

**MINUTES FOR THE STUDY SESSION
ASHLAND CITY COUNCIL
Monday, April 6, 2015
Siskiyou Room, 51 Winburn Way**

Mayor Stromberg called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. in the Siskiyou Room.

Councilor Morris, Lemhouse, Marsh, Rosenthal, Voisin, and Seffinger were present.

1. Public Input (15 minutes maximum) - (None)

Rich Hansen/25 North Main Street/Gold and Gems Fine Jewelry/Submitted photos of cigarette butts littering the sidewalk outside his business and stated that he could find 10-30 cigarette butts outside his store around the trash can daily. This also exists in front of the Brickroom and Louie's Restaurant and Bar. Cigarette filters are non-degradable and he estimated 10,000 filters went into the sewer drains and then into Bear Creek annually. He referred to the cigarette butt containers attached to posts and explained people were unaware of them or homeless people dumped them out to find ones they could smoke. He suggested the City adopt a code similar to Juneau AK and fine people for littering cigarette butts. The City could provide a police presence when the bars closed to enforce the law.

Councilor Rosenthal clarified the cigarette butt containers attached to the posts were a test project recommended by the Conservation Commission. He would take Mr. Hansen's feedback to the Commission. Councilor Seffinger noted cigarette butts were lethal to dogs and children. Mr. Hansen clarified the Conservation Commission had added screens to some storm drains for cigarette filters and had collected very few.

2. Look Ahead review

City Administrator Dave Kanner reviewed items on the Look Ahead.

3. RVTD update (request of Councilor Voisin)

Julie Brown, general manager for the Rogue Valley Transit District (RVTD) explained the 25% cut in services was due to the end of the Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) grant and the failed levy. As of March 23, 2015, RVTD no longer offered Saturday service or service after 7:00 p.m. Starting June 1, 2015, 20-minute service to Ashland would go back to 30-minute service.

RVTD Senior Planner Paige Townsend further explained other major changes included Route 1 currently serving the airport would change to Route 21 and no longer go to the airport. Route 10 service changes would affect Medford, Talent, and would no longer serve the East Main loop in Ashland. Route 10 was historically a late route and the changes in service would bring it back on schedule. Additionally, Route 10 made up 40% of ridership with 4,000-5,000 passengers daily. Cost savings were significant, 40% of RVTD's total savings would come from the frequency reduction of Route 10 for a \$350,000 savings.

Ms. Brown noted there was a chance of a funding increase during the legislative session that could possibly go towards fixed routes. In addition, the RVTD Board of Directors was considering going out for another levy next year. RVTD was having issues matching federal funds. The City of Ashland could match funds with RVTD. Ms. Townsend added RVTD was using approximately \$600,000 from reserves with the reduction in services. Based on the forecast for cost of service and cuts, RVTD will be able to operate at this system level until June 2018 where another service cut will occur or they will find a funding source. It would take \$15,000,000 in order to do most of the long-range plan.

Southern Oregon University (SOU) recently signed a two-year contract with RVTD. The Drive Less Connect Program worked with students individually to set up commuting options and provided prizes and incentives. Other statewide programs in residential neighborhoods had 10%-15% drive alone trips biking,

walking or doing something else. SOU wanted to institutionalize the program even though it was a one-time grant through the state. The majority of SOU commuters came from Medford, Talent, and Central Point. Public Works Director Mike Faught added the Transportation System Plan (TSP) showed number of trips by students from out of the area. Ms. Townsend would forward information to Council on the service impact due to Route 10 changes.

Ms. Brown addressed transportation needs for the aging and millennial populations. Currently, Valley Lift services no longer extend to Mountain Meadows senior community and 23% of 18-22 year olds in the state were not getting drivers licenses, but opting for public transportation instead. She went on to discuss trolley services, the expense, and the need to determine who that service served, visitors or workers.

4. Discussion of volunteer recognition event (request of Councilor Marsh)

Council agreed to move forward with a volunteer celebration for commission and committee members to thank them for their service. A tentative date for the celebration was August 30, 2015. Council also agreed to defray staff costs and perform those duties instead as a way to give back.

Meeting adjourned at 6:21 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Dana Smith
Assistant to the City Recorder