

**MINUTES  
CITY OF LAUREL  
CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP  
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2023**

A regular Council Workshop was held in Council Chambers and called to order by Mayor Dave Waggoner at 6:28 p.m. on December 19, 2023.

**COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Emelie Eaton	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Heidi Sparks
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Michelle Mize	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Richard Herr
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Casey Wheeler	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Irv Wilke
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Richard Klose	<input type="checkbox"/> Jodi Mackay

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Brittney Harakal, Administrative Assistant  
Michele Braukmann, Civil City Attorney  
Stan Langve, Police Chief  
Kelly Strecker, Clerk/Treasurer (via phone)  
Jessica McCartney, 303 Union President/Dispatcher  
Jackson Booth, 303 Vice President/Sergeant

**Public Input:**

There were none.

**General Items:**

**Executive Review:**

**Council Issues:**

1. 303 Union Market Adjustment Discussion.

Representation for the 303 Union presented their proposal for performing a mid-market wage adjustment. There are currently two vacancies that need to be filled. Due to those vacancies, there is room in this year's budget to accommodate the wage increase. The Police Department just completed its 5<sup>th</sup> advertising cycle in the last two years. In 2018 the hiring pool would have 35 to 40 applicants. Now, they are lucky to receive 12 applicants. While the pool of applicants to select from is smaller, the standard has not been lowered, and only those quality applicants are offered an employment opportunity. Applicants have noted the pay and cost of insurance as reasons they have chosen not to take a position at the Laurel Police Department.

Laurel's call volume has increased. The number of high-risk calls has also increased. Laurel and Billings interact with the same people. In the high-profile cases that Billings has had recently, Laurel Officers have also interacted with these individuals numerous times. There are times when Laurel is only staffed with one officer. If they need backup, they are waiting for the Sheriff or Highway Patrol to assist. Getting up to full staffing will ensure that there are two officers on

shift at a time. Currently, the Acting Captain is covering shifts in the meantime. They are also pulling the SROs from the schools to patrol the streets when needed.

It was questioned if this is an increase across the board or just for new hires. It was clarified that they are requesting a market adjustment across the board. This market adjustment would only affect police officers.

Council requested a formal proposal on what the cost would be to the City. This year, there are cost savings due to the vacancies that have yet to be filled; however, going forward, those vacancies will be filled. How will that affect the budget moving forward?

It was also asked that data be presented on the percentage of people who have declined a job offer due to wage issues. The percentage of people who declined employment because of single-officer staffing concerns was also asked.

It was noted that the 303 Union would be entering into negotiations with the City this spring over their collective bargaining agreement. It was questioned why not wait until negotiations to have this discussion. It was clarified that the hope would be to fill the two vacancies before July 1<sup>st</sup> when the new collective bargaining agreement will begin.

It was further noted that the Police Department is part of the General Fund. The Clerk/Treasurer cannot fully anticipate what revenues the General Fund will receive and thus the position the General Fund will be in for future budgets.

Council requested the financials at the \$3.00 increase and higher and lower. The Clerk/Treasurer will put together the financials for this proposal.

It was questioned how it works to discuss a market adjustment for one segment of a union. It was clarified that the MOU would only include the patrol officers. There is a concern about doing this market adjustment before entering union negotiations. Union 303 representation clarified that they had what this market adjustment would mean going into negotiations. They are aware that this may affect their contract for the next three years and that there may be little or no wage increases.

Council also asked that all competitor's wages be included in the comparison, including the Corrections Officers, Parol Officers, Women's Prison, etc.

This MOU will be on the January 2<sup>nd</sup> Workshop.

### **Other Items**

A Council Member had been questioned why the Christmas decorations were not up. It was clarified that new decorations had been ordered and were not here in time. Next year, the [Chamber] will have the new decorations.

### **Attendance at Upcoming Council Meeting**

All those present will be in attendance at next week's meeting.

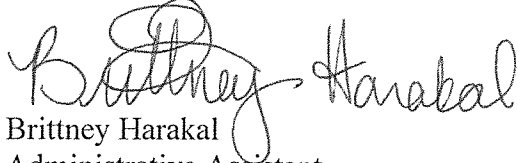
**Announcements**

The December Emergency Services Committee has been canceled due to the holiday.

The January and February Public Works Committee meetings have been moved to the fourth Monday of the month directly following the Emergency Services Committee meeting.

The council workshop adjourned at 7:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Brittney Harakal". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Brittney Harakal  
Administrative Assistant

**NOTE: This meeting is open to the public. This meeting is for information and discussion of the Council for the listed workshop agenda items.**