

UNION CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION MINUTES
TUESDAY, May 26, 2020 – 6:00 P.M.
Leonard Almquist Council Chambers, 342 S. Main St, Union, OR 97883

This meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

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

Mayor Flint stated we will be switching item number 4, Cyber security to number 3, and number 3 will become number 4 Trees in right of way (permits).

The first item on tonight's agenda is the Charter Review, Comments/Suggestions. This is the final review after attorney recommendations. Councilor Hawkins began where Council left off on Chapter 6 Section 27. CA Wiggins stated I already added the changes from the last meeting. During the reading of the changes to the Charter and attorney comments on the side Council discussed getting more input from the attorney. On Chapter 7 the attorney recommended that Council change the words to determine eligibility not qualifications.

Councilor Farmer discussed the clause about Council absences. Council discussed the attorney's comments on the clause allowing Council to remove those who miss too many meetings. CA Wiggins explains it is for review. You would have to build a case. There are some who do have this in other cities.

Councilor McDowell asked about the convicted felon clause. CA Wiggins stated maybe it should be reworded. Councilor Farmer stated I would like to have more information. Mayor Flint stated we don't want to put the city in a position where they can't do business.

CA Wiggins stated the ones that do have absentee problems, it is the business meeting portion, if someone is missing 25% of the business meetings. They are not present to vote on business. Maybe there is a discussion about being absent from business meetings. Mayor and Council discussed further moving forward it would be review and not power to remove a Councilor.

CA Wiggins stated I will follow up with the attorney. Councilor McMillan stated I wasn't aware of how much time you need to put in, it would be nice to have a clear picture of that.

The next item Council discussed was a clause under the old charter that allowed the city to be sued for \$100 and that is it. That will be stricken.

Under Chapter 12 CA Wiggins stated we will strike that. The meetings would be according to state public meeting laws.

CA Wiggins stated I will have the attorney review this and make a final draft. Then we can get started on ballot information.

The next item was Cybersecurity Policy, CIS mandated policy for coverage. CA Wiggins stated this is a template from CIS, I did make a few changes to fit us, CIS has approved it. I need approval from you on this so we can adopt this, otherwise we would lose our policy on cyber security. This is to protect from spam and cyber-attacks. Councilor McDowell asked about what happens after a breach. CA Wiggins stated we will have policy and procedure in place with this. They had a situation with ransomware in a city on the west side of the state. To get the city's information back CIS had to pay \$250,000 to get their data back because they couldn't crack it.

Council asked about password changing and how often that will happen.

CA Wiggins stated it will remind you to change your password and there will be an opportunity to get in even if your password is expired. We can meet the criteria and the policies can be implemented. Usually, 60% of Councilors will fail the test emails that are sent. It costs \$200 per year to test and train the Council; it would fool me. We will take a base line, then there will be a test.

Next, Council discussed trees in Right of Way, and discussed if City needs to handle this differently. Councilor Farmer stated I was approached by several citizens about a permitting process for removing old growth trees. Personally, I am opposed to this.

CA Wiggins stated we can control people cutting down trees on historic properties, or on city owned property. The discussion becomes right of way, public use, we manage it, our own ordinances dictate that property owners maintain right of way. We prefer not to have things there, we don't have a process for removing trees from the right of way, we applaud things being taken out of the right of way. I would suggest we permit people just like the franchises and get permission. I would say it is best to have city permission. I do know that his neighbor has two or three trees that he wants to cut down now.

Council discussed if it may cause a burden to city and homeowner. CA Wiggins stated you have to have proper signage and closure. It is about the education than the permit. The other issue, if you start regulating, then we will have to start trimming trees and create a new budget line. Council discussed the permitting process would be notification to the city.

The last item on tonight's agenda was Rural Fire/City Fire, Merger vs Taxing District. CA Wiggins stated we got a letter from the Rural fire board. If a new taxing district was created, we would give up fire and ambulance and it would self-fund from a new tax. A merger would combine Rural and city trying to work something to work together like a memorandum of understanding. We have to look at tax compression if a taxing district is considered. If you go above that it takes money from the city proportionally, La Grande and Elgin are in Compression, La Grande loses hundreds of thousands of dollars in compression. If they took over the city wouldn't have to run it. It would be an elected board. It is a set amount of money. \$115,000 to \$200,000 per year, right now we run off \$130,000 about, we are also able to share services. We do save some costs with our current method.

CA Wiggins continued it would be more money to share services than to create a taxing district. We can get grants too. We have to weigh all of that out and we have to have a strong MOU in place to operate.

Councilor Hawkins stated I think the goal is the same as our goal, we need a unified district. We also need answers to things like which way will benefit financially. It will be interesting to see how much it will take to run a separate district. Is it viable, can you run it on a new tax without going into compression?

Councilor McDowell stated it would be very helpful to list things out and get figures, start up and future operating.

CA Wiggins stated in Wyoming they would create a joint powers board that would actually run and did this stuff. I don't know the rules here for joint powers board. Councilor McDowell stated you can qualify for grants if the county sponsors districts.

CA Wiggins stated assets would have to transfer. I think those are the discussions that need to be done.

Councilor McDowell stated if everyone cooperates this can be done quickly.

CA Wiggins stated I just want to be clear the draft MOU that was presented before, it was a starting point not a final product. Our last MOU. It was yield to a co-group, a joint committee of some sort.

Councilor Hawkins stated this is a challenge, if you go for a taxing district, the city of Union and rural has to abolish both departments. A huge educational piece to go with that. Council continued discussion on a new taxing district and compression, and how it may impact homeowners.

A member from the audience stated we have talked, we have to put numbers together, see what it would take to run it, I don't think it takes much and we have survived. They special districts are working on putting something together.

This meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Approved: _____
Mayor, Leonard Flint
Wiggins

Attest: _____
City Administrator/Recorder, Doug