

**ASHLAND CITIZENS BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING Minutes**

**Wednesday, March 8, 2023 1PM-5PM**

**Siskiyou Room- 51 Winburn Way & via Zoom**

**Present:**

Councilor Gina DuQuenne	Andy Card
Mayor Tonya Graham	Jeff Dahle
Councilor Eric Hanson	Eric Navickas
Councilor Paula Hyatt	Linda Peterson Adams
Councilor Bob Kaplan	David Runkel

**Absent:** Michael Gardiner

**I. League of Oregon Cities Public Budgeting 101 Training (provided virtually) 1:00-4:00 PM**

**II. Call to Order**

Councilor Tonya Graham called the meeting to order at 4:01 pm via Zoom.

**III. Review of Roles, Process and Calendar**

Sabrina Cotta introduced herself - Deputy City Manager and city staff in attendance, Bryn Morrison- Administrative Services Manager, Joe Lessard- City Manager, Alissa Kolodzinski - Finance Administrative Analyst.

Joe Lessard indicated he is Budget Officer for the record.

Cotta reviewed the calendar of meeting dates and times and the council communication approving those dates and times. Reminder that meetings will be held at council chambers. We need two council members and one budget committee member. Then we will be full at full staff. Additional trainings are available through LOC, Oregon.gov, and GFOA.

Submit questions three days before meeting to get a written response. Send to Alissa Kolodzinski. Her email is in the Council Communications.

Councilor Kaplan asked about zoom meetings for those who can't attend in person. Cotta indicated that it is up to the Budget committee to determine. Discussion occurred. Everyone was encouraged to meet in person, but yes, zoom will be allowed for extenuating circumstances.

Navickas spoke about the concern for daytime meetings. Saying that meetings during the day may hamper public engagement for working individuals. Runkel agreed with concern. Lessard said daytime meetings were eliminated to prevent undue distress on staff and allow work-life balance. If the time would be changed, Council would have to vote on changing the time. Compromise proposed by Mayor Graham is that the meetings are held 4-6 pm instead. Councilor Hansen agreed with the compromised time. All parties agree public participation is an important step. An informal poll was held by raise of hands- four budget committee members want further discussion on changing the time. Further discussion on possible compromises occurred. Mayor Graham suggested the question of timing be added to Curiosity online. Another suggestion is to change public forum portion of the meeting to end of meeting. Last fifteen minutes instead of first fifteen.

Runkel observed Parks presented their budget to City Council. Will they appear before the budget committee? Lessard said Yes. They also present their current standing on the budget along with the proposed budget. Councilor DuQuenne agreed with David. Parks is just another department.

Councilor DuQuenne suggested the SOU survey results be reviewed by all committee members. Lessard spoke on the fact that we have had a number of things occur regarding public feedback including the survey, round table events and the town hall. Cotta to send out survey results to everyone which are also available online.

Councilor Kaplan would like a quarterly report sent out. He would like the first budget meeting to be a review of finances up through 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter reporting to see how the city compares with last year's budget.

Navickas would like to move back to an annual budget process. Saying it would allow for a better review of the budget process. Annual budgeting works more efficiently and democratically with less supplemental budgeting needed. Lessard offered a counterpoint -inflation increased by 8%, budget increase only 3%. Essentially, it's a

budget cut. Over time this has caused a staff overload. Biennial budgeting doesn't necessary save dollars, but it does save in staff time thus resources. When folks are pulled off regular duties, customer service is reduced. Mayor Graham spoke about how much time it takes Council to work on the budget and spoke on how budgeting takes time away from working on other issues such as how to increase revenue. Discussion continued. Everyone agreed they would like an increase in transparency.

#### **IV. Call for Nominations for Budget Chair and Vice Chair**

Mayor Graham suggested that since we are down 3 people this item should be moved to meeting on April 27<sup>th</sup>. All agreed.

#### **V. Chair and Vice Chair elections**

**VI. Public Hearing** – No requests to give oral testimony to the Committee were sent.

#### **VII. Meeting Adjourned**

Cotta/Mayor Graham called for adjournment of the meeting.