

The Newsletter of the  
City of Veneta

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# City News

## City Drafts Tax “Roll Back” Language to Support Community Policing Initiative

The Veneta City Council is continuing a series of actions in support of the formation of the Fern Ridge Community Policing District (FRCPD). Most recently, instructing staff to draft language regarding the City’s intent to roll back taxes.

“Proponents of the district have asked the Veneta City Council to demonstrate its commitment to roll back the City’s tax levy in the amount of \$1.67 per \$1,000 of value to match the new districts permanent tax rate,” explained City Administrator Ric Ingham. “The goal is to make the FRCPD expense neutral for Veneta taxpayers, while still providing enhanced services.”

According to state statutes, the City levies taxes as part of its annual budget process. “The City Council cannot set the rate. But it can instruct the Finance Director to have draft language ready,” said Ingham.

The budget preparation schedule includes two Budget Committee meetings in May. “One of those would occur before the May 17 election, and the second afterward, so that modifications could be made in accordance with the result of the election. If the district measure passes, the tax rollback would be implemented.”

The Council is also instructing staff to detail where any cost savings that may be realized would be allocated.

“The difference between the City’s current law enforcement contract and the expected lower cost of the FRCPD will be directed to three areas,” said Ingham. The first would be to the street fund, with those monies to be used in lieu of a Transportation Utility Fee that had been proposed last fall. The second would be to the law enforcement fund. “We aren’t yet certain whether all the services provided to Veneta residents as part of the current contract will be included in the FRCPD,” said Ingham. “So we would fund a number of functions that support such services as municipal court and code enforcement, if they are not provided by the new district.” Remaining funds, if any, would be directed to parks and recreation programs specifically to address youth and family activities.

Still to be determined by the Board of Commissioners is where the new FRCPD will be housed. “We have proposed the construction of a new substation near City Hall, which would be leased back to the

*(Continued on page 2)*

## “Please Don’t Litter” Campaign

With the spring breeding season just around the corner, the City reminds residents that having cats spayed or neutered will significantly help control the area’s feral population.

With help from Willamette Animal Guild (WAG) and Veneta Veterinary Hospital, and a grant from PetSmart Charities, the City’s “Please Don’t Litter” campaign has spayed or neutered 281 cats in the 97487 zip code since 2014. “Of those, 175 were females of breeding age,” explained City of Veneta Code Enforcement Officer Teresa Warrick. “Beginning at six months old, each female could have produced an average of 12 kittens per year. In approximately 5 years, they could have produced as many as 63,000 cats.”

If you or someone you know has a stray or feral cat or kitten in the 97487 area and need information about spaying or neutering, or would like to volunteer for Friends of Ferals, please contact Teresa at Veneta City Hall, 88184 8<sup>th</sup> Street, 541 935-2191 or visit the City’s website at: <http://www.venetaoregon.gov>.

### CITY OF VENETA - CIVIC CALENDAR - FEBRUARY 2016

Veneta City Hall - 88184 8th Street, Veneta, Oregon

2	Veneta Planning Commission Meeting - City Hall	6:30 p.m.
3	Veneta Park Board Meeting - City Hall	4:30 p.m.
8	Veneta City Council Meeting - City Hall Veneta Urban Renewal Agency - Immediately following	6:30 p.m.
10	Veneta Economic Development Committee Meeting - City Hall	2:00 p.m.
14	Happy Valentine's Day 	
15	President's Day - City Hall Closed 	Closed
18	Municipal Court - City Hall	8:30 a.m.
20	Meet Sgt. Doyle (Lane County Sheriff's Office contract Sergeant for the City of Veneta) - Fern Ridge Library	1:00 p.m.
22	Veneta City Council Work Session only no Regular Council Meeting - City Hall	6:30 p.m.

## ***City Weathers Winter Storms***

Though powerful windstorms—followed by rain and then ice—caused downed trees, debris, and power outages, Veneta has fared relatively well this winter.

Unfortunately, several homes on a two-block stretch of Sertic Rd. were damaged by falling trees, leaving residents without power for nearly two days in December. The City's Public Works staff joined local utility workers to clear the trees so service could be restored quickly. Meanwhile, residents worked to clear limbs from roofs, driveways, and vehicles, and Public Works staff kept drainages clear and water flowing to prevent localized flooding. Several homes on Bolton Hill Rd. suffered extensive damage, and at least five vehicles around the City were impacted by falling debris.

In City Park, about 18 trees came down and a swing set that had been there for more than 40 years was de-

stroyed, explained Public Works Director Kyle Schauer.

Fortunately, the Veneta Community Pool averted disaster, as a large pine tree leaned toward the facility. "Had it fallen, it would have landed right on the lobby," said Schauer. Nearby, the water reservoirs and wastewater plant were undamaged. Consequently, local citizens' water and sewer service was not impacted.

Though spring is just around the corner, Schauer offered a word of caution. "We live in an area full of fir trees that do not do well in the wind," he said. When they come down, they create hazards. Be prepared for power outages and blocked driveways." Also, he said, "If you have a hazard tree on your property, it should be taken care of. Homeowners should call the City Planning Department before removing a tree. "It's a simple process, but an important one."

## ***Efforts to Improve Local Business Climate***

The approximately 25 local businesses and residents that attended an Economic Development Open House on Jan. 14 came ready to discuss their challenges and opportunities. Hosted by the Veneta Economic Development Committee, the gathering was a "listening event," according to City Economic Development Specialist Claudia Denton. "We wanted to hear what business owners had to say, and we did. There was great engagement throughout the two-hour event."

The Committee comprises local business owners and residents who have volunteered their time. They serve as a two-way conduit between the business community and the City, with the goal of improving the local business climate.

"We were pleased to attract a good cross-section of businesses," said Denton. That included startup businesses, such as Yurtel, which plans to open Veneta's first overnight lodging, as well as established ones including Hillbilly Brews, Robbie's Windowbox Caffe, the Veneta Downtown Farmer's Market, Fern Ridge Review newspaper, a real estate broker, the nonprofit Mid Lane Cares, and more.

Though some expressed concerns, attendees came with "great ideas and a desire to invest in the community and make it a safe, prosperous, and successful place to

do business" Denton said. Among the topics of concern were the cost of fees, the need for high-speed Internet, and level of crime in the area. Some businesses expressed a desire to have more policing, and were interested in how the proposed Fern Ridge Policing District might help.

"This was a great beginning," said Denton, "but is part of a series of events." In fact, the City hosted another event on Jan. 28. That gathering began to build on the familiarity gained at the Open House as the Committee kicked off a six-month Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) Program with help from partner Rural Development Initiatives. The BRE Program will assess business needs, connect businesses with relevant assistance, and develop long-term strategies to support the local business base.

In addition, the City is accepting applications from prospective volunteers for the business visitation process, which will help the City communicate with and collect information from businesses. "The work provided by these volunteers will be valuable for years to come," said Denton.

Applications are available on the City website at [www.venetaoregon.gov](http://www.venetaoregon.gov) or interested parties can contact Denton at 541-935-2191 or [cdenton@ci.veneta.or.us](mailto:cdenton@ci.veneta.or.us).

## ***City Drafts Tax "Roll Back" Cont...***

district," Ingham continued. "Logistically, the location is ideal for connecting to Hwy. 126 and accessing Territorial Rd. So, in addition to the 10 deputies who would use this as a station, this would create a law enforcement hub for other law enforcement agencies who regularly travel Hwy. 126, including LCSO, OSP, and ODFW."

The Lane County Commissioners and the Veneta City Council have already taken the steps necessary to begin

the creation of the FRCPD. Both entities also adopted modified orders when the district's proponents revised the measure to reduce costs to the taxpayer on Dec. 30.

To learn more about FRCPD or to provide public testimony, residents are encouraged to attend the Lane County Board of Commissioners meeting on February 9, at 6:00 p.m., at the Deep Woods Event Center, 89980 Territorial Hwy., Elmira, OR