



The Friday Update

Bringing you a summary of weekly news from City Hall

October 18, 2002

City of Coos Bay

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INDEPENDENT CONSULTANT DRAFTS REVIEW OF CONSOLIDATION BUDGET – Under contract to the City of Coos Bay, E.D. Hovee and Company <<http://www.edhovee.com/>> has completed a draft review of the Coos Bay and North Bend budgets in the context of comparing these to other comparable Oregon cities and a hypothetical city with a population of 25,000 people. “The purpose of the Hovee study is to provide independent, factual information related to the cost of consolidating our two cities here in the Bay Area,” said city manager Bill Grile this week. “I have no comment about the study’s draft conclusions,” said Grile. “It’s not my report, or the City of Coos Bay’s report,” he added. The report was prepared for the voters of Coos Bay and North Bend. At Tuesday evening Coos Bay City Council meeting, City Councilor Roger Gould was quick to express his feelings about the study, stressing that it shows the economic feasibility of consolidation as he thought it would. Principal Eric Hovee emphasized that the report is simply a discussion draft at this point and that comments and criticisms of it are welcome. The Coos Bay City Council will be asking Hovee to come down to the Bay Area at some point for a public meeting on the draft so that he can explain its findings and conclusions, field questions and address concerns. That meeting has not yet been scheduled. A copy of the draft report will soon be posted to Coos Bay’s WEB site at www.coosbay.org.

CONSOLIDATION VOTE SCHEDULED – Wednesday evening the Coos Bay and North Bend City Councils once again met in joint convention. The purpose this time was to approve a ballot title for the forthcoming consolidation vote and set an election date. Cooperating effectively, the two Council’s made short work of the task and quickly approved language drafted by Coos Bay City Attorney Nate McClintock with a modification suggested by North Bend City Attorney Mike Stebbins to clarify that the measure must pass with a majority of the voters in both cities in order to take effect and create the new City of Coos Bay-North Bend. Based on the mutually supported action by the two Councils, Coos Bay and North Bend voters will now see the following measure on the May 18, 2004 ballot:

QUESTION: Shall the City of Coos Bay-North Bend be created, adopting a charter and tax rate of \$6.2933 per \$1000?

SUMMARY: This measure creates the incorporated City of Coos Bay-North Bend and adopts a city charter and tax rate for the new city. The boundaries of the new city shall include all territory within the boundaries of the Cities of North Bend and Coos Bay at the time of the election, generally including all currently incorporated territory surrounding Highway 101, Virginia Avenue, Broadway, Newmark Avenue, Ocean Boulevard, Central Avenue, Empire Boulevard, Southwest Boulevard and Coos River Highway. The measure increases the tax rate per \$1000 of assessed valuation for property in North Bend by 11-cents and decreases the tax rate for property in Coos Bay by 7-cents. A majority of the electors from present City of North Bend and a majority of the electors from the present City of Coos Bay must each vote to create the proposed city.

CITY COUNCIL APPROVES STAFFING REDUCTION PLAN – Tuesday night the Coos Bay City Council took up once again the issue of how to best confront diminishing revenues and rising expenses by approving the proposed reduction in forces and departmental reorganization plan that city manager Bill Grile presented two weeks ago. Grile praised department heads and AFSCME (the union representing general government employees at the City) for the hard work and sacrifices represented in the plan, and thanked Mayor Joe Benetti and Council President Jeff McKeown for assisting in the effort. The plan effectively cuts \$750,000 worth of expenses from the General Fund by cutting 12.75 full time equivalent positions from the budget, effective February 1, 2003. However, on December 3rd Coos Bay voters will decide whether to support a five-year public safety special operating levy which, if enacted, will reduce the 12.75 positions to be cut by providing funding to staff as many as five police officers, three firefighters and a police clerical specialist. Coos Bay’s police and fire unions are deciding whether to join AFSCME in deferring the 5% cost of living increases scheduled to go into effect on July 1, 2003. All three unions received similar increases last July. Non-represented staff opted to pass on a like increase that was to have been granted last July 1st, deciding that the better course was to defer the raises to help save jobs. Without wage concessions from the police and fire unions, public safety staffing cuts will still need to happen next year even if the five-year public safety special operating levy is successful as revenues will not be available to sustain spending at the higher level.

CITY ATTORNEY APPOINTED – City Manager Bill Grile announced to the City Council Tuesday evening that Nate McClintock has been appointed as the City Attorney. Nate is partner in the law firm of Corrigan and McClintock and has served as interim city attorney for the past three months, replacing Randall Tosh when he left to accept a position with the City of Salem. Nate is a graduate of San Francisco University of Law and has practiced law for 20 years; nine years in Portland and the last nine years in Coos Bay. He chose to move to the Bay Area for quality of life and is active in a number of community organizations. The Council and staff extend a hearty “Welcome Aboard!” to Nate.

JEFF MARINEAU’S SLIDE SHOW ABOUT BITUNG, INDONESIA – Jeff Marineau, local businessman and member of the Coos Bay Planning Commission, represented the City of Coos Bay during a visit Bitung North Sulawesi, Indonesia last summer; just as Randall Tosh, Martin Callery and Bill Grile did over a year ago. Also included in the trip were Coos Bay Public Schools analyst Tim Enright and Southwestern Business Development Center manager Jon Richards. Jeff shared his experience city staff and Mayor Benetti Thursday at noon in the Council Chambers through a slide presentation. The program’s purpose is to share our experience and knowledge with developing third world governments.

“THE RUSSIANS ARE COMING” – A group of Russian lumber and wood processing entrepreneurs are visiting the South Coast next week, coming to Coos Bay this weekend. The Coos Bay-North Bend Rotary Club is hosting the visit, with Jon Richards and others leading the group to various production operations and government offices in the Bay Area starting Monday morning. After a visit with Port of Coos Bay officials, the group will tour Coos Bay City Hall around 10:30 a.m. You’re all welcome to join in if interested and your schedules allow the time. This visit is similar to the Russian group that visited the Bay Area a couple of years ago. Several of us will be driving the group on to Roseburg a week from Saturday where their tour will continue.

CHAMBER INDEPENDENT BUSINESS OPERATOR FORUMS FOR COUNCIL CANDIDATES – On Wednesday, October 23rd the Chamber is conducting forums for mayoral and council candidates for the Coos Bay and North Bend races. Coos Bay Mayor Joe Benetti, who is running for office unopposed, will be out of town next week and will not be attending the forum. The luncheon forums will begin at 11:30 a.m. at The Mill Casino and are expected to last two hours, perhaps more. The Chamber requests reservations in advance, and these can be made by calling 269.0215 or emailing cdavis@uci.net.

COST-EFFECTIVE SUPERVISOR TRAINING – Several Coos Bay supervisors, including the city manager, attended some extremely low cost (\$25/head) management training at the Library, bought to us by City-County Insurance Services (CIS) and the League of Oregon Cities. “Enhancing Supervisor Effectiveness” is the title, and speaks to the issue of risk management as a majority of Oregon city litigation costs and settlement are related to personnel issues. We appreciate the proactive work that CIS does for us with risk management and helping hold down our insurance costs.

SIDEWALK REPAIR PROJECT MOVES FORWARD – The Urban Renewal Agency awarded the contract for replacing about 8,100 square feet of sidewalk and approximately 23 trees in the downtown area to Johnson Rock Products this week. The main project area will include the sidewalks north of Commercial Avenue and west of Bayshore Drive. The project started as a complaint from a property owner that the roots from the street trees were raising the sidewalk creating tripping hazard to pedestrians. The City surveyed the rest of the downtown area and found many areas that had the same problem. Since the trees were planted by the City in the 1970s, the Agency agreed to make the repairs instead of holding the abutting property owners responsible as our ordinance indicates. Work will begin as early as next week. The work will roll through downtown, and city staff will do everything it can to provide notice prior to work beginning in front of a business. There may be some short term impacts on pedestrians and vehicles, but the contractor and city will work to insure that access to businesses is interrupted as little as possible. If you have any questions, please contact Community Services at 269-8918.

AROUND TOWN - CONSTRUCTION UPDATE – Work continues on the wastewater pump station located at the North Morrison Street and Harris Avenue intersection in Empire. Safety concerns are behind the road closure due to the 20-foot depth of the new wet well. Motorists can expect another four weeks of detours as Huffman-Wright Construction installs new manholes and piping under the roadway.

Sixth Avenue, in Eastside, was the site of an emergency roadbed repair this week as JBS Construction replaced the west end of a large drainage channel that directs hillside storm water to Isthmus Slough. The work was complicated by the fact that the wooden structure is under water during all but a short period at low tide. Both lanes of traffic remained open during the work.

14 ACRES REZONED – On Tuesday evening, the City Council made the final decision to rezone approximately 14 acres for commercial uses. The property lies south of Newmark Avenue, west of Staples and east of LaClair Street, plus the 10-acre parcel south of Thomas Street. The process began in July, 2001 and was purposely delayed by the Council to allow time to address the Brule Street neighborhood's concerns about commercial traffic that could have possibly run through their neighborhood. The concerns were resolved by vacating the undeveloped portion of Brule Street adjacent to the rezone area. The final decision carried a condition that a Site Plan & Architectural Review be approved before any development may occur on the 14 acres.

C-SPAN BUS MAKES AN APPEARANCE - AND WILL COME AGAIN! -- The C-SPAN bus arrived on schedule this week to a welcoming committee of other displayed equipment from the Coos Bay Police, Fire and Community Services departments and Charter Communication. Students arrived on time for their tour of the bus: all the pieces were in place. However, when C-SPAN tried to fire up their electrical system, it didn't work. City staff provided assistance, but after a small fire on board the bus due to the electrical system burning, the C-SPAN folks headed out to Eugene to repair their bus before a major display in Seattle later this week. C-SPAN and Charter Communication promise the bus will return in the next few months so that local students can observe its fully functional production studios.