



WEST LINN UPDATE

First Quarter, 2017

From the City Manager: Looking Ahead at the 2018-19 Budget and Beyond



City Manager Eileen Stein

Greetings! As I round out my ninth month on the job, my attention is turned toward preparing the 2018-19 biennial budget for the City of West Linn. A biennial budget is a two year budget, meaning the lengthy process of preparing a budget only happens every other year. In the 'off year' City staff are freed up to focus on other priorities. We do examine the budget between years and make adjustments as necessary though. We also conduct audits annually to ensure expenditures are properly accounted for and the City's financial position is independently inspected. Of course, at any time, citizens can view the City's expenditures at our financial dashboard, which can be accessed via the City Website at:

<http://westlinnoregon.gov/finance>.

The challenging aspect of budgeting over the next few biennia is going to be the effect of increased rates to fund the Oregon Public Employees Retirement System (PERS), due to the large number of retirements expected in the next decade. In its simplest terms, the 2013 Legislature attempted reforms to the PERS system to lower future costs. The legislation was challenged and a ruling by the Oregon Supreme Court rendered most of the reforms moot. At issue is the 'contractual right' of the employee to receive assurances (a pension benefit) made at the time of employment. The Court's decision has left very little choice for future reform and public employers have no other option than to increase rates to fund the future liability. We expect to see rates climb in the next six years from around 17.2 percent to 26.2 percent, based on an average of the three applicable retirement plans: Tier 1, Tier 2 and the Oregon Public Service Retirement Plan.

Coupled with one of the lowest tax rates in the region, at \$2.12 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation, West Linn has budget challenges ahead. The City's tax rate was frozen following the adoption of Measure 50 in the 1990s, so raising property taxes is not an option to fund future retire-

ment costs. Nor should it be, most citizens would say. Unfortunately, this means further belt tightening in the years ahead. You will see elsewhere in this newsletter the goals for 2017 set by the City Council. These include assuring fiscal sustainability so that we can weather the PERS challenges coming our way. One effort will involve examining every cost assumption made in our financial projections including labor costs, evaluating the budget for 'one-time' budget items versus 'on-going' operational costs, evaluating the 'cost/benefit' of the services provided by the City and other cost control measures. It will also mean examining new revenue sources to meet justified needs.

The real effect of the PERS rate increases will be seen in the 2020-21 biennial budget, meaning we have two years to prepare. Over the coming biennium, expect to see efforts to engage the community in discussions about City service priorities and funding strategies. I look forward to your help with this important endeavor in the coming two years.

-Eileen Stein

City Strengthening Mental Health Services

The City Council voted to enter into an intergovernmental agreement with the Clackamas County Health, Housing and Human Services Behavioral Health Division to allow for better mental health services for West Linn residents.

By entering this program the City is aiming to reduce the number of unsafe encounters between those in a mental health crisis and police. This program also aims to reduce the frequency in which individuals in a mental health crisis are taken into physical custody while also providing compassionate care.

Through this agreement, mental health practitioners will

respond to the scene of an incident in which there is an individual in the midst of a mental health crisis, whether it be criminal related or not. This agreement also allows a West Linn Police Officer to call upon a mental health practitioner to provide an assessment of an individual. This type of referral may be generated as a result of frequent interactions where an officer believes a practitioner may be helpful in resolving issues related to ongoing mental health issues.

The City of West Linn aims to support all residents and entering into this agreement is another avenue in which this goal can be achieved.

Seeking Youth Art Submissions

The Youth Advisory Council is seeking art submissions from the City's youth community. These submissions will be displayed at the May 18 Mental Health Night.

They are looking for art that:

- Depicts a mental illness;
- Was created as a form of therapy.

All art mediums will be accepted and top submissions will be considered for a prize.

Art must be submitted by April 14, 2017.

Please contact Maggie McCaffrey at mccaffreymaggie@gmail.com if you have any questions or would like to submit a piece.

A Man to Emulate

Since 2013 the Robert Moore Award has been given to an individual who truly exemplifies the qualities that make the West Linn community a strong, special place. This year, the recipi-

ent for West Linn is demonstrated in many different forms. He was once the Mayor, serving diligently and honorably, and now dedicates a good portion of his time to bolstering the efforts of



ent not only exemplifies the qualities that make up the fabric of West Linn, but has also been known to dress up as West Linn's founder-the man who which the award was named in honor of-Robert Moore.

Larry McIntyre was recently honored as the fifth Robert Moore Award winner. McIntyre is regularly described as kind, friendly, even-tempered and patient. His love

the West Linn Historical Society and the recognition of one of our greatest natural assets-the Falls-through the Willamette Falls Heritage Foundation.

As one submission letter in his honor said, "He is an outstanding pillar in our town in too many ways to explain...he is a man to look up to and to emulate."

Regional Funding Awarded for Highway 43

The City of West Linn was recently awarded \$3 million in regional flexible funds as a partner with the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) and Metro to begin improvements to Highway 43 in West Linn.

The highly competitive regional flexible grant funding will allow the City to work with its partner agencies to proceed with transportation improvements in accordance with the City's Transpor-

tation System Plan (TSP) for the portion of the Highway from northern city limits near Marylhurst University to just north of Mary S. Young Park. The grant funds and improvements are scheduled for 2019 to 2021.

The West Linn Highway 43 project was one of 12 in the region to receive regional flexible funds through Metro; in total Metro awarded just under \$26 million for the 2019-21 cycle. A total of 27 projects,

requesting over \$94 million in grant funding, applied throughout the region. These grant funds are provided by the federal government to Metro for multi-modal improvements including bike and pedestrian facilities as well as improvements to signalized intersections. Metro uses a competitive grant award process to determine where to allocate the funds after an extensive public involvement process.

Reaching Out

Reaching out.

That was the theme of the Feb. 28, 2017 State of the City Address, and will continue to be a theme the City exemplifies in its relationships with citizens and regional partners. Mayor Russ Axelrod, who gave the State of the City Address, also encouraged citizens to continue to reach out to each other.

“Reaching out” will be important as West Linn embarks on accomplishing its 2017 Council Goals, which range from Citizen Engagement to Fiscal Sustainability to Transportation.

Citizen engagement, as Axelrod highlighted, is at the City’s core. As we move toward accomplishing our goals we will continue to develop meaningful engagement strategies to ensure we reach individuals within the boundaries of West Linn, and beyond.

In Axelrod’s speech he also highlighted how reaching out was intertwined in 2016, from the transparent process of hiring City Manager Eileen Stein to the countless hours residents have volunteered in West Linn to how City staff diligently works to ensure citizens receive the day-to-day services they expect and deserve.



A Moment with Mayor Russell B. Axelrod

This year I chose “Reaching Out” as a theme for my State of the City address. In reality, it’s a theme fitting for every year moving forward because I believe reaching out is critical to West Linn’s character, and its future.

Successful communities are not created in isolation. They are built around collaboration, mutual support, respect, and shared experiences. This means not only working together among our neighborhoods, but reaching out beyond our borders to our neighboring cities and regional stakeholders, as partners.

One example of reaching out this past year is how we were able to secure over \$4 million in grants to begin improvements to ODOT’s Highway 43 – the first ever such grants awarded to West Linn.

To create an even healthier and productive West Linn community, we must also reach out to each other individually and collectively, listen better and respectfully engage the varied interests of our residents in fair discourse.

West Linn is a community that is welcoming, successful and inclusive. This is who West Linn is and how we want West Linn to be known. Reaching out is key to achieving our community goals.

2017 Council Goals

Citizen Engagement

- Implement quarterly Council Town Halls.
- Continue to engage the CCI to address a range of public involvement issues, including land use engagement, CDC and Comprehensive Plan revisions. Improve the land use process and code to streamline and increase citizen engagement.

Economic Development

- Participate in Willamette Falls Locks activities according to the governor’s task force recommendations.
- Review City zoning to enhance the City’s opportunities for economic development in the business district.

Fiscal Sustainability

- Balance city service needs with fiscal realities over the coming several biennia given the impact of PERS funding on local governments.
- Assess the City’s Capital Improvement Plan and options for capital improvement financing.
- Identify ways to increase the General Fund.

Planning/Community Development

- Draft a plan to address waterfront/river corridor master planning along I205/Willamette Falls Drive and engage public as appropriate.
- Complete City properties review and evaluation.
- Participate in Stafford urban rural reserve discussions to protect the City’s interest for the Stafford area.
- Assess the appropriateness of zoning in potentially developable areas for consistency with neighborhood plans and city vision.

Transportation

- Continue steps to move forward the Highway 43 Concept Plan project, including citizen outreach and public education.
- Open dialogue with Tri-Met for improved transit services in the City.

Utilities

- Engage and track the WES governance discussions to protect West Linn ratepayer interests.
- Evaluate fiber feasibility.

Neighborhood News

Not sure which NA you live in? Visit WestLinnOregon.gov to find out!

Savanna Oaks Neighborhood Association

- At our February meeting, Kyle Koonce from the Oregon Department of Forestry discussed what is involved in making Savanna Oaks NA a Firewise Community. Members expressed interest in this as it makes us safer from wildfires and can potentially reduce our homeowner's insurance rates.
- At our March meeting Lt. Stradley from the West Linn Police Department provided information on crime statistics in our neighborhood.
- At our April meeting City Manager Eileen Stein and the City's new Community Development Director, John Williams, will be present to discuss future developments in West Linn and answer questions.
- Please join us for an upcoming meeting. More information is on the SONA page on the city website: <https://westlinnoregon.gov/savannaosaks>

Parker Crest Neighborhood Association

- Informational signs have been posted on Parker Road and Rosemont Road about the upcoming development project. Half street improvements such as sidewalks and street lighting, pedestrian crosswalks are part of the planning process.

Rosemont Summit Neighborhood Association

- After the big turnout at the kickoff meeting for the Rosemont Summit Neighborhood Association, hopes are high that the group will flourish in the months to come. Did you miss out and would like to participate? Come join the next meeting at 7 PM on April 6th at the Adult Community Center. The Neighborhood Association will be electing officers, planning a summer neighborhood get together and discussing ways to be better prepared for an emergency.

Upcoming Closures

Below is a list of Friday closures for the second quarter of 2017. This information will also be communicated on the day prior to, and the day of each closure. City's website and on the City's social media accounts.

City Hall and Public Works Operation

- March 17
- March 31
- April 14
- April 28
- May 12
- May 26
- June 9

Holiday Closures (All Offices Closed)

- May 29: Memorial Day

Apply for Community Grants

Community organizations seeking funding for their yearly events, operations and/or activities are being asked to submit a standardized form so all requests received by the City can be similarly evaluated during the community grant allocation process for fiscal year 2018. The biennial budget includes an allocation to qualifying community-based organizations.

The community grant application form is designed for community-based organizations interested in receiving grant funding for specific, planned events and activities occurring between July 1, 2017 and June 30, 2018. Although the City budgets on a biennial (two-year) basis, the request must be submitted for each of the fiscal years. The selection criteria, application form and report back form can be found here: westlinnoregon.gov/finance/community-grant-program-0.

Application forms are due by April 7, 2017 and must be emailed to cwl_communitygrants@westlinnoregon.gov.

Submitted application forms will be evaluated by the citizen members of the Citizens' Budget Committee and grant allocation recommendations will be forwarded to the City Council for their approval at a June 2017 City Council meeting.

Questions about the community grant application form can be directed to Cathy Brucker, Interim Finance Director, at 503-656-4261 or cwl_communitygrants@westlinnoregon.gov.

