

## City of Creswell City Council Work Session Meeting

### Council Members Present:

- Mayor Smith
- Councilor Costilla, Council President
- Councilor Holt
- Councilor Kent
- Councilor Kremer
- Councilor Morris
- Councilor Dukes

Audience Present: 10

Press Present: 0

### Staff Present:

- City Manager Vincent Martorello
- Public Works Director Cliff Bellew
- Airport Manager Shelley Humble
- Finance Director Jim Piper
- Assistant to City Manager Angela Keppler
- City Recorder Caitlin Born

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## Open Meeting

Mayor Smith opened the November 24, 2025 City Council Work Session at 6:00 PM. Mayor Smith asked everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Before moving to committee reports, Mayor Smith addressed a previous issue regarding Second Street. He stated, "Last meeting, we had some bad information given out by Vincent, which was not his fault. So, I want to apologize to Second Street as a whole for all the citizens who thought their fees had doubled from what we originally told them." He explained that the correct numbers were not transcribed properly after a meeting and took some accountability for not checking back with staff. Mayor Smith emphasized, "But it was not Vincent's fault he gave them what he had which was incorrect. And so, I just want to make sure if they're listening or if anybody here is on

Second Street, that was our fault. I apologize for the blood pressure rise and scaring you that your fees were going to be doubled. They weren't. They were never going to be. They were correct. They just were not printed correctly."

Mayor Smith then discussed committee charges for the new year. He explained, so it's my job to give you guys charges. I would like you, you know public safety, airport commission, parks and trees, admin and finance. You guys email me what you would like to do. I'll talk with Vincent if it costs us money and then I'll present the charge at the end of the or the beginning of the New Year. He asked committee members to send him ideas, noting he would review them with City Manager Martorello before finalizing charges for the next year.

## **Committee Reports**

### **Parks and Tree Advisory Committee**

Mayor Smith called upon Councilor Morris to provide the Parks and Tree Committee report.

Councilor Morris reported that the committee voted on two resolutions. The first was for the Parks and Trees Committee to create their annual work plan and associated budget and present it to the City Council rather than the other way around, explaining because city council has enough to do. City Manager Martorello noted this would align with the committee submitting charges to the Mayor. The second resolution involved drafting a charter in accordance with the city ordinance, with Councilor Morris saying the target was next month.

Councilor Morris mentioned several updates:

- The Vine Maples along Second Street were budgeted for but not irrigated and would need to be hand watered
- Park maps would be updated on the website rather than as physical signs
- Arbor Day was scheduled for Sunday, April 26th from 11 AM to 2 PM to avoid Saturday conflicts
- Discussion about OGEC (ethics) training requirements for committee members

When Councilor Holt questioned the legality of required ethics training, stating can they legally require us to do this training? I believe it's a requirement under their eyes. But can they legally tell someone you cannot serve in this public office if you do not do this training? That I don't. Because you're elected by your constituents, not by them." She expressed strong concerns, adding, I take issue with this. I have a lot of reasons for it... we get this ethics training every year with our attorney. We do. And I see no reason to have additional training brought upon us because they want to have control over us now.

City Manager Martorello stated he would check with the city attorney about the requirements and whether their current annual training with the lawyer would satisfy the requirement.

The committee also discussed the Garden Lake Park master plan, including pond storm water management, wetland determination, and the possibility of a land bridge rather than a traditional bridge.

Park updates included:

- The picnic table project moving forward while the border project was tabled
- Development of basic park rules to be posted
- Expansion of the Cobalt basketball court from 30x30 to 50x47 feet to accommodate different age groups
- Progress on Robinette Hughes Park restroom utilities

Discussion arose about whether the council liaison should be a voting member on committees. City Manager Martorello explained that typically council liaisons are not voting members to avoid potential conflicts of interest, as they would essentially be voting twice on recommendations - once at the committee level and again at the council level. The matter was tabled for further discussion to ensure consistency across all committees.

## Discussion Items

### **Budget Amendments for 2nd Quarter FY 2025-26- Finance Director Jim Piper:**

Finance Director Jim Piper explained that the budget amendments would require public notice and a public hearing, and he wanted council feedback on four proposed adjustments. Three would affect the general fund, and one had already been mentioned - the Garden Lake Park bridge engineering would be tabled and funds moved to contingency to hire consultants for a master plan.

He explained that if the master plan showed they could fill in the area instead of building a bridge, it would save money. He expressed confidence about securing grant funding for the master plan.

The second proposal was for downtown murals, estimating \$25,000 to paint two murals - one at the Mazatlán Mexican restaurant site and another at the red brick building across from Creswell Market.

The third item involved additional funding for water transmission line relocation, which came in at \$1.9 million instead of the budgeted \$1.7 million. Piper noted they had secured grant funding for 75% of the original amount and would request coverage for the increase.

When discussion began, Councilor Holt stated that she thinks it's pretty okay the way it is right now. I mean, I don't know. I have a hard time with this. We have a lot of roads that need fixed. Like, if we're able to move money around, why can't we move money around to second street and eliminate some of the lid for the second street residents? I feel this way. I there's no way on earth that I can ever get behind murals being painted for \$25,000 dollars when we have so many other needs. So, if we're able to move money around, let's move it around in a way that that's appropriate.

I think focusing on some of these goals, I think, is great. But let's take care of our immediate needs first.

City Manager Martorello responded that nothing was being put off or at risk with these requests, as they were using existing contingency funds. Councilor Holt asked, So why can't we utilize it to alleviate some of the burden on our second Street neighbors? She added concerns about future requests, she stated I fear that you're going to come ask our constituents for more money, more TUF fee, let's say, for roads. And, you know, a year ago, we put \$125,000 dollars into parks and murals. You know? That that this is where I have a problem with this because right now, you're not pulling. It's not affecting other projects that are currently happening. That doesn't mean you're not going to come ask for more money from us later.

Mayor Smith provided context about the Garden Lake Park project, explaining the connection to a second property owner who was working on filling ponds on his property, which would affect water flow into Garden Lake. He emphasized the potential economic development opportunities if this property owner received grants and developed the property to bring more jobs and stability to Creswell. He also mentioned the possibility of restoring fish to the ponds.

Councilor Kremer agreed about the murals, stating I just think that the money could be better spent, and I think that anybody who goes to a mural, they're always questioning, but how much did that cost?

Council President Costilla questioned the \$100,000 for the Garden Lake master plan, asking if it would go out to bid. City Manager Martorello explained the scope would include significant public engagement, engineering for stormwater and ponds, park design, and parking improvements. Costilla expressed concern, so this is \$100,000 just to come up with the plan on how to do it, and then we have to have more funds to make the plan.

Finance Director Piper explained the master plan would be like a business plan used to secure grant funding, potentially for a million dollars or more.

Bill Kent, from the audience, advocated strongly for the park improvements, so I'm probably the only 1 in this group that lives on that side of the freeway, and I use that park just about every other day, and I see a lot of people that do. So, to write it off as an underused park or a park we don't really care about, I would take issue with that. He emphasized that parks are crucial for attracting families to communities and praised City Manager Martorello's expertise in acquiring park funding.

Regarding murals, Kent agreed with reducing costs, sharing that he had created the fire department mural with kids using donated paint, suggesting a similar volunteer approach could work.

The discussion about the Garden Lake Park master plan became more detailed when City Manager Martorello explained the connection to the Bald Knob property owner. He clarified that Mill Creek feeds into Garden Lake, and the property owner's pond filling project would affect water flow,

creating an opportunity to improve the park's pond health by making them deeper and narrower. The council reached consensus on several points:

- Support for the water transmission line funding increase
- Agreement to pursue murals but only funding paint and supplies while seeking volunteer artists
- Tabling the \$25,000 bridge engineering funds
- Directing City Manager Martorello to work with consultants to potentially reduce the scope and cost of the Garden Lake Park master plan

## **RFP Discussion for City Attorney and Municipal Judge – City Recorder Caitlin Born**

City Recorder Caitlin Born presented draft requests for proposals for legal services for both the city attorney and municipal judge positions. She explained that this review came about from earlier discussions about insurance and when services were last put out to bid.

City Recorder Caitlin Born revealed that the municipal judge had been with the city for 41 years, with a contract ending August 31, 2026, requiring 90-day written notice. The city attorney had been with the current firm since 2003 (22 years) under a no-end-date contract requiring 60-day notice.

Regarding potential changes, she highlighted the possibility of moving court from night-time to daytime sessions, which would cut costs significantly. She explained, it would cut quite a bit of cost for doing so and allow some time for instant follow-up for court versus it being the next day or anything like that.

For the city attorney, City Recorder Caitlin Born suggested having them attend up to 12 council meetings annually at a cost of \$6,360, addressing previous concerns about not seeing the attorney enough. She noted, it would be for a year \$6,360 dollars which that is a cost to the city but that's also you guys get to actually see him interact with him, have that as a tool so that way there's not this time frame of we have to follow-up with you or we have to reach out to him.

Council President Costilla raised concerns about daytime court creating challenges for council members conducting judge evaluations, as they would need to take time off work. Various solutions were discussed, including recording sessions or having staff provide more detailed evaluations.

When Council President Costilla questioned the need for RFPs given the long-standing relationships and good evaluations, he stated, you know, so to have somebody year after year with great evaluations and say, you know, we're changing gear. We're shifting gears here. Those RFPs better come in pretty dang good to even consider that.

City Manager Martorello explained the rationale, we are being fiscally responsible as to is this the best fees. Is this the best cost that we can get? That's both that and for and for the legal fees... It's been 20 years since we've asked the question of what other fees are out there.

Councilor Holt raised specific concerns about the city attorney's performance, one of the things that I know the city attorney is supposed to keep us apprised of things going on in Salem personally, I don't think that that's been happening, and not since I've been on council. She requested this be included in the evaluation criteria.

The discussion covered the selection process, with City Manager Martorello explaining that staff would do initial screening and ranking, then present top candidates to council for interviews. Criteria would include cost, legal expertise, and familiarity with Creswell, with cost not being the sole determining factor.

Both RFPs received council approval to move forward, with the understanding that current service providers would be welcome to submit proposals.

## **Historical Museum Parking – Thomas Carroll**

Thomas Carroll introduced himself as a long-time resident since 1985, former fire department volunteer, coach, and current museum volunteer helping with building repairs. He thanked the council for their donation toward the museum's roof.

He explained the parking issue 3 or 4 years ago, when the museum gave property to the city to widen it or to put parking in right there. My understanding is that they believe that it was going to be for the museum that did not happen. He noted the museum has only three parking spaces that are open to public parking, with certain vehicles parking there all day, likely from nearby apartment residents.

He raised safety concerns about assisted living groups arriving by bus who sometimes must park at the Presbyterian church and walk elderly residents across Oregon Avenue. Carroll also pointed out, "the city uses the museum as your logo. So, I'm just going to throw that out there."

Carroll presented several suggestions from the museum's roundtable discussions:

- Museum parking 9 to 5
- 3-hour parking limits
- At minimum, designating the front space for museum parking

He emphasized they didn't want signage saying "museum parking only" as it would be too restrictive.

Monica Knight added that the museum is open on Saturdays from 11 AM to 2 PM from March through October, closing in winter due to heating costs. She noted they open by appointment any

day and that volunteers frequently work in the building during the week on displays and office work.

Councilor Holt raised legal concerns about converting public parking to private use, stating, I think the only requirement is that we would have to take I think we'd have to have a public hearing about it. Because as you're talking about potentially converting public land to a private user, limiting it would be limiting public land use.

After discussion, Public Works Director Cliff Bellew clarified that if they maintained the spaces as public property but added time restrictions, it wouldn't require the same process as converting to private use. He also provided historical context, explaining that the city had purchased those spaces at fair market value during the Fifth Street improvement project.

Council President Costilla requested verification of the historical records, stating, if somewhere back in the day that the city said that they made this deal, then it should be honored.

The council reached consensus to implement 3-hour parking limits on all three spaces, with the understanding that staff would verify the historical property transfer records. Mayor Smith confirmed we'll move forward with putting the signs up, and we'll come back when we have that information.

Public Works Director Bellew estimated the cost for three signs at approximately \$900-\$1,000 total.

## Adjournment

With no further business Mayor Smith adjourned the meeting at 7:37 p.m.

\*Signature on File

Nicholas Smith, Mayor

Attest:

\*Signature on File

Caitlin Born, City Recorder