

The City Council for the City of Junction City, met in a work session at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, October 25, 2022 in the Council Chambers of City Hall, 680 Greenwood Street, Junction City, Oregon 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 Gambia, and Karen Leach; City Administrator, Jason Knope; City Attorney, Carrie Connelly; Police Chief, Bob Morris; Deputy Chief, Eric Markell; and City Recorder, Kitty Vodrup.

1. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

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

2. School Resource Officer

Administrator Knope reviewed that the Public Safety Committee had reviewed the School Resource Officer (SRO) position at their last meeting and asked that this information be presented to Council. Administrator Knope distributed and reviewed a chart that showed current police officer staffing and staffing with the SRO position. He noted that the original concept with the SRO was the City would be able to hire a 10th officer with the \$66,000 contribution from the School District for the SRO, and the current budget included this. He added that the SRO would be available during the day for calls, as needed.

Mayor Ficek asked for public comment.

Superintendent Troy Stoops, 325 Maple Street, Junction City, expressed appreciation to the Council for reconsidering. They were proposing a 173-day contract; typical year-round contract was 260 workdays, so this was not a complete year. He continued that the value of an officer in the schools included not only security but developing relationships with students, staff, and families for positive influences, prevention, and intervention. He shared other positive impacts of having an SRO and noted that Officer Deckard had a passion for the community and kids and a way of developing positive relationships with everyone she worked with.

Daniel Allread, 445 Timothy Street, Junction City, expressed appreciation to the Council for considering this and thought this was an opportunity to be proactive. He noted that the relationships the SRO built with students would be seen 10-fold in the community, and the officer could find out about things and intervene before they developed into crimes. He thought this was a win/win for the City and School District.

Kristina Holton, 986 Unity Drive, Junction City, expressed agreement with the previous comments and support for the SRO. She noted that there was a highly concentrated number of citizens in the four schools and serving the citizens was important to the Council. This would also be an efficient use of resources for an officer to serve in that concentrated fashion. From an equity perspective, not all students had opportunities to have a positive relationship with law enforcement, so the SRO would have a tremendous impact as the students grew into adults and into the future.

Kara McDaniel, 325 Yellowwood, Junction City, noted that when she was on the Council, they worked hard to get the SRO position originally. She hoped the Council could put any issues aside and really look at the value of the position and what it did for the kids in the School District.

Councilor Wells thanked everyone for their comments and noted that he strongly supported the SRO concept. He expressed that the department could be challenged to provide coverage for the community 7 days a week/24 hours a day with the current staffing levels, and he expanded on that. He asked for a definition of an emergency as outlined in the SRO contract, "...the City reserves the right to assign that officer to other police duties regardless of school sessions when an emergency exists."

Deputy Chief Markell responded that the current day shift included a juvenile officer, who was handling all the calls to the schools and that officer would just have a title shift to SRO. He added that an emergency was any situation that needed to be addressed right away, such as an officer needing back up or a major incident that needed multiple officers. He added that this was how the SRO functioned in the past, and when the SRO was done providing back up, they returned to the school.

Councilor Leach stated that none of the Councilors had indicated in any way that they were not in support of an SRO and they had just tabled discussion until after the three new officers were trained. Their main concern was providing public safety for the people in the City and they were having a hard time doing that with the current staffing.

Councilor Gambée expressed support for hiring the SRO now and noted that the Council represented the citizens, of which a large concentrated portion was in the school district. An officer was already dedicated to serving at the schools, and the School District had generously offered to pay \$66,000 so that the City could hire a 10th officer, which the City needed.

Councilor Thomas noted that the cities of Corvallis and Gresham had to pull SRO positions out of their schools, because they were not getting enough people to apply for positions and needed boots on the ground.

Councilor Washburne stated that no one on the Council was against the SRO, and he asked if the School District had a backup plan in case this did not go through. Superintendent Stoops responded that they did, but they preferred to partner with the City.

Councilor Ceniga noted that the Council had tabled this discussion because of current coverage concerns but were all in support of having an SRO in the schools and having continued discussions with the School District to come up with a plan and move forward.

Mayor Ficek noted that the Council had not voted on this but had a consensus to table and talk about this again, which was what they were doing tonight. She continued that the Council did not do the day to day running of the City but that was staff's job, and the City Administrator and Police Chief said that the City could have an SRO and still protect the City.

Mayor Ficek asked how many students and staff were in the school district. Superintendent Stoops responded there were 1700 students and 240 staff.

Councilor Gambée said that the Council wanted more police coverage to protect the citizens and entering into the SRO contract would allow the City to hire a 10th officer. He noted that if they turned down the contract, they would not be able to hire the 10th officer, which would not help the citizens in town or the large percentage of citizens in the schools. He added that this was already in the current budget which had been approved by the Council.

In response to what was included in the current budget, Administrator Knope stated that the total expense for a typical officer was \$120,000 to \$130,000. In preparing the budget this year, they added a 10th officer position and put in the Police funding bucket the \$66,000 that they anticipated receiving from the School District and funding for the City to pay the rest of the 10th officer position. He added that without the SRO contract, they could not hire the 10th officer, as they did not have the funding. Council adopted this budget, and Administrator Knope stated at that time that he would bring the SRO back before Council to discuss before doing anything.

Councilor Gambée stated that if the Council turned down the SRO and the School District exercised their plan B, it could be years and years before the City would be able to fund a 10th officer. He added that this was an opportunity for the City to fund that 10th position where the School District was offering to fund more than 50% of the position for less than 50% of the time which was a very fair offer.

Councilor Ceniga explained the process and length of time for the three new officers to go through the academy and be fully trained. She asked what would happen if they approved the SRO but lost an officer.

Councilor Gambée responded that they would have funding to hire a new person. He added that he and Councilor Ceniga had talked about hiring a lateral, who would already be fully trained.

Chief Morris responded that if something happened operationally, they would renegotiate with the School District if needed.

Councilor Gambée added that in the meantime they could hire the 10th officer, which would give them additional back up and they could not do that without this contract.

Councilor Thomas asked if the City would have policies in place, in response to Senate Bill 386. Administrator Knope responded yes.

Daniel Allread added the point that this contract would add more capacity to the City's police force, and when the School District was not in session during the summer, winter and spring breaks, and other, that officer would not be allocated to the schools and would allow the City to influx the City's force with another officer. He asked that the Council please keep their minds open and look at the possibilities that this presented.

Councilor Gambia asked about having a condition that a lateral would be hired when the SRO contract was approved.

Administrator Knope responded that it was always nice to hire laterals and no matter what happened, staff would be discussing incentives for hiring officers to the Public Safety Committee. He added that he would not recommend putting a condition to hire a lateral in the contract.

Attorney Connelly noted that the SRO Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) was between the two government entities and the Council would just be approving the terms of the agreement. A separate message could be that staff understood that the Council's strong preference was to immediately hire a lateral, understanding of course that the Council did not hire and that was the job of the City Administrator. She added that she would not want the motion to approve the contract to include a condition to hire a lateral, as that would undermine the City's performance in that IGA.

Councilor Wells asked for confirmation that the City would have the administrative policies in place for the SRO if the Council approved this contract. Administrator Knope responded yes.

Brenda Gambia, 93998 Prairie Road, Junction City, stated that her biggest concern was the safety of her children at school, and she encouraged the Council not to put this decision off, but to move forward and approve the contract to keep their kids safe.

Superintendent Stoops encouraged the Council to try and not be officers but to trust the Chief, who was the expert on policing and make a decision based on his recommendation.

Councilor Gambia noted that he hoped two other Councilors would join him in representing the majority of people in town who clearly wanted 10 officers and direct staff to bring the contract back.

Kara McDaniel asked if the ultimate goal for the City Council was to hire a 10th officer for the City of Junction City. She asked if the 10th police officer was approved by the 14 members of the Budget Committee when they worked on this in April and May and then the budget was approved in June. She asked if they would be able to hire the 10th officer without the contract.

Administrator Knope responded that he could not answer the first question and that would be for the Council to answer what their goal was, but staff's intent was to add a 10th officer to offset the SRO and having more officers was always better than having less. He continued that it was clearly in the budget and the Budget Committee discussed it and this was part of the approved budget. He added that without the SRO contract and the \$66,000 from the School District, there would not be funding in the budget for the 10th officer.

Mayor Ficek asked if there was a consensus of interest from the Council to direct staff to bring the contract back to a regular meeting. Councilors Thomas, Washburne, and Leach said no, and Councilors Ceniga, Gambia, and Wells said yes. Mayor Ficek said yes, for a Council majority consensus in favor.

Mayor Ficek called for a break at 8:07 p.m. Attorney Connelly, Chief Morris, and Deputy Markell left the meeting. The Work Session resumed at 8:15 p.m.

3. Council Goals Update

Administrator Knope reviewed that the Public Safety Committee had completed Council Goal PS-09 New Hire Processing, and he presented a draft policy which included that new Police Department personnel would be introduced at a Council meeting and would have the option of being sworn in at that meeting.

Councilor Wells noted that the Public Safety Committee had reviewed the policy and were in favor.

Mayor Ficek stated that she would like all new hires in the City to be introduced at Council meetings. Administrator Knope responded that the Administrative policies for other departments to introduce new staff would be worked on and come back to Council.

Councilor Thomas asked if there was a policy about officers living within a certain distance from the City. Administrator Knope responded that there was no policy but that was on the list of things to discuss at the Public Safety Committee.

4. Councilor Goals Follow-up

Administrator Knope asked for clarification on two Council goals:

CC-08 Work Towards Decarbonization. Council discussion included:

- Having more trees in the City.
- Looking at the criteria to be a Tree City USA.
- Looking at the current City Code to see what the tree and shrub requirements were, before adding additional tree requirements.
- Breaking this large topic into areas and tackling a few a year.
- Asking citizens what they would like the City to do.
- Finding out what other cities were doing and what their goals were.

CC-09 Establish a metric to show how much the City has accomplished in a year.

Council discussion included:

- Having each department list their goals and then their accomplishments and report back on those in some fashion.
- Tying in goals/accomplishments in the budget document.
- Preparing a quarterly community newsletter, similar to what Public Works put out on upcoming departmental projects and what they accomplished. Could mail and have in a digital format. Could add things like Community Services events, job announcements. This would be good information, provide accountability on what was being accomplished, and show the taxpayers where their dollars were going on projects.

5. Update on New City Hall

Administrator Knope reviewed that a few contractors had been found to do the foundation work for the new building, and staff was putting plans together to finalize the permit. No estimated time, at this point.

6. Updated on the Community Center Project - \$500,000

Administrator Knope reviewed that staff was still working with legal counsel on a Request for Proposal (RFP), to get that project moving forward. The RFP was for a consultant who would help with design and make sure the City met the public participation process that the grant required. Phase I would finish projects that had been started before and Phase II would include the public participation and possibly some design, depending on how far the dollars went.

7. Update on New Police Department Building

Administrator Knope reviewed that two of three bids were received to do work on the front of the new Police Department building, which included removing windows and creating ADA access. The bids were very high, and staff was waiting for the third bid. Staff would be meeting this week with an engineer/architect on coming up with better ideas. Patrol had moved into the back of this building and it was planned that dispatch would move to the front.

Administrator Knope continued that a separate project was working on the south sheet rock wall, and the same engineer/architect would be helping with ideas to address that.

In response to a question on using the front part of that building for a business incubator, Administrator Knope stated that the police grant was used to purchase the building and therefore the building must be used for police purposes. If the Council wanted to use the front of that building for another purpose, they would need to buy that part of the building with General Fund dollars.

Mayor Ficek gave the Committee Chairs some homework, to bring back the following feedback on their Committees to the December 13th Council meeting:

- Do you feel like your Committee accomplished its mission statement?
- Did you feel like you accomplished all that you wanted to do?
- How do you think the Committee worked?
- Can you think of any way to improve or change the Committee that the Council as a whole could look at?

8. Adjournment

As there was no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:09 p.m.

ATTEST:

APPROVED:

Kitty Vodrup, City Recorder

Beverly A. Ficek, Mayor