

City of Monmouth

City Manager's Report

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

August 10, 2016

2016-17 Budget

The City's 2016-17 Budget went into effect July 1, 2016. The City's Budget Committee, which is made up of the City Council and seven citizen members, always is thorough in its approach to budget review. For the 2016-17 Budget, the committee was extra thorough as we faced an operating imbalance that needed to be addressed while knowing that a large retirement system increase would be coming in 2017-18.

The committee met earlier than usual to give City departments targets for spending reductions. Departments met their targets. With all the changes that happen each year in revenues and expenditures, the overall budget target was also met.

The spending reductions will make things tighter, but did not result in service reductions at this point. Items of note from the 2016-17 Budget include: funding for the Senior Center Expansion, addition of a new Police Officer position and added staff to the Public Works Department.

The diligence of the Budget Committee will be ever more needed next year as we determine how to absorb a very high rate increase for the Oregon Public Employee Retirement System (PERS). Small adjustments won't be enough to absorb this hit. If health care and retirement costs were more reasonable, the City would be in great shape.

Amphitheater Dedication

The amphitheater is up and running. July 4th Festival events took place in the new facility and Music in the Park continues through August.

Dedication of the facility was held on June 27, 2016. In addition to the regular speechifying, we inaugurated the facility by holding the largest known kazoo concert (300 strong) ever held in Monmouth. It is a performing arts facility, after all.



4th of July Events and Activities

I hope that everyone had a great 4th of July. As well as everything works for this awesome holiday event, you would think that one group organizes the whole shebang. If you thought this, You would be incorrect. In fact, multiple groups manage separate pieces of our festivities. This is one reason why you'll see different names on events (4th of July, July 4th Festival, Western Days, etc.) Park activities are organized by each city. The main parade and children's parade are organized by the Monmouth-Independence Rotary Club. The mini-marathon and tennis tournament are organized by separate groups. The fire district organizes the pancake feed. The above are just the main organizers. Without many other sponsors and supporters that back the organizers, the activities wouldn't take place.

Isn't it nice that the governments, service clubs and volunteers all do such a great (and coordinated) job that it looks like one group is in charge?

Planning in Oregon

Oregon has some of the most extensive land use laws in the country. The original intent of the laws were to preserve Oregon most productive farm lands. By this benchmark, the laws have been successful. On the other, property rights advocates do not like many of the limitations placed on land use, the limitations on city growth may increase housing prices by limiting supply and the procedures and rules have developed to the point that the system is very cumbersome. Another original intent of the laws was to enhance citizen involvement in planning. The system has become very legal and procedure-oriented, so citizen involvement is very difficult. The Oregon land use process makes it very easy to oppose development, which has a negative effect on our economy.

An interesting facet of placing limits on City growth is the fact that people have cars. If they can't find a home to buy or place to rent in the town where they work (and would like to live), they can "leapfrog" to a town that is near enough to be a reasonable commute. This is happening if our area right now. As the land available for housing has tightened in Albany and Corvallis, housing developments are being pushed to Adair Village and Philomath. Lack of land in Salem fuels growth in our county (including Monmouth) and in Marion County communities such as Aumsville and Sublimity. I'm not sure if this is the desired result of our land use laws.

City Council Election

Democracy in action. Representative government. A chance to serve your community. If you reviewed the organization chart for the City of Monmouth, citizens are at top. They elect the Mayor and City Councilors to oversee City business. This is democracy in its purest form. Being a small community, your City elected officials are very close to the citizens they serve. I think this helps us avoid a lot of the problems with politics and the national and sometimes state

levels where people wonder if the citizen-elected official link really works.

Currently, we have four open seats for the City Council and one open Mayor seat. If you would like to participate in the democratic process and work for a better Monmouth, the filing deadline for the November 2016 election is August 30. Since you have some steps to take to run for office before the deadline, please contact Phyllis Bolman, City Recorder, at 503-751-0145, very soon if interested.

Senior Center Expansion

If you haven't been in the neighborhood, the Senior Center Expansion is going great guns. As shown in the attached picture, the new section to the left will be storage and the section to the right in the picture will be new classrooms.



The project is anticipated to be complete in October 2016. The project is funded through a combination of local fundraising, grants and City funds.

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.

Scott McClure
City Manager

