

COTTAGE GROVE CITY COUNCIL

12800 RAVINE PARKWAY SOUTH

COTTAGE GROVE, MN 55016

COUNCIL CHAMBER - 7:00 P.M

March 5, 2025

1. CALL TO ORDER

The City Council of the City of Cottage Grove, Washington County, Minnesota, held a regular meeting on March 5, 2025, at Cottage Grove City Hall, 12800 Ravine Parkway. Mayor Bailey called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The audience, staff, and City Council Members stood and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ROLL CALL

City Clerk Tammy Anderson called the roll: Mayor Bailey-Here; Council Member Clausen-Here; Council Member Garza-Here; Council Member Olsen-Here; Council Member Thiede-Here.

Also present: Jennifer Levitt, City Administrator; Tammy Anderson, City Clerk; Ryan Burfeind, Public Works Director; Zac Dockter, Parks and Recreation Director; Pete Koerner, Public Safety Director; Korine Land, City Attorney-LeVander, Gillen & Miller, PA; Gretchen Larson, Economic Development Director; Brenda Malinowski, Finance Director.

4. OPEN FORUM

Mayor Bailey opened the Open Forum. As no one wished to address the Council, Mayor Bailey closed the Open Forum.

5. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Motion by Council Member Garza to adopt the agenda; second by Council Member Thiede. Motion carried: 5-0.

6. PRESENTATIONS

A. Eagle Scout Award - Owen Behlke

Staff Recommendation: Recognize Owen Behlke's accomplishment of Eagle Scout and award him with a plaque.

Mayor Bailey asked the Council Members and Owen to join him in front of the dais.

Mayor Bailey said this is one of those great opportunities, once again, we've been doing quite a few of these over the last few years specifically where we love to recognize and honor our Eagle Scout Award recipients, which is what we're here for this evening, or the Girl Scout Gold Award recipients. The reason we do that is because typically, these individuals as part of their final project to attain Eagle Scout, they do a project of some type to benefit the community. So, in a little bit, I'll let Owen share what that project is that he did for Cottage Grove.

Owen obviously made it all the way through, and his mom and dad are sitting over here. I know his dad was telling me he's got to fly a plane this evening, so we'll make it fairly quick here. But one of the things we do in recognizing our Eagle Scouts is we obviously get you up in front of the room and present you with a plaque. Also, for those who don't know, we do have on our side hallway, outside the Council Chambers, a wall of honor, if you will where any past Eagle Scout Award or Girl Scout Gold Award winners have their name posted there. If you go over there and look, you'll see that there's quite a few that go way, way back. My son's name is on there, and Council Member Thiede has two girls on the Gold Award, so that's pretty awesome.

Mayor Bailey said I'm going to read aloud this plaque and present it to you, and then I'm going to let you, Owen, tell the public what your Eagle Project was. Mayor Bailey read aloud the plaque from the City of Cottage Grove, which Owen obtained through Troop 5, Cottage Grove, Minnesota. Mayor Bailey congratulated Owen on behalf of the City Council, our staff, and all the citizens of Cottage Grove. Everyone applauded.

Owen introduced himself and said I just achieved my Eagle Scout and had my ceremony this past February. My Eagle Scout project was building a tetherball court for the City of Cottage Grove; I built it in Pine Tree Pond Park, it is still standing, I would really hope. I built it out of cement, so I really hope it is still there. It took us about three days to build it entirely, but over six months to plan out and fundraise. I want to thank everyone here for being here to support me for this, and I also want to thank my parents for supporting me throughout my scouting journey, and for anyone, if they are listening or watching, that lent support to my project through financial funds or through helping me out via volunteering. Thank you so much, this project would not have gone the way it did without any of you. Thank you. Everyone applauded.

Mayor Bailey invited Owen's parents if they wanted to come up and take a photo with the group, which they did.

Owen said I was just informed that our Minnesota Lions Club is currently sitting back here. I want to extend a very special thank you to you guys. The Lions Club was one of the deciding factors on whether or not I was going to do my project, and your support made all the difference. I cannot thank you nearly enough. Everyone applauded.

Photos were taken of Owen with his parents, Mayor Bailey, and the City Council Members.

Mayor Bailey said, thank you again, let's give him one more round of applause for a good job, and everyone applauded.

B. East Cottage Grove Scramblers Donation to Police K9 Program

Staff Recommendation: Accept the donation in the amount of \$1,000 from the East Cottage Grove Scramblers to be used for the Police K9 program.

Pete Koerner, Public Safety Director, said this is great to get this donation. Up on the screen here in a moment, I tried to highlight a couple of things in which the East Cottage Grove Scramblers participate. As you can see, that first one, the Washington County Star Trail, we have 140 miles of snowmobile trails in Washington County; our club here in Cottage Grove groom over 50 miles of it. Another big thing is they promote another recreational activity in the area that promotes responsible riding. The club meets with our Public Service Commission once a year to go over the trails. Obviously, over the last five years, the club has done the Dust 'Em Off Vintage show, it's a snowmobile and swap meet, they have food, vendors, raffles, and a vintage radar run; this year, the Cottage Grove Police Department brought our speed trailer and they were able to do that. They actually transported snow in for their event, it would've been better tonight, I guess.

So, with that, in a moment I'm going to have the club come up as they would like to present the check for \$1,000; they've decided that they want this money earmarked towards our K9 Program, and obviously, when talking with our K9 officers, we have two things we're looking at: A treadmill for K9s and we're also looking to partner at some point with an Eagle Scout to build some of the different equipment that we'd use for training out in the field, like we had years and years ago. I would now like to invite the members of the East Cottage Grove Scramblers up front, and I note they brought their big check. Director Koerner said afterward, Mayor, we'll need a motion to accept the donation.

Members of the East Cottage Grove Scramblers joined K9 Officer Brandyn Graff and his partner, Scout, Mayor Bailey, and the Council Members in front of the dais. Mayor Bailey said a couple years ago I got a chance to come out and see what was going on at the Dust 'Em Off Vintage snowmobile show, I wasn't able to be there this year, but what you do out there is amazing with raising money. In this particular case, you're looking for a way to give back to the community and our Public Safety Department. So, on behalf of myself and the rest of the Council, thank you for this generous donation. It'll go to very good use for our K9 Program. Mayor Bailey asked everyone to give them a round of applause, which they did.

Jeremy Goebel with the East Cottage Grove Scramblers said I just want to thank everybody for the partnership we've had with the City, we've grown big over the last few years, and we're working with the Public Works and Public Services Commission, getting the trail to stay where it stays. We're working with the Police Department now, and it's been great. I just want to say thank you, we appreciate it. Everyone applauded.

Photographs were taken of the East Cottage Grove Scramblers, Officer Graff and K9 Scout, and the City Council. Director Koerner thanked the East Cottage Grove Scramblers for their donation.

Motion by Council Member Olsen to accept the donation in the amount of \$1,000 from the East Cottage Grove Scramblers to be used for the Police K9 program; second by Council Member Thiede. Motion carried: 5-0.

C. Craig Woolery Scholarship Fund Check Presentation

Staff Recommendation: Allow Justin and Kim Olsen and the Cottage Grove Lions an opportunity to present donations in the amount of \$3,500 to the Cottage Grove Public Safety Board.

Mayor Bailey said our next presentation will start with Director Koerner, but our Public Safety Board, and the Cottage Grove Lions are also here. Craig is not able to be here tonight, but his wife, Katie, is here.

Director Koerner said I always like to take this opportunity to also just kind of explain who our Public Safety Board is and some of the outstanding things they do for our department; this goes way back to when they were the Crime Prevention Board, and they grew into the Public Safety Board and have had a lot of change. We are a Public Safety model of Police, Fire, and EMS, so they work with all of us. It's a Board that's made up of citizen volunteers from various background, and we have liaisons, Ryan Pierre from the Police Department, and Jon Pritchard from the Fire-EMS Department. They meet once a month, and they work together to promote the partnership between the citizens of Cottage Grove and the Public Safety Department in support of a safe community.

The Mission of the Public Safety Board: To provide financial support for equipment, training, and programs to enhance safety, and to provide crime prevention and safety information to citizens.

A lot of the things that we've done we couldn't do without the Board, so we really greatly appreciate them. They're the ones that founded our K9 Program way back, when Karla Bigham just kept pushing and pushing, and we got some great funds from the Public Safety Board.

Director Koerner detailed all of the things the Public Safety Board does for the community:

Community Engagement and Education: Strawberry Festival; Parades, Night to Unite; Safety Camp; Police and Fire Open Houses; Community Showcase. If there's a Public Safety event, they're going to be there somewhere, helping, and/or being involved. Income Sources: Generous donations; Grant Opportunities; Fundraising: Like our Explorers, they go down to Hy-Vee and do the grocery bagging; Host Bunco Events; Sales of K9 Plushies; Cancer Awareness, Autism Awareness Patches, Military Badges; Challenge Coins. I know this year they plan to do a Spaghetti Feed, as we did one years ago for the Reserves and it was very successful. Ongoing Support: Fitness Equipment; Portable Speed Signs (everyone wants one in their neighborhood); Huge supporter of K9 Program (Purchase dogs and equipment, help fund national K9 competition); Firefighter Particle Hoods; Craig Woolery Scholarship administration.

Purpose of the Craig Woolery Scholarship

The Cottage Grove Public Safety Board is pleased to offer the Craig Woolery Scholarship to residents of Cottage Grove pursuing post-secondary education in Law Enforcement, Emergency Medical Services (EMS), or Firefighting. The Cottage Grove Public Safety Board welcomes and supports diversity in the application and award process.

Scholarship Application

- Complete application, submit essay, and letter of recommendation
- Residents of Cottage Grove pursuing post-secondary education in Law Enforcement, Emergency Medical Services (EMS) or Firefighting
- Deadline is May 1 of each year
- Information can be found on the City of Cottage Grove webpage

Director Koerner said when I was talking to Council Member Olsen about this, he's obviously the one who got this rolling in 2019 with a \$500 donation, and now there's been over \$12,000 donated in the last five years. With that, I'll give Council Member Olsen a chance to say a few words, and then the Lions Club has also partnered with us as well.

Council Member Olsen asked the Public Safety Board, the Lions, and Katie Woolery to come up to the front; he stated this is one of my favorite times of year. My wife, Kim, and I started this scholarship in honor of our friend and colleague, Craig Woolery, when he retired from being the Public Safety Director here in the City of Cottage Grove. That's one way to preserve the tremendous legacy of Craig's service to this community; he did so many great things, whether it was as a police officer, D.A.R.E. officer, he was one of our Bike cops. He progressed through the ranks of our Cottage Grove Police Department and ultimately became our Public Safety Director. Not only that, Craig also served for a short time as our temporary City Administrator, and what that tells me and what it should tell you is that Craig's legacy is service. He was always willing and very passionate about serving the residents of this community, serving the members of this City Council, and serving his family and his colleagues, and he would do whatever it took. In fact, when he became the Public Safety Director, he went through firefighter training even though his chosen profession was police officer and paramedic; he went through firefighter training so he could demonstrate to those that he supervised, who were in the Fire service, that he was willing to put on the same uniform and do the same work that they were doing. It also gave him a much broader understanding of the day-to-day that they did, and that really speaks to who Craig is as an individual and as a leader.

So, Kim and I were honored to start this scholarship and we're very grateful to the Public Safety Board for every year taking in the applications from local young people who want to go into post-secondary education for public service in the Public Safety realm.

This year we are very excited to donate \$1,500 on our behalf to the Public Safety Board for the Craig Woolery Scholarship, but in addition to that, we've been able to develop a really great partnership with our Cottage Grove Lions Club. Kim and I are both Lions members, it's something that we value tremendously, and we are so grateful to our Lions friends and family for their generous donation this year as well. I'm going to turn the mic over to one of our Board Members, Eric Witt, to explain briefly what the donation from the Lions Club is this year and how the Lions Club feels about Public Safety here in the City of Cottage Grove.

Eric said thank you, Justin. Just to follow up on Justin's words about service, Lions International's motto is we serve, so it couldn't be a better partnership. We appreciate this partnership so much. The Lions really enjoy the relationship we have with the Cottage Grove Public Service, with the Fire and EMS, the support they grant us in all of our events, we could not put these events on without this; so, we're honored and privileged to be here to present a donation tonight, and we're looking forward to the young people who are coming up in this department.

Council Member Olsen said so, with that, I'm going to turn the microphone over to our Public Safety Board President, Julie Rice, and again, I want to thank the Lions for donating \$2,000 in addition to the \$1,500 that Kim and I were able to donate this year to the Craig Woolery Scholarship. Everyone applauded.

Julie Rice said thank you to everyone, including Katie Woolery. It's been an honor, thank you for entrusting our Board to take in the scholarship applicants' applications, vet them, and decide who's going to receive the scholarship for this year. With our scholarships, one of our previous recipients is working his way up to becoming a police officer for the City of Cottage Grove. Several of them go through C.S.O. training, they become C.S.O.s, some started out as Police Explorers, which our Board also supports. So, all of the fundraising efforts that we do in the City and from other people and organizations, we take that money, and we try to support as best as we can. So,

where the Lions Club serves the community, our fundraising serves the Public Safety. So, we want to thank you again for entrusting us, and we will look forward to our applicants for this year. Thank you.

Council Member Olsen said so, I know Craig couldn't be here tonight, he has previously been at every one of these presentations, but he's on an out-of-town trip, and we felt like having Katie here was better anyway. So, Katie, did you have anything you wanted to say? Come on over.

Katie Woolery said I do not have the gift of public speaking that Craig has, but I do want to thank Justin and his lovely wife, Kim, for starting this scholarship, and also Mayor Bailey, Director Koerner, the Cottage Grove Lions, the Council, and the Public Safety Board. I can't thank you enough for what you've done to support this scholarship. I know Craig is very humbled by it, so thank you all for everything you do.

A photograph was taken of the entire group with Council Member Olsen holding the check for \$3,500. Council Member Olsen said thank you guys, again. We really appreciate it, and we'll look forward to hearing who the recipients are later this year, it'll be great.

Mayor Bailey said thank you to the Lions and to the Public Safety Board.

Mayor Bailey said obviously, these kind of events are amazing, and we were talking about the Cottage Grove Lions Club, obviously, which is tremendous, they do a great job in our community, whether it is this project or many others, we're actually talking about the Fourth of July fireworks not too long from now; but also Justin and Kim Olsen, who got this program up and running to obviously give back to our community in such a great way and honoring Craig Woolery, who is very humble. Thank you, Council Member Olsen and your wife, Kim, for generously getting this program up and running. Hopefully, we'll see not in the too near future our first official person that's going to be coming through the whole program on those scholarships. Council Member Olsen said that will be amazing, and Mayor Bailey replied absolutely.

Mayor Bailey said so I do need a motion and a second to accept the donations, both from Justin and Kim Olsen and the Cottage Grove Lions Club, in the amount of \$3,500 toward the Cottage Grove Public Safety Board.

Motion by Council Member Thiede to accept both donations in the amount of \$3,500 toward the Cottage Grove Public Safety Board; second by Council Member Clausen. Motion carried: 5-0.

7. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approve the February 5, 2025, City Council Regular Meeting Minutes.
- B. Approve the February 19, 2025, City Council Special Meeting Minutes.
- C. Approve the February 19, 2025, City Council Regular Meeting Minutes.
- D. Accept and place on file the minutes from the January 27, 2025, Planning Commission meeting.
- E. Approve the issuance of rental licenses to the properties in the attached table.
- F. Approve Michael Haatvedt to serve on the Convention and Visitors Bureau for a term ending on December 31, 2028.
- G. Receive final 2025 Convention and Visitors Bureau Strategic Plan.
- H. Approve Ordinance 1094, amending Chapter 1-5-5 of the Cottage Grove City Code related to Lodging Tax.
- I. Accept the TJX Law Enforcement Grant donation in the amount of \$10,000 for the lease of Flock Flock cameras.
- J. Accept and approve the Law Enforcement and Fire Department Therapy Dog grant award in the amount of \$10,000.
- K. Approve Ordinance 1095 amending the City Fee Table and adding a \$10,000 Tax Increment Financing (TIF) escrow for each proposed TIF project.
- L. It is recommended that the City Council not waive the tort cap liability limits.
- M. Rescind Resolution 2025-017 and Adopt Resolution 2025-025 approving the final payment for the Low Zone Water Treatment Plant and Utility/Engineering Building Project to Castrejon, Inc., in the amount of \$75,168.20.

- N. Approve the contract extension with Mike McPhillips, Inc. for the 2025 Annual Citywide Sweeping Project.
- O. Adopt Resolution 2025-029 approving the plans and specifications and authorize bidding for the Denzer Park Project.
- P. 1) Adopt Resolution 2025-026 approving the Final Plat for Graymont Village Third Addition. 2) Approve the Graymont Village Third Addition Development Agreement with U.S. Home LLC, subject to minor modifications by the City Attorney. 3) Adopt Resolution 2025-027 approving the Graymont Village Third Addition Development Plans, dated January 31, 2025, prepared by WSB, Inc., subject to final approval by the City Engineer, in writing.
- Q. Authorize the Service Agreement with MN Native Landscapes for open space native vegetation management for the amount of \$7,400.
- R. Approve the Historical and Cultural Heritage Grant for the purchase of materials to install historical plaques throughout the community.
- S. Authorize the service agreement with Oertel Architects for final design, bidding, and construction administration services for the Kingston Park Building Project.
- T. Adopt Resolution 2025-028 approving the plans and specifications and authorize bidding for the 2025 Mill and Overlay and Hardwood Court Intersection improvements.
- U. Authorize issuance of a Massage Therapist License to Katherine April Schmidt to operate as a licensed massage therapist at The Healing Place, located at 8617 West Point Douglas Road, #140, Cottage Grove, MN, 55016.

Council Member Olsen wished to pull Item F, Convention and Visitors Bureau Appointment-Haavtvedt, on the Consent Agenda for further comment and/or discussion.

Council Member Olsen said this item is to recommend approval for Cottage Grove resident Michael Haavtvedt to serve on the Convention and Visitors Bureau for a term ending on December 31, 2028, and we're lucky that Mike's here in the audience. Mike is also a Vice President of our Cottage Grove Lions Club, he's a member of our Police Reserves, and he also is a business owner-operator, somebody who definitely is passionate about giving back to the community and concerned for the public welfare here in Cottage Grove. I believe Mike would be a tremendous addition to the CVB as he's always got his thinking cap on, and he's very entrepreneurial in spirit; I look forward to having him serve if approved here by the City Council on tonight's Consent Agenda. I just want to thank Mike for applying for this position and also thank you for your willingness to serve.

Motion by Council Member Garza to approve the Consent Agenda; second by Council Member Olsen.

Motion carried: 5-0.

8. APPROVE DISBURSEMENTS

- A. Approve disbursements for the period of 2-14-2025 through 2-27-2025 in the amount of \$3,735,955.06.

Motion by Council Member Olsen to approve disbursements; second by Council Member Clausen.

Motion carried: 5-0.

9. PUBLIC HEARINGS - None.

10. BID AWARDS - None.

11. REGULAR AGENDA

A. Sale of \$10,000,000 General Obligation Bonds, Series 2025A

Staff Recommendation: Approve Resolution 2025-024, authorizing the issuance and awarding the sale of \$10,000,000 General Obligation Bonds, Series 2025A, pledging for the security thereof special assessments, net revenues, tax abatements, and levying a tax for the payment thereof.

Mayor Bailey said our Finance Director, Brenda Malinowski, will be taking us through this item and welcomed Brenda.

Director Malinowski said Mayor, Members of the Council, you'll be awarding the sale of the 2025A General Obligation Bonds for the City of Cottage Grove. As a reminder, those this year will be used to pay for Pavement Management Equipment, the Water Tower Construction, and then the River Oaks Irrigation Project.

Two weeks ago, City Administrator Levitt, myself, and Stacie Kvilvang, with Ehlers, were in a Bond Rating Call with S&P regarding these bonds. We were awarded a AAA Bond Rating for these bonds; at the same time, they also affirmed a AAA Bond Rating for our other debt here in the City. So, very good news there.

Bids were opened at 10:00 a.m. this morning for this bond sale. There were 10 bidders, which is a very robust environment. Some of the reasons were we were early to market this year, there's not a lot of other debt being issued; we work with our Financial Management Plan (FMP) on our debt issue, so we know at the beginning of the year what we're going to be issuing in debt, so we're able to go to the market earlier. Rates are just down for municipal debt in general, due to other market conditions, and then our credit quality, our AAA Bond Rating, so those were some of the reasons why we had as many bidders as we did. Because of that, we had very favorable results. Our low bid was 3.097%, our presale report was 3.9%, so quite a bit lower. The high bid today was 3.2673%, so those 10 bidders were right together. The winning bid was The Baker Group in Oklahoma City, OK. Because of that favorable bid that we received today, we have over \$1 million in premium on that bond, and so what that means is that we will be utilizing that for Pavement Management and Equipment; so, we'll be utilizing that for things that we identified in the FMP that we would be issuing debt for in the future.

So, with that, I am happy to take any questions, or the Resolution is on the screen.

Mayor Bailey said that's fantastic results, and kudos to the staff once again, and I've got to say, our Council here for managing the finances, which kept our solid AAA Bond Rating. Obviously, they know we're good in paying our bills and such because to have that many bidders and to be that low, compared to what you thought the market was going to do, is quite amazing. So, Council, do you have any questions?

Council Member Olsen said first of all, thank you so much for such great news, oh, my goodness. Having done this for a few years, you kind of get used to what it looks like when you have to go to market with your bonds; when you look at 10 bidders and 3.09% and, most importantly, that million-dollar premium, that really says that the market likes our paper a lot. And full credit to you, Brenda, your team, and the staff as a whole, as it relates to managing our budgets, year after year after year, so well. I know you get awarded regularly for the way that the City of Cottage Grove manages its finances, but this is really the proof in the pudding. I just wondered if you might take a moment and speak to the residents who might be watching this, either tonight or in the future, about really what it means to be a AAA Bond-rated City. I know it sounds good when we say that, but people may not know like that's the best you can get, right? So, what does that really mean, and how does it impact the taxpayer?

Director Malinowski replied it impacts the taxpayer because we can issue debt, we get lower rates on that principal and interest payment; just like when we own a home, those excellent borrowers get a lower interest rate. Because of that, then the property tax levies that we need to place for our City are lower because of those lower principal and interest payments, and so that goes back to our taxpayers.

Council Member Olsen said perfect. So, it saves money in their property taxes, which Director Malinowski confirmed. Council Member Olsen said it also provides us, I think, with a little more wiggle room as it relates to borrowing power and those kind of things. Also, when you talk about AAA Bond Rating and how do you get there, what would you suggest are some of the key reasons why we, first of all, achieved it, but most importantly, have been able to hold onto it now for quite some time.

Director Malinowski replied they look at different things. So, one of the things that they look at is the Tax Capacity of our City; so, we have not only population, but with your population and your commercial area, your Tax Capacity grows. So, we're at that point. But, importantly, for the City of Cottage Grove and City Council, you took the time two years ago to do a 10-year FMP and to look at what are the impacts to our community, and how do we navigate property tax increases that aren't going to have big swings in the market to our community. And, so, that FMP did that: When we go out and we do our rating call with S&P, we show them that based on the needs of our community for those Pavement Management projects, or equipment, or other things that we need to do to issue debt because we are a growing City, that we worked it in, too. Not only can we manage our Operating Budget but also our Debt Service.

Council Member Olsen said fantastic. So, I think what I heard you say is we worked together with our friends at Ehlers to put together a 10-year FMP that was very well thought out and reasonable and rational, and the market likes that. And we've been able to stick to that plan, by and large, and so, as a result, we continue to get favorable Bond Ratings. I think that's a real credit to you and your team. So, again, thank you so much, great news tonight, this is unbelievable.

Mayor Bailey said thank you and asked if anybody else had questions; none were asked. Mayor Bailey said if somebody on the Council would like to make a motion on the Resolution that's before you, that would be fantastic.

Motion by Council Member Clausen to Approve Resolution 2025-024, authorizing the issuance and awarding the sale of the \$10,000,000 General Obligation Bonds, Series 2025A, pledging for the security thereof special assessments, net revenues, tax abatements, and levying a tax for the payment thereof; second by Council Member Garza. Motion carried: 5-0.

12. COUNCIL COMMENTS AND REQUESTS

Council Member Garza said she hopes everyone was shoveled out or just played in the snow today, it was a beautiful day to enjoy it. But other than that, our Public Works did a great job. I saw a few people made comments that it was a little later that they got out there plowing; I think it wasn't that they were a little later getting out there plowing, I just think that the snow was a bit heavier, and it caused them to be a little delayed on each space that they were actually plowing. So, they did an excellent job, we were able to get out there and move around our City streets, so I appreciate them. Thank you, guys, so much.

Council Member Thiede said I guess I don't have too much tonight, either, just it's quite the interesting weather; again, I started out this morning in Kansas City, and it was almost the same. They didn't get as much snow as we got up here, but so far this year, they've had more snow in Kansas City than we've had. So, everybody can go out, and it probably was a great day for making snowmen or forts and everything else like that, right, and snowball fights, or, no, we don't fight. But, so, just be safe and have fun in the snow.

Council Member Olsen said again, I want to thank the Cottage Grove Lions and the Public Safety Board for their participation this evening and the donation this year for the Craig Woolery Scholarship. It's always fun to make the donation, but what's even more fun is when you get into May and you can identify who the scholarship winners are, and they'll certainly be back here, in front of the City Council, to award the scholarships at that time. So, we'll just kind of keep watch on that.

I have two things for this evening, one of which is just a recommendation or a suggestion. I've noticed that some of our commission meetings start with the Pledge of Allegiance and some don't in the City of Cottage Grove. I just wondered if maybe we want to try to suggest being consistent with our commission meetings, similar to what we do here at the Council table. So, I just wanted to suggest that maybe we consider asking the Chairs of each of the various commissions to begin their meetings with the Pledge of Allegiance. It's certainly not something that I

think we need to create any kind of Statute around or anything, but just a thought; I think it's a great way to start our meetings and some consistency may be nice.

The second thing that I wanted to mention is the month of March is not only the boys' State Hockey Tournament month and Basketball Tournament Month and all the rest of it, but it's also national Women's History Month. And it's a really important time for us to recognize the fact that throughout our nation's history, we've had some absolutely amazing women, who have made massive contributions to the improvement of people's lives. The month of March is a great time to just reflect upon that and remember that not only do we have a lot of great history to look back on with regard to the women who have contributed so many things here in our country, but we also have a very bright future to look forward to. I specifically wanted to mention one individual this evening to give it a little local flavor; so, of course, many of you know that Karla Bigham is our current County Commissioner here in Washington County, but what you may not know is Karla's whole life has been dedicated to service. She started in 2005, along with Mayor Bailey, in fact, on the Cottage Grove City Council, and that's 20 years ago, and Karla's still a pretty young person, especially if you sit in the chair I sit in, because I'm definitely older than she is. But she got her start in public service very young, and has served both as a City Council Member and a County Commissioner, but she's also served in our State legislature, both in the House and in the Senate. And I think it's important that we remember that there's a lot of Karla Bighams out there in communities all across the Twin Cities and the United States; and how lucky we are that we have people like Karla and Katie Sieben and Jill Seacrist and so many others who have served the City of Cottage Grove honorably in elected seats and represented our citizens very effectively, no matter what role they've played. So, let's remember throughout the course of this month of March some of the wonderful women that we've had serving our community, South Washington County; I think a lot about Myra Peterson, as an example, who was our longest serving County Commissioner here in Washington County, and other communities across the country and thank them for their dedication to serving others.

With that, mayor, I'll turn it back to you.

Mayor Bailey said I have four quick, but important, things: 1) This last Friday started the seasonal Fish Fry, and I had the opportunity to actually to have the Fish Fry down at River Oaks, which I know the VFW and other places have it, too. I just want to say the chef at River Oaks is amazing, did a great job with the Fish Fry, and they have other foods, if you don't want fish, that you can have there. They do recommend that you make reservations, so every Friday, now through Easter, you just go to riveroaksmunigolf.com or opentable.com, that's where you can make your reservations, and you could tell how many people and what time you want to be there. It's great service and definitely great food. 2) The other item is in about five days from now, on March 10, the Cottage Grove Medallion Hunt, which we do this time every year, will run for five days or until somebody finds the medallion. The clues will actually be posted here at City Hall on the bulletin board in the lobby at 8:00 a.m. each day, and then at 9:00 a.m., they will be posted on the Parks and Recreation Facebook Page. So, if you really want to get into this thing, you want to come to City Hall, and be here right at 8:00 a.m. to get that clue and get out there and look. To win, you must be a Cottage Grove resident, and if you're under 18, you must have an adult with you because I believe there is a cash prize, correct? Director Dockter is shaking his head yes. 3) The last from a parks perspective, the 2025 Easter Egg Hunt is back; it's up at the Cottage Grove Ice Arena this year because Easter is later this year, so the Egg Hunt is actually on April 12. You do need tickets because it's great that we have so many kids who come out with their families for this event, it's inside, so you don't have to worry about the weather. Just go to the City's website, and you can register your kids or however many people that you want for whatever time is currently available. 4) Lastly, it's going to be bizarre, I know Council Member Thiede has been chomping at the bit regarding with regards to Strawberry Fest, but I have started my annual checking out with different businesses for the Fourth of July fireworks this year. I am very pleased to report, so far, everybody I've spoken with has either committed or are in the process of committing, including maybe some additional dollars, which means that amount would go up. So, what I try to do is get \$5,000 from area businesses to put towards the fireworks, so we have a \$25,000 show, and so far, we have firm commitments from: NorthPoint, once again; Tennis Sanitation, Willie is like just tell me where I send the check, which is pretty cool; and 3M also mentioned yesterday that they're donating \$5,000. We do have a few others, I'm not going to say anything yet because there's a few other businesses that we've had in the past that have committed to being part of it, and some of them are actually looking to up that amount. So, we may actually have more than \$25,000 for our fireworks display this year. I just want to thank them, that obviously

helps us make the fireworks show great; the City doesn't pay for the fireworks, the Cottage Grove Lions actually kind of get the program running, they have a Family Day and such.

I think, I don't know if it's official yet, but I'm hearing that we may be shifting it; Council Member Olsen said it is official. Mayor Bailey said last year, if you recall, the Fourth of July was very stormy, so basically, everybody had to cancel their fireworks or postpone them. In our particular case, the Lions moved it to Sunday after the Fourth of July, and the crowds were huge, much more than normal. I think part of it has to do with Cottage Grove just loves to go out and go to cabins, go up north, and whatever, and then they all want to come back. So, I believe, if I'm hearing this right, the Fourth of July fireworks in Cottage Grove will actually be the Sunday after the Fourth. So, they're going to do the same thing as they did last year so that people will be back in town, if they're heading back into work. I know that works best for me because since it's on Sunday, I'm going to actually be able to see the fireworks and enjoy the festivities. We'll get more of that out to the public, but I did want to let the public know that even though it's the Fourth of July, I know a lot of people are away at cabins and such, I just wanted to mention that that will be a change that again we'll try this year, to see how that goes.

Council Member Thiede said you did jog my memory, besides having the Strawberry Fest fireworks that we're going to have again this year, not quite as big as the City one, but we are also going to have a drone show. With like 100 drones and so forth, so I think that's on Friday night, and that should be interesting this year.

Mayor Bailey said it's amazing because once again, obviously, the Strawberry Fest Committee does all their fundraising and businesses are supporting them. You never know with the economy sometimes, wondering how things are going right now, if all these businesses are going to say oh, this is not the year I can fund or help; but everybody that I've spoken with so far has stepped up, and it sounds like the same thing for Strawberry Fest. And, frankly, if you would've seen in our Consent Agenda this evening, the number of grants that our amazing staff has been going after to fund things within the community is just tremendous. So, more to come on that as we get those things up and rolling.

I just want to publicly, at this moment, thank NorthPoint Development team, Tennis Sanitation, and 3M for their generous support of the Fourth of July fireworks.

Mayor Bailey said we do have a Workshop, which is Open to the Public, and we're going to be going into our Conference Room to talk about Polco Community Survey, it's a survey process that we're looking at doing here in the very near future. So, we won't be adjourning in here, we will be adjourning in the Conference Room. So, everybody have a great evening.

13. WORKSHOPS - OPEN TO PUBLIC - CONFERENCE ROOM

A. Polco Community Survey Workshop

Staff Recommendation: Receive presentation and provide feedback regarding the Polco survey.

Mayor Bailey said so this workshop is on the Polco Community Survey, and I believe Phil is going to take us through the presentation.

Phil Jents, Communications Manager, thanked Mayor Bailey and the Council Members, introduced himself, and said we're here to talk about the Polco Community Survey, which we are excited to begin work on. So, just a brief agenda for the evening: We're just going over the survey itself, the National Community Survey (NCS) instrument, some of the questions therein, some of these custom questions that we have printed out before you in your memo. Those custom questions are just options that we can talk through here in a little bit, and that at the end, we have room for questions, discussion, etc.

So, real briefly, as part of this overview of the NCS and Polco, etc., Polco is a civic engagement platform that's used by local government throughout the State, throughout the country. They use the NCS to gather, as you would expect, feedback from residents about City services, budgets, taxes, quality of life, how do residents feel about the

City and the community, what value they get for the services that we provide them, at what tax rate, and so on and so forth.

As far as the timeline of the survey is concerned, this graphic walks you through that. We're, not surprisingly, right about here. So, earlier this year, and again, this is a Strategic Plan priority that was identified for the City to do this community survey. We're right before March 7, as you can imagine, where we are beginning that process with Polco and the NCS. Finalizing our survey instrument; when I say instrument, that is the survey, the questions that the survey asks, which you have before you. As we finalize those materials and have Polco, I'm not a statistician, but they assemble their data and their statistically relevant information for how they're going to actually conduct the survey; there's a process of doing that, and one final piece of that is actually finalizing the instrument itself, the questions, and also what types of questions we want to include within that survey.

Once we are done with that, we send them that final material, they assemble it, data collection begins, which is essentially again, I'm not a statistician, but they send out to, I think it's 200 people based on statistically relevant information for those folks to fill out that survey. We do not want to limit the survey to 200 people. While it would give us some interesting insights and feedback, it would be just that; it would be how many people of that 200 had filled it out. So, why not, at some point, open it up to the broader community, which takes us into April. We're still beginning to see, prior to that, broad promotion on our social media channels, website, newsletters, videos, etc. that this is the survey that's out there for folks to fill out to provide us feedback about how the City's doing and so on.

As that survey closes, the data begins to be collected. We then get a report back from Polco, on or about, this is the general timeline of the survey, so.

As far as the NCS instrument, which again is the survey you have before you with the list of questions, I believe it's about seven pages long. That survey is something that is used throughout the country, throughout the State, and while the City is able to and has provided minor but important edits to that survey of stock questions, essentially, we removed things like references to sheriff or speeches or things that just don't technically apply to our community or don't apply to the City of Cottage Grove capitol city, we think of the City of Cottage Grove as an organization, right? So, we're able to provide those minor edits; we can't, however, make huge substantial changes to the survey instrument. So, if you look at a page and you go, I don't want to do any of those questions, then we'd be looking at a full other process.

The reason being for that is as we conduct that survey, get feedback, and compare it to a few other communities, other benchmark communities of how we stack against them, you need to have that survey be as consistent as possible for it to be sufficiently relevant, right? So, we can make minor changes to make sure it makes sense for our residents and for our community, and of course, we can add in custom questions, there's a reason why the edits to the instrument itself are relatively small, but important, nevertheless.

As far as comparison data is concerned, Polco views really specific communities, like a list of cities that they survey, as proprietary data. Having said that, there are hundreds of communities across the country that we will be able to compare our results against so that we can kind of see, again, not just a snapshot of how residents feel about our City, our community, our services, taxes, etc., but we can pick comparison benchmark communities.

Having said that, because of publicly-available information and other communities have chosen to publish their results or publish that they're doing surveys through Polco, we do know that communities right here in the metro, Richfield, Oakdale, I think Bloomington, and Rochester, would be more local communities that we could compare ourselves against. So, we'll get benchmark comparison data from within our own area, so to speak, and also from across the country.

So, maybe the most important part tonight are the custom questions. As you walk through these questions, what I want you to see in front of you, as I mentioned, the survey instrument itself: This is the more-or-less standard survey that people will receive, and then our ability to add in roughly about a half page of custom questions. So, as you walk through these, and it's in your memo as well, all these questions are in front of you, they're meant to be stop starters, right? So, as we look through these custom questions, what we need from you Council Members is some guidance, perhaps some consensus around which custom questions to include within the survey, which custom questions you maybe don't want to include. And anything that you see before you is not set in stone; if you

see that something is worded a little strangely, and you want it changed, we can probably do that, right? The custom questions can be tailored to however we need to fit and tailor them.

Also, for reference, as we go through all these questions, and as you look at them in the memo there, I have this over here just as a visualization. So, we are somewhat limited in how many custom questions we can include within the survey, and there's a couple really important reasons for that: One is budgetary constraints, it costs a significant amount of money to add in more custom questions than what we're allowed; not that we can't do that, but that's just another consideration. And then, perhaps just as important is balancing what I would call survey fatigue, right? We've got roughly six-or-seven pages of survey questions, it takes somebody let's say 15, 20 minutes to fill out; that already is a significant ask of somebody to do that, right? So, if we add in another page, two pages of custom questions, while those questions may be very valuable on their own, we do start to stretch people's willingness to actually participate in the survey. So, just a couple things to consider there.

So, as you're looking at custom questions, we become almost like newspaper editors, looking at column inches; you only have a certain amount of space to fit in a certain amount of words. And, so, on Page 4 of the survey instrument, you'll see a blank half of a page, that's where the custom questions would go. This one you see here is not necessarily a custom question I'm saying we should include, it's just there as an example to visualize. So, as you look at all of these custom question options, you can start to see, based on how long the question is, how many options people have to choose from for their answer; the question will literally take up a different amount of space. And so you can start to see some of these questions are rather lengthy in how many words are included, and some are a little bit more concise. So, you can start to visualize, I really love that question, but it might not fit, or this question's a lot shorter and I love it better than the really longer one. You can see how it literally all fits.

With that, you'll have all of these questions in front of you, you might also be wondering where these custom question options came from, and there are a couple spots: One is direct feedback from our Department Heads and staff about what they feel like is feedback that they're looking to get about their services or something that's relevant to their department or their mission. Then, also, Polco has a very helpful library of custom questions that they've used throughout the country that we can pull from; we don't have to use them verbatim, we don't have to use them at all, we can use them as stop starters, inspiration, etc. But they essentially come from our own internal staff feedback and that library of questions as something to start from.

So, with that, we have a handful of custom questions that you can review individually, we can talk through individually; I have room at the end, of course, for discussion. The first one being a question about revenues and taxes, and I should say another source of where these custom questions came from is hearing feedback from Council through the Strategic Planning process and other forums; it seems like the organization, the City, wants to hear from our residents how do they feel about the taxes that they're paying, and what value are they getting for the services that they're receiving, good, bad, or otherwise, the difference, right? You'll see what feels like repetitious questions around taxes and that's why; it's not that we have to include six questions about taxes, it's more that maybe there's one that we like, and we're just looking at different options. So, this is the first one, we have 40 we'll be looking at.

Council Member Thiede said I'd say that's a good question in terms of in general, and a lot depends on I'd say the extent of the range of people, the number of people that we get responding and the physical significance of that. But, hopefully, we get a good mix of people that would respond. Because you know you're going to get some that are going to say, well, cut this, cut that, cut everything; and others that are well, we want this, we want that, because we know even with things we've had going up for votes, we've been real close to 50-50, right?

Phil replied, and Council Member, to your point, which is a good one, if somebody were to express an opinion that they want to see taxes reduced, this question, as I see it kind of asks well, where, right? Where would a reduction in services happen, if we have a reduction in revenue happen, in your opinion? So, that's a good point.

Council Member Clausen said my question on this is this seems overly broad; meaning, if we go down inside each of those categories, I think there's something, other than just general police. Maybe there's somebody in the public who may have an opinion, an idea, and we're going to be thinking out here. So, is there like a spot for an open field, free to add comments or thoughts, or does that add more to the process?

Phil replied there is, if I may, that's a good point that perhaps something we add into this question, or if we just skip ahead, because we can go back to these.

Council Member Olsen said there is one that isn't open ended. I was going to say with the last, I like that one better. My concern with the first question isn't that it's a relevant or irrelevant question, but I think the longer the question or the more complex the question, the better likelihood there is for people to misunderstand the question, and then answer the question incorrectly based on that misunderstanding. So, to give you an example, if we're asking if the City had to reduce spending due to reduced revenues, how much would you support or oppose service reductions in each of the following areas? And then you turn the page, and it goes Streets; well, hey, I strongly support streets, streets are good. Well, that's not really what the question is asking, right? So, I think there's a potential for misunderstanding based on the way that the question is phrased; whereas, in the open-ended questions, there's not as much room for interpretation, so we're likely to get a more honest answer.

Council Member Thiede said but then you don't have to see their response to be able to tabulate it this much, either, if you do have that open.

Council Member Olsen said and that may be true, and I guess if we want to stick with something like this, I would just say perhaps we need to refine the ask.

Council Member Garza said I, too, think that is clear enough. We're not advocating for all of these questions, they won't all fit. Council Member Olsen said understood. Council Member Garza said I don't think the question could be interpreted wrong as well, but in another sense, as far as so, we're reducing these things, you know, I think that's just going to start another frenzy of questions that are not really.

Council Member Olsen said hey, what's going on? What are they doing? Council Member Garza said yeah, so, you know, oh, they're spending the money wrong. So, I don't know that's going to apply so well. I can see it going under a tax for that rather than it being what we're really trying to convey with this; I think it will be conveyed partly, but will feel differently about it.

Council Member Olsen said but Question #2, that question is worded in such a way that I think is pretty clear, right?

Phil replied well, the purpose as it applies continues, on the next slide.

Council Member Olsen said yeah, so, tell us how much of a priority, if at all, the City should place on each of the following aspects of the community in the X number of years. That may give us similar information to Question #1, but more relevant because the question will be interpreted one way only because of how it's asked. We're not giving them either or, does that make sense?

Phil replied yeah, Council Member.

Council Member Thiede said and you've got to stretch it as such that they're just doing a number or something like that, because in this scenario, they've got that type of question. Well, in this scenario, I almost thought, well, let's see, what should I actually write in that box, so it is ultimately, it's like the other ones, it's going to be.

Phil said Council Members, it appears this way here just for presentation purposes, it's just it's a way to make it work in PowerPoint, but as you see, it'll be like a check box.

Council Member Olsen said but I think Council Member Clausen's point is well taken because we need to give people some space to tell us something that will make us know.

Mayor Bailey said I think I agree; I don't know that you need to do Question 1. I like Question 2, and actually, 3, kind of gets what I think you were looking for, for #1. Because, basically, it says I'm satisfied with current, I'm willing to pay more, I don't want to pay any more; it really narrows it, in my opinion.

Council Member Garza said I like that.

Phil said and this is great conversation, I have to say. This is exactly what we were hoping for, whether or not I stated that explicitly or not. Your reactions to the questions and your general feedback is exactly what we were hoping for, so, this is perfect.

Mayor Bailey said but the next one, #4, I don't really, and I think I know what you're trying to get at or we're trying to get at, but I just don't know.

Council Member Olsen said that's like Question #11 on taxes, like we've already asked and answered, you know?

Council Member Garza said and I don't know what kind of answer to this question would be, the right answer to those.

Mayor Bailey replied yeah, because we stated it above on one of those things, should we raise it annually, in small increments, or should we just go big? That puts them off, and I don't think there's probably a lot of people out there that don't really know what that means; big might be 1% vs. .5% or nothing.

Phil said we need to discuss subjectivity within the questions, so.

Mayor Bailey said I like how on Question 3, I like it where it's really giving, almost like a feel: Like this is how I feel, I'm satisfied with the current level, I'm willing to pay more, I feel like I pay too much, I am willing to accept service reductions. We're not going to ask them because if they say, yeah, I'm willing to, in the end, I'm sure it's up to us on what it would be.

Council Member Garza said I don't like #5 either, and not because of anything but other than we already stated the questions for a couple of pages, so, I don't think we need to.

Council Member Olsen asked is #7 one that you specifically chose, Phil, or your staff? Because this seems to be one that comes up relatively frequently, you know, how the people want to receive their information.

Phil replied yeah, selfishly, I would love to see a question on that survey because that suits my needs, but my needs are not the same as Zac's, as Gretchen's, as Ryan's, and Tammy's. So, it's in there because it would be helpful to know.

Mayor Bailey said so, I like the question, I do like this question, but my question on this is, is there something they would like to see on that we don't have listed there? Is there an ability to write something in or add something?

Phil replied maybe Other with a field?

Mayor Bailey said yeah, something where you can, because you put social media all kind of tucked together, but, you know, some people; I mean, honestly, I'm not on Instagram, so.

Council Member Olsen said and you briefly mentioned Bluesky, and that's not even listed on here.

Mayor Bailey said so, that's why I'm trying to think, is there something we're missing that people are starting to go to or use?

Council Member Garza said, well, you know how I feel about a certain publication, but I think maybe we ought to give our community the opportunity to maybe write them in to see if they mention *Cottage Grove Journal*. So, I think that might give them an opportunity to write it in.

Council Member Olsen said yeah, so, the big question, maybe just one more option, and that option is Other, and make a suggestion?

Council Member Garza said or we could add the *Journal*; I mean, I would like to see that, I honestly would like to see that. I would like to see how many people would want the *Cottage Grove Journal*.

Council Member Olsen asked do you specifically want the *Journal*, or do you want newspaper?

Council Member Garza replied the specific one that is named behind our City; I would like to go down that avenue to see, and we've had a couple conversations about it, and I think we're going to bring it to you guys eventually, but I'd like to.

Council Member Thiede said well, you could go so far as, instead of listing all those, too, you could say what's your desired communication platform for getting information on the City? And list the platform.

Council Member Olsen said yeah, and SWCTC is not listed here, as an example, that might be one.

Council Member Thiede said and that way, people can just put different ways that they like to get that information.

Council Member Garza said yeah, because we are listing all this other stuff, so.

Mayor Bailey said I have to say it's funny, while we're sitting here, I was trying to think of all the different ways that we communicate.

Council Member Olsen said and the challenge with the *Journal* is, I mean, their publication and distribution is so limited, we just don't know, but I mean, let's ask the question.

Mayor Bailey said I do like #6. Phil said I think we skipped #6, and Mayor Bailey said yes, but I like it, I think we need to know.

Council Member Garza asked so, what's the deal with that? Are we converting to fiber, or?

Council Member Thiede asked are people going to know what the difference between fiber internet and just internet is?

Council Member Garza asked and with Century Link, are we having an issue of not putting fiber optic on the table? I mean, I know because when I first moved here, and that's been 10 years ago.

Administrator Levitt said and Woodbury has, yeah, the EDA is supposed to be doing a citywide fiber project, as there are a lot of companies that want to engage in it. So, we want to make sure that they don't tear up our entire City, so we're involved with one preferred vendor that responds to the RFP. And, so, we're trying to figure out how big of an issue is this, to be able to show the people that respond to the RFP, how big of an interest is there. There is information in this main survey, but it's kind of lumped in with other stuff, and so, we were just trying to draw it out, and if people even know that.

Council Member Garza said because when you move to Cottage Grove, you have only the options that you have, and so, you really don't have all of these other options that you would normally have growing up in a city with the fiber optics. So, I don't know that our community would even know what they're missing, I guess is my point.

Council Member Olsen said with fiber, we're talking full service. Council Member Garza said yeah, even like my neighborhood, we didn't have any of that stuff before, so.

Council Member Olsen asked so, do we like that question? Mayor Bailey replied I do.

Council Member Thiede said you've got to define it a little bit better. Council Member Garza asked make them know what it is? Council Member Thiede replied yeah, if you're going to ask somebody do you want to have internet available in the community, they'll say, well, it already is.

Council Member Olsen agreed, and said and what is the cost and all that.

Mayor Bailey said well, I'm fine either way, but I mean, all I'm trying to do is I just know that we're having some challenges with a particular end user, who categorized a message to me and said that Cottage Grove is sitting in an island; we have all this high-speed stuff on the bridges on both sides, but we don't have anything in Cottage Grove, and it's stopping development.

Council Member Thiede said well, but then this is directed at the residents. Mayor Bailey replied it is, but; Council Member Thiede said but with an end user, what you're talking about is more business.

Mayor Bailey said it would be more commercial, but I do know some of our, not even in the Business Park, some of our commercial entities have said the same thing to me, that we just don't have high speed, we don't have enough in Cottage Grove. They have it in Hastings, they have it in South St. Paul.

Council Member Olsen said well, let me pose this: Is it critical that we include this sort of question because we're trying to get some information that we want to utilize to sort of sell the idea that we need this? Or, can we do that in a separate fashion?

Council Member Thiede replied I think that's probably a separate deal because, I mean, you want to educate people a little bit, too, a little bit more, and if it's really focused on a business thing, then you focus on the business folks. My guess is that for most of the people, you can get fast enough internet for the home if you want to; you know.

Council Member Garza said and also, how; I think the community wants to know more so how interruptive is it to them, right? Is it, the fiber optic cables going in, is that something's that going to disrupt their flow, in and out of their homes, that type of thing? So, I don't even know that they care, like you said, as much as fiber optic; they have the internet in their homes, but by putting these new lines in, is that going to cause some type of headache that they don't want to experience?

Council Member Olsen said realistically, they're, plenty of people work from home, who could potentially benefit from this sort of a thing; but, again, the question is you know, do we need this data because we want to then turn that into some sort of a marketing effort for this fast something? And I don't know the answer to that.

Mayor Bailey asked what is the goal of the question?

Administrator Levitt replied the goal one is to see if that data is available now and how to sell it, and I think to Council Member Thiede's point, is if the residents don't like their current stream, the data may not actually.

Council Member Olsen said the data will be here, yeah; Administrator Levitt said right.

Mayor Bailey said well, then; Council Member Olsen said do away with it. Mayor Bailey said go away. Council Member Thiede said there's a responsibility, too, for the general public. I mean, I mentioned at work we've talked about that in the past and some different things. If our goal is a little different, then we also have to consider, which is becoming a true lens of the community media now, in terms of SWCTC, and what's the effect there and everything else.

Council Member Olsen said, yeah, there's a lot of elements to that; it might be wise to just.

Council Member Garza said and we haven't had any disruptions either; I mean, we did go down one-or-two days from the storm, but other than that, our internet is usually pretty solid as well, so.

Council Member Olsen said Century Link has some issues in some spots, but other than that, I don't think we really have any. So, go away with it.

Phil said it's gone.

Mayor Bailey said here's my question on this one, since we're getting rid of some of the questions. I would almost, if somebody rates X like good, poor, or whatever, I don't know which one they're rating. So, if you're going to do that question, which is not a bad question, you're going to have to break them apart.

Council Member Garza said for sure.

Mayor Bailey said and my gut, just so I'm going to say it, my gut would tell me a majority of citizens in Cottage Grove have no idea what the HERO Center is; I'm just going to say it. But if we want something specific, from like River Oaks or the Ice Arena, then keep that.

Council Member Olsen said you can speak to that, specifically.

Mayor Bailey said yeah, because you guys will get the data back, and you won't know which one they're happy with or which one they're not happy with.

Council Member Olsen said that's a good point.

Director Koerner said and the one that's good is the HERO Center.

Mayor Bailey said yeah, I knew you would say that, and I don't mind having the HERO Center in there, but if you're going to do it, I think you have to have it as three separate questions.

Phil replied okay, here's the thing: Excellent value, and why is it the HERO Center? I can say that from my perspective, I don't know that I'd question how this should be; but I think your responses are, because if you haven't used it, all right? And you'd also have to define value; define value, I mean, that's.

Council Member Olsen said yeah, value is a very personal thing. Phil said I just don't know what I would do with the answers to that question.

Council Member Olsen asked, so, you don't think the question is really necessary? Okay, I could roll with that.

Phil said it could be skewed in so many ways that I wouldn't know what to do with that.

Council Member Garza said definitely, yeah. Mayor Bailey asked so, do away with that one? Okay.

Mayor Bailey asked what do you think of this one, Pete?

Council Member Olsen said it's a really complicated question; Council Member Garza said it is, what if they've not had contact?

Director Koerner replied that was kind of my concern is if someone's taking this survey, how will I know they've even had contact? We're already sending surveys out for every fourth person we have contact with; so, whether they've been arrested, we're already sending that to the people that we have made contact with.

Council Member Garza said and we're already asking it on the first couple of pages as well, related to the Police Department; there's quite a few questions actually are related to how we feel about the response.

Council Member Olsen said yeah, it doesn't seem like a good question to me.

Phil asked so, Director Koerner, would you have an issue with including this? Director Koerner replied yes.

Council Member Olsen said we don't like #9. Mayor Bailey replied no, I don't think we need that.

Phil said so #9 and 10 we already talked about; Council Member Olsen said yes, we did.

Mayor Bailey said now, is that question, which they can write in their response, I do have a question on this one. Is that one that they came up with, is that their verbiage, or did we come up with that?

Phil replied I believe that did come from the library, yes, the Polco library.

Mayor Bailey said my only other thing I'd like to know on this one; so, it says I'd like to see improved or changed, and I'm going to use the word new, and I don't know if that's the right word to use. But is there anything you would like to see improved, or added; I guess added is the word I'm looking for, added or changed in our community?

Council Member Garza said improved, changed, or added to our community. Council Member Olsen asked is changed the right word, or should it be done differently? Council Member Garza said because improved and changed almost are, they're both very similar to what we're saying about them. Council Member Thiede said that's a good point, they're similar. Council Member Garza said very similar.

Mayor Bailey said I want something where people can write in to tell us what they; Council Member Garza said new additions to our community, Council Member Olsen said what they want. Mayor Bailey agreed, said what they want.

Phil said improved; what about just, is there anything you would like to see improved or added to our community?

Council Member Garza said yeah. Mayor Bailey said that's fine, Council Member Olsen said that's fair. Mayor Bailey said yeah.

Council Member Thiede said be ready for a Community Center answer. Council Member Olsen agreed.

Mayor Bailey said I understand that, but I think it's important; Council Member Thiede said no, I'm agreeing with you. Mayor Bailey said we have to open it up, and I'm sure we'll see that response.

Phil said, well, and it's the final fair point; the whole point of a survey is to get feedback from residents, and how you use that feedback is up to you. So, future policy decisions that I think someone mentioned earlier, can be based, in part, on what you hear about.

Council Member Olsen said and the way the questions are phrased is critical to that.

Mayor Bailey said and to your point, if for future Councils and such, if we're going to start using these guys to set a benchmark, which I think is what we need to do, just for the Council.

Council Member Olsen said Dave's been saying that for quite some time.

Council Member Thiede said I was just going to ask that question, because these are, it seems like this is asking more about, you know, what do you want to see or what are your feelings? And the question is, are we going to actually then do a measurement here? Because we've had other surveys done before, and looking at like levels of satisfaction, things like that, that you can, you know, to look at trends and so forth, and try to get a feeling: Are you getting any better or getting any worse, getting, you know, those kind of things. I'm not sure if I, because we haven't used Polco before, have we?

Council Member Olsen said but I like the numeric response metrics, Council Member Thiede said sure.

Council Member Olsen said because then you can statistically kind of add them up and compare and contrast. Council Member Thiede said right.

Mayor Bailey said now, this one, won't be, this particular; Council Member Olsen replied this will be the benchmark.

Council Member Thiede said right. So, the question, too, that I was going to ask, is in terms of what do you include or not include? Are we looking at the past surveys that we have done, and while they may not be asked in exactly the same way or whatever, to be able to still use this to compare to some of those? And say well, you know, didn't we do that in 2012, or we moved up maybe two or three?

Administrator Levitt replied we can go back and can look at the Reimagine Survey to see how we worded it.

Council Member Thiede said and kind of see if we can still link to some of those; Council Member Olsen said maybe there's some carryover? Yeah, that's a good idea, Dave.

Administrator Levitt said I'm sure that can be done.

Mayor Bailey said I know that's why he looked at me when he said you know, you're going to get the Community Center. Yes, but we'll get restaurants, but I'm interested to know what people want. I mean, you might get somebody that says I want a soccer dome vs. a Community Center, or.

Council Member Garza said and our community has changed so much, just over the last couple of years, with more kids, families, you know? So, things may be quite different now.

Mayor Bailey asked, and I'm assuming you guys want this question, right?

Administrator Levitt said it's not up to me, but, I mean, every business accesses it; it's up to you guys if you find value in it.

Council Member Olsen said yeah, I was just going to say that.

Phil said so, by my notes, we've got 1, 2, 3 questions, and #2, 3, and 10 that all received very positive feedback from you all; #7 was maybe could use some work, but generally positive reaction. So, that's 3 or 4 questions, in that amount of space.

Council Member Olsen said I think the first three you mentioned are probably the ones I'd personally feel the strongest about. I don't really see the need for #11; I think we've kind of measured that already.

Council Member Garza asked and don't you guys already think that the statistics that are on some of these things, as far as how immediate calls are answered or that kind of thing; Council Member Olsen said well, Jennifer actually implemented a program here several years ago where response time needs to be measured or whatever, I remember that, I mean.

Administrator Levitt replied for us, that doesn't matter. I mean, it's how many emails do you get that you've forwarded to me, that's how I see it.

Mayor Bailey said I'll be talking to Randy in a minute, I got a voice mail from him. And that's not, it's not really you, though, you're going to die when you're.

Administrator Levitt said and I don't need to see if we have a problem, I don't know. Mayor Bailey said I don't either. Council Member Olsen said and look, if we did, we'd know of it. Administrator Levitt replied I know, exactly. Council Member Olsen said and when we get emails, personally, I think we're all pretty good about trying to respond quickly.

Mayor Bailey said so, then, to your comment if there's the ones that we talked about, along with the tell us what you like or don't like or whatever, if that's the max that we can have, then that would be fine.

Phil replied, all right.

Council Member Olsen asked does that give you enough room to do that?

Phil replied, it's hard for me to say definitively, as I came here, but I think walking here tonight, I felt comfortable with two-to-four questions, depending on how long they were, that we would probably be fine fitting them. So, I'll obviously go back and add four more.

Mayor Bailey said and you said you'll let us know?

Council Member Olsen said and you're saying the three plus what Dave recommended with regards to like, hey, do you have any ideas or whatever to share? Something that we may not be aware of, which is essentially #10, right?

Phil replied right.

Mayor Bailey said so, three plus ten. Council Member Garza said no, ten includes the three. Mayor Bailey asked does the ten include the three, or? Council Member Olsen asked is ten included in your three?

Phil replied yeah, I have #2, #3, #10, #7 had some interesting conversation; #10 is the open ended.

Council Member Garza said so, #7 we talked about, that's the one that we just wanted to leave that one open, which Council Member Olsen confirmed.

Phil asked, oh, leave that open? Council Members all said yes. Council Member Olsen said I think we'll have #2 in there, too.

Mayor Bailey asked so, we'll have two open ended? Council Member Olsen said #7 and #10. Council Member Garza said so, now we have four, which was confirmed by Council Member Olsen. Mayor Bailey said so, that's four, then.

Council Member Garza said and those two won't have options, they'll just be open ended, unless they'll take up too much space.

Administrator Levitt said Council, just to be clear on Question 2, where it relates to adding Affordable Housing and Economic Prosperity to it, that came up at our Community Development Plan; so, our Community Development felt that it would be important to ask those questions.

Council Member Garza said that's all the talk right now, especially on the news tonight, they were talking about something with Affordable Housing and all of that.

Mayor Bailey said we've seen the Bills, and Council Member Olsen said there's a lot to say about that.

Council Member Olsen asked Phil, do you have what you need?

Phil replied I think I have what I need; if there's any other thoughts, I'm certainly happy to keep talking, but Mayor?

Mayor Bailey asked the Council if they had any further thoughts.

Council Member Olsen said I do like the idea of going back in that survey, too, just to see if there's any carryover, so, I just think that should happen as well.

Administrator Levitt asked if there is one question we have to cut, to keep it on one page and not pay extra, which one would you cut?

Mayor Bailey asked of the four we talked about? Administrator Levitt replied yes.

Council Member Garza said well, the two open-ended ones shouldn't be using, take up anything because they're just going to be a little write-in line; so, really, we're going to have two that will have options and then two that will just be small spaces.

Administrator Levitt replied I'm thinking with Question 2 and all of the different stuff; Council Member Olsen said yeah, just slice a few out of there. Administrator Levitt asked you'd like to take some of those out? Council Member Olsen and Council Member Garza both said yeah. Council Member Olsen said I think that's pretty doable.

Administrator Levitt replied, okay, we will do our best.

Phil said if you think of anything later tonight or tomorrow, as time goes on, obviously, just please reach out to Administrator Levitt.

Council Member Olsen said sounds good.

Mayor Bailey said yeah, my guess is you probably could, because I'm just reading this one here on that Question 2; so, you've got Parks (well-maintained parks/landscape areas, sports facilities), then you've got Open Space & Trails, and then you've got Recreation (high quality, reasonably priced recreation/leisure activities). I'm not sure, would you know what that all means?

Council Member Olsen replied well, we would. Council Member Thiede said yeah, but again, I go back to how would I use this? And it's too much.

Mayor Bailey said so, if you do have to trim some to make it fit, you could probably consolidate some of those questions maybe, from within that one.

Phil said this is very helpful feedback, so, thank you, Mayor and Council Members.

Council Member Olsen asked anything else staff thinks we need to add or subtract? I mean, obviously, we're doing all the talking, so we'll go to you guys. What do you think?

Dockter said I like the way its laid out, I like the scoring and some of the other stuff. I think it's going to be easy to interpret.

Mayor Bailey said that's what I'm looking for.

Dockter said it's how you use it, right? Because I think this will work great.

Director Burfeind said yep, I like it. I like the consistency and the benchmarking with other communities, and in the general survey, too, it addresses a lot of Public Works questions, so, I think it'll be good information.

Council Member Olsen asked, what do you think, G?

Director Larson replied I like anything that you can actually benchmark. Council Member Olsen said, yeah, we need to know.

Director Koerner said I agree with this, and we had a lot of suggestions on these, quite a few.

Council Member Olsen said it'll give good data points that you can potentially utilize effectively.

Administrator Levitt said and I think if you looked at our timeline, we made it so that when we go into budget this year, we'll have this survey data, and I'll guide you through some of the questions.

Council Member Olsen said can you remind me, what is the statistically relevant response range, do we know that?

Phil replied that's a really good question, Council Member, we actually asked that when we met with Polco to kick off, and I'm not recalling the number off the top of my head; I can certainly get that for you, though.

Council Member Olsen replied, I think it would be good to know that because if it isn't specifically relevant, then the tool maybe just isn't as valuable.

Phil replied yeah, we asked the kind of response rate question, what's a good response rate, right? They did answer that, I just don't know it off the top of my head.

Administrator Levitt said and you'll have really two buckets of survey responses: The statistically valid one that always came to mind to ensure that they're a Cottage Grove resident, and then the one where anybody can participate and they don't actually have to be a Cottage Grove resident. So, you'll have two data subsets, one that's specifically viable against other surveys, and then one that isn't.

Council Member Olsen said, and well, we've been down that path before, and it hasn't really been all that helpful.

14. WORKSHOPS - CLOSED TO PUBLIC - None.

15. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Council Member Olsen, second by Council Member Thiede, to adjourn the meeting at 8:28 p.m.
Motion carried: 5-0.

Minutes prepared by Judy Graf and reviewed by Tamara Anderson, City Clerk.