



OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE TUALATIN CITY COUNCIL MEETING FOR JULY 10, 2023

Present: Mayor Frank Bubenik, Council President Valerie Pratt, Councilor Bridget Brooks, Councilor Cyndy Hillier, Councilor Christen Sacco, Councilor Octavio Gonzalez

Absent: Councilor Maria Reyes

Mayor Bubenik called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

1. Consideration of Updates to the Outside Agency Grant Program.

Deputy City Recorder Nicole Morris presented a review of the Outside Agency Grant Program. She provided an overview of the program, encompassing its purpose statement, funding mechanism, application timeline, and review process. Recorder Morris also shared findings from research on similar grant programs in neighboring communities, which provided insights into potential improvements for Tualatin's program. She highlighted possible avenues for enhancing the current program including refining the purpose statement to align with the City Council's priorities, consideration of a funding cap, introducing a requirement for a final report, and opportunities to highlight program partners to the broader community.

Council President Pratt expressed her desire to tie the purpose statement of the grant program to the Council's priorities. While she suggested not imposing a strict funding cap, she recommended indicating past funding allocations as a guideline for future applicants. Council President Pratt stated she would like to introduce a final report to track how the granted funds are utilized.

Councilor Hillier asked if fiscal agents are allowed to take a portion of the funding for administrative costs. Recorder Morris stated there are no guidelines around that.

Councilor Hillier would like to make sure there is flexibility in the allocation of how funds are distributed. She suggested a new applicant training be held for partners, mid-grant cycle check-ins, invites to partners to participate in city events, and more extensive reporting guidelines.

Councilor Brooks agreed she would like to see the purpose of the program be tied to the council vision and the desire for flexibility in how funds are allocated. She stated she sees the funding from this program as symbolic support from the Council and wants to ensure the partners can continue to use the funding how it is helpful to them.

Councilor Gonzalez echoed the sentiments of flexibility and simplicity, proposing a straightforward final report and new partner training.

Councilor Sacco emphasized maintaining flexible fund distribution and incorporating the Council's goals into the updated purpose statement.

Mayor Bubenik underscored the requirement for grant recipients to be 501(c)(3) agencies, a sentiment supported by Councilor Hillier.

Recorder Morris acknowledged the feedback based on the discussion. She states she plans to open the grant cycle on August 1st.

2. Building Division Fee Schedule Update.

Building Official Suzanne Tyler presented an update on the building division fee schedule. She provided a comprehensive overview of the division's background, including its activities and volume of permits and inspections. Official Tyler stated the division operates independently with its own dedicated fund, sustained by revenues generated from various fees. Official Tyler explained recent state guidance necessitates the maintenance of a reserve fund capable of funding the department for 18 months. To this end, she pointed out that building fees have remained unchanged since 2005, contributing to the need of adjusting them to meet current costs. Official Tyler presented a graph illustrating revenues, expenditures, and reserves, while indicating that the bulk of revenue comes from fees such as existing building, mechanical, permit, and non-prescriptive solar fees. She stated the proposed fee adjustments were made based on careful evaluation of administrative hours, travel costs, and inspection hours. She noted even after the adjustments, Tualatin's fees would remain the lowest compared to surrounding jurisdictions, ensuring the city continues to offer low rates while building reserves to support the division. Official Tyler stated they have provided notice to the state regarding proposed changes to the fee schedule and posted the proposed changes on the city's website for feedback. She stated next steps include a public hearing on the proposed fees.

Councilor Hillier asked how long it will take to build the reserves to eighteen months. Official Tyler stated it will take 5-10 years to build eighteen months of reserves.

Councilor Gonzalez asked what the backlog is for permits in the department. Official Tyler stated residential permits are taking 2-3 weeks and commercial permits are taking 4-5 weeks.

Councilor Brooks stated it is important to have prudent reserves and is happy to see the fees come in line with actual costs.

Mayor Bubenik asked if the increase would allow for hiring additional staff to lower turnaround times. Official Tyler stated the increase would not support the addition of any new full-time staff. Mayor Bubenik would like to see new staff factored into the costs.

Councilor Hillier asked if permitting is seasonal. Official Tyler stated the summer time is the busiest season.

Councilor Pratt asked if more permitting is expected with the upcoming developments. Official Tyler stated it is projected that permitting will increase as new development continues.

City Manager Lombos recapped the Council's objective of maintaining efficient turnaround times while acknowledging the connection between staffing levels and achieving this goal. The Council collectively supported this sentiment, with a consensus to proceed with the proposed fee adjustments to meet the division's financial needs.

Councilor Gonzalez recommended reviewing these fees more frequently to ensure they remain aligned with costs. Official Tyler stated that the proposed increase includes a phased adjustment over the next five years, tied to the construction cost index to account for inflation and other business-related costs.

3. Council Meeting Agenda Review, Communications, and Roundtable.

Mayor Bubenik stated he attended an event for the District Export Council of Oregon at the NW Naturals Facility in Sherwood and the CEPA meeting to discuss where youth in the new Planbeck Gardens development will attend school.

Adjournment

Mayor Bubenik adjourned the meeting at 6:31 p.m.

Sherilyn Lombos, City Manager

_____ / Nicole Morris, Recording Secretary

_____ / Frank Bubenik, Mayor