

WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES  
SISTERS CITY COUNCIL  
520 E. CASCADE AVENUE  
JANUARY 14, 2010

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Lon Kellstrom	Mayor
Bill Merrill	Councilor President
Sharlene Weed	Councilor
Pat Thompson	Councilor
Jerry Bogart	Councilor

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Eileen Stein	City Manager
Lisa Young	Finance Director
Eric Porter	Comm. Dev. Director
Brad Grimm	Public Works Director
Kathy Nelson	City Recorder

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Kellstrom at 6:00 p.m.

A. Utility Deposit Refunds and Rates Discussion

**Finance Director Young** stated in accordance with Ordinance No. 256B the City of Sisters requires a utility deposit or proof of credit worthiness from customers. She stated currently the City is holding \$141,257 in deposits from both residential and commercial accounts. She stated that when staff works with customers in opening up new utility accounts, staff is often asked about when the customer will have their deposit returned. She explained that at present the deposit is credited to the account only when the account is being closed, with any excess returned in the form of a check.

**Director Young** stated staff is proposing that upon completion of 24 consecutive months of excellent credit history a customer's deposit will be credited to the customer's utility account. She stated this information is obtainable as InCode tracks the credit standing of City services accounts. She stated at present there are 523 residential and 111 commercial accounts in the amount of \$77,204 that would qualify for their deposit to be credited back to their account. She stated after the initial round of the deposit refund process, refund credits would occur twice a year on June 1<sup>st</sup> and December 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Director Young** stated that in the case of a customer that had received their deposit credit back and then fell behind in their payments or otherwise lost their "excellent" credit rating, they would be required to reestablish credit with the City.

**Councilor Weed** noted that Ordinance No. 256B states the deposit will be a sum equal to the estimated bill for two months of service but that \$150 is actually larger than a two month bill for most customers. **Director Young** stated that she plans on addressing the amount of the deposit after the second phase of the utility rate study is finished as she expects utility rates will change again. She noted that summer bills are usually higher for most customers when lawn irrigation is taking place and the new rate structure will address this. **Councilor Merrill** stated it is the City's prerogative to decide on the amount of the deposit and it does not need to be tied to the bill.

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**Councilor Weed** asked how much a reconnect fee is if a customer's water has been turned off. **Director Young** stated the fee is \$30 to have service restored.

**Councilor Bogart** asked if crediting the accounts will be a simple process for staff. **Director Young** stated the initial refund crediting will be more cumbersome in that there are so many accounts involved but after that it will be a simple process. She stated crediting the accounts is far easier than processing refund checks.

**Mayor Kellstrom** asked how soon the refunds could occur. **Director Young** stated that staff could process the account credits by the end of February and the \$150 would show as a credit on the account. **Manager Stein** stated the public will also be alerted to the refunds via a press release and other means.

The **Council** agreed to proceed with the refund amount being credited to accounts with excellent credit. **Manager Stein** stated the ordinance will come before the Council at a future meeting.

B. City Manager Update

**Manager Stein** stated the quarterly review of the financial report would normally occur as part of Director Young's staff report but she wanted the Council to have an opportunity to discuss the format of the report to make certain it met the Council's expectations. She stated the Council will continue to get the monthly report but it will be discussed quarterly during a regular meeting.

**Director Young** provided an overview of the information included in the report. The **Council** requested small changes in the format of the report and **Director Young** stated the changes would be easy to incorporate into the report. The **Council** discussed the findings of the report and net fund activity with Director Young.

**Manager Stein** distributed the draft agenda for the Council strategic planning session for FY 10-11 scheduled for Saturday, January 30<sup>th</sup>. She reported that Roger Jordan and Bob Wells will once again facilitate the session. There was Council discussion on whether a three hour timeframe was sufficient for the session with a decision to stick to the three hour timeframe. **Manager Stein** informed the Council they will receive their packets for this session at the January 21<sup>st</sup> workshop.

**Manager Stein** stated the City, along with several other agencies and foundations, has been approached to sign a document acknowledging support for a School Based Health Clinic in Sisters. She stated the clinic would be funded by the Deschutes County Commission on Children and Families. She stated in signing the document the City is committing to providing free pre-development counseling and a free pre-application meeting. She stated the pre-development counseling is something the City does not charge for and the pre-application meeting fee is usually \$300.

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**Councilor Merrill** explained the project is designed to provide assistance to children without insurance or to their families to get medical care for the student when the families can't get them to a doctor. **Director Porter** stated that in order to be certified, the facility must reside on school property and there is interest from a lot of different groups. He stated there were some land use issues that still need to be resolved.

The **Council** agreed to have Manager Stein sign the document.

**Manger Stein** informed the Council the annual Chamber of Commerce Black and White Ball was coming up on February 12<sup>th</sup> and asked whether they planned on attending. She reminded them that City typically purchases a table for the event and Director Grimm will be installed on the Chamber Board that evening. **Mayor Kellstrom** and **Councilor Bogart** stated they would attend. **Councilor Thompson** and **Councilor Weed** stated they needed to check their calendars before committing to attending the event.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Kathy Nelson, City Recorder

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Lon Kellstrom, Mayor