

The City Council for the City of Junction City, met in regular session at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, January 13, 2026, in the Council Chambers, 680 Greenwood Street, Junction City, Oregon and in a virtual meeting format via internet and phone.

PRESENT: Mayor, Kenneth Wells; Council President, Karen Leach; Councilors Sandie Thomas, Sidney Washburne; Andrea Ceniga, and Ken Hancock; Excused Absence: Councilor Ken Jamieson; City Administrator, Jason Knope; City Attorney, Carrie Connelly; Police Chief, Mark Waddell; Public Works Director, Gary Kaping; Finance Director, Christina Green; and City Recorder, Kitty Vodrup.

1. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Wells opened the meeting at 6:30 p.m., led the Pledge of Allegiance, and took roll call.

2. State of the City Address

Mayor Wells delivered the State of the City Address:

"During 2025, the city faced many challenges, affecting our entire organization. Our staff, working closely with the City Council, successfully resolved many of these challenges, and continue working to resolve others.

With input from staff, here are some highlights of the accomplishments of 2025 and the goals for 2026 by department.

Police Department Accomplishments

1. In March of 2025, construction of our new evidence room was completed, replacing the off-site storage of evidence. A full evidence audit was completed, and we were able to eliminate thousands of items we no longer needed to store. The project included new evidence handling procedures, new evidence processing area, and new storage lockers.
2. Technology upgrades, including new MDTs to replace most of our office desktop computers, and the number of MDTs in all of our patrol vehicles increased from three to eleven, increasing the information and protection for our officers. With the additional MDTs, we were able to transition to a new CAD (Computer Aided Dispatching) software through the Lane County Sheriff's Office and our new Property and RMS (Report Management System) software. The city renewed/upgraded its AXON contract, replacing antiquated in-car video systems and provided us with new tasers and body worn cameras.
3. We eliminated our dispatch center, transitioning service through the Lane County Sheriff's Office. The department created the Police Services Technician position to answer phones, work at the front counter, and handle reports. This was a major change for the department and our community, but the transition has been relatively seamless.
4. As with other city departments, increased community engagement was a goal for this past year. This was achieved through our presence at a number of events, including, but not limited to: Function 4 Junction, Scandinavian Festival, First Responders Picnic, National Night Out, Shop with a Cop, and local sporting events. We scheduled enhanced traffic patrols on the 4th of July, Halloween, and New Year's Eve for improved safety. We also attended various community events at churches, community meetings, Chamber of Commerce meetings, the Moose Lodge, and other fraternal order meetings. We partnered with the schools for the "Tiger Eyes" program and Schools Resource Officer, and other school events.

Police Department 2026 Goals

During the upcoming year, we will review our policies, complete all required state and federal requirements, and make construction upgrades to our building. With the planned retirement of the Deputy Chief this year, we need to re-organize the department, including duties. Chief Waddell would also like to establish a department recognition event to acknowledge positive achievements and present awards. Personnel wise, expand our Reserves and VIPS programs, and fully staff our officers. Hopefully, our Drone program is operational, and maybe even a citizen academy.

Public Works Department Accomplishments

1. Obtained several grants totaling over 2 million dollars for water and sewer projects.
2. Construction of the new Bailey Well, remodeled Bailey Park, including a new pickleball court, and upgraded basketball court, upgraded Tequendama Park. Refurbished the existing wells, resulting in increased water flow.
3. Public Works completed 100% of all service requests in 2025.
4. Upgraded the Council concerning the MAO with the DEQ, including progress reports on a regular basis, keeping the council well informed.
5. Public Works did many other tasks that were assigned to them during the year, and the Public Works Department is always very efficient in what they accomplished in a very professional manner.

Public Works Department 2026 Goals

Secure funding to complete Alderdale Well, complete multiple waterline projects, and continue to pursue a connection to Metropolitan Waste Management Commission (MWMC).

Finance Department Accomplishments

1. PER'S monthly reporting, the department was almost gold star results for 2025, successfully reporting 11 out of 12 months.

2. Working together with the City Recorder, they have converted paper forms for park rentals, garage sales, and comment forms to a fillable digital format, making City Hall nearly green with e-workflows. This has reduced costs and employee time, with information accessible from any City computer.
3. Payable payments made by check were reduced from 53% in 2024 to 47% in 2025 by converting our vendors to electronic payments.

Finance Department 2026 Goals

1. Continue to develop staff knowledge and expertise to meet professional standards in all areas within the Finance Department through training and development. In 2025 they had training in payroll, grants, unclaimed property reporting, and records retention.
2. Financial Audit FY25/26: Manage and support the annual audit process with the goal of an unqualified opinion.
3. Development and implementation of the adopted budget for FY26/27. Submit the budget to the County Clerk, County Assessment and Taxation, and GFOA's award program.
4. Continuing to increase the number of Finance records kept digitally.

Community Services Department Accomplishments

1. Completed remodel to the Community Center and opened to the public. Since reopening this fall, the facility has been consistently booked for rentals, especially on weekends. We have received a lot of positive feedback from the community about how the facility looks and functions.
2. Successfully hosted community events, including the Halloween Book Sale and the Christmas Jingle Mingle. These two events were well attended and received great feedback. Numerous people were brought into the Community Center which helped raise awareness of the newly remodeled space.
3. Following a librarian vacancy early in the year, the Library successfully transitioned and welcomed Susan as the new Library Coordinator. Since then, the Library has seen increased community engagement, expanded volunteer involvement, and improved operations. The Library continues to receive many positive compliments from patrons.

Community Services Department 2026 Goals

Strengthening Community Services by increasing use of the Community Center and Library through improved rentals, expanded weekday use, and new events and programs. Continuing growth and training volunteers to support daily operations across both facilities, while increasing awareness of Community Services through outreach and community events. The focus will be on making services easy to access, well used, and welcoming for the community.

Administration Department Accomplishments

1. By providing grant writing services to the Public Works department, \$2.1 million in grants and \$3 million in loan forgiveness was awarded to the city.
2. Updated the City's records management policies to include digital records, including transitioning to Oregon Records Management System (ORMS).
3. Converted all HR related processes, such as recruitment and new hire processing, to digital format.
4. Completed the upgrade of all major core infrastructure to the City's computer networks.
5. Assisted Public Works with the long-term overhaul of the City's SCADA (Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition) systems.

Administration Department 2026 Goals

It is anticipated in 2026 that Administration will put significant time into reworking a number of City policies; revamp internal committee structures to improve response times to community requests; and continue to provide administrative support to the various departments in support of their goals.

Mayor Wells recognized Attorney Connelly, who did so much to prepare the City legally for meetings, going over agendas, contracts, etc. and was somebody so vital to them that made their job much easier. He also recognized Recorder Vodrup who was there every day and worked so much on getting records straight, preparing the agendas, and was the right-hand person to them. He added that the Council worked well together, and they appreciated all of the help and work from staff in all departments."

3. Changes to the Agenda. None.

4. Approval of Minutes – December 9 and 16, 2025

MOTION: Councilor Leach made a motion to approve the December 9 and 16, 2025 minutes. The motion was seconded by Councilor Thomas and passed by unanimous vote of the Council: Thomas, Washburne, Ceniga, Leach, and Hancock.

5. Public Comment on Items not Listed on the Agenda

- A. Follow-up from Staff on Previous Comments. None.
- B. New Comments from Public. None.

6. Proclamation – Human Trafficking Prevention Month

Mayor Wells read the proclamation to declare January 2026 to be Human Trafficking Prevention month in Junction City and to call on all citizen to join efforts to increase education and work collaboratively to prevent human trafficking in our community.

7. Annual Financial Audit Presentation

Brenda Bartlett, Sensiba, LLC, presented the financial audit for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025. They issued an unmodified opinion that the financial statements were fairly stated and noted that the City reported on a cash basis, which was a basis of accounting other than accounting principles generally accepted. In addition to reviewing the financial statements, they were required to review specified areas for assurance that the City was in compliance with things such as budget process, making sure the City had insurance and fidelity bonds in place, and to ensure that the necessary competitive bidding was done with public contracting and purchasing. They did not identify any non-compliance with any area. They also examined internal controls and made some recommendations for the City to strengthen its processes in a few areas. These included setting security in the Tyler Technology software so that journal entry processes could not be made outside of the set approval process and looking at employee job descriptions and making sure that access to the system was appropriate to maintain good controls.

Auditor Bartlett continued that the City spent some federal money that exceeded \$750,000 during the year, which triggered specific audit requirements. Federal guidance was not received until November, so they were not able to finish that review by the end of the calendar year. They hoped to have that single audit completed by mid-February. Auditor Bartlett continued that they also had prepared an end of audit communication letter to Council, to share audit summary information and recommendations. Director Green noted that this had not been included in the Council packet.

Mayor Wells expressed appreciation to Auditor Bartlett and asked Administrator Knope if the Council would receive updates, as the City corrected the noted recommendations. Administrator Knope responded yes.

8. Grant Writer Presentation

Administrator Knope shared that this was before Council, to get a consensus, if any, of what Council would like to do with grant writing. It had been brought to his attention a few months ago that Hometown Grants could be a resource, and he introduced Vanessa Gallego to share two options with Council. If Council was interested in the second option, staff would go through the procurement process because of the dollar amount involved.

Vanessa shared that Hometown grants worked for small towns under 10,000, and they mostly did work on infrastructure and other city projects. The first proposal would include developing a Funding Strategy and doing grants on a case-by-case basis. The second proposal would include developing the Funding Strategy and having a one-year contract to do 6 to 8 grants and an extra 60 hours of contracting hours for other grant needs.

Councilor Thomas noted that the Police Foundation had a few local volunteers who wrote their grants and asked if that would be an option since the City's budget was so tight. Administrator Knope responded yes and that he would be happy to look into that.

Vanessa noted that they did work with cities that had a grant writer on staff, and they could offer support and assistance that the City needed, as rules and paperwork for many grants were a lot to undertake.

Councilor Hancock shared that he thought they needed to have more conversations about this and finances. He definitely did not want to close the door on this or kick the can down the road too far, as the City obviously had needs.

Councilor Leach asked if grant writing fees would be included in the grant award. Vanessa responded that it depended on the grant, and some grants would cover grant writing costs.

Councilor Washburne asked if Lane Council of Governments (LCOG) could help with grant writing. Administrator Knope responded that he would follow-up with LCOG on that.

Councilor Leach and Mayor Wells noted that they had heard about grant writing opportunities through League of Oregon Cities (LOC).

Vanessa stated that LCOG had many cities and she had heard that they did not write grants but could review them. She added it would be important to make sure research was done to confirm that the City had a decent shot at receiving a grant and that it was worth applying for.

Councilor Leach thought that a pay as you go approach would be a good idea over entering into a year-long contract.

Councilor Ceniga asked where the money would be coming from to pay for this. Administrator Knope responded from the department in which the project was being done.

Councilor Ceniga asked what the ballpark costs would be. Vanessa responded that the year-long contract retainer provided a discount on everything. To piecemeal, the Funding Strategy was typically \$10,000, and the writing of grants for water and sewer projects was typically \$20,000 each, as most of those would be federal grants. Administrator Knope added that with the piecemeal approach, each would come to the Council for approval with dollar amounts, etc., and the Council could say yes or no at that point.

Councilor Ceniga noted that she agreed with Councilor Hancock on not kicking this can down the road, but she was concerned with how much money this would cost, when they already had financial concerns within Public Works. She wanted to look at other options as well. She could not see spending a whole bunch of money right now that they did not have when at their last meeting, they were potentially looking at having to cut positions. She wanted to be careful and make sure they looked at every option out there and considered them before making a move.

Administrator Knope responded that he would go back and do some research on the volunteers and reach out to LCOG to get more details.

Councilor Washburne stated that he agreed with Councilor Ceniga. They needed to look at the budget before spending more money on anything to see if they could afford that right now and not do this until they brought the budget back up to where it needed to be.

Mayor Wells stated that the City did have many projects coming forward that they would need to complete, so they were going to have to get grants from somewhere. They needed to have professionals working on securing those grants, and a \$10,000 expense on a one-million-dollar project was a pretty good return on investment. He added that sometimes they might find out that there was an available grant with a short application window, so being prepared for that would be important.

Mayor Wells thanked Vanessa for presenting the information and for Administrator Knope bringing the discussion to Council.

9. **Budget Calendar Fiscal Year 2026-2027**

Director Green presented the Fiscal Year 2026-2027 Budget Calendar.

MOTION: Councilor Washburne made a motion to approve the budget calendar as presented by staff. The motion was seconded by Councilor Ceniga and passed by unanimous vote of the Council: Thomas, Washburne, Ceniga, Leach, and Hancock.

10. **Council Agenda Forecaster**

Administrator Knope presented the forecaster and noted there would be Regular Session item on January 27, 2026 for the Raintree Water Treatment Plant Design.

Councilor Hancock requested adding an agenda item to the January Work Session or the first meeting in February where he would make a motion to remove Administrator Knope from his City Administrator contract and move him to a consultant's contract that would be focused strictly on the MAO (Mutual Agreement and Order). In addition, he asked if the Council would support he and Mayor Wells meeting with Administrator Knope to draft the consultant contract and then bring that back to Council for review. He asked Administrator Knope if he was missing anything. Administrator Knope responded no.

Mayor Wells asked Attorney Connelly for her input on the process to handle this correctly, since this was just brought up tonight. Attorney Connelly responded that since she did not know anything about this, she would like to first speak with Attorney Mark Wolf. She asked if this was to add separate contract work in addition to Administrator Knope's employment with the City. Councilor Hancock responded no, and it would be removing Administrator Knope as the City Administrator and moving him to a non-supervisory position where he would be a consultant for the Council on the MAO. He added that he had already spoken with

Administrator Knope about this. Councilor Hancock continued that he was requesting an agenda item to address this issue, as he believed legally it needed to be an agenda item.

Administrator Knope shared with Attorney Connelly that from an employment standpoint, he did not have any issues with this.

Councilor Leach asked if this would mean the City would be without a City Administrator. Councilor Hancock responded yes and the City would have to hire one.

Attorney Connelly stated that she would recommend that the Mayor work with Attorney Wolf in working out that agenda item and talking about options and impacts.

Councilor Hancock responded that they needed to meet with Administrator Knope to talk about what the contract would look like and that would be brought back to Council. Councilor Hancock was requesting the agenda item and also the ability to meet with Administrator Knope to line out what the contract would say, which then the Council could review and say whether it was on target or not.

Mayor Wells noted that he could contact Attorney Wolf, as this raised many questions that had not been thought about or discussed.

Attorney Connelly noted that this was not something that she wanted to give any substantive advice on off the cuff. She was hearing that a Councilor was requesting the authority for him and the Mayor to meet with Administrator Knope. That part was a narrow question and less of a legal employment question and more of an authority question being posed, and she was okay with the Council considering if this was a prospect that the Council wanted Councilor Hancock and Mayor Wells to spend time on with the City Administrator.

Mayor Wells noted that they had discussed a lot of things tonight and this came out of the blue. He continued that there were many questions, including did the City have the money to have a City Administrator and a consultant too. He added that there were many pegs that needed to fall into holes if this was going to work.

Attorney Connelly expressed her agreement. She continued that there were many employment things to consider, and to discontinue the City Administrator contract it would take termination of the contract or resignation of the City Administrator. She thought the very threshold question to ask was this even anything that the Council wanted to consider or have options vetted. If so, the Council would authorize the Mayor and Councilor Hancock to work with Administrator Knope to develop those ways forward and to look at this in more detail, which was not a legal question but an authority question for the Council. From what she was hearing from Mayor Wells, she wondered if he was saying this was a lot to ask of the Council tonight and maybe they just wanted to sit on it for a bit and not grant authority this evening.

Councilor Hancock responded that he really did not think it was too much to ask and was a pretty straightforward question, and asked Administrator Knope what he thought. Administrator Knope responded that he did not have a problem with this. He thought the only way to answer some of the questions he heard was to meet, hammer out the contract and give the Council something to look at so they could understand what was being asked. Councilor Hancock added that was right.

Administrator Knope continued that doing that did not commit the City to anything. It would just be putting an option together for Council to view. It would not be saying the City had to do "x" or "y". It would be one of those things that you have to flush it out somehow so Council could even look at it and say yes or no, this is a crazy idea, or whatever.

Mayor Wells asked if other Councilors had input.

Councilor Washburne stated that he did not see what was wrong in looking at it.

Councilor Leach responded that was fine, but asked why the whole Council would not be involved and noted it could be done in Executive Session. Administrator Knope responded that was how his original contract was done.

Councilor Hancock noted they would just draft out the contract and bring back to the whole Council to see and discuss.

Councilor Leach asked Councilor Hancock if it would be fair to ask Administrator Knope what he thought. Councilor Hancock responded that he had done that.

Administrator Knope stated that he had zero issues with the concept that he and Councilor Hancock had talked about earlier today.

Councilor Leach said she was not expecting anything like this.

Councilor Hancock noted that it was supposed to be that way, and they were not supposed to be talking about these things outside of the meeting as that would be inappropriate.

Councilor Thomas asked Administrator Knope if she was sensing relief on his part. Administrator Knope responded that at the end of the day, he had always been a very firm believer that you should use your folks that plays to their strengths and not their weaknesses. He had sat in the City Administrator chair for almost 11 years, but at the end of the day, he would always be Public Works and that would be his strong suit. The City had processes it was going into with the MAO, MWMC, etc., and the City, as it was structured today, did not have the resources to dedicate to it that it should. He and Director Kaping were doing their best to make it work and were mostly keeping their heads above water at least 75% of the time. It kept him up at night thinking what did they miss and what was going to fall through the cracks, and with everything that goes on in a City of their size, it was extremely difficult to give this particular topic the time, effort, and resources it needed to be successful. The part of the concept that was talked about was that in two and a half years in April of 2028, he would be retiring and be done. This would let him transition back into a spot that could help the City and community achieve the best outcome and best results and would let the Council bring in an administrator that had a different focus that may better suit what the Council wanted to do both now and in the future. That was the concept behind this that he could get behind.

Councilor Hancock noted they could use the corporate knowledge while they had it, otherwise, a new City Administrator would come in and have to understand it right now.

Administrator Knope added that three out of the four staff members in the meeting tonight would be retired between two and three years. At the end of the day, what they did in the next five years would shape the community for the next 50 years. One mistake, one screwup somewhere could cost in fines and cost the community more for the next 20 to 30 years. That was how the conversation came about and it caught him off guard too.

Councilor Leach asked if Administrator Knope had called Councilor Hancock. Councilor Hancock responded no and that he had called Administrator Knope.

Councilor Leach responded that she understood that Public Works was Administrator Knope's forte, as she had first met him when he was the Public Works Director, but this was a surprise.

Councilor Thomas noted that none on the Council were there when Administrator Knope was taken out of Public Works and put in as City Administrator, so some of the other Councilors were responsible for the shape they were in. She asked Administrator Knope if he understood what she meant by that. Administrator Knope responded that he thought so.

Councilor Thomas continued that she understood what Administrator Knope was saying, that he did not have some of the knowledge. She added that was not Administrator Knope's fault that he was put in that position. Administrator Knope responded it was what was needed at the time, but that was 11 years ago. He added that times had changed and it was time to take a fresh look at things.

Councilor Hancock responded that was right.

Administrator Knope said that to him, it was not saying that anything failed or was wrong. He continued that if you would have asked him 11 years ago if he could predict today, there would have been no way they he could have. He added that if he could have, he would still be the Public Works Director.

Councilor Leach noted this was probably a wonderful idea.

Administrator Knope responded that it was at least worth considering and taking the time to flush it out so the questions could be asked and the idea vetted fully.

Councilor Hancock asked if Administrator Knope was thinking having this for the next meeting or the meeting in February. Administrator Knope responded that it depended on everybody's schedule.

Mayor Wells noted that the agenda for the Work Session was full, and he did not see this being a small discussion item. The Council was going to want to give this the time to justify the discussion.

Councilor Hancock responded that he hoped so. He asked Administrator Knope if he had a preference on when to take this to Council. Administrator Knope responded that he did not realize the Work Session agenda was so long and was totally fine and thought it was completely reasonable to bring this back to the regular Council meeting in February.

Mayor Wells responded that meeting had less agenda items and the ones on there were not as complex of issues.

Councilor Ceniga asked Councilor Hancock to restate what he was asking. Councilor Hancock said that basically he and Administrator Knope at this point, were asking a majority of Councilors to approve he and the Mayor meeting with Administrator Knope to line out what the subsequent contract would look like as a consultant. This would provide the Mayor with some of the answers he was looking for. He thought they needed permission to meet with Administrator Knope and then the contract would go to Attorney Connelly for review and potential changes and then it would be presented to the full Council to be deliberated on and discussed, however that should be done, and he was sure Attorney Connelly would tell them.

Attorney Connelly noted that she wanted to interject an intermediary step. The question would be when would she talk to Attorney Wolf about the legalities of trading out one contract for another. She asked if she could do that tomorrow, just to get some preliminary guidance and maybe that would go the Mayor and then depending on that, the conversation that Councilor Hancock was discussing could proceed.

Councilor Hancock responded that the Mayor would be included in those conversations with Administrator Knope. Attorney Connelly shared that she understood that, and before she had a contract that she would be reviewing, which was a very different type of review from her perspective, she wanted a preliminary review step.

Mayor Wells expressed agreement with Attorney Connelly's point of view on her discussing with Attorney Wolf, and then having an attorney then get a hold of the Mayor and then if they went forward, he would get a hold of Councilor Hancock.

Attorney Connelly responded great, and that was just the intermediary step that she was asking for and then everything would proceed as Councilor Hancock outlined, if the Council was in agreement.

Councilor Ceniga stated that this caught her off guard, and she was not sure what to say. She was wondering if some of this should be done in executive session, because she did have some concerns with what she had heard about this change or what this change might look like. She did not know if all the Councilors should be part of this and if they should work out what some of this might look like. She just had concerns but did not know if this should be done more in executive session or in a public session.

Councilor Thomas asked for confirmation that it was up to Administrator Knope to decide that.

Councilor Hancock responded that it was up to Administrator Knope, but at this point, all they were trying to do was get down on paper what it was going to look like and run that through the attorney so they would have something to discuss. He did not think they would be successful if they all sat with Administrator Knope and tried to write a contract. He thought they needed to have a starting point, which was a draft, and he thought the three of them sitting down in a quiet place, putting their heads together, writing this up, looking at the budget, and everything else would provide some answers for everyone. Attorney Connelly would be the first step, then it would go to the Mayor, and then to him, the Mayor, and Administrator Knope to draft the contract and then it would come back to Council. Whether that would occur in Executive Session or not would be Administrator Knope's choice.

Councilor Ceniga noted that she had some concerns about what this was going to look like.

Mayor Wells stated that he thought everybody on the Council would have those questions and they would not know what it was going to look like until they received some legal advice and had a meeting. They just needed to go through the steps, because they did not know what it was going to look like right now. Mayor Wells continued that he probably had more questions than she did right now, including do they need to write a job description, how do they establish reimbursement, how do they terminate the other contract, etc.

Councilor Ceniga responded yes. She wondered where this would fall in the budget and had some other questions that might be considered petty but she thought it was in the best interest of probably current staff as well.

Councilor Hancock stated that the only way for him to help them with any of these questions was if he would have called them individually and got this meeting ready, but Attorney Connelly would have said that would have been a problem. Mayor Wells added that if he had heard about it, he would have said something.

Councilor Hancock continued that this was the exact reaction the Council should have because he had not told anybody, until he talked to Administrator Knope today at noon. He added that there was nothing wrong with the questions.

Councilor Leach noted that step one would be Attorney Connelly.

Mayor Wells noted that if Attorney Connelly could proceed as they had discussed, he would appreciate that. Attorney Connelly responded absolutely and that she would get back to the Mayor before the end of the week.

Mayor Wells noted that if this moved forward, it would be presented to Council at the first meeting in February.

11. Staff Reports

Director Kaping reported: Public Works was in maintenance mode, and he was working with MAO and MWMC items; a local church representative asked if the City would be interested in either a donated or leased piece of ground for a dog park. Director Kaping looked into this and if the City were to accept this, it would need to be donated as they could not rezone a leased piece of ground. It would cost around \$100,000 to develop into a dog park, with fencing, benches, picnic tables, garbage cans, dog pots, etc.

It was noted that there would also be maintenance and upkeep needed in the park. The Council consensus was for Director Kaping to let them know that the Council appreciated the offer and would like to hold off on this for a few months. It was noted that if the Dog Park was listed in the Parks Master Plan, SDC fees could be used for its development.

Councilor Hancock asked how the MWMC meeting went yesterday. Director Kaping responded that it went well and staff received some good recommendations on where to start, which was what they were working on now.

Director Green reported: Finance staff were busy with end-of-year tax reporting, W2s and 1099s; and it was time to start working on the budget.

Mayor Wells expressed appreciation to Director Green on the job she was doing and stated that it was nice to see her at the meeting in person. Director Green responded that it was nice to be there.

Chief Waddell reported: Good to talk with citizens at the recent Community Meetings; were working with Public Works on trailers, RVs, and vehicles parked in easements issues 1st and 6th and started to give verbal warnings; working on a Wellness Program for the department, including sleep studies, having a therapy dog, and taking advantage of the Employee Assistance Program; looking to have a PD awards/recognition party/event in which the Council would be invited; and hoped the drone donation would arrive for a presentation at the next meeting.

Attorney Connelly reported: She clarified that Administrator Knope would be following up with LCOG and not LOC for the grant writing discussion; she would be attending the February Council Work Session and following up on the discussion this evening. She noticed in the

minutes that there was discussion on the complaint policy involving the City Administrator, and she had talked to staff and that was in the works.

Councilors Leach and Hancock responded that was good.

Administrator Knope reported: Finished the second set of Community Meetings and had five more overall than the first set of meetings. There were a lot of great questions, and staff did a great job. Were working on putting the minutes together for a recap; He and Director Kaping met with Lane County on Monday on MWMC and had a great discussion. Lane County staff were open to working with the City to get caught up. The City was solid on the engineering side and needed to start working on the planning side and start engaging Lane County, Eugene, and Springfield's planning departments and Planning Commissions, as well as their Commission and Councils. Courtney Flathers from the Governor's office had been super helpful with getting the City down the right path and would be including Junction City in a quarterly work group meeting with Creswell, Goshen, and others involved. The pieces were starting to fall into place, and it would just take a lot of time and effort to get there.

12. Previous Month's Expenditures

Councilor Hancock noted that there were two payments of \$38,482 expenditure to Executive Information Services. Administrator Knope responded that was the EIS software for the Police Department and the first payment was the initial deposit and the second payment was the remainder.

13. Councilor Comments/Questions

Councilor Thomas thanked everybody for their hard work. She thought they would be moving forward and upward in this new year.

Councilor Washburne stated that they had a lot of work to do this year in the budget, to get it balanced to where it needed to be, and they would have to work hard on it.

Councilor Ceniga thanked Mayor Wells for reading the proclamation to make January Human Trafficking Prevention month. She was a part of the CSEC (Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children) team and pointed out that there had been members of Kids First and CSEC team at the meeting tonight. She noted that this was often something that was kept quiet, and she had worked with victims, which was difficult. For every victim they found out about, there were several more that remained hidden. When they were finally able to protect them, keep them safe, and work with them, they were at a very vulnerable time in their life. This proclamation meant a lot, and it was near and dear to her to be a part of it and work with the team. She encouraged everyone listening that if they saw something that did not seem right to say something.

Mayor Wells thanked Councilor Ceniga for her comments and noted that he had been contacted by Kids First last month and provided with the sample proclamation. Recorder Vodrup helped him with that, and he thought the proclamation was well written and showed a lot of negative things but bringing it out in the public was how you turned those negative things into positive results. He was sure that the Council and those in the audience appreciated the job that Councilor Ceniga and the team did to help these victims.

Councilor Leach stated that she was looking forward to the new year and thanked staff for all of their work. She attended three of the Community Meetings and thought staff did a great job of presenting information and answering questions. People were really receptive, and the meetings got better with each session. She thanked Public Works for the great work on Tequendama Park. She added that she had felt bad about the last Work Session, as there were rumors going around that the Council had made up their minds to lay people off, but that was not true. She noted that they did not take public comment at Work Sessions, which she did not think everyone understood. She hoped that if there were questions that people would ask the Council directly or their department director and not listen to rumors. She added that no decision had been made and they would make the best decisions they could for the 8,000 citizens they represented and for everyone concerned. She wished everyone a Happy New Year.

Councilor Hancock thanked everyone in attendance at the meeting for being there. One of the things he appreciated was as Public Works staff drove around town, they were always waving at citizens, which meant a lot to the community. Junction City was a small town and had great people. As Councilor Leach had said, the Council had a balancing act of representing the

citizens and noted that the Council would never cut anybody unless they absolutely had to. First, the Council needed to study the budget and examine what happened in the past that led them to where they were currently at today. There was not a day that went by that he did not think about staff, and the Council needed to look at the impacts of the MAO and the millions of dollars that the City would have to spend, rate impacts, etc. The Council was trying to do the best that they could and take a comprehensive view of what was taking place and how they got to where they were today, so they did not repeat that in the future.

14. Mayor’s Comments

Mayor Wells thanked staff for providing accomplishments and goals, so he could use that in preparing the State of the City Address. They had a very busy and positive year last year and they would continue on and have a better year this year. The League of Oregon Cities (LOC) would be having a quarterly meeting next month in Albany, and the President of LOC would be speaking to the group. He asked Councilors to contact him or Administrator Knope, if they were interested in attending. He appreciated all who were in attendance at the meeting and noted that it was nice to see citizens coming to meetings and not looking out at empty chairs or no one attending virtually. The reason the Council was there was because they were elected by the citizens to do the best job that they could, and they appreciated citizen feedback.

15. Adjournment

As there was no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:18 p.m.

ATTEST:

APPROVED:

Kitty Vodrup, City Recorder

Kenneth Wells, Mayor