

MEMBERS PRESENT

Michael Preedin Mayor
Andrea Blum Council President
Jennifer Letz Councilor
Gary Ross Councilor
Susan Cobb Councilor

STAFF PRESENT:

Joe O'Neill Interim City Manager
Paul Bertagna PW Director
Scott Woodford CDD Director
Kerry Prosser City Recorder
Jeremy Green City Attorney

1. CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Preedin at 6:46 pm.

2. ROLL CALL

A roll call was taken, and a quorum was established.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Council President Blum made a motion to approve the agenda. Councilor Letz seconded the motion. Preedin, Blum, Letz, Ross, and Cobb voted aye; the motion carried 5 -0.

4. VISITOR COMMUNICATION

Documents submitted for visitor communication could be found on the [City Website](#). Mayor Preedin read a statement regarding ex-parte communication.

- Cathy Russell of Sisters submitted a letter for the record and spoke about traffic concerns.
- Michael, no address given, spoke about misfits and other topics.

5. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Minutes
1. April 26, 2023 – Workshop
 2. May 10, 2023 – Regular Meeting
 3. May 10, 2023 - Workshop

Councilor Ross made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Councilor Cobb seconded the motion. Preedin, Blum, Letz, Ross, and Cobb voted aye; the motion carried 5 -0.

6. COUNCIL BUSINESS

- A. **Public Hearing and Consideration of Ordinance 529 - AN ORDINANCE OF CITY OF SISTERS ESTABLISHING CAMPING REGULATIONS AND A CAMPING REMOVAL POLICY.**

Mayor Preedin opened a public hearing on Ordinance 529 and asked for the staff report.

Attorney Green reviewed minor updates made to the Ordinance.

Mayor Preedin asked for public comment; there was none. He closed the public hearing.

Councilor Cobb expressed concerns regarding Ordinance 529. She said the Ordinance appeared to be conflicting in nature, as it combined aspects of a camping ordinance with punitive measures while also aiming to ensure humane treatment for the removal of homeless individuals on camping sites on public property. She understood the Ordinance was intended to create guardrails but thought it failed to promote humane treatment or acknowledge the social complexities associated with homelessness.

Councilor Cobb also raised concerns regarding the difficulties faced by homeless individuals who worked and the impracticality of expecting them to dismantle their camping setup daily. She also expressed unease about removing personal belongings without sufficient notice and the arbitrary decision-making process regarding which items were considered valuable or useful. Finally, Councilor Cobb pointed out that the Policy Evaluation, outlined in Section 5.7, was not a workable policy as it involved contacting local agencies and outreach workers only after the removal had taken place.

Mayor Preedin disagreed with Councilor Cobb's statements. Similar to how we did not arrest every speeding driver, the Mayor believed that we would not automatically arrest individuals who might be pushing the boundaries of the camping ordinance. Mayor Preedin said our community was thoughtful, and those responsible for enforcing the Ordinance would approach it thoughtfully. It was a shame that we had to pass this Ordinance, but it was necessary. Mayor Preedin believed the Ordinance successfully combined two related issues without singling out people experiencing homelessness or individuals at events. The aim was to address camping as a whole in a cohesive manner. Mayor Preedin acknowledged that this Ordinance was not flawless, but thought it was well-constructed and did not propose any modifications.

Council President Blum said implementing the Ordinance was not a choice but a requirement imposed by the state. She noted local partners and advocacy groups for the houseless population in the community had the opportunity to review the Ordinance and provide input; she valued their expertise and highlighted the absence of dissenting voices among these groups. Council President Blum was in support of moving forward with the Ordinance.

Councilor Ross acknowledged the validity of objections raised by Councilor Cobb but expressed that those concerns should have been addressed earlier with legal counsel and others. Councilor Ross said the Ordinance had been reviewed and vetted by organizations working with the homeless population and had expected more opposition tonight but noted the absence of public comment. The Ordinance provided a means to address issues that might arise, particularly if they become frequent occurrences and it aligned with the

intent of the relevant statute. Councilor Ross pointed out the lack of centralized resources for the houseless in Sisters prevented the implementation of extensive support programs. He expressed the need to trust neighboring communities and local agencies that assist the houseless population to fulfill their roles effectively. Councilor Ross opposed changing the Ordinance and was ready to approve it in its current form.

Councilor Letz acknowledged the social nature of the homelessness issue and the importance of ensuring stable housing for individuals. However, there was also a need to protect the community's citizens, visitors, and property owners and to maintain their safety and investments. They had to take into account the well-being of all community members. Councilor Letz noted that Sisters was located close to federal lands where camping was legally permitted, providing some opportunities for individuals in distress to find shelter nearby.

Councilor Letz was confident in the thorough vetting of the Ordinance by legal counsel and community members with specialized knowledge in this area. She was willing to address any concerns or pain points raised by the community, law enforcement, or social workers and to revisit and make changes if necessary. Councilor Letz acknowledged that although it might require effort, the ability to adapt and modify policies was an inherent part of governance.

Mayor Preedin agreed we were not chiseling this Ordinance in granite. We could revisit it if needed.

Councilor Cobb said her comments were a follow-up to her initial questions sent to the City. She had also done some research and had communicated with some of the houseless people.

Mayor Preedin noted that despite having a homeless person involved in visitor communication tonight, they did not raise any concerns regarding the Ordinance. The Mayor acknowledged that each Councilor was free to vote according to their judgment. However, if the vote were not unanimous, the matter would be carried over to the next meeting.

Council President Blum made a motion to read Ordinance 529 by title. Councilor Ross seconded the motion. Preedin, Blum, Letz, Ross, and Cobb voted aye; the motion carried 5-0.

Director O'Neill read Ordinance 529 by title.

Council President Blum made a motion to adopt and approve Ordinance 529. Councilor Ross

seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken; Preedin, Blum, Letz, and Ross voted aye; Cobb voted nay; the motion failed 4-1.

A second reading of Ordinance 529 would occur at the next City Council meeting Wednesday, June 14, 2023, at 6:30 pm.

- B. Discussion and Consideration of a Motion** to Approve a Grant Application with the Oregon Department of Transportation Carbon Reduction Program for approximately \$220,000 with a 10.27% Match Requirement for the Design and Construction of EV Charging Ports at the East Portal.

Public Works Coordinator Dumanch thanked Council President Blum for highlighting this funding opportunity related to EV infrastructure. This grant was a chance to secure funding for the first phase of the East Portal project, as Highway 20 was designated as an alternative fuels corridor. The Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) was particularly interested in supporting projects that enhanced EV infrastructure in close proximity to the highway. With a match requirement of 10.27%, the funding opportunity presented an affordable option to finance EV infrastructure within the City. He anticipated grant announcements in the fall of 2023, with awards in the spring of 2024. Staff was seeking approval from the Council to apply for the grant.

Councilor Letz asked if the City was still interested in putting in or helping to facilitate other charging stations within the downtown core, closer to businesses. Coordinator Jackson was not aware of any other locations. He said this location was chosen based on what ODOT was looking for in project size; they wanted a project in the \$300,000- \$500,000 range.

Councilor Cobb said the amount collected from the gas tax would begin to decrease, which meant the amount coming from it to the City would decrease. She asked if ODOT had any plans for the charging stations to have some kind of means of either taxing or getting revenue from people who used them. Coordinator Jackson replied he did not know.

Mayor Preedin had met with the Director of ODOT, and he said road use taxes might be coming because their operational costs of road maintenance were going to exceed the money coming in starting in 2025-26.

Council President Blum made a motion to approve a grant application with the Oregon Department of Transportation Carbon Reduction Program for approximately \$220,000 with a 10.27% Match Requirement for the Design and Construction of EV Charging Ports at the East Portal. Councilor Cobb seconded the motion. Preedin, Blum, Letz, Ross, and Cobb voted aye; the motion carried 5 -0.

7. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Staff Comments

Public Works-Director Bertagna

- Director Bertagna thanked Coordinator Dumanch for his work on the Environmental Sustainability Plan.
- The fuels reduction project off of Edgington Road was complete.

Finance - Director O'Neill

- The audit Request for Proposals were due this week.
- Staff had calculated commercial sewer equivalent dwelling units, which were up 34 over last year.

Community Development- Director Woodford

- The Sustainable City Year Program celebration would be held on Thursday, June 1st.
- Planning Commission would hold a workshop on June 1st to review the details of the proposal for the Space Age gas station.

City Manager's Office - Recorder Prosser

- Staff was working on updating franchise agreements with Light Speed Network and TDS Broadband Services.
- The Community Grant application process would open on July 1st.

8. MAYOR/COUNCILOR BUSINESS

Councilor Cobb attended the League of Women Voters convention, and one of the speakers reviewed that over the past ten years or so, the tax kicker in Oregon was receiving upwards of 20 million a year in interest. It was now earning 20 million a month, which was why the kicker was so large this year. The speaker said the State planned to adjust the interest assessment to ensure the kicker would be smaller in future years.

Councilor Ross said the presentation on the Water and Wastewater Master Plans was clear, concise, and understandable.

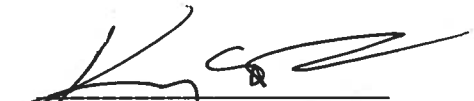
Councilor Letz attended two C4C events in the past week. The first was an emergency preparedness event; a panelist from the local insurance industry provided insights on the challenges in that field, such as difficulties in obtaining coverage and the potential for the insurance industry to play a more active role in fire prevention. Another speaker shared their experiences with the evacuation process during the 2020 fires and the importance of having a trustworthy entity in the community capable of receiving and distributing funds during emergencies; having such a group in place would be a valuable aspect of emergency preparedness. The second was a meeting focused on parks and trails. Councilor Letz also attended the Economic Development for Central Oregon luncheon last week.

Council President Blum noted the Executive Director for the Coordinated Homeless Response Organization (CHRO) had resigned; the Board would meet next week to discuss the future of the organization. She reviewed that 19 proposals from Central Oregon were submitted for review for the approximately 14 million in funding from the Governors Emergency Order on Homelessness; seven applications met the criteria and were progressing. Sisters Cold Weather Shelters' proposal was still being considered, but they needed to submit additional information.

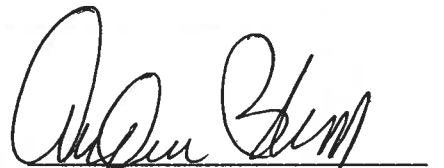
Mayor Preedin would speak at the Veteran's Memorial Day Event next week.

Mayor Preedin mentioned that over the past couple of years of being Mayor, he had observed an increase in the time load, especially this spring, and he apologized for not being as available as usual. Being a mayor required touching all the bases, meeting everyone, and acting as the cheerleader. It was a demanding role, and being an effective mayor required dedication. He said Sisters had been punching above our weight, and maintaining that momentum was important.

9. ADJOURN: 8:01 pm.



Kerry Prosser, City Recorder



Andrea Blum, Council President