



MINUTES

Council Work Session Meeting

6:00 PM - Monday, January 24, 2022

Leonard Almquist Council Chambers, 342 S. Main St, Union, OR 97883

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL:

The City Council of the City of Union was called to order on January 24, 2022, at 6:00 p.m., in the Leonard Almquist Council Chambers, 342 S. Main St, Union, OR 97883, with the following members present:

PRESENT: Mayor Leonard Flint, Susan Hawkins, Terra Richter, Tim Cox, and Councilor Heidi Denton

EXCUSED: John Farmer and Leslie McMillan

2. PRESENTATIONS:

3. UPCOMING BUSINESS DISCUSSIONS:

4. COMMITTEE DISCUSSIONS:

a) Fire/EMS Merger Presentation

Tim Sheehy said this has been worked on for several years. This is a proposal to merge city fire/EMS with rural fire. The same people will be able to volunteer and use the same equipment. The current system works but it has lots of problems. Sometimes no one is sure who is running what and they don't own a facility for this. The same group has to report to two different boards and fire chiefs.

The insurance companies are confused on who is liable and who owns what equipment. This also causes confusion for the volunteers on what equipment to use or what vehicle to take. The positions are redundant as are equipment and insurance coverage. If we merge it would make one district with one purpose, give one supervising body, a single tax, and will be governed by clear standards. It would make all equipment owned equally.

The other communities around us are already under a single district. There would be a 5-member board elected and chosen from within the district. The new tax would be \$1.00 per \$1,000 of property value. The merge will occur

with no outstanding debts. No employees would be working over 30 hours a week.

Council went over the budgeted employee salaries. Council needs to pass a resolution, and the rural board needs to pass a resolution, then file to have this put on the election ballot, then dissolve the separate districts, then form the new district and vote on November 8, 2022.

Citizens will pay \$18,500 less for better service. It will be more equitable fees; the City of Union wouldn't budget for fire/EMS anymore. Rural would get a lower tax rate and a schedule to replace vehicles. Some city residents will pay more for fire/EMS. This will be more efficient, and a majority of citizens will pay less.

Council and staff answer questions from the audience. Property value and tax were discussed.

Council discussed the history of the two districts. They also discussed the voting and merging process. A large concern over the tax are those whose homes are valued over \$120,000 because they would pay more. Council expressed concern over questions from citizens about paying more overall for services under a single district.

Everyone discussed the new fire chief position if this passed. They also discussed the campaign process. They had questions about who would manage burn permits. More information will be obtained on the burn permits and their management.

5. ORDINANCE/CHARTER REVIEW:

a) TLT Tax - LOC Attorney Draft Review

CA Wiggins said this came from the League of Oregon Cities. Councilor Hawkins asked how the public will be informed about this tax. CA Wiggins answered they will be notified through their booking company; they will add the 5% fee. Then they make the payment to the department of revenue.

Councilor Cox asked what about everyone who does it on Facebook and Craigslist, we only know of the ones who came and got their conditional use permit. CA Wiggins answered we will have to be vigilant and handle those situations ourselves. We will be voting on this soon and we are doing our first reading next month. I looked into it we can use it on our city owned property to help support tourism.


Dick Middleton asked which state laws it is referring to. Council and staff pointed out the ORS in the proposed ordinance.

6. OTHER:

7. **ADJOURNMENT:**
This meeting adjourned at 7:10 p.m.



Mayor



City Administrator