

The City Council for the City of Junction City, met in regular session at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, May 12, 2020, in a virtual meeting format via internet and phone.

PRESENT: Mayor, Mark Crenshaw; Councilors Sandie Thomas, Robert Stott, Andrea Ceniga, John Gambee, Dale Rowe and Bill DiMarco; City Administrator, Jason Knope; City Attorney, Carrie Connelly; Police Chief, Bob Morris; Public Works Director; Gary Kaping; and City Recorder, Kitty Vodrup.

1. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Crenshaw called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m., took roll call, and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Changes to the Agenda

Councilor Ceniga stated that the Council gave the public an opportunity to ask questions at each meeting and yet a response was never given. She asked if an agenda item could be added to answer previous month's questions.

Mayor Crenshaw responded that he did not think this would be an item for tonight's agenda, but would be something to consider in a work session to let the Council decide whether or not they wanted to make this a part of regular business. He believed in transparency and encouraged the public to ask questions, but some questions were more of an issue for staff to investigate and answer rather than answering in the public forum. He added that Mr. Sid Washburne had asked a question last month and was told that the Mayor would respond to him, and Mayor Crenshaw had gotten back to him today.

3. Approval of Minutes – April 14 and 28, 2020

MOTION: Councilor Rowe made a motion to approve the April 14 and 28, 2020 minutes. The motion was seconded by Councilor Stott and passed by unanimous vote of the Council.

4. Public Comment on Items not Listed on the Agenda

Mr. Sid Washburne, 520 Timothy Street, Junction City, expressed thanks and appreciation to Mayor Crenshaw for getting back to him on his question on the number of Police vehicles. Mr. Washburne noted that there were 13 vehicles being used, 4 motorcycles, 1 special vehicle, 1 bus in limbo, and 3 reserve vehicles.

5. 6th Street Crack Sealing

Director Kaping presented the request to do some point repair and crack sealing on 6th Street from Front Street to Birch Street. The City's procurement rules were followed; three bids were requested with two being received. Payment would be from the Streets Capital Fund.

MOTION: Councilor Ceniga made a motion to award the 6th Street Crack Sealing Project to Pave Northwest in the amount not to exceed \$25,521.18 and authorize the Public Works Director to sign the necessary documents. The motion was seconded by Councilor Rowe and passed by unanimous vote of the Council.

6. Coburg Dispatching Contract Agreement

Administrator Knope reviewed the request for authorization to sign an agreement to terminate the dispatch services the City of Junction City provides to the City of Coburg. The City of Coburg indicated that they would be going with the county for dispatch services, as they thought this would be a better fit for their organization. The agreement would terminate on June 30, 2020, and the budgetary impacts would be minimal as the recently approved dispatch contract with the University of Oregon was higher than had been anticipated.

Councilor Ceniga declared that she was a reserve officer with the City of Coburg. After discussion with Attorney Connelly, it was determined that Councilor Ceniga did not have a potential or actual conflict of interest.

MOTION: Councilor Stott made a motion to authorize the City Administrator to sign the Termination of Intergovernmental Agreement with the City of Coburg. The motion was seconded by Councilor Rowe and passed by unanimous vote of the Council.

7. Business Pandemic Impact Support Program Update

Administrator Knope stated that the May 18th funding of the grant application program was rapidly approaching. To date there had been 48 eligible businesses that had submitted applications and a total of \$75,000 in funding requests for the month of April.

Administrator Knope continued that when this program was set up, it was intended that equipment leases would be an eligible expense, but it had inadvertently been left out of the program language; therefore, before the Council was a resolution to add equipment leases as an eligible expense to the grant program.

Administrator Knope noted that Attorney Connelly had recommended adding language to Section 4 of the Resolution to read: "Resolution No. 1237 is hereby repealed. Program applications received to date remain valid and will continue to be processed by the City pursuant to the revised Program adopted hereunder."

A. Resolution No. 1 – A Resolution of the Junction City Council Establishing a Business Pandemic Impact Support Program and Repealing Resolution No. 1237.

MOTION: Councilor Rowe made a motion to approve Resolution No. 1, as revised by the City Administrator. The motion was seconded by Councilor Stott and passed by unanimous vote of the Council.

8. Small Business Emergency Loan Fund

Mayor Crenshaw stated that the Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) Committee had recommended that the Council make some of the RLF funds available in emergency loans to small businesses. The Council established an advisory committee to recommend eligibility criteria. The Committee met and discussed the following criteria for loan eligibility: 15 full time equivalent employees or less and must be headquartered in Junction City and do at least half of their business in Junction City. Mayor Crenshaw noted that he had hoped to bring a draft contract to this meeting for Council review, but they were still working with Community Lending Works on the draft contract language.

Mayor Crenshaw continued that the City had just been informed of a matching grant program and he asked Administrator Knope to provide information. Administrator Knope reviewed that Business Oregon had 2.5 million dollars from the state of Oregon for a matching grant program to assist businesses with COVID related impacts. Considerations were that some of the requirements may be more restrictive than what the City would want to see and that the application to participate in this program would need to be turned in by Monday.

Discussion followed and the Council consensus was that there was not enough time to prepare and submit the application and that exercising local control over the City's loan program would get money more quickly to the businesses in Junction City that needed it. The Council could consider other opportunities in the future if they were made available.

Councilor DiMarco noted that at the subcommittee meeting, Mayor Crenshaw had expressed concerns on the draft contract language for the loan relief program that Community Lending Works would be able to forgive loans at their discretion. Mayor Crenshaw responded that he spoke with Community Lending Works today and they said that it would not be legal for the City of Junction City to retain that authority. Mayor Crenshaw added that he would be talking with Attorney Connelly and Administrator Knope on this and that the subcommittee may need to meet again to make a recommendation to the Council.

9. 2020 General Election Candidate Filing

Recorder Vodrup reviewed that the General Election would be held on November 3, 2020, and the Mayor's position and three Councilor positions would be on the ballot. The candidate filing dates were June 3, 2020 to August 25, 2020. The City's code required that a candidate gather 30 signatures from qualified electors to get their name on the ballot. Given the current circumstances, staff wondered if the Council was interested in amending the City's code for this election to allow filing by fee instead of or in addition to filing by signature. If the Council were interested in amending the code, staff would bring back an ordinance at the next Council meeting.

In response to a question from Councilor Ceniga, Recorder Vodrup stated that state statute allowed two different methods of filing; one was filing by fee, which the Council would set the filing fee amount, and the other option was filing by petition or gathering signatures.

Attorney Connelly added that filing either by fee or by gathering signatures showed a commitment to the candidacy or that “you had skin in the game.” She continued that the Secretary of State’s office had taken the position that original signatures were not required and if a candidate wanted to have less public exposure, it would be possible to email the signature form to 30 different individuals, who would sign their name, certify at the bottom that this was their original signature, and then email back to the candidate. She added that if the Council wanted to add filing by fee, she would recommend keeping the ability to file by gathering signatures, so that when it was time to consider the amending ordinance, there would only be a potential conflict for the Council members who may be running again.

Mayor Crenshaw shared the example that when he was on the fire board, he only had to file a \$10 fee and served for 8 years without having to interact with the public on his candidacy. Even though he served the community well, he did not feel that process was in the best interest of the City of Junction City. The first time he ran for Mayor, it forced him to prove that there were other citizens in the community that were interested in having him serve as Mayor, and that was a pretty easy requirement as most people had 30 friends within the community. On his 2nd election, he went door to door and met new community members, giving them the opportunity to talk with him and decide if they wanted to support him. He did not think it served the City of Junction City at all to forgo its already minimal requirement of getting 30 people to agree that you should run for a position by simply paying a miniscule fee.

Councilor Thomas noted that with this pandemic, one was lucky to get someone to answer the door for their mail man. This would only be for this election and they were not even meeting together in this trying time, so she could not imagine asking people to go out and obtain 30 signatures.

Mayor Crenshaw responded that the Secretary of State’s office had offered an option to gather signatures electronically, if desired. He expressed his fear for Junction City in its history of elected officials, especially in times when there was controversy and they have what were called single issue candidates. If it were too easy to simply enlist themselves over that one issue, then indeed they would do that and would talk about their issue until they got resolve and then resign from the position.

Councilor Thomas thought that people would not put in the effort to serve unless they had a love for the community.

Councilor Gambee expressed that to have “skin in the game” paying a \$10 fee did not compare to gathering 30 signatures, which would take more effort. He liked the current process and was not opposed to people running but thought paying a fee was the opposite of what they wanted. They did not want people to be able to buy their way into an election but wanted them to go out and talk to citizens. He was hopeful that they would not be in lockdown for the next three or four months up to the election, which would give people plenty of time to go out, meet their neighbors, and get some signatures.

Councilor Ceniga stated that she could see both sides of what Councilors Gambee and Thomas were saying. It was uncertain what the City would do with the fee after receiving it, and she felt more supportive of getting signatures, because it got you out in your community and that was who you were representing. When they talked “skin in the game”, that was where you put your effort into. Anybody could drop \$20 and sign up to be a Councilor, but she thought if they put more effort into it by going out, talking to the community, and getting signatures, it showed more dedication to the community. She added that hopefully over the next couple of months, people would feel more comfortable doing that and coming up with ways to safely be social again.

Councilor Stott expressed his agreement and thought they should stay with the 30 signatures requirement and keep the code as it was.

10. Councilor Comments/Questions

Councilor Thomas noted that they had not had a staff report for a while. Mayor Crenshaw confirmed that was not on the agenda and asked if Councilor Thomas had any questions for staff. Councilor Thomas responded that she did not but was just curious about that. She felt that they did not get the same thing over the phone as they did at in person meetings.

Mayor Crenshaw concurred and noted that he preferred in person meetings, but this medium had provided better quality than he had anticipated and allowed them to conduct business.

Councilor Thomas stated that when the subcommittee had talked about the loan criteria, they had not talked about asking for collateral. Mayor Crenshaw responded that it looked like the subcommittee would need to meet again, so they could talk about that then. He added that they would advertise that meeting and take public comments.

Councilor DiMarco noted that the City’s Emergency Declaration would sunset on May 28th. Mayor Crenshaw responded that he would put that on the May 26th Council agenda and the Council could decide at that time whether they wanted to extend it or let that sunset.

Councilor DiMarco clarified that the City’s grant program would expire 30 days after the governor lifted the state’s emergency declaration and that was not tied to the City’s emergency declaration. He thanked the Mayor for doing a great job of running the meeting.

Councilor Gambie stated that what was developed for both the grant and loan programs was great and was very telling that 48 businesses in Junction City had already made application. He thanked everyone involved for their work on those programs.

11. Mayor’s Comments

Mayor Crenshaw stated that he was glad that the City Council was able to respond to the negative impacts to the economy in Junction City and make an offering to help the small businesses survive. He was impressed with the applicants, as they could have asked for the maximum amount but only asked for what they needed. That was truly something that the small businesses should applaud themselves on and that action left some funds to be available to other businesses who were also in need.

Mayor Crenshaw continued that he hoped everyone agreed that this process was indeed democratic, and they were being transparent and making opportunities available, even to their own encumbrance and difficulty in hearing those. He continued that democratic government was so important to him, even though it was a little bit tougher in this medium. Making that opportunity to allow everyone to participate was what the democratic government really was. He thanked everyone who took the time to listen tonight and especially thanked the members of the public who shared their opinions about how cities should act. He expressed appreciation to the Councilors, who volunteered in this community and held an incredibly important position in helping the community move forward. Although some of the decisions they made were not going to please everyone, the Councilors were taking the time to consider the true needs of Junction City and were to be applauded for putting the effort into that.

12. Adjournment

As there was no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:13 p.m.

ATTEST:

APPROVED:

Kitty Vodrup, City Recorder

Mark Crenshaw, Mayor