

June 3, 2014

A. CALL TO ORDER BY PRESIDING OFFICER

Mayor Bemis called the meeting of the Gresham City Council to order on Tuesday June 3, 2014 at 6:00 p.m. in Council Chambers located in the Gresham Public Safety and Schools Building, 1331 NW Eastman Parkway, Gresham, Oregon.

COUNCIL PRESENT: Mayor Shane T. Bemis
Council President Lori Stegmann
Councilor Jerry Hinton
Councilor Kirk French
Councilor Karylinn Echols
Councilor Mario Palmero

COUNCIL ABSENT: Councilor Mike McCormick

STAFF PRESENT: Erik Kvarsten, City Manager
David Ris, City Attorney
Rachael Fuller, Assistant City Manager
Robin Franzen Parker, Director Public Affairs
Eric Chambers, Senior Manager
Jessica Harper, Assistant to the Mayor
Ron Papsdorf, Director Government Relations
Sharron Monohon, Director Budget and Financial Planning
Bernard Seeger, Director Finance and Management Services
Karen Pearson, Director Human Resources
Eric Schmidt, Director Community Development
Craig Junginger, Police Chief
Greg Matthews, Fire Chief
Scott Lewis, Administrative Chief
Steve Fancher, Director Environmental Services
Pat Hartley, Director Information Technology
Susanjoy Baskoro, City Recorder

1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND MOMENT OF SILENCE

Mayor Bemis led the Pledge of Allegiance followed by a moment of silence.

2. INSTRUCTIONS TO CITIZENS ON SIGNING UP FOR PUBLIC TESTIMONY REGARDING AGENDA AND NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Council President Stegmann read instructions to citizens wishing to testify before Council.

B. CITIZEN AND COMMUNITY GROUP COMMENTS FOR AGENDA (EXCEPT PUBLIC HEARING) AND NON-AGENDA ITEMS

1. CITIZEN AND COMMUNITY GROUP COMMENTS

Judith Remington said she appreciates the work that the Mayor and Council do for the citizens of Gresham but the income of senior citizens goes down and the rents go up when one more bill is added to their expenses. She asked Council to consider this when making a decision on the safety fee.

The following citizens shared their disappointment that the Public Safety Levy failed in the election and feel the best solution in an effort to keep our City safe is to reinstate the \$7.50 fee: Doug "Spud" Henderson, Mardy Stevens, Carol Rulla, Bill Peterson, Jef Kaiser, Jenne Glover, Davis Glover (nine year old), Marlene Byrne, Clint Holly, Dick Schneider, Joan Albertson, Keith Evans, Megan Wood, and Catherine Nicewood.

In addition, the following individuals sent written testimony in opposition of the reinstatement of the Police, Fire and Parks fee: Doug Klein (Exhibit A), and Dave and Rockie Cone (Exhibit B).

The following individuals sent emails in support of reinstating the Police, Fire and Parks fee: Peter Schmidt (Exhibit C), and Alison Hark (Exhibit D).

C. COUNCIL BUSINESS

1. SERVICE PRESERVATION ORDINANCE 15

Erik Kvarsten presented the staff report (PowerPoint Presentation Exhibit E).

Council President Stegmann asked for a response to Judith Remington's concern about funding for low-income citizens and clarification on how businesses will pay for the fee.

Mr. Kvarsten stated there is an opportunity for low-income citizens to access funds to pay this fee if they do not have the resources, and also an option for businesses to pay through the business license fee.

Councilor Echols said she heard from a couple citizens urging that Council not support the fee and the premise was that there is plenty of money in general fund to support these services. She asked for clarification for citizens as to how the general fund budget is distributed.

Mr. Kvarsten stated the property tax that citizens pay out does not pay for half of the police department. Ninety-five percent of the general funds go to police and fire, and that is comparable in the Metro region.

Councilor Echols stated the other five percent is a mix of parks, community development and economic development.

Councilor Hinton referred to a letter from a citizen that stated, "let them fail and it will teach them a lesson." He said if everyone drives a car and you don't put oil in your car it will seize up. How expensive is it to replace that engine versus just keeping oil in the car? Maybe this is a trite comparison but it is very true. He feels the citizens of Gresham want to maintain the structure and safety of our citizens. It is true that it is the number one responsibility of the government to protect its residents. That is what he intends to do and it is what he feels most of the citizens in the room would prefer. He noted his appreciation for what the entire City and staff has done in terms of matriculating us through and giving that honest, fair and respectful presentation to the citizens in this community over the last couple of years. He is proud of the Mayor and staff for all the work to get the information out to the citizens. He condones and respects our citizens going forward on both sides. We had 12,000 votes out of 110,000 people. He supports the proposition wholeheartedly.

Councilor Palmero asked when the first bill will go out to citizens that will include the \$7.50 fee.

Mr. Kvarsten responded in July.

Councilor Palmero clarified that this is just to maintain the services we have currently. He complimented Mr. Kvarsten on the wonderful job of keeping the City functioning. He noted the City of Gresham is one of the leanest cities in Oregon. This is holding the line on public safety. He doesn't like the idea of letting twenty police officers go. The City has some of the most well trained police and fire personnel in the state. He supports the fee and hopes to work with the community at large for a long term solution.

Councilor French said he would hate to see us lose control of our city. Without having police and fire in place to help our citizens would be a wrong step not to support the continuation of the \$7.50 fee.

Council President Stegmann asked for clarification on why money cannot be moved from one fund to another.

Mr. Kvarsten stated government fund accounting had its genesis back in the early 1900s as part of the government reform movement when money came in and not one knew where it went. Therefore it was determined that certain pots of money would be used for certain things. You could not collect gas tax to hire a police officer. That is the fundamental kind of system that is in place. It protects and assures that certain revenues are only used for certain things. We cannot take money paid to support the water system and use it to hire fire fighters. That is not allowed in government fund accounting which governs our world.

Council President Stegmann echoed what the citizens who testified stated, she is deeply disappointed that the levy did not pass. She feels citizens did not vote against police and fire, but against the means. People voted no on the mechanism. This is her fourth year on Council and she had only had one person tell her they were against the levy. It is the method, but we must keep our kids safe. That is what she intends to do.

Councilor Echols stated there is a history of minor kid pranks or crimes taking place in her neighborhood. There have been a couple of serious crimes as well. The thefts of cars in which the police were on it in no time at all and within a couple hours the cars were both recovered. They also had a significant house fire in the neighborhood. She watched the fire departments response to it and she has never been so proud to be a citizen and a Councilor. The fire department was there for the long haul, not just about putting out the fire but stabilizing the family. The level of service makes Gresham so special. The family couldn't go back into their house but the fire personnel worked with the family to identify the things they needed and repeatedly went in and out of that house to get things for them so they could go stay somewhere temporarily and have their life together. Gresham is about police officers intervening before things get bad. It's about police officers working on our gang problem. Its about officers in the parks and trails on their bikes and being a presence there. It's about fire fighters responding and saving someone who is having a heart attack. There is just no price that can be put on that. Her neighborhood homeowners association put out a vote asking if each household would contribute \$18 a month to have a security car drive through the neighborhood three times a night. Not someone who could arrest but someone who would be a presence. It is passing in her neighborhood. She thinks about the comparison of \$7.50 and \$18 per month and she knows full well that \$7.50 is a struggle for a many people. That is why the fund that has been put into place for low-income citizens. We have no choice but to protect our community. We cannot afford to run the risk of not putting our best foot forward. The practical application is that if this is not a safe community, if we do not have police on the streets or fire stations open with amazing response time and responding twenty-four-seven, than it really doesn't matter what we do in terms of economic development. Our quality of life will go down and it will affect schools, businesses and families. It is a slippery slope. How much ground will we lose if we don't do this. She thanked all those in community that have participated in support or against. That's what makes Gresham a special place, a robust community conversation. She chose to do this volunteer job and at times it is very difficult. But there is no hesitation in her heart about continuing the \$7.50 fee. She agrees that the conversation must continue to find a better resource for these services.

A motion was made by Councilor Jerry Hinton, second by Councilor Kirk French, **TO APPROVE COUNCIL BILL NUMBER 05-14 TO PREVENT REDUCTIONS IN POLICE SERVICES, KEEP FIRE STATIONS OPEN AND RENEW THE 7.50 PER MONTH POLICE, FIRE AND PARKS FEE.** The motion passed as follows:

Mayor Shane T. Bemis	YES
Council President Lori Stegmann	YES
Councilor Kirk French	YES
Councilor Jerry Hinton	YES
Councilor Karylenn Echols	YES
Councilor Mario Palmero	YES

ABSENT: Councilor Mike McCormick

Mayor Bemis said coming on the heels of the defeat of the levy some have said and some argue that it is unconscionable for the Council to do anything other than to make the cuts. He understands that sentiment. He explained the thought process. Twelve years ago he ran for City Council; he was a business owner and was only concerned about what affected business. He got involved and began learning about the inner workings of the City understanding that sound bites didn't always translate to the real world. Then he became a father, his ideas and perspective changed dramatically about what was important in the community and the services that needed to be provided to the citizens. Those are the things that have driven him and are at his core. He loves this community. In 2007, he became Mayor and in 2008 he went to the public and said give me 30 police officers, this stuff is moving on us fast and quick, and we need more boots on the ground to handle that. It was defeated right on the heels of the recession. He heard from the residents that said they want to help but would rather not reach into their pocket books. So they implemented the Citizen Volunteers In Policing (CVIPs) program. There were and still are numerous volunteers that walk the parks and Max lines and are involved in this community to help make up the difference in what the City cannot fund. Throughout the last two years the Council has said, "This day is coming" and we must plan and be prepared for this and we must make some investments. In the meantime, we enacted the fee. There are not many people that he did not talk to about the fee. Through that process we enacted the fee and heard some folks say, "give us a levy." So we brought the levy forward and little over 12,000 people in a City of 110,000 people participated. You know the results. It is not the results that any of the Council hoped for or wanted. But they are what they are. It is not lost on him that \$7.50 a month can make a difference to some citizens. It is also not lost on him that we have a city that has one of the lowest staffing ratios and police in the entire State of Oregon, second from the bottom. This Council shows up every Tuesday because we want to make a difference in this community and sometimes it takes resources. It brings us to where we are today. A good friend of his who also had the privilege of representing this City often said, "If I have to change who I am at my core, then I don't want the job." He stated, he is in the same boat. If he has to change who he is about protecting this community, our children, and our officers, then he doesn't want the job. He believes in his heart in all the time he has spent in the last twelve years looking, innovating, and doing everything we can to get this organization on the right track. Which by the way this organization is winning national awards in other areas, yet we have this issue with crime and poverty and all these things that have been pushed our way and we need to deal with them. He is not going to change who he is. He gets that he has lost the support of some citizens, and he is okay with that. He has not lost Davis' (a nine-year old who testified) and he hasn't lost the support of his children. That is all that matters to him. Over the next six months staff will look at other ways and opportunities to augment areas of revenue to look at. But the bottom line is that if we continue to think that we can do things exactly the same way we have been doing them and at the same funding levels and expect different results we are absolutely kidding ourselves. The problems that are coming at us are too strong, too fast, and too hard and they require resources. We can bend wherever we want, but the bottom line is that the problems are here. He is not willing to give up, turn his back, or move out of the City like many of his friends have. Other communities pay twice the tax rate instead of living here and making it a better community. We are better than that. He thanked the organization for the process that they have gone through. It is tough on the organization, the men and women who protect us and the administration. They have done the work of two people each to go through a time where nobody knows what is going to

June 3, 2014

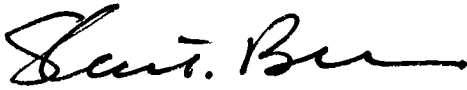
happen when the next shoe drops. They keep showing up to work. This City is winning National awards for livability for innovations, like taking our largest power source at the Wastewater Treatment Plant and making it a net producer with a substantial savings of \$1 million over two years in savings. But we have got to find ways to pay for the basic services. He thanked his colleagues on the Council, who volunteer to get into the budget and represent each of the citizens. They have a heart for this community. He respects the way they represent this community.

D. COUNCIL MEASURES AND PROPOSALS

None

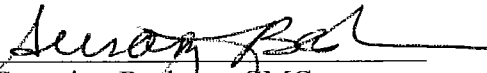
E. ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

Hearing no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:51 p.m.



Shane T. Bemis,
Mayor

Respectfully Submitted,



Susanjoy Baskoro, CMC
City Recorder