



OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE TUALATIN CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL WORK SESSION MEETING FOR JULY 29, 2024

Present: Mayor Frank Bubenik, Council President Valerie Pratt, Councilor Bridget Brooks (virtual), Councilor Maria Reyes, Councilor Cyndy Hillier, Councilor Christen Sacco

Absent: Councilor Octavio Gonzalez

Mayor Bubenik called the meeting to order at 5:03 p.m.

Deputy City Megan George and Management Analyst Cody Field, along with Dan Bates and Leah Navarro from Thorn Run Partners presented information in preparation of creating a legislative agenda.

Mr. Bates introduced Thorn Run Partners, emphasizing their history and expertise in representing local governments. He highlighted the bipartisan nature of the firm and provided background on key team members who would be assisting the City of Tualatin.

Mr. Bates presented an overview of the federal legislative process, explaining the two-year sessions, the importance of appropriations, fiscal years, and how city projects fit within potential federal funding streams. He explained how policy issues and funding opportunities are influenced by Congress's cyclical sessions, which are split into biennial periods marked by elections. Mr. Bates highlighted that successful federal funding often comes down to good preparation well ahead of actual grant submissions, stating that oftentimes the groundwork for successful funding happens months, if not over a year, in advance of the actual submission.

Mr. Bates provided an outline of the state legislative process, noting the importance of coordinating state and federal efforts. He highlighted the biennial budgeting process in Oregon and the need to prepare projects well in advance to align with session timelines and deadlines. He also underlined the importance of collaboration and coalition-building for successful advocacy.

Council President Pratt asked how they could assist with items such as the urban growth boundary expansion causing traffic issues in Tualatin. Mr. Bates stated by advocating for Tualatin's transportation projects, coordinating regional support, and leveraging state and federal platforms to address infrastructure needs aligned with urban growth impacts they can help Tualatin to advocate for funds to ease traffic congestion.

Councilor Brooks asked how the cities priorities are managed within their organization. Ms. Navarro stated Thorn Runs role is to assist the city with its legislative agenda through an achievable and advocacy approach. She stated it is a three-prong approach that looks at funding requests from the city in regards to city priorities, how to support advocacy groups that align with the city's priorities, and monitoring policy efforts that align with the city's goals.

Manager George stated a series of "deep dive" meetings with City staff were held where the goal was for Thorn Run's team to get to know the organization and the community. She stated from

those meetings items were grouped into the following focus areas based on council's vision, priorities, and other direction throughout the year:

- Transportation
- Housing
- Social Services
- Resiliency and Emergency Preparedness
- Environment
- Downtown Revitalization
- Local Control and Unfunded Mandates
- Capital Projects

Manager George asked the Council for feedback on the focus areas.

Council President Pratt stated that transportation, particularly ODOT funding and regional transit projects, should be given priority.

Councilor Reyes stated that while transportation is a priority, housing is also critical due to the need for affordable living spaces. She suggested a holistic approach where housing and transportation are considered together, recognizing their interdependence.

Councilor Brooks expressed interest in prioritizing resilience and emergency preparedness, particularly investments in water systems' seismic resiliency. She also stressed the importance of having educational briefings on current legislative policies and their impact on city planning and development.

Councilor Sacco agreed on the importance of transportation but emphasized that housing should be the second priority.

Councilor Hillier stated that transportation and housing are paramount but also highlighted the interconnectedness of downtown revitalization, social services, and environmental sustainability. She advocated for thoughtful integration of these themes to best serve residents and ensure flexibility in funding pursuits that align with emerging priorities.

Mayor Bubenik highlighted the importance of a study on 99W, noting the projects impact for the community as it has been forgotten by the legislature after initial support regarding new funding opportunities.

Manager George shared the emerging issue prioritization, stating that seeking funding for capital projects was identified as a top priority during initial discussions with the Council. She stated that staff now is proposing that Tualatin's 2025 Legislative Agenda focus on capital project requests. Manager George stated that while no specific policy priorities have been identified that aren't already covered by other advocacy efforts, the city may still take positions or advocate on relevant issues.

Manager George stated staff held several discussions and identified a long list of potential capital projects. She stated they were selected based on three criteria: projects within a specific budget range, projects that are "shovel-ready," and those that align with previously discussed themes and the council's vision and priorities. Manager George stated four state-level capital requests and at least one federal-level request were identified for the upcoming year, with additional projects

considered for future years as planning and design progress. Projects suggested at the state level include:

- Seismic valving at water reservoirs for retrofitting six storage points to ensure resource security after seismic events
- Veterans Plaza shade structure
- Electric Vehicle Chargers
- Badge access program to enhancing city-wide security installations

Council President Pratt emphasized the critical importance of seismic valving in ensuring the integrity of water reservoirs during an earthquake. She highlighted the need to prioritize infrastructure that ensures the city's resilience during crises.

Councilor Reyes and Sacco concurred that reinforcing essential utilities is important.

Mr. Bates provided strategic insights into the badge access program stating it aligns with public safety, and that successful funding might require linking it to broader state priorities, such as infrastructure resilience.

Councilor Hillier stated the city needs to ensure critical buildings are both secure and efficiently used by authorized personnel. She added that safety and identification measures during emergencies would come from this project. Councilor Reyes agreed and suggested a need to explore state programs that could support this initiative.

Councilor Brooks emphasized the need for clear, justified implementations that align with public safety goals.

Mayor Bubenik supported the idea of strategic, long-term planning for these projects.

Manager George shared projects identified on the federal side including:

- Electric Vehicle Chargers
- Railroad Crossing Feasibility study

Manager George stated staff are still reviewing options to determine an appropriate request for congressionally directed spending and will return to the city council to finalize that piece of things in subsequent months.

Mayor Bubenik stated the importance of the railroad crossing project, noting the complexity of the application process and substantial city match required. Manager George agreed that tackling this project was crucial but noted that the city is currently unprepared to complete the extensive application. She suggested a feasibility study and coordination with other cities would strengthen future applications.

Councilor Brooks asked for additional information on what types of funding are available to the city. She would like to be further educated on how the funding works.

Councilor Sacco asked what the cost to go after these types of grand funds is and what the returns tend to be. Mr. Bates stated a well prepared funding package collectively produces significant returns.

Councilor Sacco asked if the presented package is reasonable for the upcoming year. Mr. Bates stated the projects that were presented are compelling and are a good list.

Council President Pratt asked how often the Council will be informed on the work of the partners. Ms. Navarro outlined their communication processes during both interim periods and legislative sessions, ensuring council members' receive continuous updates. She added that regular updates would be sent to Manager George and Analyst Field, with broader updates available upon request.

Manager George stated the final draft of the legislative agenda would be presented at the end of August to Council.

Adjournment

Mayor Bubenik adjourned the meeting at 7:07 p.m.

Sherilyn Lombos, City Manager

_____ / Nicole Morris, Recording Secretary

_____ / Frank Bubenik, Mayor