

## CITY MANAGER'S UPDATE—July 3, 2019

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

### **At Your Service!**

At the 2019 Public Works Day, people loved the water trailer and happily accepted water bottles full of Salem water with no complaints or comments. No reports of water questions, comments or complaints at Public Works Day. Many smiling faces throughout the event!

From a grateful resident regarding Mitch Ficek, Public Works Wastewater

*Thank you for your prompt response. I am so incredibly impressed by how quickly someone came out to our house to address our concern! Mitch must have shown up at our door less than an hour after I sent in my request. He was polite, professional and clearly explained what he observed as he had already checked the main line. He had not found any blockages, he listened attentively to our description of the situation. He suggested the problem was probably under our house after asking a few questions, but offered to schedule a camera to be used to do a more thorough investigation in case there was something he wasn't able to see. He did inform us that it probably couldn't happen today, but this was fine as we were not actively experiencing a backup at that time. I feel proud to live in a city with such courteous and attentive public servants. Thanks to you, Mitch, and everyone in your office for all you do. Have a wonderful day!*

### **Emergency Preparedness**

PGE's wildfire mitigation and response plan includes laying the groundwork for longer-term changes to help protect communities from wildfire threats. PGE's initial fire risk modeling assessment shows much of the service area is relatively low risk, including Salem. PGE will keep in close touch with local emergency managers and take measures needed to reduce fire risk from electrical transmission and distribution system during critical periods in the fire season.

### **Police Station**

The police station will need additional Urban Renewal funding to complete the project described to voters. The booming construction market continues to increase costs faster than predicted. Immediate and strategic decisions have lowered the preliminary total cost and reduced the size of the building. Urban Renewal is the best choice to close the remaining gap. Without the funding, further and immediate cuts to the project will be needed. The council police station committee reviewed my recommendation for the need for additional funding and concurs with

the use of Urban Renewal funds. The recommendation will be coming to City Council on July 8.

As the structural concrete work nears completion, preparation and coordination is underway to begin work on the building exterior envelope.

## ***Management***

At an upcoming council meeting there will be a recommendation to convert some part-time seasonal positions to part time or full time. Council will be asked to increase the number of positions. The change is required as part of the City's compliance with a state pay equity law. The law requires positions doing the same jobs and doing the same work be compensated equitably. Impacts vary across the departments. Implementation must follow collective bargaining agreements.

The City's telephone language interpretation company changed July 1. Linguistica International offers 350+ different languages and dialects. For Salem, there are 21 languages, with the most common being Spanish with a Mexico dialect, Russian, and Somali. The number of minutes from 2018 was 13,094, with 9,200 of the minutes being 9-1-1 calls needing translation. The process works the same as before – staff call the number provided, share a billing code and city employee ID number, and then the staff person and caller are connected with an interpreter.

## ***Fireworks Expectations***

The City has been sending out fireworks safety messages highlighting awareness of laws governing fireworks such as use only legal fireworks where it is legal to do so. Fireworks are prohibited in city and state Parks. Fireworks are approved for sale in Oregon each year from June 23 through July 6. State-legal fireworks can be purchased from licensed retailers in Salem during this time period. Each year, Salem Police and Fire responds to many fireworks-related incidents. Staffing and the volume of calls and reports prevent a response to every concern.

## ***Drinking Water***

Algae is in the Big Cliff reservoir below the Detroit reservoir; the creeks are showing less algae than in May and early June. Cyanotoxins have been above advisory levels at the intake to the water treatment plant. Water leaving the plant is free of cyanotoxins. The plant is doing its job!

June has been the middle of the harmful algal bloom season. Models suggest that algae blooms are still likely, and that toxins are a possibility.

City and Marion County met with the Oregon Restaurant Association regarding drinking water. The restaurants were very pleased with the City's treatment and communications work.

## ***Community***

City locations for Make Music Day were Peace Plaza, the city lot at State and High and the alley adjacent, the alley between Chemeketa and Court Street, the alley between Court and State Street, the alley between State and Ferry Street, and Marion Square Park.

ENLACE and the City are planning a cultural identity event at the civic center for the evening of September 20. ENLACE is a cross-culture community development organization. The event will strengthen the partnership of ENLACE and the City of Salem in community development and involvement work. One goal of the event will be to help strengthen the connection between the Latino community and City departments. Music, dances, potluck, recognitions, raffles and the participation of councilors, mayor, neighborhood associations, and city departments are part of the early planning.

## ***Council Follow-up***

For the Riverfront Park north bathrooms, staff is pursuing a grant. If successful, the bathrooms would be constructed in 2021.

The City has closed on the 17.5 acre Rees Hill park property in south Salem.

The Mill Creek Corporate Center wetlands project has been awarded to K&E Excavating. There were three bidders. The engineer's estimate for the work was \$4,580,049; K&E's bid was \$3,353,077. Construction will begin in early July.

## ***Economic Development***

With industrial space remaining at a premium along the I-5 corridor, SEDCOR continues to receive interest in the Mill Creek Corporate Center. PacTrust is on target to close on a site at Mill Creek July 31 and construct a north/south interior street this year. SEDCOR arranged a meeting between representatives of DAS, ODOT, Business Oregon and the City to discuss sources of funding for the construction of the street. Both the state Immediate Opportunity Fund and the state Special Public Works Fund were identified as possibilities, as the project will result in increased readiness of industrial sites for development and job creation. PacTrust is working with the City on an appropriate development condition for the Kuebler Boulevard SE full road improvement.

Capstone Partners has withdrawn its interest in a 20 acre site at Mill Creek. DAS will be issuing a request for proposals for a master developer RFP later this summer.

A new Mill Creek Corporate Center sign will be designed, constructed and installed at the corner of Aumsville Highway and Cordon Road. The previous sign had been knocked down and destroyed in a windstorm.

Correction from a previous update report. Upon further legal review, the Koz grant exception cannot be decided by the executive director. A recommendation to approve the exception will be brought to a future urban renewal agency meeting.

There have been questions regarding the federal Opportunity Zone program. Three of the areas nominated by the City to the governor's office were Lancaster, State Street, and North Waterfront. The areas were requested because of the absence of other tools. Business Oregon and the governor's office chose areas that could leverage existing tools and generate more rapid, catalytic investment and change.

## ***Partnerships***

The Salem Parks Foundation has contributed \$42,000 for the McKay Park playground. Construction will begin the week of July 15, 2019 and is scheduled to be completed in September 2019. The Foundation's neighborhood park grant recipients, totaling \$9,600, are CANDO, Morningside, Grant, NESCA, North Lancaster, and SESNA for parks in those neighborhoods.

## ***State***

I attended State Representative Alonso Leon's town hall meeting in Woodburn. I updated the attendees, including a few Salem residents, on North Gateway Urban Renewal/Portland Road investments and improvements, World Beat, Make Music Day, Our Salem, drinking water, and PERS.

Included in the bills passed this weekend were \$20 million for Salem drinking water improvements, \$1 million for the Gerry Frank/Rotary amphitheater, and \$100,000 for the peace mosaic. Staff will be working with the state and organizations, as necessary, to ensure the receipt and disbursement of the funding as the legislature intended.

## ***Federal***

Senator Merkley's office has announced the City has been awarded an Airport Improvement Program (AIP) grant of \$1.2 million. The funds will be used to rehabilitate the commercial terminal parking ramp. The project will include milling off the old, seriously deteriorated pavement and repaving the entire ramp. The four-acre ramp provides parking space for commercial, charter, cargo and other aircraft.

## ***Upcoming Issues***

Tentative agenda items and council meeting dates:

Library Collection Development Report July 8

Police Station guaranteed maximum price July 8

Revenue action item and follow-up to work session July 8

Library temporary relocation July 22

### ***Natural Environment Stewardship***

At the July 8 council meeting there will be a recommendation to shift the City's current expenditure on green energy to a new PGE program that will improve the City's carbon footprint. The program applies to City operations and not the Salem community. The premium cost to use green or clean energy will be less than half the cost (\$1.00/MWh) of the current Clean Wind program (\$3.00/MWh). The highest level of participation will result in an increased electricity cost of approximately \$43,000/year. The increase to the General Fund would be less than \$8,000 annually. The primary payer of the increase would be the Utility Fund.

### ***Safe, Reliable, and Efficient Infrastructure***

While conducting a periodic audit of the utility billing system, staff found that 288 multi-family accounts were being under-billed for streetlights. The affected account holders have been notified that the correct amount will be billed effective July 1, 2019.

Thanks for reading,  
Steve