



The Friday Update

Bringing you a summary of weekly news from City Hall

October 4, 2002

City of Coos Bay	500 Central Avenue, Coos Bay OR 97420	[541-269-8912]
See us at http://www.coosbay.org	Email the city manager at bgrile@coosbay.org	

COOS BAY NORTH BEND JOINT CONVENTION – The Cities of Coos Bay and North Bend will meet in a joint convention Wednesday, October 16, 2002 at 7 p.m. in the council chambers at Coos Bay city hall. The cities are required by ORS 222.250 to meet within 30 days after the filing of the city charter by the Charter Commission. The purpose of the meeting will be to adopt a ballot title for the question of consolidation and adoption of a city charter and tax base. If the cities cannot agree on a ballot title, the county commissioners shall adopt a ballot title. City Attorneys Mike Stebbins [North Bend] and Nathan McClintock [Coos Bay] are in the process of preparing the ballot title. The joint convention is a public meeting and interested citizens are encouraged to attend. City hall is handicap accessible via an elevator at ground level under the building. The meeting will also be taped for Channel 14.

MAKE A DIFFERENCE DAY PROCLAMATION ADOPTED – The City Council adopted a proclamation at their meeting this week declaring Saturday, October 26th as “Make a Difference Day”. Domestic violence is a serious crime and government and law enforcement agencies in Coos Bay and Coos County are committed to combating this and all forms of violence. A community fundraising event has been organized on Saturday, October 26th with all proceeds designated to go to Coos County Women’s Crisis Service. The City Council encourages everyone to join in making October 26th a day when all citizens unite as a community in the effort to combat domestic violence. For information on the fundraiser and what you can do to help, contact the Women’s Crisis Service at 756-5964.

BAY AREA CHAMBER IBO PROGRAM – The IBO program for next week will be North Bend Airport District, and will be held in the Cook Shack Room at The Mill Casino Hotel. Cost is \$8.75 for members and \$10 for non-members. RSVP a cdavis@uci.net or 266-0215. Upcoming programs include October 16th – Measure No. 6-91 forming the SCINT District and tax base; October 16th – Measure No. 23, Universal Healthcare; October 23rd – Candidates Forum Coos Bay and North Bend Mayor and Council positions, and October 30th – Candidates Forum Coos County Commissioners and Sheriff positions.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS PRESENT FORUMS – A candidates forum will be presented by the League of Women Voters on **Monday, October 21st** in the council chambers at Coos Bay city hall. Candidates will be presented in two groups: from 7 to 8 p.m. will be candidates for state representative and sheriff. District #1 – David Tilton [D] and Wayne Krieger [R], District #9 – Valorie Holloway [L] and Joanne Verger [D]. For sheriff – Andy Jackson and Dave Hermann. From 8 to 9 p.m. will be candidates for county commissioners. Position #2 – Nikki Whitty [D] and Cathy Mann [R]. Position #3 – Pete DeMain [D], Kenneth Rossi [R], Gordon Ross [Non-Aff], and Thomas Matosec [Pacific Green].

On **Thursday, October 24th** [also in the council chambers] the forum will be on local and state measures beginning at 7 p.m. **Local Measures:** #6-92 – Formation of an airport district and tax base – Gary Gregor [pro] and Frank Crook [con]. #6-91 – formation of SCINT District and tax base – Bob McBride [pro] and Drew Solomon [con] (note: these are not final at this time). **State Measures:** #18 – Allows certain tax districts to establish permanent property tax rates – Bob Main, County Assessor will explain. #23 – Creating a Health Care Finance Plan – Maggie Bagon [pro] and Dan Smith [con]. #25 – Increasing Oregon minimum wage to \$6.90 in 2003 with future inflation – Jim Young [pro] and a yet to be designated person [con]. For more information on the forums, please contact Jean Nelson at 347-4229.

POLICE DEPARTMENT WORKS TO RESOLVE LONG TERM RADIO COMMUNICATION ISSUES -- Police Department staff members have been working for the past several years to contend with significant portable and mobile radio performance problems caused by interference from other VHF radio frequencies and “dead spots” within the City’s service area. An efficient, reliable VHF radio system is the lifeline of any emergency service operation. The inability of police officers to communicate in the field and with dispatch personnel jeopardizes the safety of officers responding to calls for emergency service, as well as any citizen requiring immediate law enforcement assistance. Department staff members, working in conjunction with radio systems technologists, have identified the specific problems and have formulated a permanent resolution which includes searching for and obtaining a “clean” VHF radio frequency, installation of a Voter Receiver system and replacement of an outdated radio base station and antenna. In recognition of the importance of resolving these issues immediately, Coos Bay City Council approved the expenditure of

up to \$39,683 from the City's Repair and Replacement Reserve Fund at the October 1st, 2002 City Council meeting to accomplish this goal. It is anticipated that these changes will be in place and substantial improvements in our radio communication ability will be noted within the next six to eight weeks.

CITY COUNCIL APPROVES PURCHASE OF POLICE VEHICLES - The Coos Bay City Council approved the expenditure of up to \$54,000 at the October 1st Council meeting for the purchase of two 2003 model Ford Crown Victoria police package vehicles. Of ongoing concern to the City is the continued safety of the police officer operating the City owned patrol vehicles. Any disadvantage to expending funds during these lean times is outweighed by these safety concerns. Maintaining an equipment replacement schedule is critical to the safety of the officer, as well as to the person or persons he or she may be responding to assist in time of need. Funding for replacement vehicles has been budgeted in the Equipment Repair and Replacement Fund, not from funds which could have been used for other purposes. The City of Coos Bay is fortunate to have had the foresight to have an established Repair and Replacement reserve fund available for cash transactions for equipment as opposed to using indebtedness for needed equipment items. Purchase of the vehicles through the State of Oregon General Services eliminates the need to go through a lengthy bid process, while at the same time guaranteeing the best price available.

REGIONAL OMI PURCHASE HELPS THE CITY OF COOS BAY – In early October, local OMI staff will be performing infrared inspections of all motor control panels in our pump stations and wastewater plants. This work helps in predicting possible maintenance problems. The unit used for the analysis is too expensive for individual cities to purchase, so OMI's Northwest Region purchased the infrared inspection unit and it is shared by all the cities OMI covers in the Northwest. Use of this equipment allows OMI to anticipate maintenance needs and plan for them. Repairing motors before a crisis hits helps eliminate major problems - and major expenses! Thank you OMI for keeping your efforts up to be proactive with our wastewater and storm water system!

DISC GOLF COURSE – Nine new holes for the disc golf course in Minus Park are in the early stages of development. The holes are being laid out and some of the underbrush is being removed to get a better look at the lay of the land. The holes will incorporate some of the original nine holes. David Millibar is spearheading the work and can always use help, he can be reached at 888-6249. By adding another nine holes, tournaments can be held at the park. Tournament rules require that courses actually have 18 separate holes, currently the existing course has nine holes with 18 tee boxes.

WASTEWATER REPAIRS -- The joint efforts of the City's contractors, OMI and JBS Construction, brought about the repair of a long-standing sink hole problem located on South 4th Street in front of the Fire Hall. Although several attempts to fix the sink hole have been made in the past, the ten-foot sewer line depth, high tides, and short working periods between tides have hampered the work. The combined ingenuity of veteran contractors solved the mystery of the sink hole and discovered a gap between the lateral and main line, likely the result of settlement over time. While performing the work to make the repair, traffic was kept flowing through this busy intersection.

OMI DOUBLE PLAY – At its October 1st meeting, the City Council received this year's rebate check of \$21,543.44 from OMI. The rebate is a contractual requirement, and is the difference between actual costs to provide services to the city of Coos Bay and the estimated budget for the 2001-2002 fiscal year. While cost savings from better management practices are getting slim after six years of OMI management, the savings from this year are due primarily to personnel savings because of some staff turnover and savings because of reduced electricity needs because of the relatively mild winter last year.

The next day, on October 2nd, OMI invited all city staff and the Council to the 5th Annual Client Appreciation Barbeque at Plant 1. Added to the typical menu of hot dogs and hamburgers were oysters and fresh salmon caught by OMI Project Manager Steve Simpson. The lunch was fabulous, and a welcome time to visit with OMI staff and management. Thank you OMI – we appreciate all you do!

CITY COUNCIL CONSIDERS REDUCTION IN FORCE AND PROPOSED REORGANIZATION PLAN – Tuesday evening City Manager Bill Grile and department heads presented a proposed reduction in force plan that would see as many as 13 employees laid off after the first of the year, depending on several factors. A public safety special operating levy is on the ballot for December 3rd, giving voters the opportunity to have a say in whether five police officer positions, three firefighters and a police clerical specialist should be maintained. The City's General Fund budget

challenges stem from several unforeseen factors, including diminishing property taxes, franchise fees and state shared revenues, 9-1-1 telephone funding shifts and interest earnings at a fraction of earlier rates.

“The proposal on the table is designed to bring annual General Fund spending in line with annual General Fund revenues,” said Grile, “and to live within our means.” To accomplish this, the City needs to cut \$750,000 of annual expenses from the General Fund and not plan on cash savings to support the annual growth in program costs and services next year. “Coos Bay simply will not have the ability to count on carryover cash at the start of next year as it has in previous years,” said Grile.

Stepping up to the plate in a major way, the City’s AFSCME union members have tentatively agreed to a package of wage concessions and personal sacrifices to help make ends meet without crippling services and laying off less senior union employees. “I can’t possibly say enough positive things about AFSCME and its members,” said Grile. “They have gone way outside the box, and way above and beyond the call of duty to help meet our current funding challenges,” he said. Coos Bay’s Police and Fire unions are also looking at ways to help make ends meet and realize that even if the December special operating levy passes and \$575,000 additional revenue raised, there still won’t be enough money to pay for the contracted cost of living and health insurance increases these public safety employees are entitled to after July 1, 2003.

A PowerPoint slide show is electronically available to those interested in learning more about the details of the proposed staff reductions and departmental reorganizations under consideration. To receive this, send a request by email to bgrile@coosbay.org and ask for the file to be sent. The City Council took the proposal under advisement Tuesday night and will take the matter up again at its next regular scheduled meeting, which is October 15th. That meeting begins at 7:00 p.m. in City Hall and is, of course, open to the public.

COMMITTEE REVIEWS BEAVER HILL COST AND BENEFITS -- Wednesday evening the Coos County Solid Waste Advisory Committee met at the Coos Bay Public Library to continue review of the costs and benefits of the Beaver Hill garbage burners and landfill. City manager Bill Grile was on hand for the meeting, which focused on a draft economic feasibility report prepared for the County by Enviromech – a consulting firm specializing in facilities and operations such as the one at Beaver Hill. The Enviromech report seems to put to rest the nagging question of whether Beaver Hill’s burners can generate electricity in an economically feasible manner. The firm’s conclusion is, “no.” However, other potentially feasible opportunities may be possible by capturing and using the burners’ heat for industrial processing functions, such as drying green lumber to add value. On hand to help with this discussion was committee member John Stephens, who retired as CEO of Roseburg Forest Products. “John’s insight was extremely helpful,” said Grile after the meeting. “He explained that it would only cost about \$20 per thousand board feet to dry the wet processed lumber at Beaver Hill and increase its value \$40 per thousand board feet ... with about \$3 per thousand board feet to ship it from a site as close as the Georgia Pacific plant in Bunker Hill.”

The draft Enviromech report offers these main conclusions:

- The economics of an electricity-generating waste-to-energy facility are unfavorable;
- Burning tires at Beaver Hill to utilize the facility’s full capacity has a positive benefit to cost ratio; and
- “The potential revenue from selling steam appears to be as much as four times as large as that from selling electricity; however, no potential long-term steam customer has been identified and that are many technical, legal and economic issues to be addressed.”

Without something happening to increase the overall utility of Beaver Hill, the facility’s useful life ends in about ten years when the currently used ash trench will be full and another one needed. The costs for closing the existing trench and opening a new one exceed \$3 million. The committee plans to meet again on November 6th to continue its deliberations. By then, a discussion may have taken place with Georgia Pacific officials to see if they are interested in drying lumber at Beaver Hill.