

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 with what is going on in the City organization, including the great work of your colleagues and the City Council.

The Proposed Budget Process for the 2023-2025 Biennium is in full swing this month as staff makes presentations to the Citizens' Budget Committee (CBC). The committee will make recommendations to the Council in June and the new budget cycle will start on July 1, 2023, and go through June 30, 2025. View the remaining schedule below for CBC meetings for this month. Complete information is available at ashland.or.us/23-25Budget. I would like give recognition to **Sabrina Cotta** and her team: **Bryn Morrison, Cindy Hanks** and **Alissa Kolodzinski**. They have spent many hours putting together the budget and have done a phenomenal job. In addition, I give thanks to all of the **Department Heads** and their **Teams** for supplying information and making presentations. And I can't talk about the budget without mentioning our new Finance Director, **Mariane Berry**. She is a welcome addition to our **Team**, and we can all look forward to getting to know her better. *Feel free to reach out to her via email to say hello.*

In the summer of 2022, we began talking about an **IGA** (intergovernmental agreement) between the **City, SOU** (Southern Oregon University) and **ASD** (Ashland School District) to form a **joint-Emergency Operations Center (EOC)**. The EOC will provide collaborative and coordinated support for response and recovery to large-scale emergencies in Ashland and our surrounding communities--- It's really a Southern Valley approach! It's important that we do projects collaboratively. We need productive partnerships such as this one, and others like the upcoming **Economic Roundtable Partnerships** and the three topics identified for the partners to address:

1. Partnership to Build the Ashland Brand Community
2. Partnership to Envision the University District Activity Center
3. Partnership for Affordable Childcare & Early Child Development

But back to the EOC. At the May 2, 2023, City Council meeting, Councilors unanimously approved the IGA for the EOC. Big shout out to **Kelly Burns** for seeing this IGA through the collaborative development process and for his pro-active efforts in emergency preparedness. [Learn more](#). The spirit of collaboration and partnership is strong-- We truly are better together! Good times ahead!

The **Emergency Preparedness Committee**, comprised of **Ashland Chamber of Commerce** members, Chamber staff and City staff, met on May 3, 2023, to discuss emergency preparedness in our community. The group will be making valuable updates to the City and Chamber websites and will be launching an awareness campaign in June on Smoke Readiness and Evacuation Plans. City staff at the meeting included: **Kelly Burns, Chris Chambers, Sara Jones** and **Dorinda Cottle**. We are grateful to the Chamber for this partnership that not only serves our local community, but also visitors to Ashland. The work of this committee, which began in 2015, is extensive and serves as an example of community organizations working collaboratively.

Brandon Goldman and **Linda Reid** presented at the May 2, 2023, City Council meeting on the **Housing Production Strategy (HPS)**. We have completed the process of developing an HPS to identify and prioritize a variety of strategies and actions for accommodating needed housing within our community. This effort has been supported by a grant from the **State Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD)** with consultant services provided by **ECONorthwest**. The Final HPS report identifies a set of specific actions we will undertake over an eight-year period to address the housing needs in Ashland. Council unanimously adopted this resolution and praised staff for the good work! Councilor **Hyatt** highlighted the collaborative work that took place over a two-year period between various bodies such as the **Planning Department**, the **Housing and Human Services Committee**, **Planning Commission**, the **Advisory Committee** and various **community members**. [Learn more](#)

Effective August 31, 2023, **Melissa Huhtala** will officially resign from her position as City Recorder. Melissa will be missed. **Dana Smith** has been graciously assisting in this transition with various duties, but especially keeping the City Council meetings afloat, and always with a cheerful demeanor. **Cheryl Artrip** is also helping the City Recorder Office, in particular with a large scanning project--- Thank you Cheryl! These collaborative efforts really do showcase that we are better together!

We currently have vacancies on the following committees/commissions:

- **Housing and Human Services Committee**
- **Planning Commission**
- **Public Arts Committee**
- **Transportation Committee**

If you know of anyone in the Ashland community who would like to serve on one of these bodies, please have them fill out an [online application](#). And speaking of volunteering, the Council is soliciting nominations for the Volunteer Spirit Community Award, aka **Ragland Award** in memory of James M Ragland – [Learn more](#). The deadline to nominate someone for the Ragland Award is June 15, 2023.

ASHLAND POLICE DEPARTMENT:

- We want to welcome **JR Godley** and **Theron Hull** to the APD family! Sergeant Hull made the decision to return to APD after spending a few years with another agency, and Sergeant Godley comes to us from another local agency. Both gentlemen were brought on board as Patrol Sergeants and were sworn in on May 3, 2023. They each bring years of military, local/state law enforcement, and supervision experience to our team. Please help us make them feel welcome!

CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE:

- The [May City News](#) has been published. The newsletter features events for June – All newsletters and Inside the City Reports are housed at ashland.or.us/Communications.
- The May 16, 2023, Special Election Ballot Measures are front and center on the City website – [View the measures](#)

FINANCE:

- The proposed budget for FY 2023–2025 was published on Thursday, April 27, 2023 – [View online](#)
- The Citizens’ Budget Committee meetings will take place from 3 to 5 p.m. at Council Chambers, 1175 E Main St.:
 - May 11 – Innovation & Technology and Public Safety Fund Overview
 - May 18, Parks & Recreation, Community Development and Public Works Fund Overview
 - May 25 – Final Questions/Answers and Deliberations (if needed)Complete information at ashland.or.us/23-25Budget
- Utility Billing encourages customers with past due accounts to make payments. Payment Plans are also available upon request – [View news release](#)

FIRE & RESCUE:

- AF&R’s new fire engine is currently enroute from Florida to Eugene where it will undergo a few more maintenance items and a few aftermarket add-ons that were not available in the scope when the engine was purchased – [View the news release that shows the progression of the build](#)
- Captain **Todd Becks** has officially retired. His dedication and service to the community will be missed. With his retirement, **Daniel Caples** has been promoted to Captain and **Shawn Gallagher** has been promoted to Engineer
- As of April 30, 2023, AF&R has responded to 1,869 calls for service, up from 1,636 this time last year. They had 1,092 overlapping calls for service, up from 883 last year. This equates to a 14.24% increase in call volume and a 23.67% increase in overlapping calls. They had 98 calls for service where no units were immediately available to respond
- AF&R is in the process of completing active training for car fires
- They are preparing for wildland season all members of AF&R have completed their wildland certification trainings
- AF&R is completing the last round of interviews today to hire two single-role paramedics for the completion of the single-role hiring for this year. This will allow AF&R to gain one ambulance team a day for 10 hours, 365 days a year. This effort is in anticipation of the proposed 23-25 Budget. The interviewing and hiring are subject to approval of the City Manager’s recommended budget
- AF&R fired up the grill on May 3, 2023, and helped the Rotary Club of Ashland celebrate the first grade students at the annual **Ashland Reads** event. The project is a partnership between the **Rotary Club of Lithia Springs** and the **Rotary Club of Ashland**
- **The Ashland Forest Resiliency Stewardship Project hosted a tour of the Watershed** on Friday, May 5, 2023. The tour filled quickly and highlighted the recently completed maintenance-controlled burn along the Wonder Trail. Participants learned about how controlled burning is reintroducing the long-absent role of mild fires for reducing the summer wildfire threat on public and private land. (View the [Ashland Forest Plan](#).) – *Watch for future Watershed tours*

PUBLIC WORKS:

- Public Works is establishing the Airport Management Advisory Committee (MAC) to review the rate structure and make recommendations for changes. This is part of the miscellaneous fee process approved by Council annually. MAC will discuss the Airport Taxiway Rehabilitation Project, scheduled to begin July 10, 2023. MAC will assist in outreach efforts regarding the construction phase, which will impact airport use for a couple of months.

Project Summary for the Airport Taxiway Rehab: The parallel taxiway at the Ashland Airport is shown in the 2016 ODA (Oregon Department of Aviation) Pavement Maintenance report as satisfactory to poor. Work elements for the project are general mill and overlay of the taxiway, new subsurface drainage, new taxiway edge lights and new mandatory lighted HOLD position signs. The Federal Aviation Administration has funded this project at 90%. The City has received a Critical Oregon Airport Relief (COAR) grant that will fund \$150,000 of the total 10% match required. The Airport Fund will cover any remaining project costs.

HUMAN RESOURCES (and see promotions in **Fire & Rescue** and **Police**):

- **Alissa Kolodzinski** has been promoted to Management Analyst
- **Mariane Berry** is the new Finance Director

Current Job Postings:

- Line Installer (*Electric*) – Closes 5/4/2023
- Senior Financial Clerk (*Finance*) – Closes 5/12/2023
 - Positions projected to be filled in June

Closed Jobs – Review/Interview Status:

- Office Assistant II (*Public Works*) – Interviews concluded. **Candidate in background.**
- Line Installer (*Electric*) – Interviews concluded. **Candidate in background.**
- Deputy Police Chief (*Police*) – Interviews concluded. **Candidate in background.**
- Community Service Officer (*Police*) – Interviews concluded. **Candidate in background.**
 - Positions projected to be filled in May
- Emergency Medical Technician Paramedic (Single Roll) (*Fire*) – Second interview scheduled.
- Seasonal Cadets (*Police*) – Second interviews scheduled.
- Entry Level Police Officer Eligibility List (*Police*) – Interviews scheduled.
- Junior Network Administrator (*Dept. of Innovation & Technology*) – Interviews scheduled.
- Utility Worker I/II – Streets (*Public Works*) – Interviews being scheduled.
- Wildfire Risk Reduction Specialist LDA (*Fire*) – Applications being reviewed.
- Building Inspector (*Community Development*) – Interviews concluded. **Offer extended.**
 - Positions projected to be filled in May/June

Upcoming Job Postings:

- City Attorney (*Legal*)
- Deputy Public Works Director (*Public Works*)
- Human Resources Analyst (*Human Resources*)
- Lead Line Installer (*Electric*)

Human Resources (1)	Community Development (1)	DoIT (1)
Police (4)	Public Works (3)	Parks (0)
Fire (2)	Finance (1)	Electric (3)
Administration (0)	Legal (1)	

17 in process: 2 current opening, 4 future openings, 11 in selection/hiring process

Positions Filled in 2023 (To date, 21 hires):

- ✓ Senior Financial Clerk (*Finance – UB*)
- ✓ Utility Worker I (*Public Works – Water Dist.*)
- ✓ Permit Technician (*Community Development*)
- ✓ Police Records Supervisor (*Police*)
- ✓ Utility Worker II (*Public Works – Water Dist.*)
- ✓ Climate & Energy Analyst (*Administration*)
- ✓ Code Enforcement Specialist (*Community Development*)
- ✓ Line Installer (*Electric*)
- ✓ Associate Planner (*Community Development*)
- ✓ Firefighter/Paramedic (*Fire*)
- ✓ Police Sergeant (*Police*)
- ✓ Police Sergeant (*Police*)
- ✓ Director of Community Development (*Community Development*)
- ✓ Finance Director (*Finance*)
- ✓ Park Technician I (*Parks*)
- ✓ Associate Planner (*Community Development*)
- ✓ Engineering Project Manager (*Public Works*)
- ✓ Engineering Technician II (*Public Works*)
- ✓ Park Technician I (*Parks*)
- ✓ Financial Clerk II – UB/AP Clerk (*Finance*)
- ✓ GIS Technician (*Dept. of Innovation & Technology*)

Resignations / Terminations / Retirements in 2023: **7**

Resignations / Terminations / Retirements through April 2022: **10**

UPCOMING EVENTS in May

PARKS & RECREATION:

Rogue Valley Bird Day at North Mountain Park on **Saturday, May 13**, 8 a.m. to Noon. Event information at RogueValleyBirdDay.net.

The 8th Annual **Ashland World Music Festival** is **Memorial Weekend**. Complete information at RogueWorldMusic.org/AWME. The event is made possible through a partnership between Rogue World Music and Ashland Parks and Recreation.

ASHLAND FIRE & RESCUE:

May is **"Be Firewise"** month--- Keep your yard lean, clean and green. One way is to take advantage of Green Debris Drop Off Day on **Sunday, May 7**, 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., at the Valley View Transfer Station. Complete information at ashland.or.us/wildfirepreparedness.

Community Emergency Response Team Training kicks off **Friday, May 12**, 2023. Ashland Fire & Rescue is accepting new members. For more information reach out to **Sydney Jenkins** at Sydney.jenkins@ashland.or.us.

On **Wednesday, May 31**, learn **How to be Smokewise** and ways to improve indoor air quality, with a free presentation from **Sara Jones** and **Brian Hendrix** of Ashland Fire & Rescue! Register by calling the Ashland Senior Center at 541.488.5342. This event is made possible by Smokewise Ashland, Fire Adapted Communities and Parks and Recreation. (Two presentations will be offered: 1-2 p.m. -or- 2:30-3:30 p.m.) – Learn more SmokewiseAshland.org and FireAdapted.org.

RECOLOGY ASHLAND:

On **Saturday, May 13**, Ashland and Talent residents can **Toss Toxins** for free. Complete information on how and where to drop off household hazardous waste at recology.com/recology-ashland.

Final Thoughts

Have a great weekend everyone and "Go Team City!"



**Best,
Joe L.**