

MEMBERS PRESENT

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

STAFF PRESENT:

Jordan Wheeler City Manager
Joe O'Neill Finance Director
Kerry Prosser Assistant City Mgr.
Scott Woodford CDD Director
Paul Bertagna PW Director

1. CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Preedin at 6:30 pm.

2. ROLL CALL

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

Mayor Preedin congratulated the Sisters High School volleyball team on their State Championship.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

4. VISITOR COMMUNICATION

A recording of visitor comments can be found [here](#).

- Zenia Kuzma, Sisters, had concerns about short-term rentals and the high number of unoccupied homes (20%) in Sisters. She thought it was necessary to address these issues before increasing the urban growth boundary (UGB). She would like to have real public input into the UGB process.
- Bruce Carpenter, Sisters Country, supported the city's long-term vision of exploring a UGB expansion. He also spoke on the need for public pickleball courts in Sisters.
- Monica Tomosy, Sisters, challenged the idea of a UGB expansion to solve the town's issues. She encouraged the Council not to limit their thinking and to look at creative solutions within the existing city boundaries. She urged the Council to seek public input on potential solutions that did not require expansion of the UGB.
- Casey Meudt and Henry Harrocks discussed their new business, Stagecoach Adventures, which would provide year-round outdoor recreation shuttle services based in Sisters. The main challenges they faced were delays with the Sisters Ranger District in determining what type of application they should submit and potentially missing the application window, which closed on December 1, 2023. Mr. Meudt asked for the city's feedback and potentially a letter of support to urge the Sisters Ranger District to prioritize a local process for this type of business.
- Michael, no address given, spoke about helping someone who, despite significant wealth, chose a life of homelessness to escape societal injustices. He discussed the

recent town topic of loneliness. The person he mentioned had been associating with others all day but still experienced loneliness.

5. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Minutes
 - 1. October 11, 2023 – Workshop
 - 2. October 25, 2023 – Regular
 - 3. October 25, 2023 - Workshop

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

6. COUNCIL BUSINESS

- A. **Discussion and Consideration of a Motion to Approve the Second Intergovernmental Agreement with Deschutes County and the Cities of Bend, La Pine, Redmond, and Sisters for the Coordinated Houseless Response Office and Authorize the City Manager to Execute the Agreement.**

City Manager Wheeler reviewed the second Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) related to the Coordinated Houseless Response Office (CHRO). The IGA formalized the process to move the office from Deschutes County to COIC (Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council). The State had funded the CHRO pilot program, and approximately \$900,000 remained from the original \$1,000,000 allocation. The IGA did not commit the city to any financial obligation.

Council President Blum stated that one of the main reasons why most of the allocated money remained was due to the collaborative efforts of Deschutes County, COIC, and the city of Bend. Staff from these entities had volunteered their time and resources to this pilot program and had made significant progress in laying the groundwork for future operations. Council President Blum said the CHRO Board intended to seek ongoing support from the state and grants rather than relying on city funds.

Councilor Letz asked if this approach would lead to a more streamlined and improved strategy for addressing homelessness in Deschutes County. Council President Blum replied that the coordinated effort was a step in the right direction. She said they would be including non-voting members from Housing Works and other agencies on the CHRO Board. This addition would leverage the expertise and day-to-day insights of those directly involved in addressing homelessness.

Council President Blum made a motion to approve the second Intergovernmental Agreement with Deschutes County and the cities of Bend, La Pine, Redmond, and Sisters for the Coordinated Houseless Response Office and authorize the City Manager to execute the agreement with minor legal revisions. Councilor Cobb seconded the motion. Preedin, Blum, Letz, Ross, and Cobb voted aye; the motion carried 5-0.

7. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Staff Comments

City Manager's Office - City Manager Wheeler, ACM Prosser

- Northwest Housing Alternatives received \$9.8 million in funding from Oregon Housing and Community Services for Trinity Place, an affordable housing project being built in Sisters. Additional funding included a commitment from the city of Sisters for \$500,000 in ARPA funds.
- Upcoming events: The Holiday parade and tree lighting were on November 25th, and the next City Council meeting was scheduled for November 29th.
- The community was encouraged to report issues with the recycling center to ensure maintenance and cleanliness.
- The city would be considering the future of the recycling center as the Recycling Modernization Act (RMA) was implemented. The RMA would modernize and standardize recyclables in Oregon, and the city would need to explore the necessity of the recycling center in the evolving waste management landscape.

Councilor Ross thought there was a noticeable decline in the cleanliness of the recycling center since High Country was absorbed into Republic Services. He thought we should put a little heat under Republic to keep the center picked up.

- Recruitment for boards was closing on Friday, November 10th.
- Ordinances coming before the Council on November 29th included the contracting code ordinance, which has been updated due to legislative changes, and the tree code ordinance.
- The County Assessor, Scott Langton, would be at City Hall on November 9th to discuss property taxes.
- Explore Sisters was working on their website, which should be complete this winter.
- The Deputy Recorder position had been posted; applications would be accepted until December 1st.

Finance – Director O'Neill

- Transitioning the file server to the cloud had been completed, and the City Hall server was decommissioned.
- The utility billing hosting website would be active on Monday. Residents could access the new site through the utility billing link on the city's website.

Public Works – Director Bertagna

- Christmas lights and snowflakes would be put up next week in the downtown area.
- A "one-stop" meeting with funding agencies for water and wastewater projects was scheduled. Funding agencies included USDA, DEQ, and Business Oregon. The projects included the new reservoir, the Edgington Road trunk line, and Well improvements, which were estimated at \$12 million. The meeting involved presenting project details, cost estimates, timing and needs to look at potential funding scenarios. The goal was establishing a funding strategy and initiating loan and grant applications with the participating agencies. The "one-stop" approach was an efficient way to gather all relevant funding agencies in one meeting.

Community Development Department – Director Woodford

- Building permits had been increasing in part from The Woodlands development.
- The Sunset Meadows Master Plan for 84 multifamily units had received land use approval, and they had submitted building permits.
- Development code amendments were being processed, and noteworthy amendments included the dark skies ordinance and a reevaluation of the short-term rental ordinance.
- A survey was being prepared to gather information from short-term rental license holders to understand their practices and needs.
- Work on defensible space standards and building hardening requirements was ongoing.
- The Planning Commission, acting as the Community Involvement Committee, recently assessed community involvement techniques. The Planning Commission's findings and recommendations would be presented to the Council at a future workshop.

Councilor Cobb acknowledged citizen concerns about Short-Term Rentals (STRs) and growth. She noted the city was actively examining STRs as part of its considerations regarding growth. Councilor Cobb asked if 20% of the empty homes were secondary residences. Director Woodford thought that most were second homes.

The Council discussed concerns about abandoned homes and methods for identifying them, such as water bills and property taxes.

The Council discussed implementing a vacancy tax or fee to encourage owners of second or third homes to enter the long-term rental market.

Councilor Cobb asked for Director Woodford's thoughts on the comments of a speaker tonight who asked if we had a moat around us, how would we grow. Director Woodford

replied that the city had looked at efficiency measures to address growth without expanding the boundaries, but we could not accommodate all the expected growth.

8. MAYOR/COUNCILOR BUSINESS

Council members discussed potential ways to expedite the process for Stagecoach Adventures permit, including having conversations with relevant officials at the Sisters Ranger District. Council members expressed empathy for the challenges faced by the business and discussed potential ways to advocate for their cause.

Councilor Ross shared insights from visiting Sedona, Arizona, an International Dark Sky community with around 10,000 people. Despite having a significant commercial district and high tourism, Sedona had successfully implemented a stringent lighting code. The lighting code included requirements for warm light temperatures and addressed light pollution concerns effectively. Councilor Ross said about 20 years ago, when staying outside Sedona, there was a noticeable glow at night; now, the glow was gone. He said this was an example of how a city could rectify mistakes and preserve the natural environment.

Councilor Letz provided an update on the Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee-hosted summit in Sunriver on October 26th. Various topics were discussed at the summit, including E-bikes, with insights from public works officials, law enforcement, and rental company owners. Considering their growing popularity, Councilor Letz thought we needed to integrate discussions on E-bikes into community planning and infrastructure. She also attended a Bend Chamber of Commerce impact conference focusing on the challenges gateway communities faced. Councilor Letz noted the upcoming open house for Mosaic Medical. She wished a happy Veteran's Day to all who served, including the mayor.

Mayor Preedin shared his experience conducting a training session for the League of Oregon Cities (LOC) on handling difficult meetings and contentious city councils. The training focused on promoting grace, maintaining decorum, and running efficient meetings.

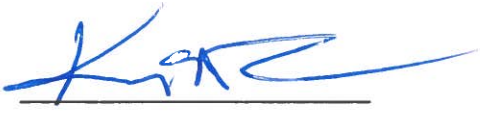
Mayor Preedin discussed ongoing discussions with the Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD) regarding proposed rule changes for future water applications. The OWRD's draft rules, based on the Umatilla Water Basin, were deemed unsuitable for the Deschutes Basin. COCO (Central Oregon Cities Organization) advocated for basin-specific data, arguing that a one-size-fits-all approach may unintentionally impose water moratoriums, impacting construction and business growth. Mayor Preedin emphasized the importance of pushing back against rigid state rules that may not consider the unique needs of our basin.

Mayor Preedin addressed pickleball and its growing interest by citizens. The hope was to collaborate as a community to identify suitable areas, possibly in newer parks or designated

spaces for the installation of pickleball courts. Councilor Ross noted the noise concerns associated with pickleball and commended the local pickleball community for acknowledging the issue and expressing willingness to address it.

Mayor Preedin expressed gratitude for the community as Thanksgiving approached, highlighting Sisters as a great place to live and raise a family.

9. ADJOURN: 7:54 pm.



Kerry Prosser, Recorder



Michael Preedin, Mayor