MINUTES
KEIZER CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION
Monday, July 13, 2020
Keizer Civic Center, Council Chambers
Keizer, Oregon

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Clark called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm. Roll call was taken as follows:

Present:	**Staff:**
Cathy Clark, Mayor	Chris Eppley, City Manager
Kim Freeman, Councilor	Shannon Johnson, City Attorney
Marlene Parsons, Councilor	Shane Witham, Community Development
Laura Reid, Councilor	Tim Wood, Finance Director
Roland Herrera, Councilor (left at 7:00)	John Teague, Police Chief
	Bill Lawyer, Public Works Director
Elizabeth Smith, Councilor (6:05)	Machell DePina, Human Resources
Dan Kohler, Councilor	Tracy Davis, City Recorder

DISCUSSION

a. COVID-19 Pandemic

Mayor Clark noted that previous emergency planning had not considered a pandemic and suggested that rather than wait until later for a comprehensive look, it would be wise to brainstorm about this midstream.

City Manager, Chris Eppley handed out a list of some of the actions that had been taken and explained that in terms of lessons learned it is difficult to plan for an emergency of this type. He explained that Department Heads met on a regular basis and exercised caution when deciding to close the government to its people. Much was learned regarding on-line meetings and their effectiveness.

City Attorney Shannon Johnson provided information regarding the latest press release from the Governor and the effect it might have on usage of the Community rooms since they are not considered a 'local government building' (which is not subject to the orders) but are considered a 'venue'. Discussion followed regarding adherence to the regulations at the Keizer Little League Fields. Mr. Johnson explained that since the fields are owned by the City, the City is under obligation to make sure the rules are followed.

Finance Director Tim Wood explained that the biggest thing learned was that because we have limited staffing in some areas we have to rely on outside consultants which involves more cost but a quicker outcome. A prime example was the move to the Zoom meetings and language translation services. Efforts have been made to embrace technology and allow transactions to be completed remotely, cash deposits to the bank

diminished during the pandemic and because of technological efforts made, he anticipates that that will remain unchanged. This has, however, caused an increase in the credit card fees. Additionally, the phone tree has been discontinued and comments have been favorable on that change. Mr. Wood then fielded questions regarding postponed utility payments, staffing strain, reimbursement grants for sneeze guards and other forms of protection, and laptops used for telecommuting.

Interim Community Development Director Shane Witham explained that he was not part of the Department Head team at the beginning of the crisis, but he thought that communication to staff was done well and everyone did a good job of pivoting and being flexible. Use of technology was already in place in many areas and the department continued running smoothly and serving the community. Mr. Witham then fielded questions regarding new projects, building inspections and code enforcement.

Human Resources Director Machell DePina focused on the effect of the pandemic on employees, their varying reactions and needs and how each individual's needs were handled. She noted the importance of daily one-on-one check-ins with people who were nervous or were watching reports on a daily or hourly basis in order to help control emotional levels, and explained efforts taken in tracing potential exposures and balancing how much information was shared. Ms. DePina then fielded questions regarding layoffs and testing of employees.

Public Works Director Bill Lawyer explained that workers can operate on 12-hour shifts with half of staff working for a short term but it is not sustainable and communication among staff is more difficult with dual shifts. The weather cooperated so that Parks staff could mow every day and didn't get behind, but the Water Division could not do the annual flushing because of diminished staffing. It has been a learning experience that everyone hopes they don't have to do again, but it is good to know that adequate services can be maintained this way for up to six months. He added that during this period remote work that staff did was effective and productive and it is being considered as ongoing for part of the week.

Police Chief Teague explained efforts being taken to keep staff healthy and avoid exposure so that they could continue working and shared information on variances in crime levels and use of masks. Chief Teague then fielded questions regarding domestic abuse incidents, suicides and mental health breakdowns. Mr. Eppley noted that statewide there have been 315 suicides from lockdown to today. This is five times the normal amount.

City Recorder Tracy Davis shared efforts made into changing meetings and bid openings from person-to-person to the virtual platform, cancelling committee meetings and then getting them back up and running, and utilizing the website and Facebook page for communication in English and Spanish. Regarding the Community Center, Ms. Davis explained that it has been a struggle; events have been cancelled since mid-March; she and

Mr. Johnson are working through the ever-changing Oregon Health Authority guidelines. It is hoped that the Community Center will open soon but there will be an additional fee because three additional staff will be required for every event.

Councilor Herrera noted that his contribution to the community and his culture was a calming message he sent out on his Councilor page that was shared by many organizations.

Councilor Kohler praised City staff for their communication and good decisions and noted that he missed the one-on-one communications during the Zoom meetings.

Councilor Reid noted that she appreciated the LOC meetings and Mr. Eppley's summary of them every week, and expressed the need for concise communication and for having an Emergency Management person on staff who would have an accurate view of those in need.

Councilor Freeman urged that a policy be put together to capture what has been learned from this experience.

Discussion followed regarding how feedback was received from staff, impacts of telecommuting, adjusting to returning to the worksite, and continuing to reach out to the community through Facebook Live in Spanish and English.

Councilor Smith expressed gratitude for the City embracing social media to reach out to the public adding that she hoped this would continue because good communication is critical along with grace, respect, trust and understanding.

Councilor Parsons echoed Councilor Smith's comments emphasizing the importance of good, consistent communication.

Mayor Clark named areas of strength such as use of social media, team efforts, communication and working with community partners. Weaknesses included outdated Council Rules and limited broadband capacity. She noted that the weaknesses are being addressed and outreach has increased to a wider sector of the community through technology that had not been accessed previously.

Mr. Eppley noted that he wanted to let Council and the community know how lucky they are because they have such talented, good and dedicated Department Heads running the City and making his job easier. Mayor Clark replied that Council feels the same and that this will be reviewed again this fall with the goal to have a Councilor work with emergency management and have a seat at the table with Marion County.

ADJOURNMENT Mayor Clark adjourned the meeting at 7:54 p.m.

MAYOR:

Cathy Clark

Cathy Clark

APPROVED:

Debbie Lockhart

Debbie Lockhart, Deputy City Recorder

COUNCIL MEMBERS

Councilor #1 – Laura Reid

Councilor #4 – Roland Herrera

Kim Freeman

Councilor #2 – Kim Freeman

Councilor #5 – Elizabeth Smith

Councilor #3 – Marlene Parsons

Daniel R Kohler

Councilor #6 – Daniel R. Kohler

Minutes approved: August 3, 2020