

WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES  
SISTERS CITY COUNCIL  
520 E. CASCADE AVENUE  
SEPTEMBER 23, 2020

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Chuck Ryan            Mayor  
Nancy Connolly      Council President  
Andrea Blum          Councilor  
Michael Preedin      Councilor

**ABSENT:**

Richard Esterman    Councilor

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Cory Misley            City Manager  
Paul Bertagna        PW Director  
Joe O’Neill            Finance Director  
Scott Woodford      CDD Director  
Nicole Mardell        Principal Planner  
Kerry Prosser        City Recorder

**GUEST:**

Lt. William Bailey    Deschutes County Sheriff Office (DCSO)

Mayor Ryan called the workshop to order at 5:30 pm, and City Recorder Prosser took roll call.

**1. Sheriff Update**

Lt. Bailey reviewed all three deputies and their patrol vehicles were in place and announced Lt. Chad Davis would be starting on November 1<sup>st</sup>. The department was working with C4C to have a virtual “Meet Your Deputy” event on November 16<sup>th</sup>. Lt. Bailey said the deputies were focusing on establishing relationships with business owners and traffic safety. He and Lt. Davis spoke daily about what was happening in Sisters. Lt. Bailey was working with the Nugget on how to introduce the new deputies.

City Manager Misley said he would begin work with Lt. Davis on the public safety strategic plan once he had officially started in Sisters.

**2. Update on Future Strategic Plan for Existing Transient Room Tax**

City Manager Misley reviewed that during Council goal setting, under the Economic Development goal, one of the focus areas was developing a strategic plan for tourism and the management of Transient Room Tax (TRT) funds.

City Manager Misley discussed the background and expectations surrounding this goal. The community had worked hard to become a tourist destination, and we had a tremendous amount of resources directed towards tourism; in the last three years, we had spent \$750,000. He projected we would allocate 1.25 million towards tourism in the next five years, this was a large sum, and we needed to be strategic on how it was spent. City Manager Misley said the City needed to balance tourism, livability, and expanding to a four-season destination. We needed a document that brought these plans together and helped guide where we were going.

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City Manager Misley said a natural step in starting this process was to survey our business owners on the topic to help inform how we moved forward. Staff was currently developing a draft survey that was tentatively planned for distribution in early November, with a report back to Council in December. The survey would be distributed to in-city businesses who had a current business license. Staff thought the background work would help form future plans for the TRT funds.

City Manager Misley said staff had also met with Travel Oregon to understand what other communities were doing with their tourism plans and funds. Staff would be moving forward on this goal in small bites, keeping in mind the Council would be a different composition starting in January. Staff expected this process to last at least six months.

Councilor Preedin asked if we would get something wrapped up by the next fiscal year. City Manager Misley replied part of what we wanted was good information to inform any changes we made; staff did expect an outcome before the end of the fiscal year. City Manager Misley reviewed the City currently had a one-year contract with the Chamber for these funds, and we would need to renegotiate the contract before the end of the fiscal year. He reviewed the goal of this process was to focus on TRT allocation.

City Manager Misley said he would be meeting with Judy Trego, the Chamber of Commerce Executive Director, next week to inform her about the survey and our plans to move forward. He noted the survey would be distributed to in-city businesses. Councilor Blum asked how we would get input from the rest of the community. City Manager Misley said the survey's focus was to get input on existing TRT spending and whether we should spend the funds on tourism promotion and/or spend some of the funds on the tourist experience. We wanted to know if more funds should be spent on the tourism experience while being mindful of livability. We could engage more with community residents down the road when we looked at other potential investments that focused on livability.

Council President Connolly asked if a committee was formed to look at this topic that "tourism" not be part of the name. The public might have a hard time separating the City from the Chamber; she suggested the TRT Allocation Committee or TRT Master Plan. Council President Connolly said looking at the five-year, 1.25 million in funds holds Council to a higher level of thinking about what we could do with the funds and would have better buy-in from the community.

Council President Connolly was concerned about this timeline with the Chamber; the sooner we could get them funding information, the better. She added this was a significant workload and asked if staff had the capacity to handle the project.

City Manager Misley said we needed to ask who wanted to be involved in this conversation, and who wanted a seat at the table if we created a committee. There was no crystal-clear path to go down; we had to collect information and look at all of our options and constraints. We needed to dive into this topic, it would be a little messy and exciting, but we needed to move forward.

Mayor Ryan supported this 100%; this process was important as this was a lot of money over five years. He said this was a long time coming, and the Vision process had brought up a lot of gaps that needed to be addressed. Mayor Ryan thought we needed to be proactive and plan accordingly; there was a lot of upfront work that could be done before the new Council was on board. He asked the staff to be careful that the committee was not biased.

Councilor Preedin thought this was a nebulous topic and had not been tackled for a long time; the survey was a great way to start information gathering.

Staff would move forward with the business survey.

### **3. Other Business**

City Manager Misley introduced Scott Woodford, the new Community Development Director. Director Woodford said Sisters was very familiar to him; he had a sense of coming home. He grew up in a Colorado mountain town and had worked in both the private and public sectors. He moved to Oregon eight years ago and has been working at the City of Redmond, and he thought Sisters was a great fit with his experience. Council welcomed Director Woodford.

Director Bertagna reviewed the preconstruction meetings for Phase A of Well #4 had gone well, and they would start drilling on October 12<sup>th</sup>.

Director O'Neill said audit fieldwork preparations were done.

City Recorder Prosser said the application process for Boards and Committees would be open until November 6<sup>th</sup>.

City Manager Misley thanked Council for moving forward with the amendments to the Urban Renewal Plan. It would be an essential tool in the next few years.

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The meeting adjourned at 6:24 pm.



Kerry Prosser, City Recorder



Chuck Ryan, Mayor