

**Minutes**  
**Aurora City Council Meeting**  
Tuesday, February 13, 2024, 7pm  
City Council Chambers, Aurora City Hall  
21420 Main Street NE, Aurora, OR 97002

**STAFF PRESENT:** Mark Gunter, Public Works Superintendent; Deputy Pete Walker; David James Robinson, City Attorney; Stuart A. Rodgers, City Recorder

**STAFF ABSENT:** Mary Lambert, Finance Officer

**VISITORS PRESENT:** Jan Peel, Joseph Schaefer, Julie Sixkiller, Aurora

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**1. CALL TO ORDER OF THE AURORA CITY COUNCIL MEETING**

Mayor Brian Asher called the meeting to order at 7:02pm.

**2. ROLL CALL**

Mayor Brian Asher-Present (arrival at 7:14pm)

Councilor Mercedes Rhoden-Feely-Absent

Councilor John Berard-Present

Councilor Charles Roper-Present

Councilor Wendy Veliz-Present (Zoom)

**3. AFFIRMATIONS-NA**

**4. CONSENT AGENDA**

- a) City Council Minutes—January 9, 2024
- b) Planning Commission Minutes—January 2, 2024
- c) Parks Committee Minutes—December 20, 2023
- d) Parks Committee Minutes—January 25, 2024
- e) Historic Review Board Minutes—November 28, 2023

Councilor Wendy Veliz moved to pass the Consent agenda. The motion was seconded by Councilor Charles Roper and passed.

**5. VISITORS-No visitor comment.**

**6. CORRESPONDENCE**

- a) Oregon Government Ethics Commission – Reminder of April 15 Filing Deadline for Annual Verified Statement of Economic Interest  
This line item serves as a reminder of a filing each Aurora board or commission member will need to fill out and submit by the above date.

- b) Bleicherode, Germany Sister City Update

The city has provided a proclamation of support and in turn has received a proclamation from Bleicherode, translated from German to English. Also, the sister city relationship

has reached an official level by joining Sister Cities International with membership account. Donald Kunz, ancestor of Aurora's Founder through Wilhelm Keil's sister will be presenting a couple of plaques to Bleicherode this summer, one to be posted at the old farmhouse outside of the city proper and the other to be placed near the Lutheran church where Keil was baptized. There is talk of rounding up a small gift to send with Kunz to Bleicherode on behalf of the City of Aurora.

c) Westside Express Service (WES) Update on Legislative Hearing  
Mayor Asher attended this hearing in Salem and provided a brief recap of the experience.

d) Aurora Emergency Preparedness Report  
Councilor Wendy Veliz attended the AEP meeting last week and noted Greg Walsh, Marion County Emergency Manager, to possibly join Aurora City Council next month for an update and discussion on what the city should be doing as a community to prepare for emergency events. A tabletop exercise is one point of discussion.

e) Airport Land Use Update  
Joseph Schaefer noted a TLM approval from Marion County in 2020 to develop 16.5 acres, appealed successfully and concluded in March of last year. Now TLM has submitted a new application for a slightly different use, all helicopters and office space, no fixed wing aircraft. There are two hearings expected given comprehensive plan amendments to apply under a different administrative rule and to see if this can be used to get the project done. Proposed are 277 parking spaces, but there are only 90 employees. On vehicle trips, each trip end is a trip, so if you commute to your office in the morning and leave at the end of the day, which counts as two trips. If everybody drives every day, the number of proposed spaces does not equate with actual need based on employees. The 2012 master plan still sits at the Court of Appeals. The new master plan was going to be a Public Advisory Committee meeting but canceled at last minute because some new documents were not on the website and the meeting bumped to March 12, 5pm. The first TLM case still sits at the Court of Appeals awaiting a decision on motions to dismiss.

## **7. NEW BUSINESS**

a) Public Safety Report

Deputy Walker noted speed radar signs on Ehlen Rd, two going out of town and one coming in. The devices worked for about three days and appear to have stopped working though input was offered to suggest they are operating in stealth mode. The signs had an impact in slowing driver speeds in Donald. Councilor Berard mentioned posting a third Welcome to Aurora sign at Bobs and Hwy 99e on the south side of that intersection. Walker will make a concerted effort to do more enforcement on Airport Road.

b) Appoint Budget Committee Members – Gary McLaren, Steve Mikulic

Motion by Councilor Berard, seconded by Councilor Veliz to appoint the above committee members, and the motion carried.

## **8. OLD BUSINESS**

a) Council Communication w Community

Councilor Roper provided a synopsis of his report to Council in the packet including the Aurora Bucks promotion results, noting the rollout came in under budget. Discussion followed about how to increase the number of residents the city has on its email list. An incentive was mentioned generally. It was noted that the recent survey did not request emails and that opt-in, opt-out would be required for legal purposes. Residents could also change their preferences. The City Recorder will connect with Councilor Roper about setting up a solicitation for more email for a variety of possible city-initiated communications. Councilor Roper referenced the website the ACVA has as well as an email list they send to, something the city may look into to avoid reinventing the wheel. Text messaging could be explored as an alternative communication method. One idea presented was to increase the number of emails with two or three emails a month going out with city news. Councilor Roper and the City Recorder will connect to discuss platform options for an email system. Staff could call down the water bill list and ask for permission, securing email and number for text purposes. Does the city need to provide in that initial communication more than just an over-the-phone request, something that gives legal permission to add residents as a contact? Mayor Asher's newsletter message will include a request for emails and phone numbers for texts in an emergency and for other purposes. Councilor Roper to help staff draft a blurb. A calendar app was discussed for the city website to highlight city meetings and social events.

b) Economic Opportunities Analysis

Joseph Schaefer noted a challenge in securing data from the state, causing a delay, but the data has now been accessed by the consultant toward next steps in analyzing that data. A copy of the buildable lands inventory to be sent to Council.

c) Aurora Traffic and Traffic Speed

This subject already discussed and moving in a good direction.

**9. ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS, AND PROCLAMATIONS**

- a) Resolution 851, A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Aurora, Oregon, Amending Resolution No. 838 and Adopting a new Schedule of Fees for Planning and Zoning Applications

Councilor Berard moved to adopt Resolution 851, Councilor Roper seconded, and the motion passed.

**10. EXECUTIVE SESSION-NA**

**11. REPORTS**

a) Finance Officer

Finance Officer Mary Lambert's report is in the packet. Mayor Asher noted the first budget committee meeting on Monday, May 1, 7pm.

b) Public Works

Public Works Superintendent Mark Gunter acknowledged the time, effort, and abilities of his crew members and the other staff working out of City Hall, at times overlooked by community members because they do their job so well. Gunter noted the project

progressing next door with demolition. Work at the well site and reservoir project continues, and Gunter will send some photos out for posting about the Cole Lane project with paving a new road to that location. Berard suggested showing some of the public works equipment and crew off at Aurora Colony Days.

c) City Attorney

David James Robinson noted a lot of public contracting and procurement relative to city infrastructure projects. No word from Verizon relative to the water tower. Some interaction with the city recorder on code-related matters.

d) City Recorder

Nothing additional other than report in packet and a mention of upcoming elections this year with Mayor Asher and Councilor Rhoden-Feely and Veliz positions up for re-election. The Recorder will provide an elections calendar in the near future.

e) Traffic Safety Liaison

Councilor Berard noted one of the reasons for placement of Welcome to Aurora signage is to help slow traffic going through town.

f) Airport

Nothing beyond what was already discussed by Joseph Schaefer.

g) Planning

The Planning Commission got through its code update at last meeting, and Council will have a March hearing.

h) Community Outreach

Mayor Asher noted the monthly food bank will be held next week in town.

i) Community Preparedness

This subject already addressed above under Correspondence.

j) Parks Committee

Parks minutes were included in the packet, and upcoming springtime projects are in the works. Mayor Asher noted some three or four grants for parks-related projects.

k) Mayors Report

Mayor Asher and John Berard met with Representative Andrea Salinas toward additional funding for Aurora infrastructure projects. Also discussed was the possibility of funding solar power for the new wastewater plant. Mayor Asher has an upcoming meeting with Marion County Sheriff's Department. On March 13, there will be a meeting with Ted Millar at the Airport, coordinated by Kenji Sugahara.

The rail project based on the meeting Mayor attended in Salem was encouraging with support from the Transportation Committee. The rail community, including owners of the rail line, are supportive of this venture.

Mayor Asher noted there is money out there for emergency management, and he will talk to Veliz and AEP about this. Asher also seeks a million dollars for the line down Cole Lane.

**12. ADJOURN**

Mayor Asher adjourned the meeting at 8:12pm.



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Mercedes Rhoden-Feely, Council President

ATTEST:



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Stuart A. Rodgers, City Recorder

