

**ASHLAND CITY COUNCIL
BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, October 1, 2024**

5:30 PM Executive Session

Mayor Graham and Councilors Hyatt, DuQuenne, Bloom, Dahle, Kaplan, and Hansen were present. Attorney Dan Thorndike, Acting City Attorney Doug McGeary, City Manager Sabrina Cotta, Climate & Energy Analyst Chad Woodward and City Recorder Alissa Kolodzinski were also present. Attending from the media was Morgan Rothborne of Ashland.News and Susan Hiland from the Grants Pass Daily Courier.

- I. To consider information or records that are exempt by law from public inspection pursuant to ORS 192.660 (2)(f).

6:00 PM Business Meeting

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Graham called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

- a. Land Acknowledgement**

Councilor Kaplan read the land acknowledgement.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Graham led the pledge of allegiance.

III. ROLL CALL

Mayor Graham, Councilors Hyatt, Dahle, Bloom, DuQuenne, Kaplan, and Hansen were present

IV. MAYOR'S/ CHAIR OF THE COUNCIL ANNOUNCEMENT

DuQuenne spoke that the 14th Annual Southern Oregon Pride Parade is scheduled for Saturday, October 5, 2024 starting at 10am at the library. Graham spoke that the agenda item RESO 2024-27 NHMP Adoption is removed from the Consent Agenda. Graham spoke that Architectural Digest has named Ashland, Oregon as one of the 13 most beautiful, underrated cities in the world and that Travel.com has named Ashland as America's Coziest College Town.

- a. Proclamation: Indigenous People's Day

Mayor Graham read the proclamation into the record and spoke that Southern Oregon University (SOU) will be hosting a celebration of Indigenous Peoples Day October 19-20, 2024.

Graham brought up that at the last meeting a former Budget Committee member spoke that she resigned due to disrespectful behavior from other committee members and the City's legal department. Graham asked the Council, as the body who sits on the Budget Committee, if there was a time when Ms. Shapiro was told to shut up by the chair, Eric Navickas. Bloom

spoke that he remembers the incident and added that for full transparency he is running against Eric Navickas (for City Council). Bloom spoke that he was sitting two seats away from Navickas, remembers the line of questioning from Shapiro, and that Navickas spoke 'oh, shut up' under his breath. DuQuenne spoke that remembers Navickas being rude and short with Shapiro. Hyatt spoke of remembering a heated exchange but cannot remember exact verbiage. Graham spoke that she wanted to clear this up so that the community could have any reflections from the Council body about this.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. Minutes of the September 16, 2024, Study Session
- b. Minutes of the September 17, 2024, Business Meeting

Hansen/Hyatt m/s to approve the minutes of the September 16 Study Session, and September 17 Regular Business meeting as-is.

Roll Call Vote: Councilor DuQuenne, Kaplan, Hyatt, Bloom, Dahle, and Hansen. YES. Motion passed.

VI. CONSENT AGENDA

- a. Approval of Liquor license for The Short Grass LLC DBA Kando
- b. Approval of Liquor license for Lovely LLC DBA Lovely Hair Lounge
- c. (RESO 2024-27 NHMP Adoption – moved to next meeting)

Bloom/Dahle m/s to approve the consent agenda.

Roll Call Vote: Councilor DuQuenne, Hyatt, Bloom, Dahle, Kaplan, and Hansen. YES. Motion passed

VII. CONTRACTS

- a. City Manager Contract

McGeary spoke that the Council directed his department to put together the contract which he has approved as to form.

Bloom/Hansen m/s to approve the employment agreement between the City of Ashland and Sabrina Cotta for the position of City Manager.

Discussion: Bloom expressed his strong support for the agreement and spoke that Cotta has proven herself a capable and visionary leader in guiding the City through significant challenges with skill and dedication. Cotta has earned the respect and trust of City Staff and is capable of managing current issues with a clear vision for leading Ashland into a brighter future. Hansen agreed and congratulated Cotta. Dahle spoke of his appreciation around Cotta's contribution to staff morale, fiscal responsibility, professionalism, transparency, and clear communication. DuQuenne spoke that she appreciates Cotta but did not support this before in reference for including community input so she will not support this motion. **Roll Call Vote: Councilor Dahle, Bloom, Kaplan, Hyatt, and Hansen. YES. DuQuenne NO. Motion passed**

b. 2245 YMCA Way Lease – Finance Department

Finance Director Mariane Berry provided a presentation of this lease opportunity at 2245 YMCA Way as the new workspace for the finance department. (see agenda packet). Per AMC 2.28.045 Item C, Council approval is needed to authorize the City Manager to execute a lease longer than a month.

DuQuenne clarified with Berry that the lease is for five years at about \$67,000 annually with a three percent CPI (Consumer Price Index) increase. Graham asked Cotta about plans for City Hall with the Facilities Master Plan coming. Cotta spoke that considerations for staff at City Hall will take time and the Facilities Master Plan will look at where different City functions should be located. This lease will allow the finance department to be housed in one location which will increase efficiency. Dahle asked Cotta what alternatives were considered. Cotta spoke that Parks and Recreation has provided Utility Billing space in the Grove, but this has impacted their ability to provide recreation services, and all other City facilities are at capacity. Bloom asked if there were any considerations for housing all departments together. Cotta spoke of being in favor of considering a solution for all public-facing services to be housed together adding that parking for the public and City staff is a consideration. DuQuenne spoke that the \$67,000 for five years was not budgeted for and asked why this space is needed. Cotta spoke that the finance department consists of 16 people who are currently stationed in three different buildings. Berry clarified that the current space at the Grove is unable to scale up for the upcoming RESP (Rural Energy Savings Program) loan and increase in delinquency processing. The Grove is also not ADA compliant and not set up for staff to receive cash or feel secure when engaged in delinquency processing. Dahle asked if the new facility would be able to house all finance employees with the ability to scale up for additional services. Berry affirmed, adding that it would extend customer service hours. Kaplan clarified with Berry that the department has adjusted its budget to accommodate this lease, so it is not requesting a budget increase. Hansen understands the desire from the community for the department to be more public facing. Hyatt spoke that the Council asked the department to prioritize extending customer service walk-in hours. Graham spoke of the direction from Council for staff to look at the safety of City Hall and clarified with Berry that this new building would provide flexibility in the future for any need to move staff from City Hall. Cotta spoke that staff have searched for several months for an alternative location for those who work in City Hall but have not found one. Bloom noted the mention of \$2,500 towards HVAC in the lease asking if this indicated there were issues with it. Berry clarified that the Operations Deputy Director did not see any issues and that the building owner was eager to have the City in this building. Dahle asked why the four percent increase was lined-out in the rent increase portion of the lease. Berry responded that the CPI is currently below four percent. Dahle asked if there could be a cap added to the rent increase language which Berry affirmed. DuQuenne asked Berry to let constituents know what CPI stands for and Berry clarified CPI stands for Consumer Price Index.

Hyatt/Dahle m/s to authorize the City Manager to approve and sign a lease agreement on 2245 YMCA Way with terms summarized in the attached Letter of Intent with the addition of a CPI Cap

Discussion: Hyatt spoke of being happy to make this motion as funding has been covered under existing appropriations, it adds flexibility while a more comprehensive plan is developed. This is responsive to Council's direction to open more hours to the public, and it will increase staff presence on the south side of town. Dahle agreed adding the rent is reasonable. Bloom agreed about the benefit of services in other parts of town, especially for those that do not use technology or need a friendly face. DuQuenne spoke of supporting this knowing where the money is coming from and is on the south side for accessibility.

Roll Call Vote: Councilor Hyatt, Dahle, Kaplan, Bloom, DuQuenne, and Hansen. YES. Motion passed

VIII. PUBLIC HEARING

- a. First Reading ORD 3244 Amending AMC 2.10 to Establish Uniform Policies and Operating Procedures for City Council and Management Advisory Committees

McGeary spoke that he made the changes asked for by Council in the previous reading with the exception of needing to clarify the two-year term limit for all Committee Members in section 2.10.015 B 2. Bloom asked about the term break for a Chair or Co-Chair to serve again. Graham, Bloom, and Kaplan clarified with McGeary that the term for Chair or Co-Chair should be for one year but can serve two consecutive terms before needing to take a break. McGeary spoke of removing the electronic attendance language. Discussion occurred about the merits of electronic and in-person attendance. McGeary spoke of clarifying the language regarding lobbying in section 0.80. Hyatt spoke of adding the Audit Committee to the fifth 'Whereas' clause and on section 2.10.020 Concern was raised about 2.10.035 Role of Staff and that staff time is limited to two hours per committee. Cotta spoke that staff is putting together a committee handbook, which includes this two-hour rule. Graham asked Cotta if this should be delineated in the handbook or in the code. Cotta spoke that the handbook will be based on the code. Dahle asked about Cotta's check-ins with staff liaisons and what feedback she receives. Cotta spoke of having formed a staff liaison support group that meets once a quarter to clarify and support their role. DuQuenne asked that the diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) language for committee representation be applied to Commissions and the Budget Committee in 2.10.065. Graham confirmed with McGeary that this was removed from this ordinance since they are governed by other statutory regulations. McGeary continued that if a Commission creates committees, they will be governed by this ordinance. Graham asked if the Council could pass a resolution that outlines the requirement to select Committees with diversity of representation as a criterion, which McGeary confirmed.

Public Hearing Opened

Mike Gardiner – spoke of an informal group of committee chairs, co-chairs, and occasionally the Mayor and/or Councilors that meets on a monthly basis to interface between

committees and commissions. Gardiner advocated for it to be easier for people to serve on committees as it is difficult to get people to serve as members, chairs, and co-chairs. Gardiner asked for clarification on what happens when members begin in the middle of a term, who tracks attendance requirements, and who's responsibility it is to bring the committees goals and action item work back to Council for annual review.

Rich Rohde – Spoke in support of the ordinance since it includes the DEI language. Rohde asked for clarification on the standing of students with regards to counting towards quorum and suggested that the resolution for including student participation be included here.

Public Hearing Closed

Bloom clarified that students count towards quorum if they are 18 years of age, as only voting members count towards quorum. Graham spoke that should a standing committee be full it could add up to two student slots per committee. Dahle asked if the intention was for each committee to set its membership number or if the intention is to create a standard that applies to all committees. Graham confirmed the intention is for a standard. Graham asked for the student representation to be included in the 2.10 section. Hansen referenced Gardiner's testimony in support of allowing a chair to serve up to four years in cases where the committee needs it. DuQuenne spoke in favor of the chair term limits since a former chair can still serve on the committee. Dahle agreed, adding that if a committee is having a hard time filling the role of chair then the Council would need to reflect on why that is the case. Graham polled Councilors for their opinion on this term limit for chair. Graham summarized that guidance for staff is for one-year terms for up to two years and that the Council will need to take up the question regarding in-person meetings another time. Graham asked that staff suggestions for this be included in the draft ordinance for consideration at the first reading which will come to Council.

b. RESO 2024-28 Budget Supplemental – Recognizing and Appropriating New Revenue

Berry presented the Budget Supplemental recognizing two sets of revenue: additional logging revenue for work done in the Ashland Forest Lands Climate Adaptation Project, and from a State settlement with several companies for their role in the opioid crisis. Those funds will be appropriated in the Administration budget for proactive opioid prevention, treatment, and recovery strategies.

Dahle asked how the opioid fund usage will be tracked. Berry spoke the City is required to report back to the State regarding these legally restricted funds. Berry spoke there is a long list of authorized expenditures the State will allow the City to use these funds for and that so far these funds have been spent on Narcan, ARC (Addictions Recovery Center in Medford) and education through the Fire Department.

Public Hearing Opened – None

Public Hearing Closed

Kaplan/Hyatt m/s to approve Resolution 2024-28 – Budget Supplement Recognizing New Revenue and Appropriating Expenditures.

Discussion: none

Roll Call Vote: Councilor Bloom, DuQuenne, Hyatt, Dahle, Kaplan, and Hansen. YES. Motion passed

IX. PUBLIC FORUM

15 Minutes – Public input or comment on City business not included on the agenda.

Lilli Malan/Ashland – spoke of her concern regarding the treatment of the homeless. Urged Council to pass the Climate and Clean Air Policy Package (CCAPP)

Kiera Retiz/Ashland –the Ashland Youth for Electrification Campaign began in March of 2023 has had no progress in months. Seven years ago, Ashland passed the Climate and Energy Action Plan which has not been completed and urged the Council to adopt the CCAPP.

Piper Banks/Ashland – spoke as a senior at AHS being frustrated that she is working on the same common-sense ordinance she started working on as a sophomore. Urged Council to pass the CCAPP.

Norah Doyle/Medford – spoke as a member of the Rogue Climate Action Team urging Council to pass the CCAPP. Passing only part of the package to avoid legal complications will not be as effective.

Clara Kopp /Central Point – spoke in support for the CCAPP which presents Ashland an opportunity to influence change across Oregon and the Nation.

Asa Oaks/Central Point – spoke support for the CAPP. Youth care about this action and there is local support for bold action now while other communities are watching.

Wren Siino – spoke support of the CCAPP as important for the climate and the community. Everyone has the right to clean air and be safe in their homes.

Logan Potts/Ashland – spoke that his landscaping business has all electric equipment and is in support of the CCAPP.

Chris Abrahamsen/Medford – spoke in support of the CCAP as executive director of the Grassroots Activists International Association. Abrahamsen spoke the Council has the opportunity to show the youth that it matters to get involved.

Kathleen Hering/Ashland –spoke as a retired nurse in support of the full Climate Policy package the youth has put together.

Ricardo Morant/Ashland – suggested changing the noise ordinance addressed at the last Council meeting to earlier by one hour rather than listing the time as 6am.

Paul Mozina/Ashland – spoke of his disappointment in how the telecommunications ordinance update was processed. Added that a draft of the ordinance was not provided before it was released for public comment. There were over one hundred comments, including one that spoke how the ordinance was in clear conflict with federal law.

Jess Grady-Benson – spoke as the Organizing Director at Rogue Climate she hopes progress towards drafting these policies and passing the package in full is made. The youth and community members want to see the Council ensure that Ashland will meet its climate goals and improve air quality for its residents.

X. SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

a. Finance Update – 4th Quarter Preliminary Financial Results

Berry provided a presentation of the update which covers the full fiscal year ending June 30, 2024 (full presentation in agenda packet). Berry spoke that the audit is underway, so numbers are preliminary. Berry anticipates the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR) to be completed and issued at the beginning of December. Transient Lodging Tax revenue is 42 percent higher, and Food and Beverage Tax revenue is 9.1 percent higher than the previous year. Berry spoke that the Food and Beverage tax expires in 2030 and goes to community services such as Parks and Streets. Investments have done well compared to budget projections, largely due to cash balances carried forward from the previous biennium and a more active approach with the City's portfolio. Franchise fees decreased by five percent generally due to the termination of Ashland Home Net agreement that is no longer providing cable TV service to residents. Overall, city-wide revenues are up about 6.8 percent. The City is in budgetary compliance. Capital spending has not kept up with budget due to the Water Treatment Plant financing is referred to the voters in November. Overall, balances are tracking as they should and the City continues with a strong net position.

Hansen appreciated the update and hard work of staff. Hansen spoke of feeling encouraged to see the Transient Lodging Tax, Food and Beverage Tax, and SDC numbers show the local economy is doing well. Dahle thanked Berry and expressed his encouragement that the City looks to be in good shape with reserves. Dahle asked Berry to explain the reason for carrying over such a large ending fund balance. Berry spoke of following best practices with the Government Finance and Officers Association to ensure that unappropriated fund balance is reserved for other needs and as a buffer. Berry added that the department also has reserves and contingencies.

XI. CITY MANAGER REPORT

a. City Manager Report

Cotta spoke that City Hall will open to the public on Thursdays from 8:30–10am beginning November 7, 2024, for office hours with the City Manager. The City's OLLI Course on local city government is underway. Jackson County has introduced evacuation zones adjacent to the City's zones, and the City's GIS team is updating the evacuation maps to include these zones. Cotta congratulated GIS Manager Lea Richards on celebrating 20 years of service with the City and as an international award-winning GIS specialist. Parks and Recreation has two surveys out on the website regarding the pool and pickleball. The full report can be found in the agenda packet.

XII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

XIII. NEW BUSINESS

a. Climate Investment

Cotta spoke that Council allocated \$500,000 per year from the electric enterprise fund to be used towards conservation initiatives during the last budget process. Cotta requested

direction for expending this allocation. Cotta spoke that staff recommendations for expending the \$955,000 balance for the biennium 2024-25 include:

- Purchase of a car charger tester at \$60,000 to facilitate repair instead of replacement when chargers are inoperable.
- Hire consultants for a greenhouse gas inventory update at \$150,000 to assess City progress on CEAP goals.
- Retain funds to support advertising and staffing for the rollout of the USDA loan program for on-bill financing of approved conservation upgrades. These funds could also allow the City to charge a lower interest rate for these loans.
- Roll funds forward into the next biennium within the electric fund to assist with rate increases anticipated as forthcoming in 2025.

Kaplan spoke in favor of keeping these funds in the conservation program. Other use of the of funds could be to study the gap between electric use and more efficient equipment, subsidies to low-income households, increase to the number of navigators to assist people through the steps to energy efficient homes, and car charge testers. Dahle agreed with Kaplan adding his support for outreach and education for small business owners. Hansen declared that he is the owner of True South Solar in Ashland (for transparency) and spoke that the Energy Trust of Oregon's new directive is Solar for Everybody with an income-based incentive. Hansen spoke that increasing the City's renewable energy incentives to mirror Energy Trust of Oregon policies will help increase solar capacity in Ashland, reduce dependence on Bonneville power, and increase community resiliency. Bloom spoke in favor of the greenhouse gas inventory to help assess movement on CEAP goals. DuQuenne spoke in favor of the car charger tester and to roll over funds. Hyatt spoke in favor of the car charger tester but not in favor of the greenhouse gas inventory. Hyatt also spoke of support for retaining funds to support the USDA loan for on-bill financing to keep the loan origination fees low, and for room to consider future programs. Graham spoke in favor of supporting as many residents and small businesses as possible to take advantage of incentives through the Inflation Reduction Act, reduction of the monthly electricity bill through weatherization and energy efficiency appliances, retaining funds to assist with citizen navigation through the USDA loan program for on-bill financing, and a fund for those in the gap that cannot afford energy efficient appliances even with incentives. DuQuenne appreciated the idea of a grant but spoke in favor of the flexibility to help with rate changes anticipated in 2025. Hansen suggested staff engage in a study on what the Energy Trust of Oregon is doing for low to middle income households. Kaplan spoke in favor of considering how renters can reduce their expenses on energy as some of the cheapest apartments have the least efficient equipment.

Kaplan/Hansen m/s to direct staff to come back in the next month with a program along the lines as discussed for use of these funds: yes to charger tester, no to the study, yes to the on-bill financing rollout, and yes to a grant program for renters and businesses that takes into account the Energy Trust of Oregon's leadership.

Discussion: Kaplan spoke he had nothing to add. Hansen appreciated the discussion and the opportunity to help the most vulnerable citizens. DuQuenne spoke appreciation for the equitable way this was presented.

Roll Call Vote: Councilor Hyatt, Dahle, Kaplan, Bloom, DuQuenne, and Hansen. YES. Motion passed

b. Funding request: 150th Birthday Celebration

Cotta spoke that the City's original charter was granted to the City of Ashland in 1874. Epic Ashland has proposed an event to celebrate the City's 150th Birthday and has been awarded \$10,000 from the new Events Grant process. Cotta is requesting funds from the Mayor and Council training budget, not to exceed \$5,000, as contingency if needed. Hyatt asked Cotta if there would be training funds left for the next Council come January. Cotta confirmed there would remain \$7,000 for any Spring conferences, onboarding, and utility board training for the next Council. Graham spoke that she and Kaplan spoke with Epic Ashland for community partnership for the event planning needed for this celebration.

Kaplan/Dahle m/s to authorize staff to provide additional funding up to \$5000 for Ashland's 150th Birthday Celebration from the Mayor and Council training budget and to direct staff to move forward.

Discussion: Kaplan spoke of Epic Ashland as a new local non-profit with dynamic leadership. He enjoyed events this summer and is happy to support this. Dahle spoke of his support and his hope that it will develop into a full calendar of events. DuQuenne, Hanen, and Bloom spoke of their support of this event.

Roll Call Vote: Councilor Hyatt, Dahle, Kaplan, Bloom, DuQuenne, and Hansen. YES. Motion passed

XIV. ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS AND CONTRACTS

a. Second Reading of Ordinance 3246 "An Ordinance Annexing Property and Withdrawing An Annexed Area from Jackson County Fire District No. 5 (East Main Park - Planning Action #PA-T3-2024-00009"

Brandon Goldman, Community Development Director spoke that the Council heard this application on September 17, 2024, when it accepted the site review, adopted the Planning Commission's findings, and approved the first reading of this ordinance to annex this property into Ashland's city limits. There are no changes from how it was presented before.

Bloom/Hansen m/s to approve Second Reading of Ordinance No. 3246: an ordinance annexing property and withdrawing an annexed area from Jackson County Fire District no. 5.

Discussion: Bloom spoke of his support for this on Ashland's South side. Hansen spoke that this achieves the City's goal to have a park within a quarter mile of all Ashland residents and congratulated Parks for receiving the grant funds needed for this park that has something for everyone.

Roll Call Vote: Councilor Hyatt, Dahle, Kaplan, Bloom, DuQuenne, and Hansen. YES. Motion passed

XV. OTHER BUSINESS FROM COUNCIL MEMBERS/REPORTS FROM COUNCIL LIAISONS

Bloom spoke that the Rogue Valley Council of Governments (RVCOG) met last week. A FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) grant came through for some live cameras to monitor wildfire. Shady Cove's water system failed, declared a state of emergency, and received support from the County and RVCOG.

Hansen spoke of the Transportation Advisory Committee meeting on September 19, when the Climate Friendly Areas project was discussed. The Committee also looked at the B Street Corridor Safety Analysis for making that area more bike and pedestrian friendly.

Hyatt spoke that the Council's support of early learning in the community is being recognized. The Early Learning Council is hosting their annual meeting and has invited Hyatt to talk about Ashland's program. Hyatt also did a podcast with the Children's Institute in Portland and spoke that Ashland is a first mover in recognizing the connection of early learning to economic development and how important this is to working families.

XVI. ADJOURNMENT

Bloom/DuQuenne m/s to adjourn. All in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 9:03 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Attest:


City Recorder Alissa Kolodzinski


Mayor Tonya Graham

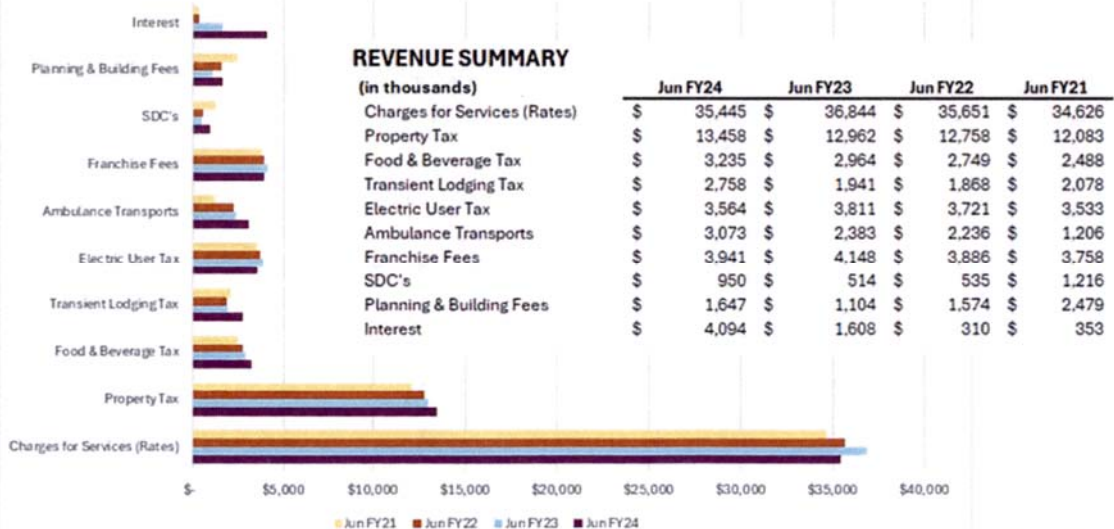


Finance Update Fourth Quarter FY24

October 1, 2024

Finance

REVENUE SUMMARY (in thousands)





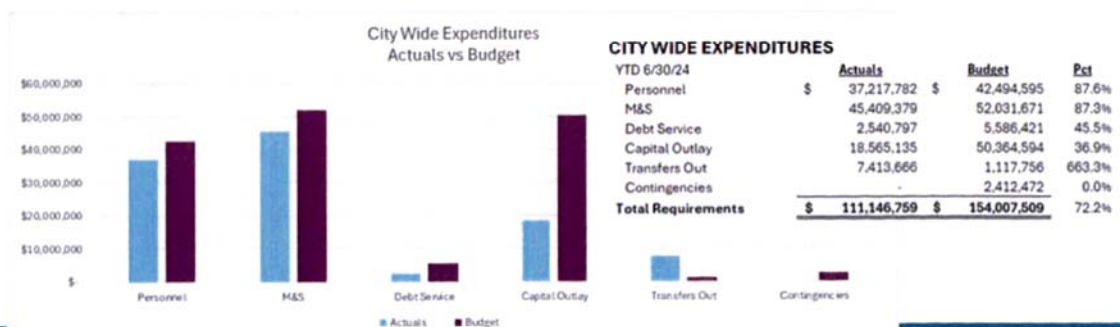
Revenues

- ❖ Transient Lodging, Food & Beverage Taxes and Other
 - TLT is **42% higher** than previous year
 - F&B is **9.1% higher** than previous year
 - Planning/Building fees are **up by 49.2%**
- ❖ Investment income more than doubled this fiscal year
- ❖ Franchise Fees **decreased by 5.0%**
- ❖ City-wide revenue **up by about 6.8%**
- ❖ Accounts receivable and collections update
 - Delinquency processing and collections efforts continue
 - A/R had been increasing since pandemic, starting to see gains in collections
 - New customer policies for appeal process



Expenditures

- ❖ In budgetary compliance
 - Transfers out are due to SDC accounting entries that are in compliance with GAAP and budget law.
- ❖ Capital spending & debt service
 - Water Treatment Plant construction delayed due to referral





City's Net Position*

❖ Fund Balance

- City Wide = \$89.1M vs \$82.7M
- General Fund = \$20.6M vs \$21.7M

❖ Cash & Investments

- City Wide = \$78.6M vs \$76.0M
- General Fund = \$17.1M vs \$21.1M

* Current Year vs Previous Year, same period



Finance Department Updates

- Utility Billing
 - 2245 YMCA Building
 - Implementing process for new ordinance
- Municipal Audit Committee
- Budget
 - Preparing for the upcoming season

QUESTIONS?



Re: Ordinance enforcement and City communication

September 20, 2024

I want to openly state that this is not a 'legal document', or an attempt to hold the City to any kind of legal accountability. That is not my interest. What I am interested in is being able to communicate with fellow human beings, that happen to hold some relative positions of power in our community about how they are wielding that power, and asking them to be accountable for their actions or inaction; as well as inquiring with them about what they feel is affecting their choices of action, expressing what I see and feel from the experiences and witnessing of these questionable relations, and seeing if there is any possibility to come to some clarity and commonality in communication. The following is my relating of what feels to be an essential discord within the Ashland community, and what has been witnessed throughout my life and over the many years I have lived here. It is a perspective piece of how I see and feel things to be, but with an openness to have that perspective clarified.

Jason and Vanessa Houk were officially recognized as contributing members of this community and awarded a plaque by the City to honor the exemplary dedication and hard work that they have offered for many years now, at little to no profit to themselves, and often at great expense, and even during hardships of their own. They have helped to build and strengthen the support in our community for the housed and unhoused alike.

They have worked diligently with the City and police over the years to maintain civil and considerate relations, to be compliant; yet while there have been public displays of support by the City, the reality is the efforts of support in practice have felt limited, strained, deceptive and inconsiderate, often making it difficult to be, or know if they were being, in compliance.

There has been a lack of considerate communication by the City regarding apparent concerns with how the meals are managed, or an apparent desire for them to not happen at all, and there feels to have been incremental actions by the City of discouraging the unhoused and impoverished to be here in Ashland, from attending the meals, and of limiting the ability for the Houks to be able to serve this community freely and without discrimination or interference, much less with active support.

Instead of coming to the Houks to inform them about changes in the arrangement with using the park, and telling them to please inform the community of what the police are going to be diligently enforcing now; that it is different from how it has been, with the allowance of dog owners to attend the meal in the park; they got informed by what the officers are choosing or being told to enforce currently, by them handing out citations without forewarning. An enforcement of the ordinances that I will personally say feels to be being issued with a lack of due discernment, and with prejudice weighing against the unhoused and impoverished of this community.

At the recent meal on Friday Sept. 20th, we were puzzled as to why a young man at the meal, who hadn't been disruptive in any way and was sitting peacefully eating his meal, with his puppy calmly on leash laying down tied to his backpack next to him, was being given a citation. The Houks and myself waited until the interaction with the young man was over before inquiring with the officer as to the particulars of the situation.

After we stated that there was some confusion about the issuing of the citation for having a dog in the park, because of how we had been allowed to for years at the meals, we were told there are new concerns to do with dogs, that officers have been bit, and that the 'no dogs in the park' was being strictly enforced. Also, that the young man 'didn't have control of the dog' and that it was a potential threat, to which I questioned his discernment of the situation.

The other aspect to the officer's account of the situation was that he said he had already talked to the young man earlier in the day about his dog, which if so, then I would think that he would have been familiar with the physical condition of the dog and it having impaired motor functions (weak wobbly legs), as was clearly apparent as they walked out of the park from the current situation. Not a dog that would be so easily jumping up and at people or other dogs, even if it did have that kind of demeanor, which quite obviously it did not.

Lessard's efforts to talk and work with us, his listening intently and following up on researching perspective and information offered in how we could work together and the kinds of community projects that could possibly work here in Ashland, if there was the actual willingness for it to be.

But, as we saw, the unwillingness on the part of the City was unsurprisingly made clear; because when there was some actual progress moving forward in our combined efforts, Mr. Lessard was fired and replaced by someone who has obviously no interest in having a working relationship with us, and has been antagonistic toward the unhoused and impoverished community exemplified in the ordinances she has supported and the lack of any meaningful considerate communication.

As I see it, the City always has the upper hand, discloses only what it has to and in a way that serves its agendas, lays the burden of proof on the unhoused and impoverished of any misdeeds or ill will by the City, relies on most of the community only knowing what happens from how it is presented through news media, or online community groups that are often divided, ignorant of how it all plays out 'on the front lines' for the most part.

So, why am I telling you all this? What good is to come of it? What is to be accomplished?

Only the consciousness/conscience within you can say. If you truly feel and believe that this perspective offered you is untrue, or not worthy of your consideration, then so be it, but it had to be spoken. This pattern of dismissal and abuse is apparent and will not go without being questioned. If there is any true empathy and compassion among any of you, that you feel an earnest interest in clarifying and rectifying relations, and you are not valuing any prescribed agendas for the City over human lives, or taking this as an affront to your 'Authority' and threat to a position of relative power in this community, then perhaps we can honestly sit down and talk.

Because, at the core of this, I do know that there is a greater potential possible within and between us all. I want you to know that I understand and have empathy for the pressure and weight of your positions, and I see the actions and behaviors, but I do not equate them to being 'who you are', and that I also see the Heart within you...and am inviting that Heart to reveal itself all the more. I deal with insecurities, frustrations and the sense of societal expectations...yet, I do not feel the burden of them as heavily as you might I would surmise, and I am doing my best to have compassion for that, but the disheartening behavior is feeling more and more intolerable.

I understand the layers of perceptions, identifications, and psychology that is inherent in this situation, that defenses and insecurities can often be too strong to be relaxed and vulnerable. It's not that I feel to 'shame and blame', I am just tired of the deception and disingenuousness. Many of you may not feel you are being such, may not know the full scope of what is involved and has been happening for decades now; but just know, this isn't 'coming out of nowhere', that there are years of observation of this societal behavior and experience behind this relating of it.

How and why that behavior has come about, what motivations or insecurities have bred it, I can't say for certain about any particular person...but if there are to be any real and true honest human relations in this community, things have to change. And the one with the 'power' in this situation has an equal, if not greater responsibility to make an effort in this. That's really all I am asking for: for the City and police to stop seeing the unhoused and impoverished as a 'problem' to manage or dispense with...to connect deeper into your Humanity, more so than reacting out of fear and desires, whatever those may be. Of which, I for one am willing to hear about, if there is the willingness to share it without fear of 'legal liability'...just as human beings relating to one another about the world situation we are living in.

Our world is going through rapid changes, and I know there is much that can be examined about those changes, and if reflected upon with an open heart and mind, much that can be addressed, or at least clarified about how we are all living here together.

Peace, Skeye Hridayam
skeye.hridayam@protonmail.com

I also offered reflection on how I have witnessed many of the housed community casually walking their dogs throughout the whole park on any given day, and as if to highlight that point, interestingly enough, a man with a dog came strolling out of the park about to pass us as I pointed him out.

He assured us that the ordinance would be equally enforced by all officers to all members of the community, housed and unhoused alike, and that he would be talking to that man. I left before I could witness if that was so. Punctuating as I left that he was exercising discrimination, not discernment, that each encounter could be weighed with reason.

Admittedly, I am skeptical as to the validity of the claims of the dog attacks, I have heard and witnessed officers stating situations falsely before, and I at least question the conditions of how the incidents may have happened. If they are true though, I would be interested in seeing the recent reports of the dog incidents involving officers and anyone in the community; as well as the representation of citations given to anyone walking their dog through the park, and a record of how actively these are pursued by police or park security.

Because for years now it is obvious that many of the housed in this community feel perfectly safe and fine with walking their dogs through the park, even though there have been additional standing signs posted at entrances and in the park. People are not only walking the dogs, but also allowing them to urinate and defecate, with usually, not always, the latter at least being deposited into a baggie, but then also left on the side of the trail and not taken to a trash can. If the housed people have been being actively cited as much as the unhoused, I would think this would not be the case. But maybe the citations aren't costly enough, perhaps they can afford it, and feel it is worth the expense to have the privilege to walk their dog where they want.

After the Houks felt the need to return the plaque to the city, because they did not feel that the City was living up to the words and supposed intention of that award, and because of how the City and police continued to criminalize and harass the unhoused and impoverished of our community, there felt to be an intensified effort by the City to 'be rid of the problem' with more ordinances and intensified poor relations from the City and police. The award appeared to be little more than a PR image piece for the City, because instead of an active concern to clarify and rectify why the award had been returned, it seems to have been taken as a personal affront and rebuke of the City.

One knows when they are being 'dealt with', rather than being considered; there is an obvious energy and attitude that is apparent, even when it is being housed in political rhetoric phrased with PC 'feel good' language, or legalese to mitigate accountability or any sense of self responsibility and active discernment...just 'doing my job'.

Instead of being considered and honestly worked with as fellow human beings and members of this community, we, the unhoused and impoverished, injured, disabled and destitute are treated as burdens and threats, seen as the refuse, misbegotten, dispossessed of this society; and get discriminated against, profiled, criminalized, targeted and persecuted...Managed.

We the impoverished and unhoused of Ashland are tired of being 'dealt with' and 'managed', instead of being considered as a part of this community, when most of us have lived here just as long, if not longer, than many of the housed of this town; have worked in and supported many of the establishments here, have worked at starting or having families, careers, and even businesses here, or elsewhere, and gone through life altering experiences and economic hardships and losing most or all that had been worked for.

Yet, and regardless of how one has come to be here, the environment and community of Ashland on a whole is what we have come to find nourishes us, helps us feel like life is still worth living and can be enjoyable, and even productive. But, it seems, some would deny us that nourishment and seek to make Ashland inhospitable to us, even to the point of endangering our lives.

When we met with the previous City Manager, Joe Lessard, there was some shining hope seeming possible that we were actually being considered and not managed. I held my reservations, but was honestly appreciative of Mr.

Oct 1, 2024

Comments by

Kathleen Hering

236 W. Mountain Ave

Ashland OR 97520

kathleenhering@gmail.com

I moved to Ashland 10 yrs. ago

Because of being extremely sensitive
to petrochemicals. As my 1st action

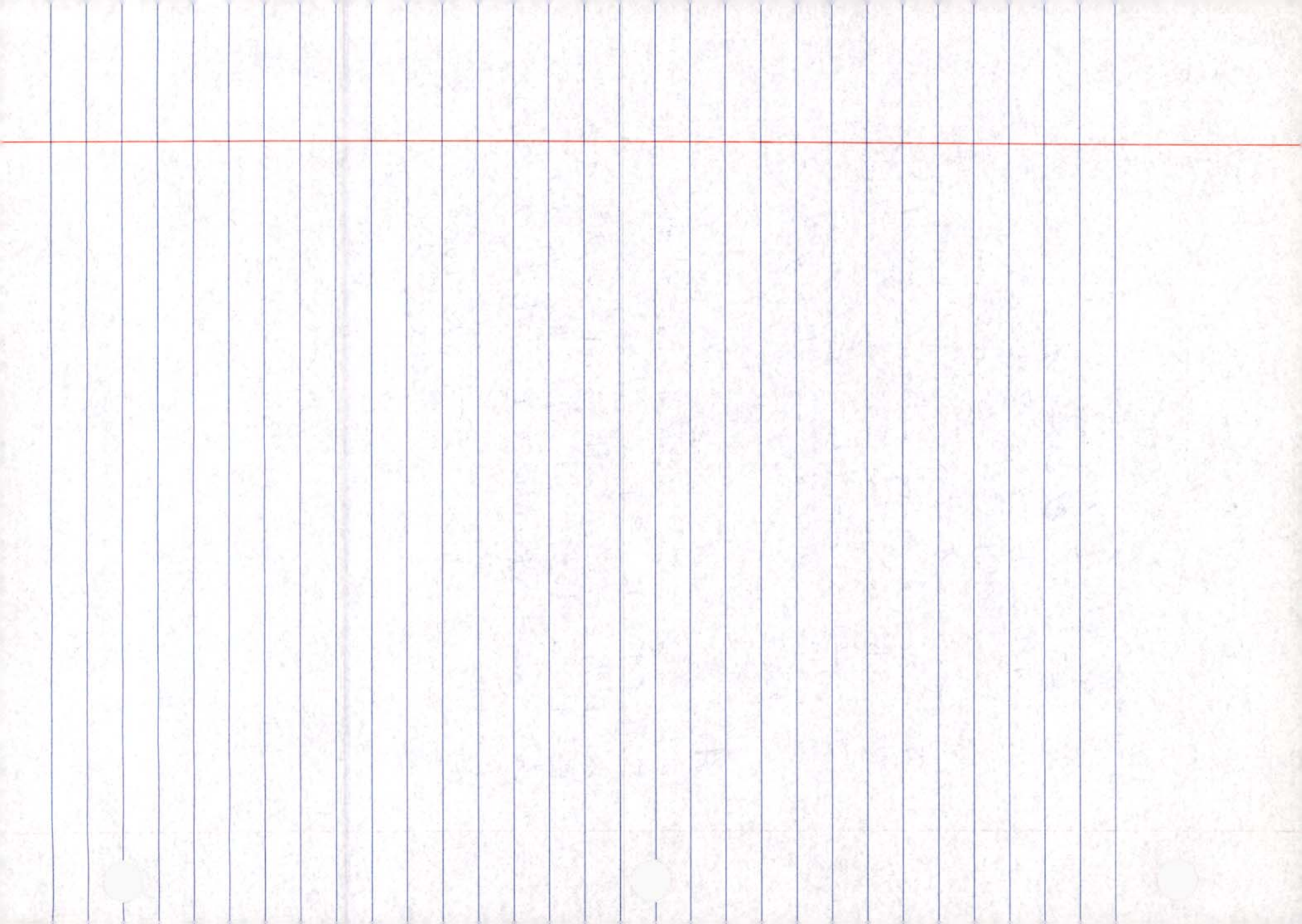
in moving into my 1934 house

was to get rid of the gas
stove

As a retired nurse I would really
like to see Ashland adopt the
Full Climate Policy. Having new homes
be full electric with good insulation &
split units will make housing not
only more affordable but will be healthier.

Thank -you -

Kathleen Hering





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Date:

10/1/24

Name: (Please Print)

Mike Gardiner

Ashland Resident:

☒ YES ☐ NO City: _____

Agenda Topic/Item Number:

VIII 1st Reading ORD 3244

Public Forum Topic (Non-agenda Item):

Please respect the order of proceedings and strictly follow the directions of the presiding officer. Behavior or actions which are loud or disruptive are disrespectful and offenders will be requested to leave.

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Date:

10.1.24

Name: (Please Print)

Lilli Malan

Ashland Resident:

☒ YES ☐ NO City: _____

~~Agenda Topic/Item Number:~~

Clean Air / Homelessness

Public Forum Topic (Non-agenda Item):

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Date:

October 15+

Name: (Please Print)

Kiera Retiz

Ashland Resident:

☒ YES ☐ NO City: _____

Agenda Topic/Item Number:

Public Forum Topic (Non-agenda Item):

Electrification Ordinance

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Date:

10-1

Name: (Please Print)

Piper Banks

Ashland Resident:

☒ YES ☐ NO City: _____

Agenda Topic/Item Number:

Public Forum Topic (Non-agenda Item):

Climate & Clean Air Ordinance

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Date:

10/1

Name: (Please Print)

Norah Doyle

Ashland Resident:

☐

YES

☒

NO

City:

Medford

Agenda Topic/Item Number:

Public Forum Topic (Non-agenda Item):

Climate & clean air ordinance

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Date:

10/1

Name: (Please Print)

Clara Kopp

Ashland Resident:

☐

YES

☒

NO

City: Central Point

Agenda Topic/Item Number:

Public Forum Topic (Non-agenda Item):

Climate Policy

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Date:

Oct 1 2024

Name: (Please Print)

Rich Rohde

Ashland Resident:

☒ YES ☐ NO City: _____

Agenda Topic/Item Number:

~~8~~ Villa Ord 3244

Public Forum Topic (Non-agenda Item):

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Date:

10/1/2024

Name: (Please Print)

Wren Simo

Ashland Resident:

☐ YES ☒ NO City: Phoenix

Agenda Topic/Item Number:

Climate Policy

Public Forum Topic (Non-agenda Item):



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Date:

10-1-24

Name: (Please Print)

Logan Potts

Ashland Resident:

☒ YES ☐ NO City: _____

Agenda Topic/Item Number:

Climate Change / better appliances

Public Forum Topic (Non-agenda Item):

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Date: 10.2.29

Name: (Please Print)

Chris Abrahamson

Ashland Resident:

☐ YES ☒ NO City: medford

Agenda Topic/Item Number:

climate change ordinance

Public Forum Topic (Non-agenda Item):

Open Forum

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Date:

10-1-24

Name: (Please Print)

Asa Oaks

Ashland Resident:

☐ YES ☒ NO City: Medford

Agenda Topic/Item Number:

Climate Policy

Public Forum Topic (Non-agenda Item):

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Date:

10/1/2024

Name: (Please Print)

Kathleen Fleming

Ashland Resident:

☒ YES ☐ NO City: _____

Agenda Topic/Item Number:

Climate Policy

Public Forum Topic (Non-agenda Item):

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Date:

10/1/24

Name: (Please Print)

Cole-Hie

Ashland Resident:

☒ YES ☐ NO City: _____

Agenda Topic/Item Number:

Climate Air Policy

Public Forum Topic (Non-agenda Item):

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Date:

October 01 2024

Name: (Please Print)

Ricardo Morant

Ashland Resident:

☒ YES ☐ NO City: _____

Agenda Topic/Item Number: *Utility Billing Customer Policies +*
X.a (10a) - meeting (09/17/24), XIIIa (13a), XIIIb (13b) - Unnecessary Noise

Public Forum Topic (Non-agenda Item):

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Date:

10/1/24

Name: (Please Print)

PAUL MOZINA

Ashland Resident:

☒ YES ☐ NO City: _____

Agenda Topic/Item Number:

Public Forum Topic (Non-agenda Item):

Telecommunications ordinance

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Date:

10/1/24

Name: (Please Print)

Jess Grady-Benson

Ashland Resident:

☐ YES ☐ NO City: _____

Agenda Topic/Item Number:

Public Forum Topic (Non-agenda Item):

Climate ordinance

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Did not speak



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Date:

OCT. 1

Name: (Please Print)

Avram Sacks

Ashland Resident:

☒ YES ☐ NO City: _____

Agenda Topic/Item Number:

Public Forum Topic (Non-agenda Item):

Pallet Houses

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Did not speak



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Date:

Oct 1 2024

Name: (Please Print)

Alan Journet

Ashland Resident:

☐

YES

☒

NO

City:

Jacksonville

Agenda Topic/Item Number:

Public Forum Topic (Non-agenda Item):

Clean Air & Energy Proposal

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