



# City of Yamhill

A small taste of Oregon

**AGENDA**  
**CITY OF YAMHILL, TOWN HALL MEETING**  
**Wednesday, March 24, 2021**  
**MINUTES**

**TONIGHT'S MEETING WAS A TELECONFERENCE**

The meeting started at 6:01pm. Mayor Potter explained everyone would be limited to 3 minutes in order to give everyone a chance to speak and for everyone to either raise a hand in their camera or in zoom if they wanted to speak. Background on the Police Department, certificates and training for the Police Department, memberships and team participation for the Police Department, and finances was given by Chief Graven. Chief Graven invited anyone that had questions or comments in regard to the Police Department to email or to send him a letter in addition to the Town Hall meeting being provided at this time. Community discussion addressing questions and concerns about a proposed Police Service Fee were as follows:

Rocky Losli asked about the 3-minute limit and that if the Police Service Fee went into effect what would the \$30,720 per year go toward in the police budget. Chief Graven was unsure where he had derived the \$30,720 number from, the number that he had for the first year was \$25,260. Chief Graven stated that in the budget there would be a line item for the Police Service Fee and equipment and other items purchased with this money would be itemized there. Rocky Losli wanted to know specifically what the Police Service Fee revenue would be used for. Chief Graven said there were several areas that had a shortage that this funding would be applied to: training, equipment, vehicle maintenance, grant writing, leadership and assistant positions, and salaries for officers Miller and Van Cleave. Rocky Losli would like more detail in the future.

Patty Pairan was concerned about the Adjustment of Police Service Fee in Section 5 in the draft ordinance. Patty Pairan gave the example of Bend whose Police Service Fee went from \$5 to \$30 a month in a short amount of time. She was concerned that the City of Yamhill's Police Service Fee might jump to \$50 a month, which is something she couldn't afford. Chief Graven explained that this adjustment is not decided by him, City Council would be deciding on the adjustment. Mayor Potter asked if it was the word automatically that was worrying Patty Pairan and stated that this was a draft ordinance and could be changed. Patty Pairan was still concerned that there would be increases without her knowing what percentage the increases would be made. Walt Gowell, the City's Attorney, stated that the increases will be made based on the CPI-U West C index which has stayed at 2% for the last 10 years and would be approximately a \$.10 increase.

Sherry Wilson stated that with the new houses coming in this year, that the amount of revenue generated by the Police Service Fee would increase by \$3,000 and that the amount would be closer to what Rocky Losli had mentioned. Sherry Wilson asked who

would vote on the Police Service Fee. Mayor Potter stated that City Council would vote on it at the April City Council meeting. Sherry Wilson asked if this could be put to a public vote. Mayor Potter said she didn't know but felt that this didn't need to be put through that type of legislative action and could be handled by the community. Mayor Potter recommended that Sherry Wilson take the survey that will be posted on the City's website. Sherry Wilson felt that not enough people were aware of the Police Service Fee and offered to take flyers door to door to let everyone know about the Police Service Fee. Clerk Bregante-Candau stated that tonight's Town Hall meeting was in the News Register, was posted on the City's website, City Hall, and the Post Office. Sherry Wilson considers the News Register as the News Resistor and doesn't receive the paper and asked how many emails the City had and suggested that the City send everyone an email to notify them of the meeting. Sherry Wilson didn't realize the broad spectrum of the needs that the Police Department has and asked more questions about the number of meetings the City had, had for the Police Service Fee. Mayor Potter asked her to restate her question. Sherry Wilson asked if the 3,000 training hours, that Chief Graven had, was over the 24 years he had been at the Yamhill Police Department. Chief Graven replied that it was over 30 years, 24 of those years with the Yamhill Police Department. Sherry Wilson was concerned about the Police Service Fee being added to her water bill, the annual increase of the fee, and the amount of people attending the Town Hall meetings.

Mayor Potter stated that this fee would be used to buffer the several gaps in the Police Department's budget. These gaps are putting the Police Department at risk and the cost of running the Police Department is increasing with all the necessary items for the Police Department to be safe and protect the community of the City of Yamhill. If these gaps aren't buffered the City is at a risk of losing their Police Department and having to contract out with Yamhill County which increases response times and reduces the amount of service that the City currently has. Mayor Potter greatly appreciates our Police Department and would hate to lose them.

Rocky Losli appreciated all the comments and information presented in the meeting. Rocky Losli asked what the enforcement mechanism was for the collection of the Police Service Fee. Chief Graven believed that there wasn't any accountability for the payment of the Police Service Fee. Rocky Losli asked if there were any other methodologies for collecting the revenue needed. Chief Graven stated that the City is looking into applying for grants as soon as they open to provide additional revenue for the Police Department. Rocky Losli asked if a levy had been considered. Chief Graven stated that they had considered doing a levy the past 4 to 5 years and this is the route he choose to go because there were other levies and bonds being presented to the voters and it would have been challenging to do all of them at once. Chief Graven and the City Council discussed the water rate increases and the budget concerns since 2013 and this is the route they decided to go. Rocky Losli suggested a comprehensive plan rather than a piece meal for each category that needed funding and that there needed to be more time for discussion and research of this topic.

Chris Livingston stated that Chief Graven and the other officers at the Police Department work very hard, they put their hearts and souls into this town and get compensated very little for what they do. Chris Livingston also stated that the Police Department works very hard to stay within their budget and will do without or use very

old equipment, if necessary. Chris Livingston stated that there are not a lot of options for funding and the Police Department needs the community's support for the Police Service Fee. Mayor Potter asked Chris Livingston if while he was working for the Police Department if he gets paid, to which Chris Livingston responded that he doesn't. Mayor Potter thanked him for his service. Chris Livingston responded that he gladly does it because loves the community and loves being out there.

Alisha Overstreet asked if over the years with the growth of the City if the Police Department was receiving more money. Chief Graven stated that there were minimal increases for cost of living, but that the budget for this current fiscal year was \$100,000 less than last fiscal year. Jay Disbrow interjected that the Police Department received \$110,000 from a grant the year prior to use for radios, that's why their budget was approximately \$100,000 less this year. Alisha Overstreet asked what the implications would be if the Police Service Fee wasn't put into effect. Chief Graven responded that the Police Department would continue to seek funding through grants which was very limited due to the competitiveness of the grants or the City would be checking into contracting with Yamhill Co. for police services. Alisha Overstreet asked if a bond would better serve the Police Department than the Police Service Fee. Chief Graven replied that it most likely would but he the years he was going to do the bond the school was doing a bond and then the fire department and he didn't want to interfere with their bonds. Alisha Overstreet stated that she didn't feel the Police Department should be tasked with having to figure out where their next meal comes from essentially, she felt that this was the City Council's job to figure out how to fund the Police Department so that they can do their jobs, and was appalled at the amount of out of pocket expenses the Police Department made with the small amount of pay they were receiving in comparison to the other police officers in Oregon. Alisha Overstreet also believed that having a Yamhill Police Department was essential to keeping the community safe and that the relationship that the Police Department has with the community prevents crime. Alisha Overstreet also felt that the conversations in regard to the Police Department's budget should be had with the City Council and not the Police Department.

Carol Prendergast was concerned as a senior living in this community on a fixed income that they would no longer be able to afford to live in this community, she felt that she and other seniors should be valued as the new families coming in and the Police Department. Carol Prendergast was also concerned that not enough people knew about the Police Service Fee and felt strongly that every resident should be informed and that this decision should be made by a vote of the people. Carol Prendergast felt that even though this was put in the paper and on the website that many people still didn't know about it.

Jay Disbrow felt it was presumptuous to vote on the Police Service Fee in April without, what he felt was, a valid dated ordinance to present to talk about this issue. Jay Disbrow also felt that this should not be done with one vote due to the issue being so contentious. Jay Disbrow pointed out budget numbers, the total for the general fund in 2020 – 2021 was \$796,312 with \$441,300 of that going to the Police Department for 55% of the general fund. The Police Department's budget in 17-18 was \$336,642, in 18-19 it was \$365,931 for an 8% increase, 19-20 \$424,050 for a 14% increase (this is without the \$110,000 grant money for radios), and 20-21 \$441,300 for a 4% increase. Jay Disbrow stated that every dollar taken out of the general fund was a dollar that

could be going to other services. Jay Disbrow supports the Police Service Fee if the Police Department's budget is frozen at \$441,300 because he feels people are paying twice if they are paying the Police Service Fee and the Police Department's budget is increased each year.

Alisha Overstreet appreciated the information that Jay Disbrow's presented and felt that this idea should be presented to the City Council. Alisha Overstreet stated that she wanted to let everyone know that she was on a fixed income, as well, her husband is a veteran. Alisha Overstreet strongly believes that the City Council should be handling the funding of the Police Department, not the officers.

Chief Graven, at the Mayor's inquiry, stated that on average across the state of Oregon, 68% of the general fund goes to the Police Department and that the Yamhill Police Department was below that. Chief Graven also stated that there was someone in the community that reached out to the Yamhill County Sheriff's office for salary figures and the County wasn't able to get a hold of them so he was going to inform everyone in this meeting: for this coming fiscal year salary for the County Sheriff with rollups (incentives) is \$230,532, for a Captain \$225,020 with rollups, a Deputy with 7 to 10 years of service \$159,463 with rollups without overtime. Chief Graven continued to say that if the Yamhill Police Department was removed and the City contracted with the County, the officers would become employees of the County (if they chose to accept) and would receive somewhere in the range of the salaries above depending upon training and skills. In light of that information, Chief Graven stated that neither himself or the other officers want the Yamhill Police Department to go away, they want to continue to have the Yamhill Police Department and work for the City. Chief Graven also had facts and figures for cities that were comparable to Yamhill that had contracted with the County for police services and several of these cities had implemented Police Service Fees, received only 4,000 hours of policing with two deputies from the County whereas the City receives 7,000 to 8,000 hours of policing per month from their current Police Department of one Chief, 2 officers, and two reserve officers.

Mayor Potter stated we only had enough time for Kristen Regalado and Donna Dempsey to speak and encouraged the Manson's, Robert Davis, and Patty Pairan to come to the City Council meeting in April and/or submit their comments or questions in writing to the City Council.

Kristen Regalado stated she has lived in the City of Yamhill her whole life and now lives here with her family, as someone with children she appreciates the rapport that the Police Department has with the community and feels it is important for her children. Kristen Regalado also stated that there is no connection with the water bill and the Police Service Fee, the City could send them out on two separate pieces of paper because one doesn't influence another. Kristen Regalado feels that the money has to come from somewhere to support the Police Department or the County Sheriff's whether it be from a monthly service fee to property taxes through a bond or levy, she would prefer to pay the \$60 a year which she feels is a minimal expense to keep the response time to calls low and current police officers at the City. Kristen Regalado understands that the additional fee has to budgeted for, she has a young family, but feels that it is a small fee in comparison to what it could be if a bond or levy was passed or if the City contracted with the County for policing services. Kristen Regalado also feels that it is an investment in the community. Mayor Potter added that if the City

contracts with the County for police services they will have to pay \$400,000 per year in addition the County Commissioners would also implement a Police Service Fee. Donna Dempsey stated she was willing to pay the extra \$5 a month for the police and their special skills and suggested setting up a fund for those that were on a fixed income to help support them. Donna Dempsey asked if the City still had a grant writer and Mayor Potter replied that Administrative Clerk, Sharon Bregante-Candau, was working very hard at acquiring as many grants as she could for the City. Donna Dempsey asked if the Police Service Fee would be reduced or removed if grants were received for the Police Department. Mayor Potter replied that she imagined not, and that time will tell if there will be any increases if this is implemented. Mayor Potter stated that there wasn't a plan to increase the Police Service Fee at this time and Council would just be grateful to have the Police Service Fee and have additional funding for the Police Department. Donna Dempsey stated how much she appreciated the Police Department and felt they deserved the Police Service Fee. Mayor Potter thanked Donna Dempsey and said that the Yamhill Police Department could leave their positions now and make 50% more at another police agency but they choose to stay, and she is grateful for that. Chief Graven thanked everyone who participated and said at the Mayor's request he had created an anonymous survey for the Police Department Fee because he was interested in the community's input. Chief Graven also stated that if anyone had any questions or concerns, they could email him or call into City Hall, and he would be happy to talk to them personally. City Clerk Kim Steele clarified about the \$110,000 from the timber money that was brought up at the Town Hall, that this was for the police radios and was very necessary or they couldn't communicate with the emergency personnel they needed to. Also, City Clerk Kim Steele clarified that a large portion of that timber money was spent on a light project that didn't produce the desired results of the project and was never fixed to. In addition to that, City Clerk Kim Steele stated that a vote of the community is very expensive in a non-election year. City Clerk Kim Steele didn't understand why the increases in the Police Department's budget was singled out in the Town Hall meeting when every single department's budget has annual increases, at the very least, cost of living. City Clerk Kim Steele would gladly pay her Police Service Fee, she appreciates the Yamhill Police Department very much. Mayor Potter stated that the Police Service Fee survey would be on the City's website, the Yamhill Community Facebook page, and a hard copy could be picked up at City Hall.

Not able to speak after 7pm: the Mansons, Robert Davis, and Patty Pairan.

There were 27 participants on the zoom teleconference.  
Town Hall ended at 7:28pm.

Respectfully submitted,

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Yvette Potter  
Mayor, City of Yamhill

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ATTEST: Sharon Bregante-Candau  
Administrative Clerk