

COMMITTEES from page 1A

given from City Recorder and Economic Development Coordinator Kelli Weese, Assistant City Manager and Public Information Officer Megan Messmer and City Planning Director Wendy Farley Campbell.

All three presentations were designed to lead new committee members through the processes that govern meetings, as well as an overview of finances, human resources, planning, public works and personal interactions.

That was also the case for FURA committee members, who received an abbreviated version of the longer presentation tailored to the agency.

FURA Chairperson Bill Meyer introduced new committee members and reviewed the agenda for the evening.

"I want to welcome two new commissioners tonight, Dave Braley and Rob Ward, who is representing the Port of Siuslaw. He is our latest commissioner at the port. I am sure pleased to have both directors on board and I believe it portends some good decisions moving forward," Meyer said.

With no public comment scheduled and no changes to the minutes from the previous month's meeting, Reynolds turned the meeting over to Weese, who covered the history of FURA, the manner by which it is funded and how it has interacted with the city previously.

Weese paid special attention to emphasize the tone and tenor expected from FURA members, asking members to be respectful. Comments to the media and to the public in general were mentioned

as areas where an individual's opinion should be stated clearly; any comments made regarding FURA should only be mentioned when discussing the work done by the agency.

The overview at FURA included new graphics which clearly delineated the areas in the Urban Renewal District, projects qualified for potential support, previously FURA-funded projects, and the expectations of committee members.

Messmer then reviewed the status of the ReVision Florence Streetscaping Project, mentioning the few remaining items being completed, including the repair to the Maple Street Gateway Monuments, and ADA-compliant crosswalks.

Current members of FURA are: Chairperson Bill Meyer, Vice Chair Mike Webb,

Ron Caputo, Dave Braley, Mayor Joe Henry, John Scott, Rob Ward, Carmela West and City Councilor Woody Woodbury.

During the CEDC meeting, much of the same information regarding the responsibilities of its members and the city structure which governs committee interactions was covered. The CEDC action items were limited and included the election of Bill Prosser as its chairperson, and Jeff Ashmead as vice chairperson.

Current members of CEDC are: Chairperson Bill Prosser, Vice Chair Jeff Ashmead, Jonathan Baily, Nicholas Costa, Brian Holmes, Daniel Lofy, Russ Pierson, Carla Twombly, David West and Robbie Wright, as well as Mayor Joe Henry as the city council ex-officio and Kelli Weese as the staff ex-officio.

WLFEA from page 1A

• Change over to an Option 4 Health Insurance plan at a 90/10 split for employees, and a 50/50 split for employee families in the amount of \$98,430; and he then requested transfers from Contingency to Personnel Services totaling \$400,500 so the district does not exceed appropriations.

While Resolution 2021-01 was ultimately approved, the differences in philosophy between one WLAD director and other board members was highlighted in comments made by Director Larry Farnsworth during the discussion period.

"I will open the discussion by again expressing my disappointment that our board did not have the resolve to complete the negotiation goals that they set out at the beginning of this process," he stated. "Well before COVID and well before the budget cycle, our board came to a consensus. The chief presented a very good official review of the future of the district and it was clear that expenses were growing faster than revenue — and that our district faced some difficult financial challenges. We have no spending discipline and we don't have a board that is willing to say 'enough is enough.' The sense of entitlement in this district is beyond compare."

Farnsworth continued, pointing out specific expenditures which he believed should be handled differently and that, from his perspective, employees and staff at WLFEA were over compensated and received more benefits than other comparable agencies.

WLAD Director Mike

Webb disagreed with Farnsworth on the financial situation at WLFEA and pushed back in a brief response to Farnsworth.

"We have a contract and we have to fund it. We have employees that are on a contract and we have to continue to run the district," Webb said. "It is a two-way street when you get into negotiations and we went all the way down to mediation. It's not that we didn't try to cut things, it's just hard to make the case you are destitute when you bring in \$350,000 more than you spend."

SVFR Director and President Ned Hickson, who was involved in the fire district's contract negotiations, said he supported the idea of addressing future district obligations but also felt the deal reached with the labor union was achieved in good faith and would allow for more debate on the matter during the two years of the contract's life.

"I know this has been an arduous process, a seemingly never-ending process, and I know that it got a hair away from mediation. But I think, given the circumstances, everybody took a little bit of a hit and everybody got a little bit of something," Hickson said. "It's not exactly what we started out for, and it wasn't what the union started out for. But under the circumstances, and considering the challenges of the past year, I am happy with what we ended up with."

After a brief pause, the roll call vote took place to approve the contract, as was the case with the transfer of assets requested in Resolution 2021-02, passing with only Farn-

sworth opposed.

Reports from SVFR/WLAD staff were included in the meeting materials, with no questions from directors.

Also during the meeting, two new firefighters — Conway Pebley and Nick Terrell — were sworn in and the consent agenda for the meeting was approved without changes.

In his monthly memorandum, Schick reported WLAD was awarded a reimbursable grant from the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department for the purchase of an All-Terrain Vehicle in the amount of \$60,164, of which \$48,130 (80 percent) is paid for by the grant, leaving \$12,034 (20 percent) to be paid by the district through a contingency transfer.

WLAD was also awarded a Coronavirus Relief Fund grant through the Department of Administrative Services for the purchase of two Hands-Free CPR devices in the amount of \$32,770, of which 100 percent is paid by the grant.

In addition, "All first responders in the WLAD service area have been offered the COVID vaccine and we have completed the vaccination series for those who desired to be vaccinated," Schick

said.

This includes the Florence Police Department and the Mapleton and Swisshome/Deadwood Fire Departments.

"The West Lane Emergency Operations Group is finalizing discussions with Lane County Public Health for vaccine clinics to be held in the City of Florence," Schick added. "We are hoping to be able to hold more clinics in early March. Those desiring to be vaccinated must sign up through the Lane County COVID information website. The federal government has, or will shortly, be distributing vaccine directly to local pharmacies on our area."

People can preregister for the vaccine through www.lanecounty.org/coronavirus.

WLFEA's meeting ended on a positive note as Hickson, during the director comments portion of the meeting, specifically welcomed new firefighters Pebley and Terrell, thanking them for their commitment and intention to serve the Florence community.

The next meeting for the SVFR and WLAD boards of directors is scheduled for Thursday, March 25. For more information, visit svfr.org and westernlaneambulance.com.

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