

CITY OF GEARHART
Special Meeting of the City Council
Tuesday, December 13, 2022
6:00 pm On-site and Virtual/Telephonic

The special meeting of the Gearhart City Council was held Tuesday, December 13, 2022. Council members, City staff and the public were able to attend on-site, virtually, or by dialing in on a telephone.

Mayor Smith called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm. Present were Mayor Kerry Smith, Councilor Preston Devereaux, Councilor Reita Fackerell, Councilor Dana Gould, Councilor Austin Tomlinson, City Administrator Chad Sweet, Police Chief Jeff Bowman, Executive Assistant Krysti Ficker, and City Treasurer Justine Hill. A quorum of the Council was present.

There were no conflicts of interest declared by any member of the Council. Councilor Fackerell did acknowledge she was acquainted with Erik Jensen; however, it was confirmed that she would not gain any financial benefit by voting.

Public Communications - Written & Oral. Mayor Smith commented that there were no written and/or oral communications submitted.

New Business.

Police Chief Recruitment. Mayor Smith introduced the new business item and Administrator Sweet went over the staff report. He talked about the longevity of the police chief, the City's police hiring requirements, and the difficulty in hiring a new police officer. The City had attempted to obtain three bids for a company to provide services for recruitment, of which two submitted proposals (Jensen Strategies, GMP Consultants). Administrator Sweet reported that in the past, he has been involved with both companies and that each had done a good job. He felt they both had good proposals and offered similar strategies for hiring a new police chief. Jensen Strategies had a professional fee of \$24,000, plus anticipated City expenses of an estimated \$5,000. GMP Consultants had a professional fee of \$15,000, plus anticipated City expenses. His recommendation is based on price, which is GMP Consultants. He pointed out it was a Council's decision and opened the topic up for discussion. Mayor Smith appreciated GMP's guarantee and warranty and was curious if Jensen had similar language. Administrator Sweet confirmed there was no such language in Jensen Strategies proposal. Councilor Gould felt Mayor Smith's inquiry made a very valid point. She feels that the position is going to be a

challenge to fill, that there will not be many applicants, and that the hiring process may be difficult. She appreciated that Jensen has experience working in Oregon and the local area; as well as experience in helping facilitate public input in the process. Administrator Sweet clarified that he had specifically spoken with both groups about the public portion of the process and that they were both able to provide support (e.g., public, staff, Council). Councilor Tomlinson appreciated that GMP had specific experience with police chief recruitment, which may give them a wider network to pull from. Councilor Fackerell felt that both proposals cited clients that were much larger than the City of Gearhart. She was concerned about recruitment being focused on larger cities with higher salaries. Councilor Gould thought there should be an intense recruitment focus in Oregon. She also felt there should be an alternative plan if coverage is needed until the City can hire and assimilate a new police chief. Administrator Sweet mentioned that Clatsop County Sheriff's office is mandated to provide assistance and work with the City if support is needed. There was discussion on this type of coverage not being the same level of coverage and what type of police department Gearhart would like. Councilor Devereaux requested information on what package could be offered to entice a new police chief to Gearhart. He expressed that the police chief should live in the City. He also felt that Sheriff Phillips already has his hands full in the County. He talked about lack of manpower at the County level and the time commitment that the new gun law will impose on the Sheriff's department. He wanted to know if there had been any discussions with Seaside for interim coverage. There was continued discussion on lack of coverage in Gearhart, alternative options for coverage in the police department, other agencies assistance, adequate coverage in the community, intergovernmental contracts with other agencies, evidence storage, residence location of new police chief, and response times. Mayor Smith brought the discussion back to the recruitment proposals and asked if there was a motion.

- ON MOTION by Councilor Gould, 2nd by Councilor Fackerell to approve entering into an agreement with the lowest bid and proceed with the recruitment of a new police chief, MOTION was approved 4 yeas (Fackerell, Gould, Smith, Tomlinson) - 0 nays - 1 abstain (Devereaux).
- Mayor Smith mentioned that he will strive to have clearer communication so that the Councilors understand the discussion topic.

League of Oregon Cities (LOC)/Oregon Mayors Association (OMA) Partnership Needed to Solve Statewide Homelessness. Mayor Smith requested Administrator Sweet go over the staff report synopsis. He went over the collaborative State partnerships, the two objectives, funding amounts, preventative service examples, capital investments, local community partners, and

the recommendation for the City to participate. He had asked Alan Evans of Helping Hands for information on the local homeless situation. It was acknowledged that community partners have not been selected and could be determined at a later date. Councilor Devereaux talked about the Governor's homeless expectations on public property and how the City was planning to address this issue. Administrator Sweet acknowledged that the City does have some homeless cases in Gearhart. Last budgeting cycle there were funds allocated in the police department for community care to address some of the immediate needs that the officers encounter. City departments get support for local organizations like the hospitals, Helping Hands, and Clatsop Community Actions. As part of participating in the proposed LOC/OMA program, the City would like to recommend that some funds go to support local service organizations and some stay with the City to provide support. There was continued discussion on regional facilities, the benefits of pooling resources, pressure on the State to provide stable funding, courts evaluating City's engagement with homeless measures, collaboration, feasibility of capital improvements, the proposed template, and acknowledging that homelessness is not illegal. Mayor Smith requested consensus by the Council if they would like to move forward with the homeless partnership.

- There was consensus by the Council to allow the City's involvement in the statewide LOC/OMA Homeless Emergency Project, including the option to divert funds to partnering communities if necessary (Devereaux, Fackerell, Gould, Smith, Tomlinson).

Council Concerns.

- Councilor Gould does have concerns over recruitment in law enforcement. She is not opposed to exploring other coverage options; however, more investigation would need to take place.
- Councilor Devereaux reported no concerns.
- Councilor Tomlinson reported no concerns.
- Councilor Fackerell reported no concerns and was looking forward to the jail tour.
- Mayor Smith felt compelled to correct false fabrications posted on the internet regarding information from the December 7, 2022 Council meeting. He stated that at no time was the Highlands emergency property a discussion. He clarified that as reported at the Council meeting, Councilor Tomlinson and himself walked the parklands in the dunes to provide input for mowing permit options (e.g., scotch broom). The Highlands property was mowed in August of this year; however, the Gearhart Fire department did not turn out any equipment. They did turn out equipment for the Little Beach wildfire on September 1, 2022. Mayor Smith is also continuing to work on a date for the town hall, which has been a challenge due to scheduling conflicts. He feels that if there is something to report, it will be reported. He


requested that the authors of the misinformation, please stop wasting the City's and/or citizens' time.

Mayor Smith requested adjournment.

- ON MOTION by Councilor Tomlinson, 2nd by Councilor Gould to adjourn the meeting, MOTION was approved 5 yeas (Devereaux, Fackerell, Gould, Smith, Tomlinson) - 0 nays. Mayor Smith adjourned the regular Council meeting at 6:51 pm.



Chad Sweet, City Administrator



Mayor Kerry Smith