

LEBANON CITY COUNCIL
MINUTES
February 24, 2016

Council Present: Mayor Paul Aziz and Councilors Jason Bolen, Bob Elliott, Floyd Fisher, Robert Furlow and Wayne Rieskamp

Staff Present: City Attorney Tré Kennedy, City Manager Gary Marks, City Clerk Linda Kaser, Finance Director Dean Baugh, Engineering Services Director Ron Whitlatch and Maintenance Services Director Jason Williams

CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Aziz called the Regular Session of the Lebanon City Council to order at 1:09 p.m. in the Santiam Travel Station Board Room.

ROLL CALL: Roll call was taken with Councilor Grizzle absent.

CONSENT CALENDAR

AGENDA: City of Lebanon Council Agenda – February 24, 2016
BOARD MINUTES: Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee – July 24, 2014 & August 20, 2015
PUBLIC UTILITIES EASEMENT: Berry Street & Hwy. 20 – ADA Curb Ramp
R-O-W DEDICATION: Post Street (Linn County Property)
R-O-W & DEED DEDICATIONS, EASEMENT & AGREEMENT: Walt Badger – Airport Road Extension Project

Councilor Bolen moved, Councilor Elliott seconded, to approve the Consent Calendar as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENTS – *There were none.*

REGULAR SESSION

1) City of Albany Draft Agreements

Engineering Services Director Whitlatch requested Council consensus to approve two final draft agreements between the City of Lebanon and the City of Albany before creating remaining exhibits and final documents for approval. He stated that there is no contention with the exhibits, but it will take some time to put together. Dollar amounts and timing have not changed since the last time staff and Council met.

Concessions on both sides were made when staff and counsel met with City of Albany Public Works and their city attorney to work through details. Albany staff is meeting with their council today to present these draft agreements.

Mayor Aziz and Council thanked staff and City Attorney Kennedy for all of their work these past few years. He also thanked Albany for coming to the table to work things out.

City Manager Marks added that the high point is that Lebanon will be independent in its ability to draw water with construction of the new water treatment plant.

Whitlatch stated that the exhibits will be put together and finalized sometime before July for Council's approval.

There was unanimous Council consensus to approve the City of Albany draft agreements and to proceed with exhibits and final documents for approval.

2) New Water Treatment Plant – Fluoridation System Cost Analysis

Whitlatch requested Council direction regarding the continued use of fluoride in the City's drinking water system as staff is approaching final design of the new water treatment plant, which currently includes a fluoridation system. He reported that the City is at almost 90% design and both projects will likely be put out to bid right after the April Council meeting. The estimated capital cost for this system is \$115,000; annual costs for the chemical and maintenance to pumps and feed lines are approximately \$20,000. Staff would also likely add \$3,000-\$4,000 to the equipment acquisition fund each year to allow for replacement of lines, pumps and tanks, as fluoride is somewhat corrosive and degrades these items over time. Staff's standpoint is that they make the purest possible water with the least amount of chemicals.

He presented several options for Council consideration:

1. Direct staff to continue to fluoridate the City's drinking water system and install the equipment at the new water treatment plant;
2. Direct staff to bring a resolution back to Council repealing (Resolution #2000-48) the use of fluoride in the City's drinking water system; and
3. Approve a resolution referring the fluoridation issue to the vote of the people for the May ballot.

Councilor Furlow asked Whitlatch what the additional cost would be to add the fluoridation system later. Whitlatch stated that the City is not yet at final design so he does not have that information but it would obviously be less expensive to install it beforehand, rather than having to retrofit it later. The figure he provided is the capital cost based on the consultant's current estimates.

Kennedy distributed a letter from Linn County Department of Health Services endorsing the use of fluoride.

Councilor Bolen stated that the Council decided to add fluoride 19 or 20 years ago [16 years ago] after listening to a lot of research and debate. The new water treatment plant fluoridation system would not include additional money, but current money that would be spent anyway, and there would not be a reduction of water rates if it is not included. He does not want to see this become a cost-benefit analysis scenario comparing savings to the next generation's rotted teeth. His opinion is that the City chose this path with measurable benefits and the plant was designed with it, so the City should go through with it. If a significant population of the public wants to put something on the ballot, there is the initiative process for that.

Councilor Furlow concurred with Councilor Bolen since the Council does not have a clear mandate from the community to remove it. The initiative process exists as a mechanism to change public policy. The cost to add the system at a later time will be significantly more, which he feels is ill-advised and not fiscally sound. He referred to Frank Moore letter, Linn County Health Administrator, and stated that Mr. Moore is a credible health professional and would not take this position in a frivolous manner.

Councilor Fisher stated that there was a lot of opposition when he voted for the addition of fluoride in 2000. Since then, there has been a steady trickle of people bringing in multitudes of derogatory data; opinions seem to be split about 50/50. He is not an authority and both sides seem to have backing from experts on the subject. Whitlatch confirmed that there is natural fluoridation in the water. Councilor Fisher wondered if the Council is ignoring new evidence. Those speaking against fluoride feel that we are harming our bodies so he questioned whether teeth trump, for example, someone's liver.

He is now looking at this differently and feels that it is a subject of choice. The unhappy 50% are being subjected to something they feel is a violation of their body and health. Those who want fluoridation without ingesting it can get topical teeth treatment. He hesitates making an arbitrary decision without a lot of community input and would be more open to removing fluoride from the water system and letting a petition add it back.

Councilor Bolen stated that adults have that choice but children, who are most affected, do not have the choice and would be the ones who suffer, which is what proponents argued in 2000. Councilor Fisher stated that it would have been nice for the dentist who proposed this to have come back with years of data; we are left without local validation of the original premise. He emphasized allowing a choice. Councilor Bolen suggested carrying on as planned but reaching out to local dentists and COMP-Northwest for their input. The Council made this decision years ago so he does not feel it is up to him to arbitrarily decide to remove fluoride and bring it back in by petition.

Councilor Elliott agreed with Councilor Fisher that it should go to the vote of the people before any decisions are made. Regarding Councilor Bolen's comment that this would not cost the taxpayers anything, he asked how the annual \$23,000 O&M costs would be paid without raising water rates. Whitlatch stated that this is factored into the annual O&M; staff is looking at it purely from the perspective of cost and risk management. Councilor Elliott reiterated that he would like this to go to the vote of the people because of the amount of opposition he has heard.

Mayor Aziz's opinion was that the people of Lebanon have not spoken; it was the Council who made that decision in 2000. He completely agreed with Councilor Fisher that he will never be an expert so would rather not put anything in the water if there is a chance of it being dangerous for some. He would like to see the Council refer this to the voters so that they can decide since many things (medically and in research) have changed in 15 years. It affects many people, including babies, in negative ways. Councilor Fisher pointed out that if this was put on the November ballot, we would hear from the greatest cross-section of the community because of the presidential election.

Councilor Bolen stated that he finds it ridiculous that the Council would put this to a referendum because two people made public comments. He does not feel this is an issue where the Council needs to spoon feed something to the community because it gives the impression that the Council is backing out and putting it to the vote. Mayor Aziz disagreed because the previous decision was made by Council; the public deserves the opportunity to make that decision. City Clerk Kaser shared that her research indicated that this went to the vote of the people in the 1950s and the 1980s and was voted down.

There was Council majority 3 (Bolen, Furlow & Rieskamp) to 2 (Elliott and Fisher)] to direct staff to continue to fluoridate the City's drinking water system in the new water treatment plant.

Whitlatch stated that staff receives this question a lot; they are not experts but are going off of EPA guidelines. He reiterated that staff wanted Council guidance before committing to the capital costs and managing the risk of having fluoride in the system. He confirmed that no capital costs are being added to the original system design or to the ratepayers.

ITEMS FROM COUNCIL

Mayor Aziz stated that he has been receiving questions about a signal or traffic control near Reeves Parkway/Hwy. 20. Whitlatch indicated that this is in the economic development agreement with Samaritan Health and, he believes, is in the TSP. The decision was being held off to ensure that the signal gets placed in the correct location. He and Community Development Director Wendolowski discussed requiring another traffic impact analysis with one of the next planned developments.

Regarding Councilor Rieskamp's concern about the homeless at the Park Street Bridge, Marks stated that

Maintenance Services Director Williams reported that his crews are constantly cleaning up litter and encouraging them to leave (five to seven times over the last year) but they always return. He added that Williams and Police Chief Stevenson agreed to develop other ideas to address this but the City's hands are somewhat tied.

Councilor Rieskamp stated that his concern is the high visibility of the garbage, although he is aware that the maintenance crews have other areas to take care of.

Kennedy stated that Councilor Bolen asked him why Eugene can prohibit camping under their bridges. His answer was that since Eugene created homeless camps and provide them a place to sleep, they can thereby limit their sleeping to that location.

Regarding Dave Robinson's request [at the last Council meeting] for help with lighting on Airway Road, Marks reported that Whitlatch worked with Mr. Robinson and there is a plan to place at least five street lights on Airway.

PUBLIC COMMENTS – *There were none.*

ITEMS FROM PRESS – *There were none.*

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Aziz adjourned the meeting at 1:55 p.m.

[Minutes prepared by Linda Kaser & Donna Trippett]

Minutes Approved by the Lebanon City Council on
this 9th day of March 2016.



Paul R. Aziz, Mayor
Bob Elliott, Council President

ATTESTED:



Linda Kaser, City Clerk