

Minutes of the Veneta City Council

January 25, 2016

Present: Sandra Larson, Tim Brooker, Thomas Cotter, Victoria Hedenstrom and Thomas Laing

Others: Ric Ingham, City Administrator; Ken Jones, Legal Counsel; Shauna Hartz, Finance Director; Kyle Schauer, Public Works Director; Teresa Warrick, Municipal Court Clerk; Darci Henneman, City Recorder; Sgt. Chris Doyle, LCSO; and Joan Mariner, Fern Ridge Review

1. CALL TO ORDER THE VENETA CITY COUNCIL

Mayor Larson called the Veneta City Council to order at 6:30 p.m.

2. STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS – MAYOR SANDRA LARSON

Mayor Larson read her State of the City address. A copy is attached.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

4. CONSENT AGENDA

MOTION: Thomas Cotter made a motion to approve the consent agenda as presented. Tim Brooker seconded motion.

VOTE: Thomas Laing, aye; Thomas Cotter, aye; Sandra Larson, aye; Victoria Hedenstrom, aye; Tim Brooker, aye.

The consent agenda as approved included Minutes for December 14, 2015 Work Session, Minutes for January 11, 2016 Work Session, Minutes for January 11, 2016, Accounts Payable - To be Paid – Payable through January 19, 2016, Civic Calendar for February 2016, Public Works Activity Report for November and December, 2015, Temporary OLCC liquor license for St. Catherine of Siena Catholic Church.

5. COUNCIL BUSINESS AND REPORTS

a. Business

(1) Lane County Sheriff's Office Activity Reports

Sgt. Doyle provided his report. He said case numbers increased somewhat in December as did property crimes and individual welfare checks. He said the investigation of the double homicide/suicide on Jeans Rd. has concluded but deputies are still responding to theft calls at that address.

In response to a question from Mayor Larson, Sgt. Doyle said to his knowledge, Veneta Neighborhood Watch has not been patrolling that residence on Jeans Rd.

In response to questions from Thomas Cotter, Sgt. Doyle said the Jeans Rd. residence is literally the last house in City limits. He said deputies have patrolled the area but they cannot be there all the time. Sgt. Doyle said deputies usually do not respond to a standard fire call unless the fire department requests their presence. He said there is no state statute that requires LCSO to respond but it is policy, in situations where a weapon or assault is involved, deputies will clear the area before fire or emergency staff enter a building. Other examples are overdoses or an intentional or suspicious fire that causes the fire department to be uneasy. Also, deputies are dispatched if a fire alarm goes off. Again, he said it's not a requirement that LCSO personnel be on the scene but it is policy they will respond if the fire dept. has requested their presence.

In response to a question from Mayor Larson, Sgt. Doyle said regarding the double homicide/suicide at the Jeans Rd. residence, the EMTs did not want to enter the property until LCSO personnel arrived and cleared the area.

b. Council/Committee Liaison Reports

Thomas Laing said Mid Lane Cares has run into a snag in setting up the health clinic at Valley United Methodist Church. He said the clinic must have a clinically approved air conditioning system and estimates for that went from \$20,000 to \$108,000. He said things are on hold for now and they don't know what they will do with the \$285,000 grant from Trillium. He said the dental van will be on site in May. Two fundraising events are the Mr. Falcon contest in April and Benefit by the Glass in June. He said the budget process is moving along and tax returns are being filed.

Thomas Cotter said the Economic Development Committee (EDC) held an open house which was well attended. He said it was a good opportunity to meet new people. He said Thursday, January 28th is the kick off of the Business Retention and Expansion program at Our Daily Bread Restaurant.

Tim Brooker said he attended the Lane ACT steering committee meeting where they reviewed the February agenda as well as a very full meeting schedule for 2016. He said they also discussed the Super ACT and said that everything is a go for the February meeting.

Mayor Larson said this is "School Board Appreciation Month". She said Superintendent, Sally Storm attended the last board meeting and Ms. Storm has returned to work part-time after heart surgery. Mayor Larson said Elmira High School principal Gary Carpenter said this year all freshman are invited to visit the University of Oregon and NW Christian College along with juniors and seniors. She said the high school has started a radio class, have resurrected the spirit club due to a low turn-out for cheerleading, and are working on an athletic hall of fame. She said state testing scores at Elmira High School are above state average but enrollment is declining. Since open enrollment took effect in 2012, 162 students have transferred out of the district.

6. STAFF REPORTS

a. Teresa WarrickMunicipal Court Clerk

(1) Municipal Court Report

Warrick provided statistic for citations issued through Veneta Municipal Court from 2003 through 2015.

In response to a question from Mayor Larson, Warrick said we collected 33% of the fine revenue issued in 2015 and will continue to receive payments on the outstanding citations for years to come.

In response to a question from Thomas Laing, Warrick said the high number of citations issued in 2004 was due to one specific deputy who is no longer with LCSO.

Ingham said these statistics are a result of the LCSO log and the work Rachel Sykes did last year. He said Sgt. Doyle's report does not include citations written into Veneta Municipal Court.

In response to a question from Mayor Larson, Ingham said since there were only three speeding citations issued in 2015 in the Veneta Elementary school zone, deputies should concentrate patrols in that area.

In response to a question from Mayor Larson, Warrick said the City has contracted with Credit Services of Oregon (CSO) to provide collection services. She said the City also suspends drivers licenses of individuals sent to collections. She said the City has sent over \$367,000 in uncollected citations to CSO of which about 9% has been collected. She said CSO returns the full amount due to the City and they charge an additional 40% to the individuals. She said revenue we receive only covers about 40% of the total Municipal Court costs.

In response to a question from Thomas Cotter, Hartz said the City budgets around \$50,000 for

Municipal Court expenditures.

In response to a question from Tim Brooker, Warrick said we average a rate of 50% collection.

(2) 2015 Crime Trend Reports

Ingham said this was a new task for Warrick and again, in 2014 Rachel Sykes provided the basis for the crime trend report. He said 2015 will be the first full year of data and as we do this year after year, we should be able to track the trends. He reviewed the charts provided in the packet.

The Council thanked Warrick for putting the information together.

In response to a question from Mayor Larson, Sgt. Doyle said the monthly report included many calls for suspicious activity but again, in most situations, once the deputies respond to the call, its determined that the activity wasn't suspicious or unlawful. However, property crimes were up in the month of November.

b. City Attorney.....Ken Jones

(1) Formation of the Fern Ridge Community Policing District

i. Agenda Item Summary

ii. Lane County Board of Commissioners Board Order

Mr. Jones said Resolution No. 1187 is basically a continuation of Resolution No. 1184. He said as Lane County Commissioners change the content of the Board Order, the District changes. He said the Council is required to adopt Resolution No. 1187 which addresses those changes and includes the boundaries of the City in the District. He said Resolution No. 1187 repeals Resolution No. 1184.

iii. **Resolution No. 1187** – A RESOLUTION APPROVING LANE COUNTY BOARD ORDER 16-01-15-07 FOR THE PURPOSE OF FORMING A SPECIAL LAW ENFORCEMENT DISTRICT AND REPEALING RESOLUTION NO. 1184

MOTION: Thomas Cotter made a motion to approve Resolution No. 1187. Thomas Laing seconded motion which passed with a vote of 5-0.

c. Finance Director.....Shauna Hartz

(1) Financial Activity and Fund Balance Report FY 2015-16

Hartz said this report spans the period of July 1, 2015 to December 31, 2015 so we're six months into the fiscal year. She said she uses this report as a guideline in our operational funds for user fees and operational expenditures. She said we like to be at about 50% at this time of the year. For the most part the user fees are about 50%. One exception is in the general fund – the 213% is due to an increase in building permit revenue which reflects more activity than expected. She said in the sewer fund, under "All Other" is slightly higher because E. Bolton residents paid more of their assessments than anticipated. On the expenditure side, personnel, materials and services are at 50% or lower. The exception to that would be capital outlay- which is a result of large projects that haven't yet started. She said on the flip side, most of the budgeted transfers have been done so they will show at 100% as will the debt service payments which are done once a year. Lastly in the planning fund, we have more expenditures than anticipated but that is offset by the revenue from land use applications and associated fees. She said at this point, City wide, we've collected about \$500,000 more than we've spent.

Ingham said this is the second or third time the Council has seen the financials in this new format. He said Hartz is available to answer any questions the Council may have regarding this new format.

(2) Budget Schedule for FY 2016-17

Hartz reviewed the draft budget schedule for the upcoming budget year. She said if all goes as planned, the Budget for FY 2016-17 will be adopted at the June 27th Council meeting. She said at this point, the budget schedule is information only so if Council members have any conflicts with the meeting dates please notify her as soon as possible so that she can adjust the schedule if needed. She asked Councilors if they wanted to formally adopt the Budget Schedule, which is something we haven't done in the past but we can start doing if the Council would like to.

After a brief discussion, it was the consensus of the Council that it isn't necessary to formally adopt the Budget Schedule but to continue with the current process of posting the budget meetings on the City's website and include the meetings on the May and June civic calendars.

In response to a question from Ingham, Mr. Jones said since the Budget Calendar has been properly presented, he sees no reason why it would require formal adoptions. However, he suggested if the calendar is included on the City's website the meeting dates should be referenced as "tentative dates".

d. City Administrator.....Ric Ingham

(1) 2016 Goal Setting Summary Report

Ingham said staff provided the Council with a draft goal ranking at the January 11th work session which at that time, the Council had a thorough discussion on what goals should be combined, removed, or repositioned to reflect the Council's intent. He said based on the decisions made at that work session, staff finalized the Goal Setting Summary Report for possible adoption by the Council at tonight's meeting.

MOTION: Thomas Cotter made a motion to adopt the 2016 Goal Summary Report as presented. Tim Brooker seconded the motion which passed with a vote of 5-0.

In response to a question from Mayor Larson, Ingham said staff will post the Goal Summary Report on the City's website.

(2) 2016-17 Work plan

Ingham the work plan is intended to be an 18 month work plan from January 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017. He said with a possible new Council in January 2017 we would have a more robust goal setting session after January, 2017. He said staff will flush out start dates and bring the work plan back to the Council for future adoption.

(3) Questions from Councilors

In response to questions from Thomas Cotter, Schauer said the orange cone near the creek by Councilor Cotter's house was placed there during the high water to indicate where the sholder rock eroded away and left an abrupt edge. He said public works needs to place some rock there to support the edge of the asphalt. He said he will have public works check on the water leak at the first house on the right at Fern Meadows.

In response to a question from Victoria Hedenstrom, Ingham said construction of the bus loop at Veneta Elementary this summer should alleviate traffic congestion on Territorial. He said he will ask the deputies to look into the traffic congestion to see if there is anything that can be done.

7. OTHER

Ingham reminded the Council of the upcoming LCOG appreciation banquet. He said staff will put banquet information in Councilors' mailboxes. He said attendance is not mandatory, but our LCOG partners would like to see the City represented.

In response to a question from Thomas Laing, Schauer said he hasn't heard from the insurance company about replacement of the damaged playground equipment, however, the merry go round was not damaged.

o. **ADJOURN**

Mayor Larson adjourned the Veneta City Council at 7:41 p.m.


Sandra H. Larson, Mayor

ATTEST:


Darci Henneman, City Recorder
(Minutes prepared by DHenneman)

2016 follows a year of opportunity, accomplishment and progress in Veneta, but with opportunity often comes challenge.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Among the City Council's goals for 2015, enhancing public safety—specifically community policing, youth relations and code enforcement—continued to be the Council's top priority.

In January, our contract sergeant Billy Halvorson began hosting informal and well-attended monthly community meetings at the Fern Ridge Library, and in July we renewed our law enforcement contract with the Lane County Sheriff's Office, increasing Sgt. Halvorson from one-third to one-half time, providing him more time to focus on Veneta's contract and oversight of our contract deputies.

Deputies stepped up their patrols and engagement with youth at the skate park, as well as their morning presence in Veneta Elementary's school zone.

Recognizing the nexus between health and public safety, the Council enacted a ban on smoking in all city parks, for which second graders from both Veneta and Elmira gave us a thumbs up on their annual field trips to City Hall. In addition, we prohibited the possession of e-cigarettes by minors and their sale to minors.

Both the City and Lane County Sheriff's Office supported resumption of a local Neighborhood Watch Program, a proactive citizen response to concerns about property crimes, in particular, which has continued to grow in both numbers and effectiveness.

In October, this citizen group advanced a plan to form a special law enforcement district encompassing the communities of Noti, Elmira, Walton, Crow, Alvadore and Veneta and surrounding rural areas. Council and staff have devoted a lot of study to the proposal. Because Oregon law dictates that law enforcement districts can be formed only by counties, the City of Veneta has resolved to support Lane County's placement of the citizen-driven initiative on the May ballot and agreed to be included in the proposed district, believing that the proposal has merit and that voters within the proposed district's boundaries, including Veneta, should have the opportunity to decide whether or not it will be established.

The proposed district would eliminate the need for Veneta's separate law enforcement contract with the sheriff's office, while providing 24-hour deputy coverage for the Fern Ridge area. The sheriff's sub-station headquartering the force of eleven deputies (including one school resource officer) and a full-time sergeant will be located adjacent to Veneta City Hall. Formation of the district could help to ameliorate public safety and budget issues for both Veneta and Lane County.

Our city administrator has been working for well over a year with Lane County and Lane Fire Authority on an Emergency Operations Plan addressing local response to large-scale catastrophic events, including the predicted Cascade seismic cataclysm. Lane County secured Federal Emergency Management funds for development of a template that will be applicable to other small cities.

CODE ENFORCEMENT

Better code enforcement results in more livable and attractive communities. To that end, we turned our attention to three blighted properties in Veneta, all of which are no longer deemed hazardous. Staff and Council intend to continue to pursue abatement of blighted properties within the city.

A serious dog attack in the city prompted a review and revision of our dangerous animal ordinance, clarifying the definition of "dangerous animal" and providing more latitude to our code enforcement officer and municipal judge to impose restrictions based on the level of threat.

Thanks to Veneta's dedicated Friends of Ferals volunteers, we met our second-year spay and neuter quota, and PetSmart Charities renewed Veneta's "Don't Litter" program grant. 281 formerly fecund feral felines were spayed or neutered over the two-year grant period.

INFRASTRUCTURE

The Council's number two goal for 2015 was to advance our sewer system buildout in the serviceable area of the city. Veneta was incorporated 53 years ago primarily to provide clean, safe, water and modern, sanitary sewer services to residents. Last year, we came closer to completing the incorporators' vision with construction of a sewer line along East Bolton Road between Applegate Court and Pine Street.

Veneta's Public Works Department manages a network of 21.5 miles of asphalt, concrete and gravel streets within our city limits. Steps one and two in pursuing the Council's goal to improve and preserve those streets were completion of a pavement condition survey and adoption of a six-year pavement preservation plan with an estimated cost of \$3.4 million.

First repairing roads that are in fair condition rather than those in poor condition may seem counterintuitive, but in fact, it is more cost-effective to preserve them before they are critically deteriorated. The first round of work completed in September filled potholes and cracks, and patched and sealed 25 different street sections around town.

Council suspended consideration of a Transportation Utility Fee to fund the preservation plan pending the outcome of the Fern Ridge Community Policing District vote in May.

Sidewalk conditions were also surveyed, with the result that most of Veneta's sidewalks are rated good to excellent. Of course, there are still major streets that lack sidewalks including 6th and 8th Streets, Hunter, and parts of Perkins.

Those same second-grade field trippers got a once-in-a-lifetime look into the cavernous interior of the city's two-million gallon water reservoir when their visit to the public works yard coincided with preventative maintenance. The tank's original 1978 interior coating was sandblasted to bare metal and recoated, preserving future water quality. They also heard the roar of McKenzie River water moving through the EWEB pipeline, the sole source of city water while the tank was off-line, so there was no disruption of service.

As projected, Veneta's annual water rate increase was a moderate 2%. The sewer base rate continued at a 5% reduction, enacted in July of 2013.

GROWTH AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The best laid plans don't always go awry. Following completion of a major update of our 208-page Comprehensive Plan, accomplished in record time with no legal challenges thanks to Community Development Director Kay Bork, and the adoption of a five-year economic development action plan, we believe that Veneta is poised to capitalize on a rebounding economy.

To that end, the Council reconvened Veneta's Economic Development Committee, appointing nine representatives of the local business community to help shape the plan's focus on business retention and expansion and recruitment of smaller, more professional businesses.

Rural Development Initiatives, a non-profit organization that supports rural communities as they work through challenging economic conditions, selected Veneta and The Dalles to pilot its Business Retention and Expansion Program at no cost to the City. Local businesses are invited to the program's kick-off on Jan. 28th at 6 p.m. at Our Daily Bread.

West Broadway said goodbye to Kelley's Hardware last year, but welcomed two new businesses. West Lane Fitness moved into the former Moose Lodge, a move the City helped to facilitate with Urban Renewal funds for facade improvements. Broadway Grill just missed its December 31 opening, but has since been thronged with local diners.

Building permits and business inquiries both were up, and three new subdivisions are in the planning stages for 2016.

Recognizing that fiber access is critical to today's businesses, the City pursued and won a \$20,000 Regional Fiber Consortium grant to extend our fiber buildout to the Veneta Business Park, to be accomplished this year.

COMMUNICATION AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Our ongoing drive to improve citizen awareness and understanding of issues before the city, as well as citizen participation in civic activity, is reflected in the City of Veneta Communication Plan, adopted last January.

Since then, we have updated our City logo and launched a new, more user-friendly website.

The plan recognizes the importance of social media in today's communication and commits the City to developing guidelines for effective and responsible use of it.

For several years, the City has joined the Oregon Mayors' Association in sponsoring an annual "If I Were Mayor" contest, encouraging young citizens to learn about the functions of local government and to think either inside or outside the box about ways to improve quality of life in Veneta. Last year, fourth-grader MacKenzie Corbett thought very much outside the box with her proposal to control marauding cats with squirt guns, and high school sophomore Riley Craig was rewarded for his creative video entry.

Supported by a generous grant from the Lane County Cultural Coalition, the Veneta Historical Advisory Committee partnered with Applegate Pioneer Museum to install a plaque at the museum honoring Veneta's founders Edmund Hunter and Charles Dunham, designed to further interest in and knowledge of Veneta's history.

MISCELLANEOUS

There are, of course, other activities and developments of significance that don't fall strictly under specific council goals.

In December, the Lane Area Commission on Transportation ranked our proposal for a bike/pedestrian path improving safety for all who walk or ride between Veneta and Elmira first of seven county-wide proposals. If approved by ODOT at the state level, construction could begin in the next three to four years.

Life in Veneta may not be all fun and games, but we have our share.

Veneta's community pool concluded another successful season that included water aerobics and swim lessons as well as a Summer Solstice Party, Night Waves for teens with deejay Barry MacGuire and a Family Fun Night.

For 23 years, the City has operated Zumwalt Campground, originally a response to illegal camping during the Oregon Country Fair. The popular venue, a money-maker for Veneta's parks fund and Mid Lane Cares, sold out again this year. Campers took time out from fair revelry to partner with the Friends of Zumwalt on their trail restoration project.

The heat was on when Veneta staff, aka the City Slickers, entered the Harvest Festival chili cook-off, but, alas, they did not win. Mid Lane's annual fund raiser to support the Fern Ridge Service Center is becoming a signature event for the city.

Veneta celebrated its sixth year as a Tree City USA with a celebration at the Veneta Community Center, featuring arborist Matt Horowitz and an apple cider pressing demonstration by Marion Lil of Apple Springs Organic Farm.

Lane Council of Governments named Veneta's nominee Tom Laing its Outstanding Citizen of the Year for his long service to his fellow veterans.

A year of opportunity, accomplishment and progress, yes.....and challenge.

We were certainly challenged as 2015 came to a tempestuous close with a sudden December storm that blew through Veneta on a wild and erratic path. Trees fell on houses and automobiles. Streets were blocked by fallen trees and debris. Veneta City Park lost 18 trees, some of them falling on the swing set and monkey bars.

In typical Veneta fashion, however, we weathered the storm. Best of all, no one was seriously injured in spite of some close calls.

There was also little or no damage to city facilities. The Community Center lost a few shingles but the pool building was unscathed, thanks to the timely removal of a large pine tree that threatened to fall on it.

Generators at the water and wastewater plant worked the way they were supposed to in the resulting power outages.

Public Works staff along with crews from EPUD and Lane Electric plus several stalwart community volunteers cleared streets and storm drains in record time, preventing flooding from more rain that came later in the day.

The annual holiday tree lighting was somewhat soggy, but it's Oregon, and we didn't let a little moisture dampen our celebration, especially our enjoyment of the sweet voices of the Veneta and Elmira Elementary School choirs.

And Mother Nature didn't rain on our holiday parade—much. Weather-defying families lined the streets for the 12th annual Fern Ridge Light Parade, and the rains held off almost to the end.

Speaking of challenges, if 2014 was the "year of the chicken" in Veneta, as I suggested in last year's State of the City, 2015 was the "year of the turkey." Flocks of them are roaming the city and their numbers were not reduced at Thanksgiving! We would suggest that kind hearted residents rethink their practice of feeding them because the fowl invaders will necessarily meet a cruel fate, eventually. "Eventually" is the key word, however, because Department of Fish and Wildlife limits the City to six kills at a time, and my husband recently counted 24 in just one of many flocks.

At least the breasts of harvested birds are donated to locations like the Eugene Mission, but our public works staff has the unenviable task of cleaning and preparing them.

THE YEAR TO COME

Many of the opportunities, accomplishments, progress and challenges of 2015 laid the groundwork for work still to be done. The Council reordered but did not significantly change its goals for 2016, except that we placed new emphasis on parks and recreation in support of healthy lifestyles.

In May, Fern Ridge residents will decide whether or not to establish the Fern Ridge Community Policing District. Either decision will present challenges for the City.

In addition, candidates for three of our five council seats, including the mayor, will be on the November ballot, as will a measure establishing a city tax on recreational marijuana.

We will turn attention to city sidewalks and retail licensing of tobacco, and Veneta's beloved Easter Egg Hunt will go green with biodegradable candy-filled eggs.

It's probably clear that the annual visit of second graders is a highlight of the year for me. They come to learn, but we also learn, as, like little barometers, they provide valuable insight into the attitudes of our residents as a whole. Last year, they told us that they see Veneta as a safe place with friendly people, naming their homes, school, library, pool, parks and Dairy Queen among their favorite places.

I look forward to reassuring this year's group that, even with the city's inevitable growth and change, Veneta will remain the family-oriented community that they know and love.