

**UNION CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**  
**Monday, May 11, 2020 - 7:00 p.m.**  
**Leonard Almquist Council Chambers, 342 S. Main St, Union, OR 97883**

This meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m.

Roll Call: Councilor Leslie McMillan, Councilor Brian McDowell, Councilor Jay Blackburn, Mayor Leonard Flint, Councilor Susan Hawkins, Councilor John Farmer, Councilor Terra Richter, Student Liaison Emilee Freeman, and City Administrator Doug Wiggins.

Mayor Flint stated 5a. approval of terms on the sale of property will be moved to the next Council meeting.

On the item public comment on agenda items Dick Middleton 575 10th Street stated I would like to comment on the ATV Ordinance, you have more regulations than the state of Oregon. I believe some kids can drive a tractor at 12 or 14 years old, all you are missing is a license plate and a sink on the back.

Under correspondence, Mayor Flint stated I sent a letter to Rural Fire and we got a response letter. Councilor Hawkins read response letter for the record.

Mayor Flint stated I wrote a letter because we hadn't been progressing in negotiations, they had talked about merging the two departments together, but with compression laws on taxes, it could create a problem. Councilor Hawkins stated PPE's are being supplied.

CA Wiggins stated I have talked to our fire chief and EMS director, we have enough. La Grande is also helping supply us. I spoke to the tax assessor we could establish a permanent rate levy to all citizens to serve them through a property tax. It would have to be voted in by the voters.

Councilor Hawkins stated the Union Rural Fire Protection Board would be eliminated, yes, then a new board would take over completely, and a new board would be drawn up.

CA Wiggins stated they would become completely responsible for fire and ambulance.

Mayor Flint stated before we tie up our city administrators time, fire and EMS would be run jointly, by the same board. This will take considerable work to get this off the ground.

CA Wiggins stated we charge \$10.00 a month for fire and EMS. That brings about \$150,000 every year, if it changed it would be closer to \$200,000 per year just guessing conservatively.

Mayor Flint stated the current rate is \$1.22, but it could change. We need to find out when compression kicks in. They can't exceed \$10 in total permanent levy.

Councilor Richter asked how much more services would be improved.

Councilor Hawkins stated a new board would be elected it would not be either entity making decisions. It would unify the city.

CA Wiggins stated there are costs that could be incurred by the city, it would depend on the agreement you could come up with the new fire board.

Councilor Blackburn stated I think in the past the division and animosity has been tough over the years. If we are driving people away then I would like to get rid of that.

Councilor McDowell stated in order for anything to work you have to apply a business focus and direction, and working with the fire board on what the process looks like now and how it is all funded. We should have some guidance rather than thoughts.

CA Wiggins stated I think he wants to evaluate everything, but that is only if we move that direction. They have made it clear what they want, we need to decide what we want.

Councilor Farmer stated I think it is something that we need to look at, we could do a work session on it.

Mayor Flint stated should the negotiating committee look at unification. Councilor Farmer answered yes. Councilor McDowell stated I want to understand our situation is first. CA Wiggins stated our proposal was the city would run the fire department; we would take it all on. With that, they would answer to the city, with the understanding that the board had input, the board would pay us to manage the whole thing. It wasn't a take all grab all, they have accountability from a person.

Mayor Flint stated the mayor acts as the interface, the appointee has to be approved by the Council, we had a combination board set up from both entities. Councilor Hawkins added more details from past negotiations to help Council understand.

Councilor McDowell stated I think that is a backwards process in my opinion. I think it would be good to have a work session. Council discusses the options since the Rural Fire sent their proposal. Mayor Flint stated I feel they need to send a full-fledged proposal.

Council discussed the need for more information before they decide to give up fire and EMS.

Mayor Flint stated the League of Oregon Cities asked me to be on a panel to help train new Councilors. I would like to know Council's opinion. Councilor McMillan asked would that make classes stay local. Mayor Flint answered yes. McMillan stated then yes. Council is in favor of the Mayor being on the panel.

Next under old business was the Farmers Market which was tabled by Councilor Hawkins and Councilor Farmer on 03/09/2020. CA Wiggins stated they are not doing anything this summer. I believe we can remove it and wait for them to bring it back. Councilor Farmer motioned to remove farmers market item. Councilor McMillan second, motion passed unanimously.

The next item was Ordinance 559, ATV Ordinance, 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading. Mayor Flint stated I am going to comment about the new regulations. It is a city street, it is not riding in the woods, the city would have liability for accidents that occur. I know kids that can ride ATV well, but in the city is a different story. The lights are for riding at night. Mayor Flint and Councilor Hawkins read ordinance for the record.

Councilor Farmer motioned to approve the ordinance with corrections. Councilor McDowell second. Councilor Farmer stated I know it seems like too much, we have applied safety requirements for everyone involved.

Councilor Hawkins stated I wish there was a way to allow certain people to still drive and ATV in the city. Councilor Farmer agrees with Councilor Hawkins.

Mayor Flint stated hopefully in the future we can come up with something to help those who use an ATV to get around town. Motion passed with four yes votes with Councilor Richter and Councilor McMillan voting no.

The new business item was postponed until the next regular Council meeting.

The next item was the consent agenda, which had the minutes from April 13, 2020, Regular Council Meeting, April 13, 2020, Work Session, April 27, 2020 Work Session, April 27, 2020, Special Meeting, and the Vouchers for April. There was consent on the consent agenda.

The next item on tonight's agenda was informational items. Mayor Flint stated I want to send a big thank you to those working for fire and ambulance during this pandemic. CA Wiggins shared the Buffalo Flats update with Council. Councilor Farmer asked about seeing the fire chief in person once in a while to ask questions. CA Wiggins stated he would pass along the request.

Next, was the City Council Working Committee Updates. Under short term goals were Police/Fire/EMS and City Charter. CA Wiggins stated we are going to send a letter to Rural Fire, to have them come forward with their proposal. No further updates on police. Council is currently working on the City Charter.

The next goal was ATV, Weed, and Absent Business Owner Ordinances. CA Wiggins stated we just finished ATV. We haven't worked on the others yet. The next thing to work on are the emergency declarations and orders.

On the Economic Development, Councilor Richter stated we have a meeting this Thursday at 6 pm. We are on hold for things, we are trying to get our local merchants on a website to encourage shopping local.

On the Ranger Station and Walking Path, CA Wiggins stated we are waiting on abatement quotes to come in. Those should come in this week. We have to get the asbestos abated before I can proceed. On the walking path we are waiting on applications for grants, we are looking at another section of path to work on.

Next, on the City Administrator/Public Works Report, CA Wiggins stated I did put out applications for business relief fund. Our first round is due on Friday. I also talked with Councilor McDowell about business Oregon releasing funds to help. We will have to conform to their guidelines. Also, on CIS we need to draw up a policy for the computers, I have to get it back to them ASAP, to maintain our cybersecurity insurance.

On public comment Dick Middleton 575 10<sup>th</sup> Street stated I heard a phone call meeting is going to happen on that Buffalo Flats. Thank you, Councilor Hawkins, for your comment. If I knew I would get answers on the ATV ordinance I would have asked more questions. Also, we should honor a woman who goes around and cleans up our town. CA Wiggins stated I know who she is and will look into it.

Finally, on Upcoming Meetings and Suggestions, Councilor Farmer asked could get us guidelines on tree removal in the city for future discussions. Also, we should discuss the citizen and employee banquet gifts.

Mayor Flint announced the future meetings and changed the date of one meeting listed below.

Work Session – May 25, 2020 6:00pm – Moved to May 26, 2020 at 6:00 p.m.

Work Session – June 8, 2020 at 6:00pm

Regular Council Meeting – June 8, 2020 at 7:00pm (Budget Adoption)

This meeting adjourned at 8:42 p.m.

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor, Leonard Flint

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
City Administrator/Recorder, Doug Wiggins