

City Manager's Update — November 4, 2020

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

At Your Service

Planning continues for the public service center on the main floor of the civic center. The move of the police department provides an opportunity for a convenient location for high-volume services and customer information/wayfinding.

Jobs Well Done

Despite the pandemic, work continues to bring long-time projects to fruition. A few examples:

- A short-term lease at the UGM/Saffron block to meet Library needs as they go through their renovation and as we prepare for a new future on that property.
- The property acquisition and lease of the ARCHES building to help bring long-term support for homeless services in our community.
- The lease of the Portland Road property to help meet emergency shelter needs.
- Updating our economic development strategy to be more reflective of the diversity in our community and to help guide us over the next few years of pandemic recovery.
- Purchase and sale agreements at the Salem Business Center that are the result of the policy leadership of City Council and all the time and effort of Urban Development, Community Development, City Attorney, and Public Works working with businesses, subdividing the property, and providing infrastructure.
- Updating the Convention Center Management Agreement, no easy task with the impacts of COVID.

Council Follow-up

The diversity and equity work sessions with council and department directors are scheduled for December 2 and December 9. Dr. James Lake will be the facilitator.

Following City Council's October 26 discussion of a mobile crisis intervention program, staff will work with the United Way on the United Way's invitation to area organizations to explore what funding partnerships would be available in Salem.

COVID

On the November 9 council agenda is a recommendation to provide \$200,000 city-wide for restaurants and businesses that need heated, covered outdoor space for dining areas or break rooms. The program would reimburse expenses, \$3,000 to \$5,000 for small businesses and \$10,000 for large businesses.

In the same budget amendment is \$1.2 million for COVID shelter mitigation and assistance. The source of the funding for the \$1.4M will be the General Fund balance as we ended FY 2020 better than forecast. The addition of CARES funding in this fiscal year certainly made the recommendation decision easier. Total CARES grant funding received or pending is \$7,786,950.

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has increased the needs for additional shelter support for Salem residents.

Parks Mitigation—\$180,900

- \$23,000—Waterline installation for additional potable water.
- \$67,000—Additional equipment purchases to maintain inaccessible areas.
- \$84,000—Additional portable restrooms and handwashing stations.
- \$6,300—Additional garbage services.

Vehicle Camping—\$86,540

Council directed the creation of a pilot vehicle camping program. The program *Safe Park* was implemented in July in partnership with the Salem Leadership Foundation. The additional funding will continue and expand the program through June 2021. The current program serves 64 vehicles and this funding would increase the total to 104 vehicles and 208 persons.

Additional Shelters—\$233,780

The City and non-profit organizations continue to seek additional shelter locations. The funding will only be used if a location and operator can be secured.

Cash for Trash—\$50,000

This pilot program sought to provide incentive and mechanism for keeping personal camp areas clean. Undeveloped park parcels provide for a physically distant space for camping. Waste management is an important aspect of ensuring the health and sanitation of the camping areas. Nonprofit providers donate outreach time to conduct the program, and in many cases supplement the number of incentives provided by the City. Although nicknamed “Cash for Trash,” a gift card is provided rather than cash. This additional funding continues the program through June 2021.

Salem Warming Network—\$30,000

Additional site locations are currently being sought to expand the reach of this program. If successful, new partners will receive site stipends to assist with increased costs at the locations, in alignment with what current partners receive. In addition, \$25,000 is needed for site improvements for a warming shelter on Portland Road NE.

Towing—\$14,000

The city seeks to ensure the Cascades and Wallace developed park area and parking lots are available for all park users. Regular enforcement of code related to vehicles is underway. The City identifies inoperable vehicles used as a primary residence and needs funding for towing fees to an approved camping location.

Supplies—\$3,000

Stock of weather-proof duct tape, sleeping bags, tents and other supplies to augment resources with the Salem Housing Authority navigator position.

Opportunity Funds—\$120,000

This is an emerging area of community priority. Innovation will be important and the ability to act nimbly will be needed. These opportunity funds are sought to address any additional issues or opportunities related to homelessness for the current fiscal year.

We are seeing increased usage of the emergency assistance programs. There will be continued outreach through ads and utility bill inserts.

Fires

Governor Kate Brown has extended the state of emergency for fire-impacted counties to support ongoing wildfire emergency response and recovery efforts. Governor Brown's emergency declaration provides a basis for the ongoing operation of the state's Emergency Coordination Center, rule suspensions as needed to support wildfire recovery, and the continued operation of the Governor's Disaster Cabinet and Wildfire Economic Recovery Council. In addition, it provides authorities for the Oregon Department of Transportation to engage in the contracting it will need to do for the debris cleanup process, including removal of hazard trees, ash, and structural debris. The state of emergency will remain in effect until the Governor determines that state agencies can continue supporting recovery efforts without the need for emergency authorities to overcome barriers to a quick and efficient statewide recovery.

Fiscal Health

The General Fund ended fiscal year 2020 (June 30, 2020) with an \$13.5M improvement from the budget. The FY 2020 budget planned a draw of \$10.9M from fund balance. Instead, we added \$2.6M to fund balance. The biggest pieces were the unbudgeted operations fee at \$3.5M and unbudgeted CARES grant receipts from rounds one and two of \$3.0M. The remaining \$7.0M was a combination of increased revenue and decreased expenditures.

Housing and Shelter

Thanks to the Salem Housing Authority staff, HRAP will be receiving \$366,000 from Willamette Valley Community Health, our regions community care organization.

On the November 9 council agenda will be a resolution restating the emergency declaration relating to unsheltered residents that was originally adopted on January 21, 2020 and extended through January 12, 2021. The shelter at Portland Road obtained approval through the state emergency legislation. That legislation has now expired. City staff are working with community partners on other potential shelter locations. Also, in years past when warming centers prepared to open, they would go through a process with the City to ensure life and safety issues were addressed. In many cases the use was not permitted in the particular zone, leaving

the operator and the City potentially vulnerable to challenge. To address this issue as well as to address the more recent emergency need for shelter space due to COVID, increased homelessness, and the Santiam fires, this resolution extends the previous state of emergency through October 2021, and allows the City Manager to suspend land use regulations for warming centers and for emergency shelters. Each of those uses are defined in the resolution. The uses would still have to comply with building and fire codes, but the land use restrictions would be suspended. In addition, the land use restrictions cannot be suspended for property in single family residential zones. Through the emergency declaration, City Council would be giving the City Manager broad discretion to adopt an emergency order to implement the declaration.

The legislature's Emergency Board has allocated \$30M to the Oregon Community Foundation for grants to local community organizations to support shelter services through the acquisition, retrofitting, and potential operation of hotel and motel properties in wildfire-affected areas. The Oregon Community Foundation plans on having properties identified by the end of November and acquired and operational within 30-75 days. Priority populations to be served include:

- Veterans
- People with disabilities
- Families
- Communities of color
- LGBTQ+ community
- People with persistent mental illness
- People experiencing chronic homelessness
- People vulnerable to COVID or diagnosed with COVID

The 30 million in grant funding is projected to support the acquisition of nine to twelve facilities, totaling approximately 500 units of shelter. Up to \$5 million of this funding can support operation of facilities. The eligible regions are Clackamas, Jackson, Lane, Lincoln, and Marion. Eligible entities to receive the OCF grants are cities, counties, tribal communities, nonprofit organizations, or a collaborative of those entities.

Partnerships

The City, as are many communities, is having a significant challenge related to abandoned RVs. The RVs are not cost effective for tow companies to take. I have submitted a letter of support to Oregon Correctional Enterprises (OCE) for developing a new recycling center to address the growing concern over abandoned motor homes and other recreational vehicles. The recycling center would provide meaningful work opportunities for adults in custody. OCE recognizes abandoned RVs are problems for property owners and overwhelming local government with the high cost of removal and disposal. OCE will be developing a proposal for legislative funding consideration.

Police

The community policing performance audit is underway. The oversight committee has met and will be meeting again on November 5. The consultant will be scheduling interviews with councilors and other stakeholders.

A school resource officer contract has not been signed for this school year. The Salem Keizer School District (SKSD) is not providing in-class instruction due to COVID. The school resource officers have been reassigned by Chief Moore to other community needs. Not having a contract with SKSD results in a revenue loss to the City of \$622,000.

Police Station

The station will be open for the public to access Police services on Monday, November 9! The building is substantially complete and punch list inspections have been ongoing this week. Corrections will be made over the next month with priority given to areas that will be moved into and operating first. Move-in began on Monday, November 2nd with Evidence, Records and other first floor areas. Next week (Nov. 9-13), Administration will begin to move. They will be followed by Patrol moving into the 2nd floor starting on Nov. 16. Moving activities are scheduled to be completed by the end of November.

Final corrections are being made to the traffic signals with two-way traffic on Division and Liberty Streets and are planned to open on Thursday, Nov. 5.

We've completed an update of the project cash flow projection with analysis of remaining contingency and all cost categories where there are savings or overruns. Based on a conservative worst-case scenario including outstanding change orders, there is a projected savings of between \$600,000 to \$1,000,000. The ballot measure allows the savings to be used to renovate space at the civic center.

Upcoming Issues

As directed by City Council, staff are completing cost estimates for a trail connection between the Candalaria and Fairmount neighborhoods. A trail would impact Pioneer and City View cemeteries. Staff have met with representatives of Friends of Pioneer Cemetery and will be meeting with City View Cemetery and Pioneer Village LLC. In December, staff will be submitting to City Council a report summarizing the cost information and meetings with impacted property owners. No City Council direction or action would be requested or expected in December. The report would then be scheduled for City Council consideration at the first Council meeting in January. This will provide members of the community plenty of time to review the report and submit comments well in advance of City Council consideration.

Thanks for reading,
Steve