

The City Council for the City of Junction City, met in regular session and for a work session at 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, July 27, 2021, in the Council Chambers at the City Hall, 680 Greenwood Street, Junction City, and in a virtual meeting format via internet and phone.

PRESENT: Mayor, Beverly Ficek; Council President, Ken Wells; Councilors Sandie Thomas, Sidney Washburne, Andrea Ceniga, John Gambee, and Karen Leach; City Administrator, Jason Knope; City Attorney, Mark Wolf; Police Chief, Bob Morris; and City Recorder, Kitty Vodrup.

REGULAR SESSION

1. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Ficek opened the meeting at 5:30 p.m., led the pledge of allegiance, and took roll call.

2. Executive Session per ORS 192.660(2)(d) to Conduct Deliberations with Persons Designated by the Governing Bod to Carry on Labor Negotiations

Mayor Ficek called Executive Session at 5:32 p.m. Regular session reconvened at 6:17 p.m.

3. Police Association Contract

Administrator Knope stated that before the Council was a contract renewal with the Junction City Police Association. He noted there was one change on page 7, Section 4.4 Sick Leave and would be amended to read:

A. Full time. Full-time employees shall earn sick leave with full pay at a rate equal to the number of hours worked in the employee's regularly scheduled shift for each calendar month of service. Sick leave shall accrue from the date of employment, but shall not be taken until the successful completion of the first ninety (90) days of employment.

MOTION: Councilor Wells made a motion to approve the Police Association Contract, as amended, and authorize the City Administrator to sign the necessary documents. The motion was seconded by Councilor Thomas and passed by unanimous vote of the Council.

4. Executive Session pers ORS 192.660(2)(e) to Deliberate with Persons Designated by the Governing Body to Negotiate Real Property Transactions.

Mayor Ficek called Executive Session at 6:20 p.m. Regular session reconvened at 7:56 p.m.

Mayor Ficek called for a break at 7:56 p.m. and reconvened the meeting at 8:03 p.m.

5. Real Property Purchase

MOTION: Councilor Gambee made a motion to purchase 664/668 Greenwood Street from Craig Taras for \$295,000 and authorize the City Administrator to sign the necessary documents subject to City Attorney review. The motion was seconded by Councilor Wells.

Councilor Gambee stated that because of the foresight of the City Administrator and Police Chief four years ago in signing a lease agreement with the option to purchase, including an amazing rent repayment of the lease, every day for the last four years when the police officers and staff came to work in this City, they had hope that their situation was improving. Every time the Police Department received a donation to put in floor boards, do electrical work, put in a shower, paint, or fix the roof, the staff had additional hope that their situation was about to improve. This was based on the 2015 ruling by this Council that our Police Department lacked adequate space and for the last four years because of this lease agreement that was negotiated very well by the appropriate people, they gave our staff hope. He continued that was why he was in favor of this purchase at a great price according to every real estate professional in town. It was an amazing price, the City got their lease money all back, and they continued to give staff the reward of that hope. If they chose not to do that, did they know how the blue in this town were going to feel when they had the opportunity to expand and have a decent, adequate shower and not have to share a shower with the inmates in the jail. He added they would be pulling the rug out from under them if the Council chose not to purchase, and then turn around and say they backed the blue.

Councilor Ceniga stated that she had been extremely torn on this whole topic and had listened to everybody's points, questions, and concerns. She continued that it was very apparent that they did not have a magic wand and were not going to get a new City Hall or a new Police Department. She did not like the idea of this building purchase because she agreed it was a band aid on a bigger problem and right now they did not have 5, 10, and 20 Year Plans. She had spent 7 years working in the Police Department and understood the frustrations more than anything, as she had dealt with them. She backed the blue 100%, would fight for our officers, and did not want to lose the money. She felt this was a small amount of money to spend right now to give our officers and our Police Department what was needed. She continued that prior to this meeting, she was 100% against doing this and had just went over to see the building, as she felt it was not fair for her to make a decision on something she had not seen. She had been invested in the City for a long time and had worked at the Police Department and Public Works and was now a City Councilor. She noted that she disagreed with some of the ways this had been gone about with receiving this money and did not think they should be soliciting for donations, although she did appreciate the people who had donated. She thought this was a small price to pay for what they were getting and for what they had invested, and she would support this tonight.

Councilor Wells thanked Councilor Ceniga for her comments and said she had spoken from the heart and as a person who had walked the walk and talked the talk. He appreciated that and thought everyone in the room appreciated that. They each would need to make the vote that they thought was right, and he was not going to make a vote that he felt he had been shamed into by some other Councilor. They needed to do what was right for the Police Department and for our officers, because they were going to do what was right for us. He had seconded the motion because he did not think anybody else was going to and he wanted the discussion to take place, plus he felt that the Council owed the citizens a vote on the record on this issue and not just have a motion die for lack of a second. He thanked everyone for their patience tonight and said he was going to make the decision that was right for him, the citizens, and the Police Department and would go along with Councilor Ceniga and vote in favor of this motion.

Councilor Thomas stated that she would like to do what was right for our City and had backed the blue for a long time because she had a lot of family in law enforcement. She added that some of the underhanded ways this was done made it very hard and she would vote no.

Mayor Ficek stated that this was something that affected our community and she wanted to open this up for citizen comments.

Ms. Cindy Montgomery, 1215 Oak Street, Junction City, asked what if the money Senator Manning offered did not come through and would the building purchase go through anyway. She noted that the citizens did not know the answer to this, as they did not get to participate. Her other question was there was a business in the front of that building and would they be able to keep their lease. Mayor Ficek responded that they would be able to keep their lease and there was money to purchase that building, even if the City did not get the money from Senator Manning. She added that after receiving the money from Senator Manning, the building would be paid for, with a little extra on the side.

Ms. Cathie Campbell, 554 Kalmia Street, Junction City, asked if the Council had reviewed where this money was coming from and what it was supposed to be used for. Mayor Ficek responded yes and it was very specific as to what it could be used for.

Ms. Campbell stated that her understanding was it was for COVID relief. Mayor Ficek responded no and that it was coming from the federal government due to COVID and was being divided at the state level.

Ms. Campbell noted that her understanding was it was supposed to be used for things like infrastructure. Administrator Knope responded that was a different pot of money and this one was from House Bill 5006. He continued that what Ms. Campbell was talking about was something the Council would be reviewing in the very near future and that was a completely different pot of money.

Ms. Campbell asked if this was ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) money. Administrator Knope responded that it was not.

Ms. Montgomery stated that she had received an email from Senator Manning that it was ARPA money. Administrator Knope responded that the 1.4 million that the City was going to get in two splits from the latest round of ARPA was a different pot of money than the funding for this property purchase. This property purchase money was from House Bill 5006 and he was not sure where the funding ultimately came from for that, but the bill appropriated the money for Senator Manning.

Mr. Jack Sumner, 1061 Quince Drive, Junction City, stated that he had been involved with the Police Department since about 2001 off and on as a SCOP (Senior Citizen on Patrol) to help in the City. During his time as a SCOP, they tried to be on patrol and not sitting in the back office. He continued that the City was looking to purchase something with money they did not have. He continued that Senator Manning had not returned any of his phone calls or emails on the money he had promised that night at a Council meeting. He asked if the money was really coming.

Mayor Ficek responded yes and the bill had been passed and was sitting on the Governor's desk waiting to be signed. Administrator Knope gave Mr. Sumner some information on the House Bill.

Mr. Sumner asked who would be in the extra room and stated that the police officers that were on duty tonight should be out patrolling the City to keep it safe. He did not understand the reasoning behind having more space to sit and do reports when they had spent about \$3,000 per police car to have computers so the officers could do their reports in their cars. He said that happened during his tenure on the Council and if that money was ill spent, that was another reason why they should not do something like this. He continued that listening to the comments of the Council President, they would probably have the votes to pass this here tonight. He stated that as a taxpayer, he did not agree with that and there was no free money coming to Junction City. That was his taxpayer dollars coming from a government that was supposed to take care of them from beginning of life until death and that was not the way the United States was supposed to be run. He disagreed with the proposal to purchase this property, because right now he knew of no money in the budget to buy it. He added that they were buying something they did not have money for and yet they had been promised something that with a stroke of a pen could go the other way.

Mayor Ficek thanked Mr. Sumner for his comments and called for the vote.

VOTE: The motion passed by a vote of 4 to 3, with Councilors Ceniga, Gambée, and Wells voting in favor, Councilors Thomas, Washburne, and Leach voting against, and Mayor Ficek voting in favor to break the tie.

6. Adjournment of Regular Session

Regular session was adjourned at 8:19 p.m.

WORK SESSION

1. Call to Order

Mayor Ficek called the Work Session to order at 8:25 p.m.

Councilor Ceniga asked if she could share something with Mr. Sumner, and Mayor Ficek said yes. Councilor Ceniga said she wanted to respond to a comment Mr. Sumner had made on doing reports in the police cars. She explained how the computers in the cars were used and how they assisted with report writing and other things, but they were not used to write narratives and the long report. Mr. Sumner responded that when he was on the Council, the selling point for these computers was they were desperately needed so the officers could do their reports in their cars when they were still out patrolling and protecting the citizens of Junction City, but he was being told a different story now.

Mayor Ficek stated that it was late, and she was sure the Police Chief would be glad to show Mr. Sumner the facility and answer any questions Mr. Sumner would have. Mr. Sumner asked why he would want to go see something that he could not even get the list of donations that Councilor Gambée had described. He noted that he had asked three times to see the list of donations from the Police Department but had been stonewalled each and every time and did not receive what he legally should have received. Administrator Knope responded that he respectfully disagreed, as he had fulfilled Mr. Sumner's requests to the

letter of the law each and every time. Administrator Knope added that by law, when a public records request was received, the City was not legally required to create a document to answer a records request and was only required to provide what was in writing. Mr. Sumner responded that Councilor Gambie quoted a list of items donated. Councilor Gambie responded that he did not have a list but had went to the room and had seen all the work that had been done.

Mayor Ficek thanked Mr. Sumner for coming to the meeting and voicing his concerns. Attorney Wolf left the meeting.

2. Council Goals Session

Mayor Ficek noted that it was late and asked how the Council wanted to proceed on the Work Session agenda items.

The Council consensus was to discuss the Council Goals Session and the 5, 10, and 20 Year Plans at a future meeting and to set a date for these agenda items at the August 10th Council meeting.

Councilor Washburne said he would like to see a copy of the contract after it was signed for this building purchase. Council Thomas stated that she would like to see the permits. Administrator Knope responded that would be easy to provide.

Mayor Ficek asked that a copy be given to each Council member. Administrator Knope responded that he would do that and put copies in their boxes.

Mayor Ficek encouraged the Council go to staff if they had any other questions, as they were always very helpful.

Discussion followed on the day of the week to do the Council Goals Session. It was noted that in the past, the Council had done this on a Saturday, as this worked better for those Council members who worked during the week.

Mayor Ficek encouraged the Council to think about what they would like to discuss at the Council Goals Session and for the discussion on the 5, 10, and 20 Year Plans.

3. 5, 10, 20 Year Plans for City

Would be discussed at a future meeting.

4. Adjournment of Work Session

The Work Session was adjourned at 8:33 p.m.

ATTEST:

APPROVED:

Kitty Vodrup, City Recorder

Beverly A. Ficek, Mayor