

CITY OF GEARHART  
City Council Worksession  
Tuesday, May 31, 2022  
On-site and Virtual via Zoom

A worksession of the Gearhart City Council was called to order by Mayor Cockrum on Tuesday, May 31, 2022 immediately following a 6:00 p.m. Executive Session; the time was 7:18 p.m. Also present were Councilor Warren, Councilor Fackerell, Councilor Smith, Councilor Tomlinson, City Administrator Chad Sweet, Fire Chief Josh Como, City Treasurer Justine Hill, City Attorney Peter Watts, and Executive Assistant Krysti Ficker.

The purpose of the session was to discuss the outcome of the failed May 17th fire / police station bond measure, and how the outcome affects the future of the proposed UGB land swap.

Mayor Cockrum stated with her emergency preparedness background, she felt the City was pursuing the best site available. She felt she was wrong based on percentages.

Councilor Warren stated feedback pointed to a multitude of reasons why voters voted no. He maintained the location as the most resilient available and questioned the cost of waiting at both Highlands Lane and the current location. He suggested Town Halls with experts available to the community and greater involvement from the Gearhart Rural Fire Protection District to help educate residents on their relationship with the City.

Councilor Smith echoed the need for a Town Hall. He requested the use of instant polling equipment to determine what folks are willing to spend, and where they're willing to spend it. He suggested any future surveys have no bias.

Councilor Tomlinson acknowledged the struggle between removing the station from downtown and spending money on a vulnerable site. He agreed with the Town Hall and survey propositions. He also suggested the UGB land swap be more of an open process if Council decides to move forward.

Councilor Fackerell felt if the cost was the same for the current downtown location, the outcome would've been better. She thought personal opinion is what carried the vote.

City Attorney Watts confirmed the City of Scappoose would be willing to lend us their instant polling equipment.

Mayor Cockrum proposed the Council come up with a short term plan to move forward, including how to

provide volunteer firefighters with a safer environment until a station is built.

Chief Como provided examples of contaminant exposures and addressed the needs analysis conducted to determine station size and decontamination standards.

City Administrator Sweet stated the difference between the station's outfittings, trainings, and requirements versus when he first joined the department. He echoed the need for a plan to move forward, noting the increase in population, second homeowners relocating, and increased call volume. He provided a sheet to Council covering historical station election outcomes and survey results at both High Point and Highlands Lane.

Mayor Cockrum stated the need for a consensus on where to go from here at the next Council meeting.

Mayor Cockrum adjourned the worksession at 8:04 p.m.

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Mayor Kerry Smith

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Chad Sweet, City Administrator