

COTTAGE GROVE CITY COUNCIL

January 8, 2025

12800 RAVINE PARKWAY SOUTH

COTTAGE GROVE, MN 55016

SPECIAL MEETING - TRAINING ROOM - 5:00 P.M

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Bailey called the Special Meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. He stated we have a hard stop, as we have a Council Meeting tonight at 7:00 p.m.

He thanked everyone for coming this evening, and noted State Representative Rick Hansen had sent a message to me and Commissioner Bigham, stating he was ill, so he's not able to be here. Mayor Bailey said on behalf of the Council and the City, we really do appreciate all the service and support that we get from all of you, and we welcome you to Cottage Grove.

This evening we're going to talk a little bit about the progress that we've been making here in Cottage Grove over the years, some of the projects and things that we've been working at really hard. We're also going to look at some of the high-priority items that are very important, on which we really want some added focus. I think all of you have met some of our team over here, our lobbyist firm, who's representing the City of Cottage Grove; I believe they're also representing Washington County, so they work well together.

You have a packet in front of you, there are important things at the beginning, and then there are pieces that each of our different department directors are going to share with you at a high level; there are basically four things that we really want to make a point of discussing this evening. There are some other things in here that if you come across this legislative season and have questions about, you can just let us know.

I just want to mention that Senator Judy Seeberger is aware of one thing, as we've been talking about this, and it's one of our high-priority items that you obviously got across the line this last year, the Emergency Medical Service program. We didn't qualify for any of the dollars on that round, but I do know that you're still working hard with the rest of the team, and we'll get into more of that a little bit later. It will obviously have a huge impact for both of the communities that you were able to get some funding for and hopefully, as things continue to move forward, it'll trickle down to get to us locally.

There were also changes from this last legislative session on the School Resource Officer law that allows us to keep that program in place. For those who maybe don't know, we kept our School Resource Officer (S.R.O.) in the school here in Cottage Grove. We had kept it through the process while all the challenges were happening. Our relationship with the School District is very, very good. I know some communities were having some challenges with it, but we weren't, so the changes that were made were very beneficial for everybody, but specifically for Cottage Grove.

Some of the funds in areas where we do pick up some additional dollars that we want to continue to support, the Minnesota Investment Fund is very important to the City of Cottage Grove as is the Job Creation Fund. They're really important for us because we like to say "tools in the toolbox"; so, when we have somebody who's interested in moving to Cottage Grove or is looking for incentives or things that we can do to help, those particular programs have really helped us expand our local economy, specifically in our Business Park.

As I mentioned earlier, you're going to hear about the City's four top legislative priorities: 1) 100th Street is a big one; 2) PFAS Resources, you'll hear why we're talking about that, though we're getting our Water Treatment Facilities taken care of right now; 3) EMS Service that we talked about earlier; 4) Paid Family Leave and what effect that's having on cities.

There'll be some other additional topics that we may cover, and if there are any questions on any of it from any of you, feel free to ask questions. So, without further ado, I think I'll just say thank you for coming, thank you for enjoying our food from River Oaks, our chef there is amazing.

Before I turn this over to Director Burfeind, we'll start with quick introductions.

2. ROLL CALL

- Representative Wayne Johnson, newly elected to District 41A, which has half of Cottage Grove, then Denmark Township, and river communities up into Lakeland, Lake Elmo, and Grant. I was on the Cottage Grove City Council for a couple years and I was also County Commissioner for four years, and now I'm down at the House. I'm looking forward to listening and hearing about what we can do.

- Senator Judy Seeberger, I'm in my first term, this will be my third session. I replaced the irreplaceable Karla Bigham, and I'm happy to keep working for Cottage Grove.

- Senator Matt Klein, I've been in the legislature since 2017; with redistricting two years ago, I picked up a precinct in Cottage Grove, as well as some other cities on this side of the river. I serve as the Commerce Chair in the Senate and on Tax Committee as Vice Chair. I'm looking forward to hearing what your issues are today.

- Karla Bigham, Washington County Commissioner, said I used to be in the Senate, and we have very good representation in the Senate. Obviously, I know these two guys in the House and Rick, so I'm very much looking forward to working with all three of these fine gentlemen. I appreciate being invited to this, I think it's important to show the relationship between City, County, and State. The food is always fantastic from River Oaks. One more thing, we approved the 19A and 100th yesterday.

- Monique Garza, Cottage Grove City Council, I've recently been reelected.

- Dave Thiede, Cottage Grove City Council, I've been on the Council since 2010.

- Myron Bailey, Mayor of Cottage Grove, this is my 16th, going into 17th year now as mayor of Cottage Grove.

- Justin Olsen, Cottage Grove City Council, started in 2008, took a little break for a few years in 2016, then made a comeback in 2019, and was grateful to the voters of Cottage Grove for being reelected for another four-year term. Welcome to all of you, thank you for coming here, and congratulations to the newly-elected, including my colleague, Dave Clausen, to my right, who served our community proudly as a Public Safety professional for many years. I look forward to working with everybody and having a very productive year this year.

- David Clausen, Cottage Grove City Council, I'm a former City employee, a police officer for many years; this is my first time holding an elected office.

- Jennifer Levitt, City Administrator for Cottage Grove

- Representative Tom Dippel, born and raised in Cottage Grove, grew up down on the Mississippi; went to Pine Hill Elementary School, Oltman Junior High, graduated from Park in 2000. I'm living back down on Grey Cloud Island, enjoying all the beauty of the City.

- Brenda Malinowski, Finance Director, City of Cottage Grove

- Ryan Burfeind, Public Works Director, City of Cottage Grove

- Emily Schmitz, Community Development Director, City of Cottage Grove

- Zac Dockter, Cottage Grove Parks and Recreation Director

- Pete Koerner, Cottage Grove Director of Public Safety

- Gretchen Larson, Cottage Grove Economic Development Director

- Phil Jents, Cottage Grove Communications Manager

- Tamara Anderson, City Clerk

- Brandan Strickland, Larkin Hoffman

- Julia Page, Larkin Hoffman

Mayor Bailey said thank you and congratulations to our newly-electeds, both locally here but also up at the House; obviously, the Senate and Karla stayed the same.

Before I kick it off to Ryan, who's going to start us off on the top four legislative priorities, I'll just again reiterate as we get into this, being the mayor, I'm not afraid to talk; if there is something you need that we can help support, whether it's these projects or something that's on the extras, if you will, up at the Capitol, please let us know. Let me know because if you need me to testify, I'm more than willing to do that, to talk about whatever the

topic may be that's relevant to the citizens of Cottage Grove that might help support what you're trying to advocate for us up at the Capitol. With that, I'll turn it over to Ryan Burfeind, Public Works Director.

3. A. 2025 Legislative Agenda

Staff Recommendation: Receive an overview of the 2025 Legislative Agenda.

County 19A & 100th Street Realignment Project

Director Burfeind said our first legislative priority that I'm going to talk about is our County 19A and 100th Street Realignment Project Bonding Request. This is a joint project with Washington County, with a Bonding Request that we'll hopefully be working together on, of \$22.5 million. This is a project located in the south part of Cottage Grove; so, it's kind of outside Highway 61 and 10. We have our growing, ever-expanding Business Park in that area. It's very accessible, but it does only have really one access to Highway 61 and Jamaica Avenue, which has all sorts of issues at peak times, and traffic is really at capacity. We've been working on this project actually since 2018 with Washington County, starting with more of a high-level study and planning this route. I have a video on the next slide that really shows the details of the project.

This is a really strong partnership with Washington County, they're the lead agency on this project, but also with MnDOT due to that connection to Highway 61, and 3M, because it is largely 3M land that we will have to build this road through; 3M has been a very good partner, very supportive throughout the process, and there are other surrounding communities that were part of that overall planning study. I should mention the Business Park as a whole because it will be a new access for our Business Park, and all of those entities down there have been very supportive of this project as we work through it.

Director Burfeind said I will switch to a video that we created, this is an animation we developed to really make this project come to life. This is something that does a much better job of showing what we're trying to accomplish here in the south part of Cottage Grove. You can see it's highlighting the project area there, south of Highway 61, and the starting point is going to be at the intersection of 100th Street and Jamaica Avenue, kind of right by the Renewal by Andersen facility; this is where it will tie in through the Business Park and we will get that new access. There are very many jobs in that area, so it's a big supporter of those current jobs, but also it will be opening up additional land for development because we have a new access and a new capacity from a transportation perspective. This is the Mississippi River Trail Corridor, and we have these multiuse trails right now that have been on road, but we'll have dedicated off-road trails for that, which will be much better from a safety perspective, and this expanded three-lane section that we will be constructing with the project.

As you start to move east, we start to travel onto 3M land; its Miller Road today and it kind of becomes 100th Street and there will be an intersection. The key part of the project is a bridge crossing over the railroad tracks. There is no grade-separated crossing down there right now, at the 3M entrance it's an at-grade crossing, which is definitely a safety concern; especially with the CPKC merger, there's even more train traffic on that railroad.

We'll tie into Highway 61 with the roundabout; we have the roundabout that the County constructed in 2017, on the north side, and it's been very beneficial for that north side of the highway. This will be on the south side so it's definitely an important project down there for the community. I hope that it helps show what we're trying to accomplish.

I mentioned the Business Park, and it does open up this new land as well. There are two different aspects with growth of the Business Park: First is NorthPoint, that's something that was approved and is under construction, 280 acres of logistic center, distribution center, with at least 1,200 jobs. Many of those buildings have tenants at this point. We also have 500 acres of new 3M land, that's highlighted in red here on the screen; this will really allow development, and that's really big for our community. This is land that 3M was pretty careful with, because when they had the incinerator, they wanted some buffer with that facility. With that incinerator closing down, they've really been open to the development of this land in Cottage Grove. To help facilitate that, our Community Development Department has undertaken a Small Area Plan at Highway 61 and Innovation; so, this is happening with the design of a new roadway because now we have this new area of Cottage Grove that has the opportunity for development, and we want to make sure it has the highest and best use. So, it kind of creates that roadmap for development of that area of the community. There was a Market Study done as well to make sure we have the right development, the right Land Use in that area; that Small Area Plan isn't really meant to get into the issues and

details and in the weeds. It's really that high level what Land Use is the best for that area and making sure that's working well with our new roadway.

From a funding perspective, it's a very expensive project as it's a new roadway entirely across this property, but also that bridge alone is \$10-to-\$15 million. So, \$47 million is the Total Project Cost; between the \$11 million in local funds that we both have in our CIPs and then \$13.6 million in grants that have been acquired to date, that funding gap is \$22.5 million. So, with that \$22.5 million, we would be fully funded and able to deliver the construction of the project. That's very important because these grants have obviously timelines tied to them; so, if we are not able to start construction in that 2026-into-2027 timeframe, we'd actually risk losing that grant funding that has been acquired, which would be definitely detrimental to the project. The City and the County have both been really aggressive on that grant funding; you can see in bold the ones that we have received that make up that \$13.6 million. Also, there's a Regional Solicitation Application that the County put forth, and seven applications to the IJA, those Federal grants as part of that ask. The project has scored very well, but there are very competitive grants, there might be 1,000 applications to a RAISE grant nationwide with maybe 20 projects getting funded. So, while we have scored well, it's just a very competitive process to get that funding. I mentioned tonight we're working with Washington County and supporting them in that Bonding Request.

Director Burfeind asked if there were any questions before he moved on to the next priority.

Representative Johnson said I've been following this for quite a while because I think was it 2020 or 2021 we first started having the meetings as far as this one, what would be down there. At that time, they'd say this was a ten-year project, we're just starting to explore it, and I think a year or two exploded into we need it now. So, it's very interesting to follow this, but so you're saying if it's not started, the project hasn't started in 2026 or 2027, you'll lose those funds, correct?

Director Burfeind replied that's correct, Representative. There are two different kind of dates for some of those, but that's the timeframe we need to meet to be able to show that the project's been committed and construction is starting.

Representative Johnson asked so, is that just a portion of that \$13 million or the whole \$13 million?

Director Burfeind replied that would be specifically the Minnesota Highway Freight Grant is what we would risk losing, which is \$12 million; so, that's the largest part of that funding.

Representative Johnson asked so if our commissioner and also our senator and representative can help me a little bit here; if this isn't done in 2025, which is our budget year, and it's done in 2026 instead, when are those funds made available for projects like this so it'd still be qualified for, that the money would not be lost, if that makes sense.

Commissioner Bigham replied if it's approved, it's fine because we would be sending the paperwork that the project's going forward from our perspective. We've let the RFP out for engineering now, the County has.

Representative Johnson said okay, so it would happen in a normal bonding year, which is next year, by the end of the session.

Commissioner Bigham said but if it doesn't happen, I'm going to start to sweat; I'm getting warm right now, but I'm not sweating, but we need it. If we wait another year, it's going to be a problem.

Representative Johnson said okay, thank you for that. You brought up the line item here, the project will include construction of a bridge over the railway for \$11 million. Did you break that out for a certain reason? I guess what caught my eye is are there any funds available to working with, to make railroads more safe by bringing the cars away from?

Commissioner Bigham asked grade separation? There is, but they don't fund it very well at the State.

Representative Johnson said okay, but what about at the Federal level, though, since it's a railroad, they don't?

Mayor Bailey said it's kind of like it was, but Ryan just was talking about the competitiveness.

Commissioner Bigham said and remember, they're private.

Mayor Bailey said and my partner here at the County, with all due respect, I've been razzing Karla to say that what we've learned, what we've been going after the RAISE grant. And you can correct me if I'm wrong on this, is that we need to be further along in the true development phase of the project before we can score to that very, very top level for the RAISE grant. Like Ryan mentioned, we're scoring high, but when you're competing against all these other cities and counties and states around the country, it becomes difficult if we don't have all of our ducks

in a row that we can call it shovel-ready, basically. So, that's where the comment that you made earlier about getting engineering and all that done is so crucially important because obviously, as you know, this road is a County Road. For the rest of you, we're always just talking about this one piece, which is a total of \$47 million. Eventually, this County Road will make its way all the way down to Grey Cloud Island for what will eventually be a park, maybe some development, and all that kind of stuff. Of course, we have another bridge that we'll have to deal with once we get this thing kind of situated. It'll be even more expensive.

Representative Dippel said I think I've gone under that bridge like 15,000 times.

Mayor Bailey said you can help us with that one, too, but that one is even more expensive than this bridge because you literally have to build a new track because it's such a heavily-used rail, that you have to build a track that goes around it, build a new bridge, and then move the track back over to its normal spot. So, I'm not sure exactly how this works on the other one, but the number is pretty solid at this point from what we're asking for, from a funding standpoint.

Representative Johnson said okay, thank you.

Director Burfeind said one final thing I should mention before I keep this moving is the Commissioner mentioned and that was a good point, the County has released an RFP, and we are working with the County to continue and complete final design, environmental documentation, and Right-of-Way acquisition in 2025; so, those are also things that we'll have to fund as well. We want to keep the project moving, and we are committed to that.

Commissioner Bigham said and one other thing, the \$47 million is like all that he said, the environmental stuff, it's the whole enchilada, and so there isn't anything, any extras at all, that's all in.

Representative Johnson asked and that's 2027 numbers?

Director Burfeind replied yes, that does account for 2027 charges, correct.

2007 Consent Order Funding for Permanent Operations and Management of PFAS Treatment

Director Burfeind said all right, our next legislative priority is really tied to PFAS in Cottage Grove, and as we're moving into what's going to be an O&M (Operations & Management) phase, we do have our two permanent treatment plants, one under construction and one that will start construction this summer. Just at a high level, very briefly, I want to talk about for everyone in the room just some of the brief history of PFAS and how we got to where we are today. It was in 2000 when PFAS was first discovered in our drinking water, and we were kind of in that hot spot, unfortunately, in the East Metro. After that, we kind of jump forward to 2017, that's when we were really thrown into the fire. The Health Department lowered their health-based values (HBVs) for several PFAS compounds, and at the time, we had 11 wells; 8 of our 11 wells were over those new limits. We had a State of Emergency Declaration that summer, full outdoor water use bans, it was a very challenging summer. We delivered our first two Temporary Treatment Plants that summer, and we were able to, in about 60-to-90 days, have compliant drinking water. It was a huge effort, citywide, to accomplish that. Since that time, in 2018, of course, the 3M Settlement was finalized and agreed to and has that \$850 million for the East Metro. As values have changed as the levels have risen and changed, we now have 7 Interim Treatment Plants at our individual well sites. So, you can see a couple pictures of them here; they're basically just a little metal shed with some treatment vessels in them. They work for what we need them to, they do fully treat the water, but they're definitely not built for the long term; they were meant to get us by until we can construct those permanent facilities.

In those two permanent facilities, you can see this one right here is the Low Zone Treatment Plant, and this is actually a construction photo from earlier this month. So, we're actually nearing completion, we're looking to having that operational June 1, 2025, which will be a huge milestone for the City. We'll continue to operate 5 of those Interim Treatment Plants after that one's done. This is our Intermediate Zone Treatment Plant that's actually going to be built kind of right behind the Central Fire Station; that'll be the south side of 80th Street, kind of across from Park High School. They are two very large facilities, we're doing everything we can to be the most cost effective but also making sure our needs are met for generations to come.

The newest challenge is really related to the O&M Funding. We were notified at a working group meeting that we had with the PCA and DNR earlier last year, in May, that obviously inflation cost increases have changed, and there have been more wells that needed to be treated in all the communities due to the new MCLs that were released by the EPA. And that was really kind of like a landmark event; there hasn't been a new MCL, which is a

Federal requirement, for contaminated drinking water for at least a decade. When that was completed last year, that really set a hard deadline for the nation to be compliant for PFAS, and all that put together really ate away at our 3M Settlement Funds. We were notified that instead of 20 years of O & M, we were really getting down to just a few years of that O&M cost to cover these facilities. Cottage Grove, like the rest of the East Metro, we have a known source; it's 3M contamination, that's been proven, and the City has had assurances, we knew that even the 3M Settlement Funds would not last forever. Then there was a 2007 Consent Order that we were referred to that would pay for the O&M in perpetuity, but that is a concern for us, as that's a different mechanism. Settlement Funds the State has, and they're available; the MPCA and the DNR govern those. The Consent Order, which was what we were referred back to when the Settlement Funds run out, is different, and the fact that 3M has to kind of agree to pay those bills and do that; so, that's a big concern for us because as we look at these two new facilities, while we're extremely grateful for that money to build them, we're looking at somewhere around \$2 million a year just for more of the basic maintenance and the media replacement. That's not capitalization, and that's not any long-term maintenance, replacing tanks and things like that after 20-or-30 years. So, as a City, I think we voiced that at that working group meeting that we definitely have a concern. Our City Council approved a letter at the end of December that was sent to the MPCA, that we shared with representatives and senators in this room, really requesting that hopefully by May 31, 2025, that we have more clarity on what will that transition look like. Because for a city of our size to take on that \$2 million in maintenance, that's a huge burden; our entire Water Utility Fund right now is \$2.8 million a year. So, as we work through what that is, we have to look at about an 89% water rate increase in about a two-year time to pay for that.

Representative Dippel said this might be a stupid question, but I wonder over time, so you said 20-or-30 years, there'd be a major maintenance; has anybody looked at studies of what PFAS chemicals with that fingerprint have made their way into the water and if that took a certain amount of time? And if it all goes into the water and then is functionally filtered out over time, is there a potential that it would be remediated?

Director Burfeind replied that's a great question, Representative, so that is up to them at a State level. They have been trying to look at it, but it's a very hard thing to model; public groundwater modeling is done by the DNR and Department of Health and MPCA. Obviously, our source is the Woodbury dump site, right off of Keats Avenue. While I think that's the goal is they would capture that PFAS with the wells that 3M operates, we have monitoring wells downstream from that that are 10, 15 years downstream and closer, and we're still seeing those contaminants in the groundwater. So, while I think that could be a hope that this could change over time, I think it's far enough out that it's still a concern for us.

Director Burfeind said and just getting back to that water rate increase, that would be a huge burden on our residents to have to fund that \$2 million. Because if there's any point where there's a concern from 3M on reverting back to that Consent Order, these are real costs that we have to pay immediately; our power, watermain, all the different things, natural gas, that have to be paid, we would have to fund those. Doing some math with Brenda, our Finance Director, what that would mean for your typical single-family home, kind of standard indoor use, some exterior use, we're looking at an increase from \$124 to \$234 a year just for kind of an average home. We're not taking into account other water uses outside the home. So, it would be a major impact to our community. Really at this point it's not anything legislative we're looking for, it's more just your support, as the MPCA and the DNR are trying to work through that Consent Order and basically where this takes us. He asked if there were any questions.

Representative Johnson asked what's the lifespan of this facility?

Director Burfeind replied that's a good question. It's got different components, so the basic facility is the Tilt-up panels, all the concrete, that's more like your 50-to-100 years. These costs that I show are the annual cost plus media replacement; so, the media that actually does the work and takes the PFAS out, that gets replaced every 4-to-6 years, but you have to plan for that cost, so that's in the \$2 million. The other big milestone is some of the tanks in there, at about 20 years it's kind of a major rehab. So, you kind of have the annual costs, a major rehab every 20 years of the tanks, and then maybe like a roof and things like that, your HVAC system, but then the concrete Tilt-up panels is 50-to-100 years.

Representative Johnson asked so is that \$2 million used to prepare for that, or is that strictly outside of that? Director Burfeind replied so that is strictly the annual cost, plus the media replacement; so, that does not include what you would have to do for that kind of 20-to-30 year and then the capitalization as well, we'd have to plan for overtime.

Mayor Bailey said so, basically, not the tanks at this point, but what goes in the tanks. So, the other thing, and I know Representative Dippel was making the comment, we're actually, when both of our sites are up and running, the new ones, we're using and correct me if I'm wrong, Ryan, we're trying two different types of filters, if you will. One is cheaper than the other one, so we've been testing and working on what might eventually be less expensive than the GAC filter.

Director Burfeind said I'll just mention real quick the GAC, that's kind of a tried-and-true one that we've been using for many, many years, and that's in our initial facility. But we actually built it to convert to an Ion Exchange very easily and it takes the same media; the one near Park High School, that is Ion Exchange. We actually started operation on the first Ion Exchange PFAS Treatment Plant this last summer, so, our last two Interim Plants were Ion Exchange. Through the 3M Settlement, with those funds, we did a Pilot Study that showed Ion Exchange will work and it does work; so, we're using it on an interim scale, and then that will be the permanent treatment for that water facility. Ion Exchange has been more expensive, but it's flipped over the last few years with all the science and all the advancements; so, that's actually a lower cost.

Representative Dippel said that was going to be my next question: If this becomes more necessary all across the country, it will be mass produced, and when things are mass produced, costs go down, efficiencies are created, so is there an anticipation that it will continue to go down if you believe we hit a baseline?

Director Burfeind replied I think over time, we hope that, like you said, with mass production, and that's what we're seeing even in the last few years that Ion Exchange has been more available and it has gone down. We have a big fear, though, that that is 6,000 water utilities across the country in the next 5 years need to do this. We talk a lot with different suppliers, and they are ramping up as fast as they can, but there's a big concern they can't meet the demand. But I think we're concerned we're going to see a spike and then hopefully a reduction after that. With that, I'll turn it over to City Administrator Levitt.

Funding for Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Aid

Administrator Levitt said I'm going to talk a little bit about EMS and our EMS Service. Now, it's not my typical to start with a bar chart right off the bat, but some of you are very familiar with EMS Service and others are not. So, I'll give you a little bit of background. Before 2015, the City of Cottage Grove when we delivered our ambulance service, they covered our operations, meaning our personnel, our people, our equipment, our ambulance replacements. Now, since then, every time the ambulance rolls out the door, we actually lose money. So, you might be asking, well, why is that? Well, it's important to know because we have a Public Service Area (PSA); so, Cottage Grove also provides ambulance services to Newport, St. Paul Park, and Grey Cloud Island, and it may not seem like a big deal, but in the end, our taxpayers are actually the ones who are subsidizing the ambulance service to those communities. I'll also put a plug that the City of Cottage Grove does not get any Local Government Aid (LGA) where some of those other communities do get LGA, so we have no support for that; so, currently, our taxpayers are providing those subsidies.

I also like to point out if you're a private ambulance service, if you get taken to a hospital, you can make your money on your ambulance runs. We're municipally-owned and run an EMS service, so there is no money.

When I said the ambulance rolls out the door, it loses money, and that's because either we provide the Basic Life Support (BLS) or Advanced Life Support (ALS) services; one of the challenges we have, and I'm sure many of you are aware, is that Medicare and Medicaid are currently under a study by the Federal government, so they will not have that rate study and that reimbursement done until 2026. So, we probably won't see an increase in Medicare and Medicaid until 2027. So, right now, when we do a BLS run, we are capped at \$462, and our cost is actually \$2,210 to be able to do that; for Advanced Life Support (ALS), we're capped at \$537. So, you can see the difference between \$2,200 and our current cap. The other thing, too, is across the metro, you're seeing an aging population; so, the more Medicare and Medicaid that we bring in, the residents in our population are aging, so it's definitely causing that to be more challenging. Also, as we continue to add more senior facilities in our community, there's more Medicare and Medicaid runs. So, this is definitely becoming a challenge for us.

One of the things that City Council struggles with every year is the amount of write-offs that we have to do. I draw your attention to the bottom of the screen; yes, that's over \$4 million that we will have to write off because we are not recapturing that with private insurance, Medicare, and Medicaid. So, those shortfalls are falling on our residents. Like I said, before 2015, the ambulance service as itself could operate with its own funds to support itself; well, now it's flipped, now our taxpayers, our residents, it's in our levy, that are paying for our firefighters and our ambulances. As many of you know, there is a huge issue right now in recruiting firefighter-paramedics. We run a firefighter-paramedic and firefighter-EMT service for our ambulance service. So, recruiting and retaining those personnel are extremely difficult, and so we've obviously had to increase those different values for compensation for that.

It's also the cost of our ambulances, as our ambulance costs are continuing to skyrocket. Right now, I think we're waiting four years for an ambulance; we put our order in four years ago, and we still can't get it. So, we continue to see the challenge with labor, and we see the challenge with the cost of our ambulance, and now the equipment that we run in our ambulances are state of the art, sophisticated operational equipment to run our ALS service. Those things we've actually had to lease, we can't actually purchase, because it would impact us too much on the capital side of things.

I know, Senator Seeburger, you have worked really hard to get funding for this; unfortunately, we were cut off and did not get it as a municipal EMS service. Right now, potentially our taxpayers are subsidizing \$350,000 a year; so, our residents are subsidizing Newport, St. Paul Park, and Grey Cloud Township. Now, obviously, our runs between Woodbury, they take some of our patients and we take some of theirs, we'll call that a wash. So, right now, our ask is, is there any way that we can get \$350,000 annually to be able to cover for those other cities? Because, philosophically, we struggle with the fact that our residents are the ones who are subsidizing that for us. And we don't see this fix really happening until the Feds come up with that new Medicare and Medicaid reimbursement. So, I'll take any questions you have on that.

Representative Johnson said so, I remember this was an issue going back from when I was here on the City Council. I think one of the first conversations that I had was two things: What do you get refunded from the insurance? When they actually have insurance, do you get your actual bill covered, or do the insurance companies cap you out, too?

Administrator Levitt replied they cap, but they're closer to it, so, they're like at 85%-or-90% revenue.

Representative Johnson said so, then, when you actually go out on fires, do you get paid back from homeowner's insurance for that? So, you basically have the cost that the City is covering for when there's a fire, right?

Administrator Levitt confirmed that.

Representative Johnson asked what is the, comparison wise, what is the cost of the Fire services as opposed to EMS? And the reason I ask is because the City takes care of the Fire Department, so the argument would be why isn't the EMS also covered underneath like Fire coverage? I'm not saying it should be, I'm just asking the question. And then because they also provide Police and Fire, why is EMS singled out as something that is charged out as opposed to if there's a Fire call or a Police call, why that was ever established. The other thing, too, is then I know you are asking for this money; are the cities that are responsible for this also asking for the money? Because, ultimately, the cities themselves are the ones that are not paying the bills. So, are they also going and saying, hey, we need help because this affects our budget also?

Administrator Levitt replied in the proposed legislation, there was \$120 million identified; so, all municipalities and governments that run ambulance services are struggling because we transport to the hospital, right? So, if you have Allina, you transport to Allina Hospitals. Allina can make their money back from those hospitals, we can't, we're just a transport service. And so that's the difference why us municipalities are struggling to run EMS services.

Mayor Bailey said to maybe answer, Representative, I think we have and we are having conversations with our partnering cities. In the past, because of our service area, and I think you might know this from when you were on the Council, we weren't allowed or cannot like slice off cities; but what we can do now, with some changes that happened, is we can say okay, City X, if you're not going to help us with this, we're going to sub your service out to somebody else, maybe it's Allina, maybe it's HealthEast, or whoever. Now what that does, just to be perfectly blunt, is they're coming then maybe from Eagan for a service that's in St. Paul Park or Newport or whatever. We

have some of the best response times, so it does become a challenge and it would be a challenge for them; personally, I would feel bad that we're not providing the service, but we also, the fact of the matter is our citizens are picking up the cost on this to support these other cities. Normally, we've done other things with other cities, which we do with St. Paul Park and Newport, when we as a City, as big as we are, can buy it; you were commenting earlier as more stuff is being made, if we're doing salt or sealant or whatever for the roads, we buy it and then we buy it also for St. Paul Park and Newport, and then they pay us for whatever that new rate is, if you will. So, I mention that to you because there is an option out there that we could just say, St. Paul Park, Newport, or whatever, we're not going to service your community anymore because you're not covering those costs. We've had a conversation so far with Newport, it went fairly well; we started the discussion, if you will, we have not yet had our conversation with St. Paul Park. Newport sounded pretty positive in the sense that they're willing to do something with us because they understand, and I mean, we're showing them the numbers, we have nothing to hide. The numbers are the numbers, we can show exactly what each city is negative for us that's causing our citizens to pay. Obviously, if the general public, in my opinion, were to understand that they're subsidizing these other cities, I think there's going to be a major citizen uproar, like why are we doing that? So, what we're trying to do behind the scenes is get the issue resolved. I know at the State level you guys are trying to do it, too, because this is an issue, it's not just a Cottage Grove issue. We're just trying to figure out the best way to continue to operate our service here in Cottage Grove and not hand it off to somebody else that we don't necessarily believe would have the best service for our citizens for life-saving care.

Council Member Thiede said well, there would probably be a greater delay in getting to the patient.

Mayor Bailey said absolutely, yes.

Council Member Olsen said well, Senator Klein deals with this with South Metro, I mean, you know how that whole situation works, and those sorts of configurations exist all across the metro and the State. That funding that you were able to push through, Senator Seeburger, I mean it was a godsend for those departments that received it. I mean, they were on life support, thinking they needed that or they were going to go away. Our fear is that if this continues to become an even greater burden over time, we're going to have to make some very tough decisions that could potentially impact response times and frankly, survival rates of residents who currently are served by our ambulance service.

Representative Dippel asked what specifically did Newport say? Yes, we'll give you the?

Mayor Bailey replied well, not necessarily; they're looking at it because what they want to do is they want to now, we just met with the mayor and the administrator, and they've asked us to come back to a workshop with their entire Council to share the data and the information and what are the "ramifications."

Representative Dippel asked do they have any extra cash right now to?

Administrator Levitt replied their budget is already set.

Mayor Bailey said yeah, the budgets are set.

Council Member Olsen said what's encouraging, though, is they're at least willing to have the conversation because that has not always been the case.

Senator Seeburger said and very few cities and townships are willing to have that conversation, Statewide. So, this is a common problem throughout the State, particularly in greater Minnesota where the geography is bigger, the ambulance services are smaller, and you're asking teeny-tiny, itty-bitty towns to assume the cost of providing ambulance service for hundreds, if not thousands, of square miles of territory. So, it's an issue throughout the State. We are looking at it, we are working on it, part of what we did with the EMS bill that passed last session was to start addressing some of those issues and grant some flexibility with regard to the PSAs. There was huge pushback on that; in fact, I had some fallout in my job over it because Allina is so worried about that change, but it was something that needed to happen.

Council Member Olsen said I was going to say it needed to happen.

Senator Seeburger said one thing we are talking about, Representative Huot and I are talking about, because we can't do anything with the Medicare rates, we're making systemic changes with regard to creating an essential services vs. a pay-for-service, a fee-for-service model. I have a vision that that will happen, but that's going to take a while. One thing we're looking at and one thing we're kicking around is reimbursement for no transports, and so I think that would make a tremendous difference.

Council Member Olsen said that would be huge.

Senator Seeburger said I think what people don't realize is if you don't transport the patient, you don't get paid; and a lot of the calls that are for EMS are to, they're not transport calls. So, you still have to send out your crew, you're paying for readiness, and you still have to set up your crew and drive your ambulance and visit the patient, pick them up off the floor, put them in their chair, whatever it is; if you don't transport them, you don't get paid, that's free work, it's volunteer work for the community. So, we're thinking of can we create some sort of fund, as we're building out this new system, so that you can get paid for non-transport, and I think that would create quite a bit of relief in the short term. So, tell me what works, that's what we're working on, that's what we're thinking of.

Council Member Olsen said that's encouraging.

Senator Seeburger said yes, and to answer Wayne's question, why do we treat EMS differently from Police and Fire? It's because it's not an essential service. So, there is no State mechanism for funding it, it was based on a fee-for-service model, which we're seeing doesn't work. The idea is, long-range vision is to make EMS an essential service, just like Police and Fire, but then we need a funding stream, a revenue stream, and what would that be, what would it cost, what would be tolerable, right? Because this would be taxed. So, those are the really difficult questions that we have to finagle and finesse in order to fix this system because it needs to be fixed, it doesn't work the way it is. But we also can't do it overnight, so incremental changes, fixing what we can; the long-range vision of trying to retool how we provide prehospital care, so it's a big job.

Representative Johnson said thank you for the explanation on why that was excluded.

Paid Family Leave

Administrator Levitt said the other thing that we think maybe of retooling is regarding this Paid Family Leave. One of the challenges that we have is the City of Cottage Grove as an employer has been providing the Family Leave. Unfortunately, the way the legislation is written, it's going to cost us anywhere between \$105,000 to almost \$143,000 annually. So, for us, we look at providing this, this is only the 50% option, this is only the employer part, we're not including the employees; if we were to include the employees, that amount would double for that. So, we're paying for 250 employees and only about 4, on average, will use it now, so, this is increasing our costs.

What's difficult is right now our employees can get their paycheck as normal, they can get their insurance as normal; and now this means that in 2026, all of a sudden they have to file, kind of like unemployment, they'll have to get a check from the State, they'll have to write a check to the City for their insurance premiums. So, it's actually going to cost the City as a whole more, and it will cost the employees more.

So, in our 2026 budget, this is equivalent to about three police officers, that unfunded mandate for us. So, we've been providing better Family Leave than what is being proposed. I know Representative Johnson and I were talking in line at the food tonight, and it's challenging. We're hoping that there could be an exemption or a carveout for local units of government because this is very challenging, and it now provides up to 20 weeks of leave under the law, instead of the FMLA of 12; so, for us, to cover that amount of overtime when we run a lean ship as it is, these things can be extremely challenging to us, but the financial implication is really significant.

Senator Seeburger said Jennifer, that's like a percent of your levy; Administrator Levitt stated that's correct, and that's only the employer-required portion of 50%; our four union contracts have the other 50% being borne by our employees. So, you would actually double that if you wanted us to pay for it.

Senator Seeburger said that's something that could be collectively bargained on their end.

Administrator Levitt said which we just got done with.

Senator Seeburger said so, I'm just saying from their argument, they would be able to collectively bargain something else.

Administrator Levitt replied my suspicion is that you are going to see a lot of those unions coming to the Capitol to say this is a heavy burden on our employees to be able to pay for this and this is not sustainable; and a lot of us are providing paid benefits that are greater than this, already, and this cost is significant. So, I mean, like I said, it's costing us some police officers to be able to do this.

Representative Johnson said Commissioner, last night we found out that the South Washington School District is planning on a million dollar hit, and that their teachers are collectively bargaining and have already notified them

that we have no interest in having anything taken out of our paycheck to cover this. So, they are already planning on that, too, so that's going to be something that's going to hit the ground with taxes and stuff like that.

But the question I have for you (addressing Administrator Levitt) is how did you come up with only, how did you figure that only four people would be using it?

Administrator Levitt replied so, typically, we have about four people that take FMLA, so, about four people have taken Family Medical Leave with us. Usually they will take, most of them right now are cops, I think it's something in the water that we haven't seen.

Senator Seeburger said I was texting while you were talking because another senator and I have had these conversations, and I think there's room for improvement. Certainly, a significant group of us are willing to see what we can do.

Administrator Levitt said we appreciate anything that will work because this will go into effect in 2026, so we would have to start budgeting for that when we start our new budget.

Administrator Levitt said so those are our top four big items.

Administration

There are a few other items we just want to speak about quickly:

- Newspaper Notification Requirements for publication: Can we use electronic media instead of having to have a local paper?
- State Licensure of Massage Therapists: As a City, we license them and do a lot of detailed backgrounding, and I will tell you in that, we find a lot that are really in the sex trafficking world. So, we feel that this is a huge issue that really needs to get the attention at the State level for a larger licensure system because it's definitely a challenge and a problem.

Representative Johnson asked so, you want what's happening in Cottage Grove to be expanded throughout the State?

Administrator Levitt replied a State licensure for Massage Therapists, no different than a chiropractor or whatever.

Administrator Levitt said I'm going to turn it over to our Parks and Rec Director, Zac Dockter, to talk about a few quick items.

Parks and Recreation

Director Dockter said for Parks and Recreation, I have two projects that I want to highlight, that I would like to keep attention on:

1) Highway 61: Highway 61 is obviously a historical highway, lots of tourism, and lots going on in Cottage Grove. It obviously runs into St. Paul with the bluffs and many things, all the way down to La Crescent, so we want to have recreational opportunities along Highway 61. We have a great opportunity for a recreational connection from Ravine Regional Park, the County Regional Park, down to the Washington County Point Douglas Regional Park, which is on the banks of the Mississippi and St. Croix Rivers. So, this would be actively engaging both County and State staff to look for a regional trail opportunity here; so far, I've had positive response from both County, City, and the State. Ultimately, I want folks to know also that this connects from Lake Elmo Regional Park all the way through Cottage Grove, along County Road 19, and then down Highway 61. So, one picture is all the way from the conjunction of the St. Croix and Mississippi River all the way up to St. Paul, so there's quite an opportunity there.

Council Member Olsen asked Director Dockter who are you working with at the County on that? Director Dockter replied Alex McKinney, and then from the State, MnDOT, and they've talked about regional designations, and we've made a little bit of headway.

2) Mississippi Dunes Park: Director Dockter said Cottage Grove has been aggressively pursuing 3M Priority 2 Settlement dollars for Mississippi Dunes Park. The goal of the Priority 2 Settlement dollars is to restore and enhance aquatic resources, wildlife habitat, fishing, and outdoor recreation opportunities to the East Metro and

then downstream of the Mississippi River and the St. Croix River. I think this Park Plan that we've proposed along the Mississippi River, at the former Mississippi Dunes Golf Course, which we already have ownership of, is a perfect opportunity to add recreation and enhance and protect natural resources down there as well. I can't think of a better fit for those dollars. So, when we come up, when we pursue that, we're just looking for support.

Representative Dippel said that's a brand-new question because I happen to live really close to that, I recognize the trees hanging over the water; when you take a boat and go south, towards Hastings, there's area that's, this is actually really easy, you can get through there with just about any boat if you have a boat launch there. But then when you get just a little bit past River Acres, there is this area where it's about a foot deep, or a foot and a half, and nothing can get through there except a pontoon boat that's trimmed way up. Have you guys talked to the Army Corps at all about dredging or making sure that boats can get through there?

Director Dockter replied, yes, Representative Dippel, that's a good question. So, we've done a little bit of hydrology reporting to find the depth and things like that, but I'll be honest with you, I've not gotten past River Acres. I guess I had some questions about that.

Representative Dippel said that's the one spot right here where it's shallow. Director Dockter said I thought it got deeper, and Representative Dippel replied no, it doesn't. It's weird because in between the buoys, it's deep because they're always dredging, but then there's this weird embankment where the rock island is. Director Dockter said yep, I know exactly where that is. Representative Dippel said yeah, right there, and I haven't been able to find a spot that's easy to get through there. So, if you have a regular V-hull, just a cruiser or something, you'd draft too much and you'd get hung up on that.

Director Dockter said and I will say that we always intended to engage with the Army Corps of Engineers because they're doing lots of dredging on Pool 2, building that recreational island.

Representative Dippel said you just ask them, because right over here, as you're coming by.

Director Dockter said you're right, because there is that nice channel through here, and again, it's going to be a launch, and whether its used for pontoons or duck hunting or small boats or whatever it is, but we also want to focus on the paddling opportunity, too. It's an unbelievable place to have here.

Director Dockter asked if there were any questions on those two projects; none were asked. He said I'll turn it over to Community Development Director Emily Schmitz.

Community Development

Director Schmitz said so, it's no surprise that Cottage Grove clearly has grown the last handful of years. We took an opportunity this year to complete a Housing and Market Study for the entirety of the community. As Ryan has indicated, we're seeing the growth on the south side of 100th, and we're starting to talk about the east side of Keats Avenue. So, what that Market Study is telling us is that our market area can support a variety of housing opportunities. It's also telling us that our population is growing more in the 65-to-75-year-old range, we talked about that, so, how are we planning now and into the future to support the growth of that population, as well as having affordable opportunities in the market? We continue to obviously ask for support into those funding opportunities. Here at Cottage Grove we don't always receive the best affordable housing opportunities, so we certainly are taking advantage of Valhalla dollars that were approved a couple years ago; receiving that small amount and using that so we can provide support to those projects that we know are needed in our community.

Finally, making sure that we think about keeping the zoning a local decision. Each community is unique and different, we all have different needs. It's no surprise that the housing challenge is real, and it's everywhere across the State, but I think it's important to remember that each community evaluates their community and zones it and we make sure that we are provided those opportunities to guide it as well. Unless there are any questions, I'm moving quickly because of the time.

Senator Seeburger said I just want to let you know I will never vote for the Missing Middle Bill. Mayor Bailey said thank you. Senator Seeburger said It's going to be introduced again, it's the same author. I'm a hard no; Senator Klein said I'll join you on that.

Council Member Olsen and Mayor Bailey both said thank you, and Senator Seeburger said so, you've got two nos right here on that Bill.

Mayor Bailey said what Minneapolis wants does not resonate into the local suburbs, so it does not need to happen. We're doing it on our own. Council Member Olsen said it sounds like you're going to be back; Senator Seeburger replied yes.

Director Schmitz said I'll turn it over to Economic Development Director Gretchen Larson.

Economic Development

Director Larson said I'll be brief because I know we need to move along.

Tax Increment Financing Flexibility: With our economic development, we like to encourage the flexibility of using Tax Increment Financing, or TIF, to do other community projects, such as transit-oriented development. As the mayor said, the more tools in the toolkit the better, when it comes to economic development.

Business Expansion: We'd like your continued support of MIF and JCF, which is the Minnesota Investment Fund and the Job Creation Fund. We've used that over the past 10 years to create thousands of jobs and a large capital investment in between; so, it's good for the cities and it's good for the region.

Workforce Readiness: As you all know, a trained workforce is critically important to the State's economy, and so we'd like to see any type of investment that would remove barriers to education, would help address racial and applicational disparities, and continue the City's authority to acquire anyone asking for assistance to have workforce requirements in their ask.

Childcare Programs: Last, but not least, investment in affordable childcare. Right now, the expense of putting a child through regular daycare is about \$16,000 a year in 2024; so, that's the fourth highest in the nation. The national average says that a family should pay about 7% of their income in childcare, and that's about 20% in Minnesota. So, anything that you and the other experts in childcare could do to help us with that would be terrific.

Representative Johnson said with the child fund, the previous thing, I talked to a daycare provider today, and she is very concerned with her centers and what's going to happen with those paid medical families. And it will have an opportunity to shut down centers that, which we all know there's a healthcare, there's a childcare crisis. But they have to have a certain amount of people per kid, and I think she was at Primrose, and she was very concerned that all of a sudden with the new State mandate that they're not going to be able to keep up with enough staff as a result of this. So, that's another issue, and the reason I'm bringing it up is because of here, which is going to increase the cost of childcare and not having people.

Senator Klein said I've also spoken with multiple childcare providers, and many of them have said that they may just exit the profession entirely because the laws that were just passed have made it too difficult for them to comply, and a lot of them are just moms who are trying to make ends meet and take care of kids.

Director Larson said yes, the City Administrator and I have been talking about that as well, it varies. And with that, I'll turn it over to Brenda, our Finance Director.

Council Member Olsen asked before you do, I have a quick question on one of your bullet points. It talks about an educated workforce and trying to remove barriers for folks. I'm curious if the two senators might be able to enlighten me: Has there been any conversation at all about the proliferation of special needs people, who are now moving into the workforce, and ways in which we can support them being able to hold a job and get to and from work, and be part of sort of a "traditional workforce" or work environment? It seems like the opportunities that even were there when I was young for special needs folks to work, whether it was in a restaurant environment or something like that, those seem to be few and far between. And some of it has to do, frankly, with insurance costs and exposure and all kinds of things. Do you guys talk about that at all? I'm just curious if that's come up.

Senator Klein replied neither of us serve on Human Services.

Senator Seeburger replied yeah, that's more of a Senator Hoffman issue, but I can tell you I personally had those conversations with Senator Hoffman because I do have a special needs son.

Council Member Olsen said as do I, which is why I'm asking.

Senator Seeburger said, so, it's on my radar. I know from personal experience that there are various private entities and programs that assist with young adult transition, but I also know that the waiver process is complicated and it takes a really long time.

Council Member Olsen said extremely.

Senator Seeburger said and I think there are also some issues with guardianship that I think we can work on fixing as well, but I'd be interested in talking more about that and figuring out ways that we can support.

Council Member Olsen said I hear because of the circle that we run in, we have lots of friends and neighbors that we know, who have special needs family members; I hear a lot of frustration around, you know, I'm having a really hard time finding a job for so and so or such and such, or finding a job coach, or any of those things.

Senator Seeburger said let's talk more about that; give me a call. Council Member Olsen said yes, that would be good.

Finance

Brenda Malinowski, Finance Director, spoke on the following topics:

Office of the State Auditor (OSA) Levy Limits: Director Malinowski said I'm going to start with talking about levy limits, the yes and no levy limits. Emily said it very well, when we have levy limits, each community is different in how they make use of their State-imposed levy limits. We're just not all the same, some of us are developing and some of us are fully developed, so we ask for consideration on that, to continue the levy limits.

Regarding the State Auditors, in our reporting process, we are mandated on doing some reporting, also to our community, and we appreciate that and we do that. But in our budget, we are able to put in our City newsletter, and that gets to all of our community, but when we publish our year-end Financial Report, we have to do that in our official newspaper; last year, we paid about \$900 to do that, and so we're asking that we could have that same consideration for some of those publications where we could do it in our newsletter, as we mail that out to our community and its on our City website.

Sales Tax on Local Government Purchases: On sales tax on local government purchases, we're exempt from a lot of things, and one thing that we are not exempt from sales tax right now is motor vehicle sales tax. We are for our Police and Fire vehicles, we aren't for the rest of our equipment, and so we're asking for an exemption on that. Our equipment has gotten very expensive recently, we have a one-axle plow truck that we're ordering this year, and it's \$315,000; if we had an exemption, it would be another \$22,000 that we could concentrate on other equipment or lowering taxes in the City. And then a simplified process for exemption of sales tax on construction materials, in support of our construction projects; right now, we would have to bid each of those parts out separately on our big construction projects, and in so many cities, including Cottage Grove, that's a lot of work behind the scene to make that happen. So, we do not go for that exemption, and even if there could be a refund at the end of a project for that sales tax that was included in that construction, that would help our local residents in order to keep our taxes down.

Lastly, regarding TIF and when our Districts are decertified, we have some consideration that if there's going to be an audit of the TIF District after decertification, that it would occur within one year. Right now, there is not a limit on that, and so, in theory, it could be 5-to-10 years down the road when an audit process would start, and then we probably would have staff turnover. It's going to take a lot of staff time and dollars to go back and understand what happened in that decertified District several years ago.

Representative Johnson said, real quick, back to the simplified process of exempting sales tax, you said it's an issue when you're bidding? But don't they pay sales tax on where it's delivered? So, if it comes to Cottage Grove, there'd be one rate, wouldn't it?

Director Malinowski replied correct, but if we go down to Menards right now, and the City makes a purchase, we're exempt from sales tax. If we make it part of a bid package, we have to have each contractor have an Exemption Certificate that they pay to all their vendors that they use and include all of the costs. It's a long process, and so a lot of cities do not do that; we just have the one State package.

Representative Johnson said okay, thank you.

Director Malinowski said and I'll turn it over to Pete.

Public Safety

Pete Koerner, Public Safety Director, said I'll keep this really quick. In this pamphlet we gave you, I have about 12-or-13 of our priorities in Public Safety. I can tell you at the Capitol, locally, too, that Public Safety does feel the love, you guys have been wonderful to us. So, without reading all of this, I just kind of want to mention:

Officer Wellness: You've done a lot with Officer Wellness, and it's kind of expanding out to the Fire Services, too. A lot of the Fire and Police officers, they get damaged in their careers, but that doesn't mean the career needs to be over. So, if you'd continue to support those efforts, we really appreciate that because there are treatments, and we were seeing a lot of our staff leave, but we want to keep them; they're still really good employees.

Recruitment and Retention Needs: This is a huge issue with Public Safety, Police, Fire, and EMS; we're still doing okay with it here, but I know there are a lot of programs out there. So, when you hear these, please continue to support those.

Copper Wire Theft Prevention: I know that just went into effect last week, but it's like the catalytic converter stuff, that law worked. We saw a significant reduction, and I know some of these trade groups out there are now suing the Department of Commerce, so continue to support this. We had some significant losses here in Cottage Grove with the copper wire, and our officers actually caught people, so that was good.

With that, I'm always open if there are any Public Safety things, and I know over the years, you have contacted us, we have a good relationship. We work a lot with our Sheriffs Association, Chiefs Association, and State Fire Marshals. So, the things you've seen here that we're supporting is pretty much metro and Statewide.

Mayor Bailey said again, thank you all for coming. There were some other bullet points, but of course we're getting to the time where we're going to have to go in and do a Council Meeting. As you look through anything in the information we're providing for you, if something rings a bell or you want some further clarification, you just heard from Pete, all of our staff is open and willing to have conversations with you, or myself to go testify or whatever you need from an information standpoint. We would appreciate it and your support, and I know you get to have some fun up at the Capitol this year, but understand, as you all know, that everything we do, everything you do is for the betterment of the community and the State. So, all of our residents that you represent, we represent; think about them when things get hot up there with which direction you want to go, and understand that some of these that we've talked about have tails, depending on funding sources and things like that. We just would hope for any support that you give us, specifically on our legislative priorities, but if there are any other items you need from us, let us know.

Administrator Levitt stated our only other request is for a group picture if we get that done.

Representative Johnson said mayor, I'd like to just thank you for having a lobbyist that's down there, working on your behalf; it makes it easier if we're not the first person to come out and talk to people about it. It was very awesome and forward thinking to do that.

Mayor Bailey said well, I agree, and it's helped.

A group photo was taken of all present.

4. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:14 p.m.

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