



BAKER CITY, OREGON CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING
MAY 23, 2023 - 6:00 PM
CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS

MAYOR:
Matthew Diaz
COUNCILORS
Johnny Waggoner Sr.
Jason Spriet
Dean Guyer
Beverly Calder
Raymond Duman
Nathan Hodgdon
CITY MANAGER
Jonathan Cannon

Call to Order/Introduction

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| 1. Call to Order | The meeting was called to order by Acting Mayor Nathan Hodgdon in Mayor Diaz's absence at 6:00pm. |
| 2. Pledge of Allegiance and Invocation | The pledge of allegiance was led by Councilor Calder. She then called for a moment of silence for Diane Ellingson. |
| 3. Roll Call | Roll call was called by City Recorder Rheann Weitz. In attendance were Councilors Hodgdon, Spriet, Guyer, Duman, Waggoner Sr., and Calder. Mayor Diaz was absent. Also in attendance was City Manager Jon Cannon, City Recorder Rheann Weitz, Building Official Dawn Kitzmiller and Police Chief Ty Duby. |
| 4. Agenda Additions, Deletions, Modifications | Mayor Diaz asked that the addition of the OMA conference discussion and Council Rules discussion be moved since he would be absent. He also asked that City Council committee updates and City Council comments be deleted. Councilor Hodgdon asked that the Homeless Encampments discussion be added to the agenda.
Councilor Calder motioned that council comments be kept on the agenda. |

MOTION MADE BY: Beverly Calder

MOTION: Remove Council committee updates and OMA conference discussion, add homeless encampments discussion and keep city council comments.

SECONDED: Nathan Hodgdon

IN FAVOR: Unanimous

OPPOSED: None

Motion Passed.

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| a. 2025 OMA Conference Discussion - Addition |
| b. Homeless Encampments - Addition - Councilor Nathan Hodgdon |
| c. Council Committee Updates - Deletion Request - Mayor Matthew Diaz |
| d. City Council Comments - Deletion Request - Mayor Matthew Diaz |

e. Council Rules Discussion - Deletion Request - Mayor Matthew Diaz

5. Public Comment	There was no public comment.
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Old Business

6. Consent Agenda	There were no items on the consent agenda.
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7. Ordinance 3392 - Leak Adjustment Ordinance

MOTION MADE BY: Ray Duman

MOTION: Ordinance 3392, amending the baker city municipal code 53.21, section A, subsection 6 "water conservation leak adjustment" be read a third time by title only

SECONDED: Jason Spriet

IN FAVOR: Unanimous

OPPOSED: None

Motion Passed.

MOTION MADE BY: Beverly Calder

MOTION: Adopt Ordinance 3392

SECONDED: Johnny Waggoner Sr.

IN FAVOR: Unanimous

OPPOSED: None

Motion Passed.

8. Revenue Options Discussion

There was a discussion on the 7 revenue options given to the City Manager by City Council at the previous meeting.

1, Fuel tax. Jon Cannon stated that he made a call to the state in regard to a local fuel tax. He stated that it would have to be approved, by vote, on either the fall or spring ballot. He stated that if it were passed, the tax would be collected at the point of sale, by ODOT, then the City would collect the funds when the gas is delivered. He also mentioned that ODOT has a 1/4% admin fee and a 1-time \$30,000 IT set-up cost. He did mention that ODOT said if there were 3 other towns that wanted to implement at the exact same time as Baker City, the cost could be split. Jon Cannon had a spreadsheet that showed potential revenue numbers if the City was to implement a \$.01, \$.02 or a \$.03 fuel tax by using a 4-year average on gas/diesel revenues for Baker City. There was some discussion on the pros and cons of both gas and diesel tax or just gas tax. Jon Cannn and Councilor Duman both mentioned the fact that truck companies track local gas prices, and they will put a lock on driver's cards for towns that have a higher price than surrounding areas, so businesses could potentially lose out on money. The numbers showed that if the City implemented a \$.03 fuel tax on gas only, it would bring in roughly \$277,000. Councilor Calder asked if anyone had reached out to LaGrande or Ontario to see if they had any interest in implementing a fuel tax as well. Councilor Guyer said that he knew Ontario did not.

Jon also expressed that the state was already increasing their fuel tax by \$.02 on January 1st, so that should be taken into consideration when deciding when to put a potential local tax on the ballot.

Councilor Calder stated that this is a way to not put the entire burden on our community. She stated that it would be a good selling point for the community if some of the burdens landed on tourists as well.

Councilor Hodgdon stated that \$.01 was too low but \$.03 was too high.

Councilor Calder said that \$.03 was a good starting point. Councilor Duman stated that even a \$.03 wouldn't be enough to backfill the \$490,000 that was

taken from the Street Funds during the budget meetings and that \$.05 would come closer.

Councilor Calder mentioned that they should reach out to other cities to see if they would also be interested, seeing that they could save some implementation money if so.

Councilor Duman asked the council when they should try and get this vote on a ballot, and it was unanimous that it should be in November. Councilor Guyer stated that if it fails in November, they will have options for May as well.

2. \$1 per 9-hole tee time fee. Jon Cannon collected current tee time numbers from the golf course, and with those numbers, assuming they are all 18holes, came up with an \$11,560 projection of revenue. Councilor Calder asked how the fees would be collected and given to the City. Cannon stated that the golf course would collect the fees and reimburse the City. Councilor Calder stated that she didn't think that it was an unreasonable amount and she had a meeting last week with certain members, and she didn't get a bad reaction from them. Councilor Guyer stated that he spoke with Jon Woolard, who is the golf board chair, and he said that he showed a lot of disinterest in the fee. He stated that they felt like it already cost too much to golf and that he didn't think many golfers would be happy about additional fees. Councilor Guyer expressed, though, that he didn't think it was an unreasonable fee either, and that \$1-\$2 was nothing for golf.

3. Moving Code Enforcement into a Civil Process. Jon Cannon stated that for this change to happen, it is possible for code enforcement to stay at the police department, but it would be more effective to move over to admin. He did say, though, that by moving the position to admin, there would be labor negotiations with the police union as well as the AFSCME union, to which the position would then belong. He stated that no matter what department the position was in, it has to belong to a union as it is a union-represented position. He stated that he talked with Ontario and they told him that it isn't a money maker, but it does pay for itself and it is more effective.

Councilor Hodgdon expressed that code enforcement is a priority and it would be nice for it to be able to be more effective in the admin department. He also mentioned that it would let the police be police.

There was a short discussion on the possibility of more complaints from citizens in the beginning, but it could ultimately be a good decision.

4. Short-term rental license. Jon Cannon stated that he had done some research and he found that there are a lot of variations and flexibility in the fee structure for short-term rental licenses. He mentioned that he saw fees anywhere from \$50-\$1,000 per license. He also mentioned that there would be costs associated with the management of these licenses and with cuts to the budget, he wasn't sure the city has the personnel currently to do so. Councilor Calder stated that they should at least consider a starting point of requiring a conditional use permit. She expressed that there are so many short-term rentals in town anymore, and nothing is stopping anyone from turning more homes into short-term rentals. She expressed that no one wanted to see their blocks flooded with short-term rentals. Councilor Duman agreed and stated that the school district tried to hire 8 new employees and 6 weren't able to find houses to rent long-term. He mentioned that it might be a good idea to consider setting up districts and only allowing a certain number of short-term rentals in each district. Dawn Kitzmiller, the Building official,

mentioned that she would like there to be a licensing process so that her office is aware of which homes are short-term rentals because so many of them have added on or modified homes without building permits.

5. Pavorpol. Councilor Calder stated that she did some research on this product and it seemed like it was a good product, but it was meant for smaller projects, not the large project that had been presented to Council at a previous meeting.

Councilor Hodgdon mentioned that it may be a good project for the public art commission to take on. He thought maybe it would become a community project.

There was a short discussion on potential ways to promote Baker City to tourism after that.

6. Consolidation of the police department with the county sheriff's office. Jon Cannon stated that he had a meeting scheduled with Sherriff Ash next week to discuss this possibility more seriously. He did let the council know that if this was to move forward there would be labor bargaining for both the decision and the impact.

Councilor Calder said that many cities and counties have done this merger, and she thought it was Lewis and Clark College that would do an analysis for the City to see the real numbers.

Councilor Duman said that they have to really think about what the city wants from the sheriff's office; 24-hour coverage, detectives, etc. He mentioned that if we need the same personnel, the same vehicles, the same everything, then is it really worth it if it doesn't save money?

Councilor Calder said that they should consider starting a task force and letting community leaders guide the conversation. Councilor Hodgdon agreed, stating that it would impact the whole community as well as surrounding areas, but he would really like to see hard numbers before making a decision one way or the other. Councilor Calder expressed that no one wants an unsafe neighborhood but the city has to make decisions to live within their means. She mentioned that the county and the state have both gone away from 24-hour coverage and neither one of those entities made a bad decision. She stated that what we want versus what we can afford is a tough decision to make.

Councilors Duman, Guyer, and Hodgdon all expressed interest in the analysis from Lewis and Clark College to see the numbers before making any decisions.

7. Furlough days, hiring freezes, and use of vacation days. Jon Cannon stated that using vacation days is easy to push on admin, it just may have an impact on services during certain times. However, it is a different story with police and fire due to their schedules and already being as short-staffed as they both are.

He mentioned that with furlough days, there would also be an issue with police and fire due to them already being below target levels for staff. He stated that there would be no services from either department on the days chosen as furlough days. He did say, though, that admin would be easier to enforce. However, there would be an impact on services offered in the City, from closing the Finance window to closing City Hall altogether. He mentioned that hiring freezes wouldn't gain anything. They are already short-staffed in the police and fire, and in the admin department, if a position leaves, such as HR manager, City Recorder, City Manager, Administrative Services Admin, or Payroll, then he has to replace them. They are not positions he can wait to fill.

Councilor Calder mentioned that in 2021 they had goals for financial issues and she asked City Manager Cannon what had been accomplished. Jon Cannon stated that eliminating ambulance services was a huge part of the issue. If that hadn't happened, they would be in a lot worse shape than they are now. He also said there have been many efforts to improve efficiencies in the City, such as the transition to Cassele Software and its potential to eliminate the need to hire more staff down the road.

Councilor Spriet mentioned that if non-emergency personnel only had furlough days, he understood that it would be a tough decision to make, but it would be understandable if services were lost during those times. Jon Cannon answered that if offices were closed, work just wouldn't get done, there would be no way around it as the City was already short-staffed as it is, and if the staff were to lose more working time, less and less would get done. Councilor Spriet agreed that it may not be a popular decision, but if it has the potential to save money, it would be worth it.

Councilors Spriet and Calder also mentioned the pay schedule policy and stated that it needed to be added to this item # because it really needs to be looked at and changed.

There was more discussion on furlough days, and how it can be used as a management tool, and it didn't have to be looked at in a negative way. He also mentioned that if everything they had discussed thus far went through, it would only break them even from the money that was taken from the street fund at the budget meeting, and he expressed that they needed to come up with ways to move the City forward, not just tread water year in and year out. He stated that franchise fees needed to be added to the list as well.

Councilor Spriet mentioned reaching out to state legislation for possible solutions, since it seems to be enough of an issue that other cities are facing as well, they may have a solution. Jon Cannon mentioned that most other cities have implemented public safety fees to cover expenses.

Council agreed that they would like to begin to work to get the fuel tax put onto the November ballot, and requested that City Manager Jon Cannon continue researching all of the other options that were discussed.

9. 2025 OMA Conference Discussion - Addition This item was moved to further date in Mayor Diaz's absence.

New Business

10. Council Rules Discussion This item was moved in Mayor Diaz's absence.

11. Resolution #3938 to Change Appropriations in the Building Inspections Fund Moving Funds From Contingency to Materials and Services Budget Accounts Dawn Kitzmiller, the building official, requested that funds be moved from contingency to cover unexpected inspection expenses due to unexpected increases in demand for building inspection services.

MOTION MADE BY: Beverly Calder

MOTION: Adopt Resolution 3938 to change appropriations in the building inspections fund, moving funds from contingency to materials and services budget accounts.

SECONDED: Ray Duman

IN FAVOR: Unanimous

OPPOSED: None

Motion Passed.

12. Homeless Encampments - Addition - Nathan Hodgdon Councilor Hodgdon wanted the council to discuss possible options for solving the homeless encampment issues in Baker City. He expressed that the police are helpful, but the encampments just move to different locations, and the

issue isn't being solved. He mentioned that implementing a reward system of sorts may be a good incentive for the homeless to clean up after themselves and be "better neighbors". He said that maybe they would offer "Baker Bucks" to those who keep their areas clean, or those that help others to keep their areas clean, something like a good neighbor reward.

The Councilors, along with police chief Ty Duby, had a discussion on the potential for turning a piece of city property into a homeless camp designated area. If they were to do this, the homeless in the City would be able to have their own 12x12 area and they would be responsible for keeping it clean and orderly. It was also mentioned that if there was a designated area for the homeless to be, then the police would be able to enforce them not being anywhere else in the city.

Updates and Future Items

13. Council Committee Updates - Deletion Request - Mayor Matthew Diaz

This item was deleted from agenda.

14. City Manager / Director Updates

City Manager had no updates.

15. City Council Comments - Deletion Request - Mayor Matthew Diaz

This item was kept on the agenda.

Councilor Hodgdon stated that he was approached, in the park, by a parent who asked if they were able to bring their own tools down to the park to fix/tighten a few nuts/bolts here and there. He asked if it would be possible to form a committee of sorts through public works and get volunteers to come together.

Jon Cannon stated that they would need to reach out to Public Works director, Joyce Bornstedt and that if it were to be done it would need to be done carefully and done to code for liability reasons. He thought that if volunteers were to come to talk with Joyce first, there could be specific rules for volunteers to follow to make that happen.

Councilor Hodgdon also wanted to discuss the potential for the City to partner with BCD to do fundraising, something like a raffle. He said that tickets could be sold 5 for \$1 and drawings would happen once or twice a month for gift baskets or certificates. Could be a fun way to get citizens involved and to make some money.

16. Upcoming Agenda Items

Jon Cannon gave the council a list of items for the upcoming agenda.

OMA conference discussion

Minutes from previous meetings to review

Revenue discussion

Budget hearing, discussion, and adoption

Tree Board applicant

Resolution for updating development code

Council Rules Discussion

Barger Presentation

Councilor Guyer stated that Jon Woolard, the golf board chair, wanted to discuss the golf course budget.

Councilor Waggoner Sr. stated that the budget review should be the last item on the agenda as it would be a lengthy discussion.

Adjourn

17. Adjourn

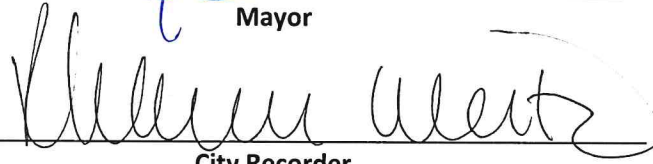
Meeting was adjourned at 9:05 pm

Signed: _____



Mayor

Attest: _____



City Recorder

A link to this City Council meeting can be found www.bakercity.com or upon request to the City Recorder.