

MINUTES

Eugene City Council
McNutt Room—City Hall
777 Pearl Street—Eugene, Oregon

September 21, 2011
Noon

COUNCILORS PRESENT: Betty Taylor, George Brown, Andrea Ortiz, George Poling, Mike Clark, Chris Pryor, Alan Zelenka, Pat Farr.

Her Honor Mayor Kitty Piercy called the September 21, 2011, work session of the Eugene City Council to order.

A. PRESENTATION ON OREGON PRESCRIPTION DRUG PROGRAM

Human Resources Director Myrnie Daut was present to discuss the Oregon Prescription Drug Program. She reported that the Oregon Prescription Drug Program offered twice the discount to members offered by the National League of Cities Drug Program. The NLC program offered a 23 percent discount and the Oregon program offered a 45 percent discount. The Oregon program was free and was intended to provide uninsured or under-insured Oregonians with access to discounted drugs. There were 28,000 members in Lane County.

Ms. Daut recommended that the City promote the Oregon program and referred the council to sample handouts regarding the program that would be made available at City facilities. Information about the program could be accessed through a link on the City's Web site, and information would be shared with participants at the upcoming Financial Planning Day scheduled on October 22 at Willamette High School.

Councilors asked questions clarifying the details of the Oregon program.

Ms. Osborn shared information about Financial Planning Day, noting that it was a no-cost event offered to residents and was co-sponsored by the City of Eugene and United Way.

B. WORK SESSION: Update on Strategic Communications

Assistant City Manager Sarah Medary introduced the topic. She reminded the council of past discussions about the need to improve City communications with the public and the outcomes the council adopted through the Eugene Counts process that called for improvements in transparent and interactive communications and broad public involvement. Subsequently, staff evaluated the City's existing communication efforts in all areas to ensure they were occurring in a way that reflected the City's values for collaboration and creativity and developed a plan to improve them after examining examples from other communities and research from the University of Oregon.

Community Relations Director Jan Bohman led the council through a PowerPoint presentation entitled "Telling Our Story" that described the elements of the "Telling Our Story Plan." She said the organization started with the question of what it wanted to be known for and built from there using

information from other communities and organizations, including the University of Oregon. She briefly noted the members of the Steering Committee, who included Kelly Darnell, Stewart Ramsing, Alana Holmes, Libby Tower, Jo Eppli, Melinda McLaughlin, Eric Jones, Ms. Bohman, and Assistant City Manager Medary. She shared a series of slides that illustrated the values staff had focused on, which included community service, quality of life, stewardship, sustainability and human rights, and leadership and collaboration and then shared some key words that staff believed described the organization and how it worked. The words included “welcoming,” “engaging,” “service-oriented,” “responsive,” “professional,” “caring,” “respectful,” “good steward,” and “innovative.”

Ms. Bohman then shared fortune cookies with the council that contained fortunes with one of the key words as well as a statement about one of the services provided by the City of Eugene that illustrated that word.

Ms. Bohman anticipated that the City would develop a communications guide for employees that provided guidance on the use of words and images.

Ms. Bohman highlighted the goals of the City’s communications strategy and shared draft proposed actions associated with each goal (listed below each goal):

Build the positive relationship and understanding between the community and the City.

- Proactively identify meaningful City stories
- Find new and better ways to communicate City stories
- Support all City employees, elected officials, and volunteers to be communicators and story tellers
- Continue to work with traditional media and look for new strategies for effectiveness

Present a cohesive identity of the City organization.

- Consistently incorporate core messages throughout City communications
- Implement consistent use of City visuals and identifying elements
- Find and use opportunities to present a more full, integrated range of City services

Inform community members and actively support their involvement in the work of the City.

- Use new website to engage people online
- Increase use of video and social media
- Implement public participation guidelines

Create City communications that are accessible and responsive to the community and its diverse groups and cultures.

- Implement public participation guidelines
- Work with our communication partners to know and help get out our messages
- Provide staff with language tools and resources
- Identify diverse community audiences and their communication needs, best avenues for communication

Ms. Bohman reported that the City was working with a new vendor, Civic Plus, on the organization’s new Web site. She shared some of the input the Steering Committee had received from City staff, the City Council, and the public about what was desired on the Web site. She invited questions.

Mayor Piercy was pleased with the work that had been done. She appreciated the improvements that had been made to the City's current Web site and looked forward to having a more functional web site that engaged the public to a greater degree in the City's work. Ms. Bohman anticipated the City's new Web site would be launched in May 2012. She invited content suggestions from the council.

Mayor Piercy suggested the City's communication efforts should acknowledge the good work done in the past that the City had built upon.

Mr. Pryor suggested that the discussion was about branding and the two-way communication that implied, which highlighted the importance of ensuring that the City's message was authentic and delivered with truth and authority. In addition, the message must be accountable. If the message had those elements people would believe in it and it would have impact. Mr. Pryor said the City's communications initiative should be inclusive of the entire organization, including the City Council. He said the council needed to reinforce the City's message of authenticity in its role, and he committed to doing so.

Ms. Ortiz questioned how the City could use its Web site to counter negative stories or perceptions and tell the organization's side of the story.

Mayor Piercy agreed with Mr. Pryor about the role the council had in reinforcing the City's message, and suggested that the council think about how to reflect the organization's cultural values in its own goals work.

Mr. Clark expressed appreciation for the staff work. He concurred with Mr. Pryor's remarks. He suggested that the council goals process could add further clarity to the initiative and he looked forward to that discussion.

Mayor Piercy acknowledged that the strategy was focused on the City organization but she was also interested in telling the story of the community and the history that made Eugene what it was. Ms. Bohman said that 2012 will be Eugene's 150th anniversary and a City staff team was meeting with community partners about ways to commemorate the anniversary. She thought that it would be a good opportunity for the community to tell its story and emphasized the many people who were interested in participating in that effort.

Ms. Taylor encouraged Ms. Bohman to take advantage of the Masonic Cemetery and the history that could be found there. Ms. Ortiz hoped the effort acknowledged things that were not so positive, such as the racism faced by past African American citizens.

Mayor Piercy adjourned the meeting at 12:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Forrest

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City Recorder

(Recorded by Kimberly Young)