

# LEAVENWORTH CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION MINUTES

## May 14, 2019

Mayor Cheryl Kelley Farivar called the May 14, 2019 Study Session to order at 8:30 AM.

Council Present: Mayor Cheryl K. Farivar, Carolyn Wilson, Elmer Larsen, Mia Bretz, Margaret Neighbors, Sharon Waters, Clint Strand and Jason Lundgren.

Staff Present: Joel Walinski, Chantell Steiner, Herb Amick, and Lilith Vespier.

### 1. Chamber Report

Chamber Director Nancy Smith updated the Council on the activities with Maifest and noted that the upcoming summer Gazebo entertainment is fully booked. She said the Chamber is working now on Kinderfest and continuing relations with other concierges, upcoming hospitality events and identified an opportunity for the City to consider placing chainsaw carvings for a walking art tour event to tell the story of Leavenworth. The Chamber brought in the wood carvers at Maifest this year and the Chamber does get to keep the carvings that were made that day; over time this could grow to more carvings for expanding the tour.

### 2. Link Transit Presentation – Richard DeRock

Mayor Farivar welcomed Link Transit General Manager Richard DeRock. Mr. DeRock provided the Council with handouts and a PowerPoint Presentation on where Link Transit is heading. He briefly reviewed the history of Link Transit including service area, costs, legislation for revenues, and overall community needs. He identified specific details of the entire system, who and where ridership is driven, how revenues are generated (96% from taxes and grants) and expenses are broken down (74% employees), and the environmental footprint that is known to have the largest percentage of alternative fueled transit fleets in the Northwest. He identified the success of the system performance noting the achievement of all six Federal performance measures with an average cost of 25% less than the state average. He discussed the process involved with community outreach for what the riders would like in the future and how changes are impacted financially; this resulted in the support that identified a .2% increase in tax revenues that Link will be putting on the August 2019 ballot. With this increase the level of service will increase the number of trips per hour, will add expansion for weekday evenings and weekends as well as adding some service on holidays. He answered questions on employee pay rates/benefits and how expanded services will improve employee hours and morale while reducing service costs through efficient scheduling. He talked about the minimum bus ridership age of five years old to ride alone and how Link has partnered with the schools to ensure that children know the busses are a “safe place” for children. In closing, Mr. DeRock updated the Council on the upcoming grand opening for the new Leavenworth Park-N-Ride behind Safeway that is scheduled to begin service in July and identified the details of the ballot request implications. Mayor Farivar stated that the Council can consider passing a resolution of support.

### 3. Council Annual Retreat Follow-up

#### A. Council Communication

Mayor Farivar introduced Colin Brine, a local resident, that specializes in leadership development, strategy/vision work, and communication through the company Be Clearly. He identified the assistance that the company has provided for the Link Transit outreach and the recent PUD outreach campaigns. He asked the Council what principles and objectives would they like to focus on and the need to identify a specific topic to formalize how to approach outreach on that topic; framing and understanding the moment is key to starting the process. Councilmembers shared ideas on what the concerns are that may include cross or miscommunications, competing priorities, fractured structure and a reduction of an overall community feeling.

Mayor Farivar noted that the process might need to be similar to what Our Valley Our Future has done. Mr. Brine stated that they have done a good job to identify who are we at our best and how do we get more of that. He talked about expanding on our crown jewels and how to showcase all of the amenities. It was noted that Council meetings are designed to conduct business while what is missing is the ability to interact in an informal forum format. The Council discussed options for creating a city-wide survey that is open and broad based that will need to build on ongoing communications rather than just a one-time moment or forum. Mr. Brine expanded on the process that can start at the survey and move into a series of events that could roll out over time and expand on topics as topics and issues are identified. Going through multiple events that builds on each event opens communication, invites further involvement and engagement, and creates ownership of the ideas that are moving forward. Council voiced concerns on what communication tools the City currently uses, what might be missing, and how to reach those that are not using our tools with the intent to provide facts and information to help reduce miscommunication concerns. Council discussed the concept of sponsoring versus leading to create an open discussion for all citizens to participate in a neutral environment; letting people take ownership and feel that they are being heard and are a part of the decision making is critical to keeping the discussions moving forward. Mr. Brine stated that he will work on putting together a structured plan for follow-up at the next study session.

## **B. Lodging Tax Discussion**

City Administrator Joel Walinski reviewed the discussions at the retreat regarding the lodging tax break down and how to look at those percentages with and without reserves. He identified what the purpose of the reserves are, which includes resiliency to outside forces (\$300,000 reserve per the Financial Policy), such as economic downturns or fires, and the remaining dollars are currently unallocated to be used for future initiatives or capital improvements. He then reviewed what elements or groups are included within the four categories of Tourism Advertising, Tourism Promotion or Enhancements, Ongoing Support Services, and current Capital and Debt requirements. He explained the relationship difference of Advertising, which mainly includes Leavenworth Area Promotions and some Chamber services, versus Promotion/Enhancement, and the need for contractual documents for partnerships that identify services provided for dollars being expended. Council discussed the difference of the relationships with the current partnerships and how each one will have a unique mission and difference in outcome of services. These will be different from the Group Funding program applicants that have traditionally been held to a maximum number of years. A new expansion of the program is to consider a funding program for ongoing event requests or enhancements to current events. Administrator Walinski suggested having the Economic Development Committee look at the structure of the programs and make a recommendation to the Council for further discussion. Council discussed the draft materials and made suggestions for the

Committee to consider on the funding limits, scoring criteria, geographic boundary, consideration of local assets, and bonus points for specific purposes.

#### **4. Chumstick Wildfire Coalition**

Administrator Walinski noted the recent discussions on wildfire awareness and that Councilmember Waters has recently volunteered to attend the Chumstick Wildfire Coalition meetings. Council discussed how a community can become a Firewise Area and noted some benefits of the program such as grant funding, education and awareness. This will also assist the City in developing future code changes for fire reduction methods in regard to building new residential and commercial facilities. Council discussed ideas for having fire risk and suggestions for improvements as a part of the future community meetings.

#### **5. Development Services – 2018 Summary**

Development Services Manager Lilith Vespier reviewed the 2018 permits issued compared to the previous nine years identifying the number of each specific type of permit. She then identified the valuation impacts of those permits over the past decade. She noted the increases in business and liquor licenses over the past three years. She then reviewed the various types and numbers of Land Use related permits; there was a brief discussion on the increase in home occupations that were driven by the compliance of the State Master Business License partnership with the City over the last several years. Manager Vespier provided photos of some recent projects around the community that are currently underway and discussed some elements of each of the projects. She discussed how timelines for permitting and construction will vary depending on each builder's schedule; the City has set timelines for reviewing and issuing permits that are adhered to. She gave a brief update on the appeal processes occurring with the Adventure Park and Leavenworth Haus Apartment projects.

Councilmember Waters asked if the Planning Commission can consider ways to include examples of how changes may affect a neighborhood when considering code changes, such as a zone change or planned development. Manager Vespier said she will look at how to put something like this together; Administrator Walinski added that the challenge with examples is that they are based on assumptions and assumptions can vary from person to person. Manager Vespier gave some suggestions on future long-term planning ideas to consider for projects such as land use of the Osborn site or other large developable areas. Councilmember Bretz questioned whether we will be conducting independent surveys on the permitting process; Administrator Walinski stated that he has contacted a few companies that do independent surveys and have been told that Leavenworth does not have a large enough number of permits to be of value to companies that do a large independent style survey. The Development Department does continue to provide a survey with each permit and actively seeks feedback on ways to create improvements from the applicants.

#### **6. Draft Resolution XX-2019 Six-Year Transportation Improvement Plan**

Public Works Director Herb Amick reviewed the current and draft Six-Year Transportation Improvement Plans (TIP) noting the removal of several projects that have been or are being completed this year. Administrator Walinski reviewed the process for approving the TIP that will occur over the next month prior to a public hearing and adoption in June; the deadline for adoption is July 1.

## 7. Council Open Discussion

Mayor Farivar updated the Council on the new private parking lot at the corner of Highway 2 and Chumstick; she noted that the drainage requirements reduced the number of parking spaces and that the owner will be offering an online application payment process only.

Councilmember Lundgren questioned if the City will be seeking a website upgrade with the contract that is being presented for maintenance services on the evening agenda; Administrator Walinski explained it is just maintenance of the current site, although a website upgrade or redesign could be funded in next years budget.

Mayor Farivar stated that the City will be holding a Memorial Day recognition ceremony at the Mountain View Cemetery this year and asked for suggestions of speakers.

Councilmember Neighbors stated that Link Transit is looking for a Leavenworth representative to assist on the board that is working on their upcoming ballot measure.

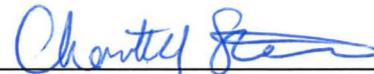
Councilmember Larsen asked that the Parking Committee look at Lodging Tax reserves for use of future major parking improvements, such as a parking garage. Councilmember Bretz said this will be a consideration of the Committee as well as looking at other suggestions such as offsite parking for larger festivals.

Study Session adjourned at 11:52 AM.

**APPROVED**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**Cheryl K. Farivar**  
**Mayor**

**ATTEST**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**Chantell Steiner**  
**Finance Director/City Clerk**