

City Manager's Update — August 28, 2020

Prepared for Mayor and Councilors. Please contact Steve Powers, City Manager, for additional information.

At Your Service

A resident wanted the City to know of a good deed a City employee did,

At about 0848 this morning a car had stalled too close to the railroad tracks. The City employee ran over and pushed the car uphill out of the way of the railroad tracks.

Community Development

The Blight to Bright program is doing great work on stubborn blight cases. Three houses will be moving from blight to removal or restoration.

The number of residential permits issued in July 2020 was 50, the highest number in any July since 2006.

For July 2019 through June 2020, the total number of permits issued was the highest of any July-June period since 2011.

Council

New councilor orientation sessions have begun. There will be two or three sessions a month from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Thursdays via Zoom. The topics and materials are organized around the six result areas in the Strategic Plan. While intended and designed for new councilors, and focused on basic, introductory information regarding services and departments, current councilors may find the sessions of interest.

COVID

The state is distributing \$200 million to cities and counties of the \$1.38 billion that it received in federal Coronavirus Relief Funds (CRF). A total of \$46.1 million was distributed to reimburse cities and counties for eligible expenses in round 1. Salem received \$2.3 million. The balance of \$153.9M will be distributed by the end of calendar year 2020. There are seven opportunities for cities to request reimbursement for eligible expenses. The City's most recent reimbursement request was \$369,000.

The City Community Connection e-newsletter and City webpage both have banners that connect readers with COVID information. The City home page has a link to a COVID page highlighting the importance of face coverings. This separate page on the City's website provides a link to Oregon OSHA should someone want to make a complaint. The intention is to help residents who may be unclear about the City's enforcement role and where they can report concerns.

City staff will be providing reminders and masks, if needed, to the public with whom they interact. Police officers will continue to educate and inform, refer to the appropriate state agency (In addition to OSHA, state regulatory agencies have enforcement power over some types of businesses and services) if the officer believes a situation is in violation of Governor Brown's executive orders, or enforce if the severity of circumstances justify enforcement.

Downtown

To incent redevelopment of vacant buildings, the Downtown Advisory Board is considering recommending changes to the Capital Improvement Grant Program. Currently, it would be difficult for an existing large building that wasn't historic or did not have housing in its redevelopment to qualify for a grant exception. One of the recommended changes is to allow exceptions for adaptive reuse of existing building when eligible project costs exceed \$3M

The City has awarded a construction contract to Aaken Corporation Electrical Contractors to complete the State Street Two-Way Conversion project from the intersection of Liberty Street NE to Church Street NE. The improvements include modifications to the traffic signals at the High Street/State Street and the Liberty Street/State Street intersections, replacement of street striping, and all necessary signage. Construction will start the first week of September on the underground portions of work in preparation for new pole installation. There may be traffic lane closures and temporary parking reductions Monday through Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The project is scheduled to be completed by the end of October.

Library

The library project oversight committee will be considering parking technology changes within the retrofit project that could facilitate changes to library parking. Any recommendation from the committee will be included in a report to council. The final concrete pours for the shear walls are complete. The shear walls are a major milestone for the project. The structural concrete crews have moved on to the parking structure. Preparations are underway to begin the build-back work to restore the library interior. Work is underway to replace the aging civic center transformer with new transformers for both the library and city hall. The project remains on schedule and on budget! Discussions are underway with the Library Foundation regarding a funding partnership for the main entry improvements. Initial reaction is positive but there are many details remaining to work out.

Management

Among the police chief's many responsibilities is oversight of the City's 9-1-1 center, the Willamette Valley Communications Center. WVCC serves more than 372,000 people in three counties. To ensure Salem's next police chief can focus on continuing the excellence of the Salem Police Department and have his or her time available for the multitude of complex policing issues facing Salem, I have assigned WVCC oversight to Fire Chief Mike Niblock. The change will be effective when Chief Moore retires. Chief Niblock has been a participating

member of the WVCC advisory board and budget committee for years and is well versed on WVCC operations. I know he will provide excellent leadership to WVCC.

Police

Police chief applications close September 7. Virtual interview panels, councilor engagement, and community opportunity are planned for early to mid- October. Chief Moore’s planned retirement date is November 30. To provide a variety of perspectives for my consideration in the selection of the chief, there will be three interview panels, community panel, law enforcement panel, and in internal City panel. The process will be in two rounds, the first round will be a group that the consultant best meets the position profile. The second round will be the finalists from the first round.

The City received nine proposals for the police performance audit. The audit will be conducted by an independent, professional firm with expertise in policing. The successful responder will be chosen based on scores against pre-established criteria from a selection committee, as required by City purchasing policy.

To support the audit and the desired engagement within our community, staff have assembled an advisory group from the community with expertise in the areas of focus in the audit or with performance auditing. The advisory group, or steering committee, will be chaired by Jodi Sherwood, chair of the City’s Community Police Review Board. A staff group will also be available to ensure quick turnaround for any information requests

Audit Timeline (pending contractor selection)

September 14, 2020	Notice to Proceed
Week of September 21, 2020	Kick Off Meeting with Advisory Group/steering committee
September 28, 2020	Progress Report to Council
By December 14, 2020	Preliminary Findings to Council, may influence year 1 funding requests
February 2021	Findings and Recommendations to community, groups for input.
March 2021	Present final recommendations

Policy Agenda

Work on a climate action plan is beginning. The consultant’s work will be guided by a task force. The mayor has asked Councilor Nordyke and incoming Councilor Gonzalez to serve. The task force will be approximately 40 people, representing a broad range of the community. The broad sector categories are:

- Building and Energy

- Land Use and Urban Form
- Transportation
- Consumption and Materials Management
- Natural Systems
- Public Health and Safety
- Equity and Diversity

Invitations will be sent out in early September. The task force will begin meeting in November and will be in place through next year.

DHM will be conducting the City’s resident satisfaction survey. DHM is planning on conducting the survey in September to get it out in advance of election fatigue. A report (at least a draft) will be available to mayor and councilors by the end of September. Survey results will be included in the City’s annual community report, which comes out in October.

There are many opportunities for residents to engage on issues important to the community. The table below provides a summary.

Safe Community	Welcoming and Livable Community	Natural Environment Stewardship	Safe, Reliable and Efficient Infrastructure	Strong and Diverse Economy	Good Governance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Policing Performance Audit <i>Oct 20 – Mar 21</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our Salem (comprehensive plan update) <i>ongoing – Dec 21</i> • Parks master planning <i>ongoing, multiple parks</i> • Library Strategic Plan <i>Fall 20 – Summer 21</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate Action Plan <i>Oct 20 – Dec 21</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital Improvement Program <i>annual update</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic Strategy (update) <i>Fall 20 – Spring 21</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Plan (update) <i>Ongoing – Feb 21</i> • Community Satisfaction Survey <i>annual fall update</i> • City Council Policy Agenda <i>annual winter update</i> • Budget

Projects

We are starting the design of the new public works building. As with the police station and library, a council oversight committee will be in place. The Mayor, Councilor Hoy, and Councilor Andersen will be serving.

Sheltering

Pandemic conditions will lessen capacity at participating churches in the warming center network, given the age demographic of typical volunteers being more susceptible for worse

health outcomes with COVID and the need for increased physical distancing. The need is for more space and more volunteers. Staff will have an update for council at an upcoming meeting.

Solid Waste

Marion County has extended its contract with Covanta until June 30, 2021. It was previously set to expire in September 2020. Covanta is not pursuing legislation for renewable energy credits. The Marion County Solid Waste Management Advisory Council (SWMAC) is recommending to the Marion County Board of Commissioners that Ryan Zink be appointed to the SWMAC. Ryan is the City’s franchise administrator and has been attending SWMAC meetings.

Upcoming Issues

The Oregon Health Authority has rated a private water system in Marion County as the top project for state funding assistance. The Sleepy Hollow Water System is a small community water system with high arsenic levels. The OHA will assist Sleepy Hollow in consolidating with the City and abandoning the system’s domestic well. Residents currently being served by Sleepy Hollow will become residential customers of the City. Salem will replace all PCV pipe with ductile iron pipe, install a water meter for each connection, and replace connections when needed. Five fire hydrants will be installed throughout the neighborhood to comply with fire codes. Sleepy Hollow abuts Ward 6.

A language-access information report will be on council’s September 14 agenda.

Water/Wastewater

State Treasurer Tobias Read is proceeding with including the City’s \$20 million in an upcoming state bond. Once Governor Brown signs the bill, the City will enter into a pre-work authorization agreement with Business Oregon to allow us to fund design work prior to the sale of the bond. Funds are expected to be available to us on or about March 1, 2021.

As is customary, a postcard will be sent to utility customers with the proposed water, wastewater, and stormwater rate increases prior to the public hearing October 12.

Thanks for reading,
Steve