

City Council Minutes
March 28, 2016

Mayor Thayer called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM. Councilors Present: Paul Canter, Harry Myers, Donna Dillard, Lonnie Koroush, Ron Thexton and Cindy Canter. Staff present included Chief Operating Officer Jim Minard and Public Works Superintendent Dave Claborn.

CITIZEN COMMENTS:

Bobby Eitners expressed her concern about the crosswalk at the southern end of the high school, without the rapid flashing beacons as the one to the north. She felt it created a safety concern with the different standards.

Gary Lech of Turner Road, Sally Smith of Turner Road, Beverly Smith of Smitty's Place, Evelyn Lee of Alpine Road, Lynn Cook of Kyle Road, Dennis Albert of Carson Road; and Roger Irvin spoke in opposition to the County turning over the Bailey Branch railroad right-of-way to the City, particularly for commercial development. Each of them expressed opposition to a commercial operation, such as a possible Dollar General store, as being incompatible with the Monroe Library, particularly if and when it was vacated in a few years, was too far from downtown, and that this site should be left in open space. Jon Flores noted that a new building would only increase traffic congestion.

Leithra and Johnnie Hilsbery spoke on the future development on some of the railroad property. While they understood concerns with location and compatibility with the library, they stated that the new jobs and products offered would be good for the community. C.O.O. Minard read a statement of Julie Holst of Main Street that she favored any opportunity for employment in Monroe that would preclude her from having to drive to work.

STAFF REPORTS:

P.W.S. Claborn discussed his monthly report as sent to the Council electronically and operational updates. There were no further questions and Mr. Claborn excused himself from the meeting.

C.O.O. Minard deferred his report given the length of the agenda.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Minard noted that three additional bills had come in since the packets were put together. They included a bill from Brown Construction for the pedestrian crossing, Mark Barham for backflow testing, Carlson Testing the pedestrian concrete. Myers moved to accept the consent agenda, excluding the Monroe Telephone bills, which was seconded by Thexton and approved 6-0. Myers moved to pay the Monroe Telephone bills, which was seconded by P. Canter and approved 5-0-1 (Dillard abstained with a conflict of interest).

NEW BUSINESS:

Benton County Sheriff's Office Contract Discussion. Sheriff Jackson was present to discuss certain concerns of the City Council. Mayor Thayer expressed that the Council was concerned about the significant reductions in citations over the past several months, which he previously discussed with the Sheriff and his staff. Thayer explained he could not fully understand the monthly report and the time noted as being spent in Monroe under the contract. Koroush asked why matters not pertaining to our contract with the Sheriff's office, for ordinance enforcement and enhanced patrol services, included items for criminal activity that the Sheriff's office was obligated to respond. C. Canter expressed her on-going concerns with the monthly reporting and lack of detail. She asked that he put the street or address on the report to where they respond. She pointed out we asked them for that last time the Sheriff was down. She felt the Sheriff should be focusing public safety issues such as speeding traffic. Also, they need to be more of a presence when our children are out. Thexton expressed concern over the report that also appeared to reference issues that were not even inside the city limits.

Minard noted that in years past the Sheriff's office issued upwards of a dozen tickets a month for traffic violations, predominately speeding, cell phone use, and tinted windows. Based on that volume they held court monthly and generated \$20,000 to \$25,000 to offset the cost of police services and court. He noted in the past two months only two citations had been issued and that court had been reduced from monthly to bi-monthly; and based on last few months court may need to be reduced further.

Sheriff Jackson noted his department did not operate under a quota system and was opposed to such. He reminded the Council of the officer's discretion that he was hesitant to interfere with. He expressed his willingness to look into these concern and asked the Mayor to contact him with any future concerns.

Benton County Board of Commissioners – Discussion of Bailey Branch Property. Commissioner Jaramillo introduced herself and asked for County Council Vance Croney to address the Council with the limitations on any property transfer. Croney advised the Council that the free transfer of County land would require the land be used for a public purpose for 20 years. To eliminate this issue would require payment of fair market value. He noted the rail banking restrictions that ran with the rail bed that included a requirement that in the event a rail service wanted to reopen the line, any improvements would need to be removed.

County Administrator Dennis Aloia noted this was the Council's opportunity to convince the Board to transfer the property; particularly given the Board had already voted against this transfer of two against and one in favor.

P. Canter noted that while he respected the audience comments earlier, he noted that not one of those persons lived with the City of Monroe. He felt that all of the issues could be addressed and job creation and product availability would be beneficial to the citizens of Monroe and surrounding populous.

Minard expressed his objections to the testimony, noting that each of the issues could be resolved through conditions of the transfer and the local site plan review process before our Planning Commission. He stated that the concerns with compatibility with the library could be easily addressed by requiring color and materials that could include brick exterior, with drawing previously provided the Board. This would complement the color and form of the library and tie in to our history with the brick yard. As to concerns that any future commercial building would become a blight on the community, he felt was speculative at best. The issue that nothing should be built so close to the library implied that the City of Philomath was in error for allowing a NAPA Auto Store in close proximity to the Philomath museum, which stands as an iconic structure in all of Benton County. Under this scenario nothing should have ever been built next to the County's landmark buildings. He noted that the area was not needed for park purposes, given the Park Master Plan, approved in 2011 already addressed the City's need for future parks, with one park roughly two blocks to the northwest and another park, roughly three block to the southwest.

South Benton Recreation Alliance – update on trail project. Jon Greydanus updated the Council on the group's activities that included a trail through town and bridge over the Long Tom River.

Legion Hall Telephone: Mayor Thayer opened the discussion on the underutilized telephone in the Legion Hall. Staff reports indicated the phone was only used minutes per month, for which the city was paying \$30. Dillard asked if anyone spoke with our attorney on removing this phone and any liability. Minard noted he had spoken with our insurance providers, but not the City Attorney, and there were no concerns on liability. Thexton moved to have the phone removed, which was seconded by Koroush and approved 5-0-1 (Dillard abstained).

Budget Committee Appointments: Thayer noted there were three vacancies on the Budget Committee and asked John Flores if he was interested. Koroush moved to appoint Mr. Flory to the Budget Committee, which was seconded by Myers and approved 6-0. Minard noted that there was no need to fill all these spots this evening and could be addressed at next month's meeting.

RESOLUTION NO. 2016-02: A Resolution Setting Fees for Processing Applications Filed Pursuant to the Monroe Development Code and Monroe Public Works Standards. Minard noted that with the pending residential development the City Engineer would be engaged to review public improvement to the City's infrastructure and this resolution would ensure the developers, not the City, covered those expenses. Myers moved to adopt Resolutions 2016-02, which was seconded by Koroush and approved 6-0.

OLD BUSINESS:

Monroe Fest Update: It was determined that MonroeFest would not be held this year.

Staff Report from Jim Minard: Minard provided his monthly report that included:

- The OSU class that developed the Monroe Economic Revitalization project had completed its work and hoped to make a presentation to the Council next month;
- The pedestrian crossing was complete and we would be seeking another \$40,000 from ODOT for reimbursement of expenses;
- There was still no action on the building permits pending on N. 8th Street;
- The recent article in the Salem paper representing the City had a lead issue in its water was from around five years ago and a one-time situation as we transitioned into the new water source. It had been resolved and not been an issue since.
- He'd received information on the cost to upgrade some of our 70 watt street lights, but was working with Thexton and the Committee on possible outside funding;
- The Statement of Economic Interest still needed to be completed and he was working the State to get those forms to the appropriate individuals; and
- He was working with the City Attorney's Office on a proper agreement to ensure public improvements would be completed according to City specifications.

Minard also noted that he wanted to confirm the Council's directive on legally established lots that did not meet the minimum area requirements. The Council consensus was that if the lot contained a minimum of 5000 square feet it qualified as a legal building lot. Minard noted this addressed the current concerns, but he was aware of other lots that would not conform to this standard and would provide background materials at next month's meeting.

COMMITTEE REPORTS AND COUNCIL COMMENTS:

P. Canter noted the Employee Committee was finalizing its work on updating the City's Employee Handbook and would hopefully be on the Council's April agenda. .

Thexton noted he had attended the COG meeting and suggested that the matter of upgrading street lights be deferred while the City look into potential grants from the Energy Trust of Oregon. He noted that the County had made an offer to upgrade Ash Street, a County road, with a new "chip seal" and asphalt pedestrian path. C. Canter noted the committee felt is should look at a better offer prior to the City assuming ownership and maintenance responsibilities.

Myers suggested staff look into any insurance breaks the community might receive from having the Sheriff's contract. It was noted this might apply to personal insurance policies, but Minard would check with our insurance company to see if there were any price breaks for such.

ADJOURN: There being no further business Mayor Thayer adjourned the meeting at 7:55 PM.

Signed: _____
Mayor Frank Thayer

Attest: _____
C.O.O. Jim Minard