

City of Monmouth

City Manager's Report

A Report on City of Monmouth News, Happenings, Successes and Other Items

March 2, 2017

New City Council Orientation

Monmouth welcomed three new members to the City Council in January. While the Mayor and Councilors are volunteers, they have significant responsibilities and must understand a wide variety of subjects to do their job to the best of their ability. They also have to work as a group and answer to 9,745 "bosses", or Monmouth citizens.

Just like you would do for a new employee, Monmouth works hard to orient its new elected officials. Part of the orientation covers group process and how to work as a team (City Council). We also cover all the core services of the City, current issues and how we interact with other levels of government. Ethics and legal issues are reviewed, as well as how to work with the community.

Unlike most jobs, where you have some time to learn as you go, City Councilors are fully vested with authority and must make decisions at their first Council meeting. This City Council has handled several meaty issues starting with the first meeting of the year, so our new Councilors didn't get the opportunity to start slow.

NASA at the Library

Monmouth has been chosen to participate in the NASA @ My Library program. The three libraries selected are on the path of totality – meaning they will all see a full solar eclipse this August.

The program hopes to help groups that are underrepresented in science or related fields have opportunities to learn about science, and

help groups that don't often visit the library begin to form a positive relationship. The program will offer the library special resources to aid learning how best to get kids excited about science. Much of the NASA @ My Library program is aimed at younger audiences, but the library plans to offer programs aimed at people both young and old.

City Budget

The City is embarking on a very challenging budget process this year. The City's General Fund (Parks, Police, Planning, Library and Senior Center, Finance) is out of balance and adjustments must be made. A significant driver of the imbalance for all City funds is PERS, the state run retirement system. We are members of PERS and must absorb big rates increases as they come. The Budget Committee met for a planning meeting and directed staff to target a balanced General Fund budget using a mix of revenue increases and spending cuts. As we have previously squeezed program budgets, the cuts this year will be serious and likely impact the services received by our citizens.

Our utility funds are in better shape, but have been hit with unexpected capital projects, which will be factored in to this year's process. Monmouth has always been very disciplined with budgeting and spending. We'll use this orientation to tackle our current challenge.

Senior/Community Center Addition

The Senior/Community Center Addition is complete and in use. For those that have followed this item, it has been a 10-Year process from idea to reality. The addition(s) have been

put to immediate use. The extra storage has helped immensely. The two additional classrooms have made scheduling much easier and have cut down on congestion in the facility. Come by for a tour. You may find out that there are programs, not just for seniors, you may be interested in.

Council of Governments Award

The Mid-Valley Council of Governments, which covers Polk, Marion and Yamhill Counties, has an annual awards banquet. They give out awards for cooperative projects, one for leadership at the staff level in an organization and one for an elected official. This year's elected official leadership award went to former Monmouth Mayor, John Oberst. John was the Mayor of Monmouth for ten years. He was recognized for his Mayor duties, participation in several local community groups, serving on regional and state governance boards and for serving on an incredible number of state committees covering a wide variety of transportation topics. Congratulations to Mayor Oberst for earning this well-deserved award.

Development Projects

Development activity in Monmouth has been slow of late as we are running out of developable lots. We still have projects going, however. Beverley Estates (Gwinn St. between Broad and Warren) has made some nice progress, even in the recent harsh weather. When this is completed, people will be able to travel on Gwinn St. from Highway 99 to College. Sunset Lane also has many homes in various stages of construction. This is located at the west edge of Monmouth on Church St. While not in Monmouth, our Power and Light department has been working on two subdivisions near Gun Club Rd. in Independence. These are in the service area for our electric utility, as are areas outside Monmouth to the north and west.

Highway 99 Project Coordination

The Highway 99 reconstruction project is going to be wonderful when it is completed. It will feature brand new asphalt, a continuous center turn lane, bike lanes, a landscaped median and a

separated sidewalk. Some the City's excitement was dampened as we found out that City water lines and services and electric lines may need to be relocated as part of the project. This was not anticipated. This work will redirect staff from other projects and could be very costly for the City to relocate the facilities.

Sanctuary City

We've had a very engaged group of citizens promoting the idea that Monmouth should become a "Sanctuary City". The basic idea behind a sanctuary (or inclusive) city is that we welcome immigrants and wouldn't base City services on someone's immigration status. More importantly, our Police Department would not check anyone's immigration status or use its resources to support Federal immigration enforcement efforts. The State of Oregon has placed sanctuary standards limiting immigration enforcement into law. The law applies to cities and counties, so Monmouth is already functionally a sanctuary city. Council will continue discussion about adopting a resolution on this subject at its March 21 Council meeting.

At a more basic level, the City of Monmouth will treat you with respect and courtesy and provide you with great services regardless of all of your defining characteristics. That's just how we do business. So feel free to drive on our roads, check out a library book, call the Police Department, turn on the electricity or play in our parks. We're here to serve.

If you have any questions about items in this report or anything related to the City, please call me at 503-751-0146 or e-mail me at smcclure@ci.monmouth.or.us.

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