

**Council Work Session  
March 13, 2023**

Members present was Mayor Trish Callahan, Vice President Delena Oden, Councilor Stacy Equitz, Councilor Alvin Thompson and Councilor Peggy Davis-Gilliam. Councilor Paul Price was absent. Staff present was City Recorder Lori Paxton and Planning Commissioner Keith Gilliam. Audience was Mark Rohde and Sheriff Deputy Ian Lance.

**Councilor Davis-Gilliam made a motion to open the meeting at 7:00 pm. Vice President Oden seconded. All ayes motion carried.**

Mayor Callahan said the reason for this work session is to get information on what we need to do to get our police department going again. She said our guest speaker, Deputy Lance, is here to fill us in on what we don't know and what we might need to do. He is not here in an official capacity.

Deputy Lance gave us his background experience as a police officer and a lawyer. By hiring someone and putting them through the police academy, as you have always done, you are now and will continue to be a revolving door for your police department. Once that person is enrolled in the academy, other cities are approaching that person and trying to entice them to go to work for them. And they can pay a better wage than Butte Falls can. It takes three to four years working as a cop to gain the experience needed. And all cities, and even the sheriff's department are looking to hire police officers.

Deputy Lance said in looking at the proposed contract budget you received from Sheriff Nate Sickler, this is pretty much what you can expect to pay for a deputy and all that goes along with the package. Jackson County will not be flexible in their budget and the sheriff most likely will not cut a percentage of the budget down for you. Your best hope is a retired part-time cop.

City County Insurance has it's own guidelines for police departments and it is very strict. You need to check with your insurance and see what they say.

City Recorder Paxton asked Deputy Lance if we should disband our police department and he said, you kind of already are because you don't have any police officers. A lot of smaller towns are disbanding their departments because they can't afford it, they get priced out by insurance companies. Insurance rates are going up and PERS insurance is very expensive for police departments.

Deputy Lance said either look for a retired cop or hire a code enforcement person that can also be a community service officer. The sheriff's office has a community service program and they might be willing to help you train someone. The officer would not be a sworn in officer, would not be able to make arrests or write traffic tickets and they can't carry gun. They would enforce your city codes, handle the paperwork and work with the school system.

He said the Oregon legislature will most likely start taking away traffic enforceable in Oregon, as it is happening now in other cities. Councilor Oden inquired about installing traffic cameras here and asked if we could send the pictures to the Medford Police Department to process? Deputy Lance said you could ask the sheriff's office and see if they would help with that too.

Councilor Oden said what if we have someone here at night driving all over town, squealing their tires and speeding, how do we get help for that. Deputy Lance said you can call the traffic team to report

that kind of behavior. They can respond to that and will if a officer is in the area.

Deputy Lance said so if you continue to hire a young person who wants to become a cop, you will lose them to other cities, regardless of what that person might promise you. It is not a good idea to have a single cop without good oversight, it is too dangerous. The need a good mentor to help them gain experience and be a good cop.

Mayor Callahan thanked Deputy Lance for presenting the information to the council and said we have a lot to think about before the next council meeting on how we want to proceed.

**Councilor Davis-Gilliam made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 pm. Vice President Oden seconded. All ayes motion carried.**

Minutes submitted by City Recorder Lori Paxton.