

Coffee with the Mayor

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Back to Oregon last week for family vacation and mornings with Stumptown coffee! Even the coffee at the local coffee shop was very good! The coffee was good as expected but family time was much better! Grandsons, ages 5, 2 and 4 mos, make family time very special. The mountains of Oregon only add to the experience.

Returning to work after being off for over a week made Tues feel like a Monday. A lot of information and background to catch up with. I was able to keep up with emails using my city phone, which helped. However, Tuesday was still a very busy day. The Clerk-Treasurer has been busy working to prepare the city's budget for 2025, a process I've been assisting with for my first time. The city's budget includes the police and fire departments, mayor's office and staff, cemetery, pool and golf course. According to state statues there is a specific timeline and process that must be followed before the budget can be presented to the city council for approval. More on that later as I become more familiar with the process.

It is evident driving around the community that many streets are in need of repair. This is true for every section of the city. Repair and paving, as one can imagine, is expensive and must be accomplished to state guidelines. There is a grant program from the state house called Community Crossings and provides funds to local municipalities and counties for paving identified areas. The process for submitting for this grant begins with identifying the need and budgeting an amount based on projections. Since the grant funds 75% of the overall need, we need to budget for 25%. If the grant is awarded, which it was this year, the total amount is what is available for paving. This year, the city budgeted \$100k for 2024 and the state wrote the city a check for \$300k making the total roughly \$400k available for limited paving.

To oversee this project, the city contracts with First Group Engineering, INC to prepare estimates and maximize the repaving areas based on need and available funds. Once the planned streets are identified, First Group prepares the technical package and begins the bid process. Sealed bids are submitted and opened at a stated date and time. There are mainly two companies capable of total repaving and both submitted bids to comply with the process. First Group reviews each bid to ensure each one is complete, accurate and can be accomplished within the limited budget. Once this review and analysis is complete, the contract is awarded to the lowest bidder.

At that point, city employees work with the contractor to conduct a full engineering review of the identified streets and prepare a timeline for completing the repaving. As required, not only does the street get repaved but sidewalks along the street, if present, must be

redone to comply with American with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines, which adds to the cost, taking away from repaving opportunities.

The identified streets for repaving this year are D st NE between 2nd and Main, 7 th NE between Vincennes and A st, Oak St and Chris Schenkel in Green Acres. There is a section of Oak St that is only one lane and this will make it a complete street. Residents along those areas will be notified prior to beginning any work. The company will start the milling process, or removing existing blacktop, mid September. The project must be complete by the end of October as required by the grant.

Looking ahead, city employees are reviewing and grading the existing streets for next years grant cycle. In addition, in preparing the 2025 budget, we, the Clerk-Treasure and I, are working to increase next years paving budget in hopes of a bigger award amount for paving more of the identified need.