



Every other week at the City Council Business Meeting, I deliver a City Manager's Report to Council and the public. The reports highlight the incredible work being done by you, the City staff. I want to share this report with you in a biweekly email. It's important for all of us to stay connected on what is going on in the City organization, including the great work of your colleagues and the City Council.

Economic Diversity & Revitalization: --- On March 6, 2023, an Economic Roundtable Discussion was held in Council Chambers with partners from various sectors in Southern Oregon. Participants identified three key next steps that would benefit Ashland's citizens, businesses and visitors:

1. Establish a Partnership to Build the Ashland Brand – this collaborative partnership is for marketing Ashland for tourism and potential business relocation opportunities.
2. Establish a Partnership to Establish a University District Activity Center – this initiative is to jointly plan potential future development of a University District that would diversify the City's economic base and support SOU by enhancing Ashland's student life experience.
3. Establish a Partnership for Affordable Childcare & Early Childhood Development – This partnering effort is to plan potential advancement of childcare or early childhood development options for Ashland residents.

This endeavor will be taken up in earnest after we get through the budget season. For now, we are sending the roundtable participants a request for participation in the three partnerships and Council has adopted an adhoc committee to look at Affordable Childcare and Early Childhood Development.

At the April 3, 2023, Council Study Session, AFN Operations Manager, **Chad Sobotka**, and Director of Innovation & Technology, **Jason Wegner**, presented the Ashland Fiber Network (AFN) Business Plan. And, Fire Chief, **Ralph Sartain**, presented the Ashland Fire & Rescue Business Plan. Both of these presentations are fine examples of solid budget planning to better serve the citizens of Ashland as we look ahead to the 2023-2025 Biennium Budget.

- [View the AFN Business Plan](#)
- [View the Fire & Rescue Business Plan](#)

The 2023–2025 Biennial Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) was adopted by Council at the April 4, 2023, Council Business Meeting. You can view projects for 2020–2026 on the Capital Projects 2020–2026 Dashboard at [gis.ashland.or.us/cipstorybook](https://gis.ashland.or.us/cipstorybook).

City Budget Process (RECAP) – At the April 27, 2023, Council Study Session, I will present, “Strategic Choices–City Manager’s Recommended Budget.” This will be the first presentation for the 2023–2025 Biennium Budget. The City operates on a fiscal year that runs from July through June. The 2023–2025 Budget we are preparing now will take us through to June 30, 2025. To view the budget review and adoption calendar visit, [ashland.or.us/23-25Budget](https://ashland.or.us/23-25Budget).

Our Citizens’ Budget Committee will begin meeting weekly on April 21 and will continue through the end of May. This committee will discuss the budget, review public comments, deliberate and finally approve a budget that will be presented and voted on by City Council.

The Citizens’ Budget Committee Meeting schedule is as follows:

- Meeting 1 | April 21 | Introductory/Informal Meeting
- Meeting 2 | April 27 | Proposed Budget Enterprise Funds
- Meeting 3 | May 4 | Presentations of Administration and Finance
- Meeting 4 | May 11 | Presentations of Innovation & Technology and Public Safety
- Meeting 5 | May 18 | Presentations of Parks & Recreation, Community Development and Public Works
- Meeting 6 | May 25 | Deliberations/Approval

The meeting will be located in Council Chambers, 1175 E Main St and streamed on [rvtv.sou.edu](https://rvtv.sou.edu).

#### *Quick Notes – What’s a Budget?*

- The budget provides a financial plan for the Biennium
- The budget is a policy document indicating the priorities of the City
- The budget is a legal document making lawful appropriations giving the authority to spend public money
- The budget is a public communication tool
- The budget is an internal control document ensuring compliance by an annual outside audit

I encourage you to read the “Budget Bites” posted to our social media accounts: @CityofAshlandOregon on Facebook and @CityofAshland on Twitter. Our “Budget Bites” posts cover where the money to finance the City comes from and how that money is spent. You can learn about:

- Property Taxes
- Food & Beverage Tax
- Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT), or the hotel/motel tax
- Electric Utility Users Tax
- And more!

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#### ***What’s Coming up?***

The annual Rogue Valley Bike Swap will once again be at The Grove, 1195 E Main St, on Saturday, April 29, 12 to 2:30 p.m. Buy, sell or donate a bike, parts or accessories and this festive and long-standing event. Test ride an e-bike, register your bike with our Police Department and more! A portion of each sale will help fund youth bike education programs in local public schools. More information at [RVTD.org/bikeswap](https://RVTD.org/bikeswap). This event is co-sponsored by APRC.

May events include:

- Rogue Valley Bird Day on May 13, [RogueValleyBirdDay.net](http://RogueValleyBirdDay.net)
  - Ashland World Music Festival on Memorial Weekend, [RogueWorldMusic.org/AWMF](http://RogueWorldMusic.org/AWMF)
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***Below is an update from our departments:***

CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE:

- The City newsletter has been revitalized. The City has not produced a newsletter since October 2021 due to a staffing shortage. The monthly newsletter, City News, will go out in City Utility bills starting this month. The newsletters and the biweekly City Manager's Report are housed on the City website at [ashland.or.us/Communications](http://ashland.or.us/Communications)

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:

- **Jennifer Chenoweth** has been hired as the new Associate Planner--- Jennifer's educational background is in landscape design, and she has previously worked in environmental compliance and planning roles with the National Parks Service and with Clallam County, Washington. Please join us in welcoming Jennifer
- South Rogue Valley Climate Friendly Areas Public Meeting with the City of Talent and City of Medford on April 13 – Thank you **Derek Severson** for your work on this
- **Regan Trapp** was recently recognized for her achievement of becoming a certified Oregon residential mechanical and structural inspector, and residential plans examiner – Way to go Regan

FINANCE:

- Budget process is in full swing
- The Budget calendar has been advertised in local publications such as, Sneak Preview, the LocalsGuide and our revised, "City News" monthly newsletter
- Regular/ Twice weekly, "Budget Bites," will be posted on social media (City Facebook and Twitter accounts)
- Regular updates to the City Budget page are taking place, [ashland.or.us/23-25Budget](http://ashland.or.us/23-25Budget)
- Utility billing is almost back to full staffing, and caught up with all billing – Three new employees are currently in training

FIRE & RESCUE:

- **Ashland Firefighters** saved a woman during a structure fire on April 3 – Read the news release (Way to go Team that included support from **Police** and **Electric!**)
- **Zac Hansen** has been hired as a new probationary firefighter
- Completing four background checks for conditional job offers
- Completing an assessment center on April 12 for potential employees for Ashland
- Received a grant from the Forest Service for Wildfire Planning
- Received a grant from the Office of the State Fire Marshal to pay for a Type 3 Heavy Brush Engine to replace a vehicle that is due for replacement
- The Ashland Loop Road Closure has been extended through April 7, as private landowners complete a forest project on land that borders the Loop Road
- Call volume as of April 3 is at 1,429 calls with 825 overlapping calls--- Compared to 2022 at this time, 1,269 calls for service with 673 overlapping calls--- This is a 12.61% increase in call volume and 22.59% increase in overlapping calls (overlapping call means there are multiple calls occurring simultaneously and there are no available resources)

#### HUMAN RESOURCES:

##### March Anniversaries:

- **Christopher Benoit** (Parks & Recreation) – 2 Years
- **Christopher Start** (Wastewater Treatment Plant) 28 Years
- **Colton Cantrell** (Telecommunications) – 1 Year
- **David Onkka** (Water Treatment ) – 11 Years
- **Derek Pecolatto** (Fire & Rescue) – 1 Year
- **Greg Jaquette** (Parks & Recreation) – 12 Years
- **Hanns Niedermeyer** (Parks & Recreation) – 8 Years
- **Jason Caro** (Cemetery) – 9 Years
- **Jennifer Aguayo** (Parks & Recreation) – 6 Years
- **Jess Hawkins** (Electric) – 10 Years
- **Jesse Smith** (Finance) – 3 Years
- **Josh Roberson** (Streets) – 1 Year
- **Kelly Haptonstall** (Police) – 31 Years
- **Larry Giardiana** (Conservation) – 20 Years
- **Lindsey Rochon Evertt** (Police) – 2 Years
- **Marshall Rasor** (Fire & Rescue) – 20 Years
- **Molly Taylor** (Human Resources) – 15 Years
- **Nicholas Peters** (Fire & Rescue) – 1 Year
- **Rick Spence** (Police) – 25 Years
- **Sabrina Cotta** (Administration) – 1 Year
- **Stephanie Aguilar** (Police) – 1 Year
- **Steven Boyersmith** (Fire & Rescue) – 22 Years
- **Steven Burkhalter** (Electric) – 35 Years
- **Tim Hegdahl** (Fire & Rescue) – 12 Years
- **Todd Stubbs** (Fire & Rescue) – 19 Years

#### PARKS & RECREATION:

- A new senior art show opened this week at Ashland Senior Center, featuring the watercolors of Priscila Franco during April through June. The Council is encouraged to come see the show during open hours of Monday-Thursday, 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.
- The Senior Services Division is hosting two OHSU nursing students for their spring term practicum starting April 3. The students will do a survey of local seniors about their current access to the internet, their needs and barriers

#### PUBLIC WORKS:

- Near Miss Reporting is now taking place as the City collects data to understand and improve the transportation network for all modes of transportation. A [Near Miss form](#), where citizens can report a 'near miss' incident, can be completed on the City website
- The Public Works Support Division was able to hire a Project Manager and Engineering Technician to fill two of five vacancies - They will be starting in the coming weeks and staff is looking forward to having additional resources on board
- Safe Routes to Schools Planning will take place on April 10 and 11 – This is joint effort between the City and the Ashland School District, with planning assistance from ODOT – The plan will identify street

improvements near local schools to support students and families in walking and cycling to school safely – More information on the [ODOT website](#)

- ADA Compliant Curb Ramps Project:
  - *The Americans with Disabilities Act Project 2021–2023* is underway. This project is being overseen by ODOT. The project will upgrade and install ADA compliant curb ramps at all locations on the state system. *Granite Construction* is currently under contract with ODOT to complete a phase of the total project within Ashland. The work is scheduled to be complete by June 2023. The work involves installing ADA ramps and some transitional sidewalk sections along Siskiyou Boulevard, North Main Street and East Main Street. The City has contributed funds for the project to install a higher order crosswalk at the North Main Street/Van Ness Street intersection. This involves installation of a rectangular rapid flashing beacon and a median island to improve crossing abilities and safety along the North Main corridor. In addition, there will be another marked crosswalk at the corner of the North Main Street/Nursery Street intersection. Projects like this one are taking place throughout the Valley. More on the ODOT website at [Oregon.gov/ODOT/Projects](https://Oregon.gov/ODOT/Projects)

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### ***Final Thoughts***

**Have a great weekend everyone and “Go Team City!”**

***Best,  
Joe L.***