

COMMON COUNCIL
TUESDAY, APRIL 14, 2015
7:00 P.M.

Mayor Ryan Daniel – Present
Clerk Treasurer Rosie Coyle – Present
Attorney Marcia McNagny – Present

Council Members

Nicole Penrod – Present
Ben Romine – Present
William (Bill) Simpson – Absent
Daniel Weigold – Absent
Jacie Worrick – Present

The Columbia City Common Council met in regular session with all members except Bill Simpson and Daniel Weigold present, Mayor Daniel presiding.

MINUTES Motion was made by Ben Romine to approve an overview of the March 24, 2015 meeting minutes as presented, Jacie Worrick seconded the motion, all voted aye.

ORDINANCE 2015-12: VACATE OF PUBLIC ALLEY – 208-510 E. VAN BUREN ST.

Motion was made by Ben Romine to read Ordinance 2015-12 by title only, Nicole Penrod seconded the motion, all voted aye. Rosie Coyle read Ordinance 2015-12 by title only.

Mayor Daniel explained this was regarding the petition to vacate the alleyway by Verne & Dayna LaRue. Rosie Coyle advised the notice was published in the newspaper and the surrounding property owners were contacted. She advised Attorney McNagny reviewed the ordinance as well.

Nicole Penrod called a couple different places and was informed that the property was of no real value to the City. She stated if it is vacated and it becomes a part of the LaRue's property they will reassess and pay taxes on that part. Mayor Daniel noted it was very much like Langeloh Park or North Street Garden. Ben Romine questioned in this case what makes this property different than Langeloh Park or North Street. Nicole Penrod advised she asked if there was a value to it, in terms of a price for them to buy it, and was informed that there was really no value to it.

Mike Shoda noted that even if we do vacate the property they cannot build on it because there is a water line there. Mayor Daniel advised there was a clause in the ordinance addressing that.

Rosie Coyle advised Mr. LaRue could be at the next meeting if needed.

Jacie Worrick questioned if we would be setting precedence. Mayor Daniel confirmed we have vacated alleys before. Rosie Coyle advised we have but they are not used alleys. Nicole Penrod felt they would have to go case by case. Rosie Coyle stated their theory was that no one uses it because there is nothing there. She advised they were not going all the way through, just

halfway. Jacie Worrick questioned if we would still plow the other half of the alley. Mayor Daniel advised we would. Kelly Cearbaugh expressed a concern for setting precedence; even though it was only half of an alley a lot of people could join in and do the same thing. He stated as far as plowing they would have to come in off of Madison and make the turn to Market.

Nicole Penrod requested to table the issue until more of the Council members were present, Jacie Worrick and Ben Romine agreed. Nicole Penrod felt it important that Mr. LaRue be present at the next meeting.

ORDINANCE 2015-13: SALARY ORDINANCE AMENDMENT Motion was made by Nicole Penrod to read Ordinance 2015-13 by title only, Ben Romine seconded the motion, all voted aye. Clerk Treasurer Rosie Coyle read Ordinance 2015-13 and ordinance amending the City of Columbia City salary ordinance for 2015.

Mayor Daniel explained this had to do with discussions that came about with a recent hire in the Telecommunications Department but expands to public safety departments in general. He advised in the current ordinance there is a probationary rate for police and fire which was about \$14,000 less than a regular police officer or firefighter. He shared there was discussion from both Chief LaRue and Longenbaugh regarding that difference and continuing to be able to attract talent. He shared that there was discussion regarding how the probation status of an employee is or is not tied to a first year employee and the wage scale incorporated.

Mayor Daniel explained, in the ordinance, the first change was in the Communications section to remove the title "Probationary Pay" and instead give a range from \$32,000.00 - \$43,000.00. He explained this came about because our recent hire had experience in another department and was a part time Telecommunicator for the City. He felt by giving the superintendent and Human Resource Director the ability to judge based on years of experience makes sense. He explained it would be the same situation for police and fire.

Rosie Coyle advised the probationary period for communications is 6 months but the law requires police and fire to be a one year probationary period.

Mayor Daniel felt these were pretty common sense changes and did not believe it would affect any of the budgets financially.

Nicole Penrod questioned if the top of the range was still less than current full time people. Chief Longenbaugh advised it was by about \$3,000.00.

Ben Romine confirmed they would basically be giving the department heads the discretion as to what they offer based on experience. Mayor Daniel advised that was correct and added that pay rates have to be approved by himself as well as the Clerk Treasurer. Ben Romine confirmed it was just for wages and does not include benefits. Mayor Daniel advised that was correct.

Motion was made by Ben Romine to approve Ordinance 2015-13 as first reading, Jacie Worrick seconded the motion, all voted aye.

REVIEW OF DRUG & ALCOHOL ABUSE PROGRAM Beth Igney, HR Director, was present to review the drug & alcohol programs. She advised these changes came about because of a conference she attended through IMPACT who is an affiliate of IACT. She noted in the policy there were 'strike-outs' that they would like to delete and the additions were in red.

Mayor Daniel read a paragraph from the Program Overview section of the policy that he felt summed up where we were trying to get to in moving to as close to zero tolerance as possible.

Ben Romine questioned how they see this being enforced with volunteers since they do not have scheduled shifts. Beth Igney explained they would still be under this program, they would go through the pre-employment testing and then for the random testing their names would be added to the list, she would call them and set up an appointment for them, as long as they were an active volunteer. Mayor Daniel noted the underlying concern was that volunteer's, just as much as the full timers, drive the big 1,000 lb. vehicles.

Nicole Penrod advised she was all for zero tolerance and questioned if their name gets pulled and they go that day or the next day but are not on duty how would that help. Ben Romine added if they would go for testing and had alcohol in their system but were not on a run or at a scene would we discipline them if they were not even on duty. Beth Igney advised they could look at that further. She explained sometimes if an employee is on vacation she does not get them tested until the next week and was something we could do with the volunteers; just wait until they would come on duty. Rosie Coyle felt the only time alcohol might come into effect is if they were on a scene and it is noticed. She felt otherwise the main thing we would be testing for was drugs.

Ben Romine advised he would like to get Tom Larue's opinion. Mayor Daniel advised they have had discussions with him and mentioned this originated from him. Nicole Penrod questioned if the volunteers could make the choice not to respond to a scene. Mayor Daniel advised they could and hoped they would not come to a scene if they have had a few drinks. Tim Longenbaugh shared that he could not speak for Chief LaRue but advised the police department has an alcohol policy in place.

Additional discussion followed.

Beth Igney advised this would also include part time people. Nicole Penrod confirmed it was just for people in safety type positions. Beth explained for the random testing it would be but we could do everybody for pre-employment.

Ben Romine advised he understood what they were trying to get at but felt further clarification was needed. He stated he did not have a problem with the drug test but the alcohol part was the question. He was not sure how we could make an exception for the volunteers but felt it would create a problem with anyone having had a drink during the day; they would not go on a run because they would be threatened with being discharged.

Mayor Daniel questioned if the general sense of the Council was they liked the majority of the policy but there was question regarding the alcohol testing of the volunteer firefighters. Council

agreed. Mayor Daniel requested Beth Igney contact Ben Romine to see if there were ways to clarify that issue.

Mark Green noted he has about 40 part time summer employees. He advised he was all for this but the difficulty for him was the cost to have them all tested. Mayor Daniel agreed with Beth Igney in that if they are employees of the City whether summer staff, winter staff, part time or full time staff they needed to be tested for drug and alcohol. Beth Igney questioned if there was an option within the budget to help with the costs. Mayor Daniel felt they would be able to find the funds somewhere.

Motion was made by Nicole Penrod to pass the Drug and Alcohol Abuse Program on first reading and take it to a second reading with some possible modifications to the volunteers, Ben Romine seconded the motion, all voted aye.

ORDINANCE 2015-14: AMENDMENT TO TRAFFIC ORDINANCE Mayor Daniel requested to table this issue.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS **Jeff Walker** – SR 205 project, comprehensive plan public survey, Redevelopment Commission request for proposals for development of the former Eagles property as well as solicit bids for demolition of the 215 W. Van Buren Street. **Terry Wherry** – Park Department virtual server for RecPro software, base radio replacements, Mediacom installed new internet connection in fire training room, finished up rewiring project in dispatch, installed 2 new desktop computers in the fire engineers office. **Kelly Cearbaugh** – street sweeper out, working at cemetery, limb pickup, will have leaf machine out for one pass, leaf mulch available. **Tim Longenbaugh** – handgun qualifications, upcoming training, testing for new applicants, burglary investigations. **Mark Green** – ordered playground for Every Kids Dreamland, DNR trout fishing derby at Morsches Park, opening day for baseball/softball is April 25, RecPro software for registrations and memberships. **Mike Shoda** – flushing hydrants on May 11. **Mike Cook** – training and certifications.

Having no further business to discuss the meeting was adjourned.

Mayor Ryan Daniel

Attest:

Clerk Treasurer Rosie Coyle