

WKNA General Meeting

Sept. 14, 2023 7 p.m.

At Keizer Civic Center

Submitted by Carolyn Homan, WKNA Secretary

About 21 people in attendance, including Guest Speakers Oregon Rep. Kevin Mannix and Keizer Police Chief John Teague

Call to Order: WKNA President Rhonda Rich called the meeting order at 7:05p.m. Introductions were made around the room.

Minutes of previous meetings – Rhonda asked for a motion to approve minutes of the May 13 meeting. Barbara Daniels moved approval; Art Mauer seconded. Motion carried.

Budget Report -- Rhonda said WKNA has spent \$188.96 of the city-approved \$1,200 budget: \$103 for 200 copies of the latest WKNA newsletter for distribution at Keizerfest, Back to School night at Cummings Elementary, our flyer boxes and fall meetings; \$61.99 for printer ink; \$23.97 for lanyards, leaving a balance of \$1,011.04. Board members have purchased T-shirts with the WKNA logo to wear at events like Keizerfest.

Vice President position: Rhonda thanked Kris Adams for her Board service (she was not able to attend the meeting) and welcomed Carol Doerfler back to the Board as the new Board Vice President.

Guest Speakers

Rep. Kevin Mannix – Rep. Mannix began his latest term as an Oregon state representative in January this year and reported on the legislative session that ended June 25. He previously served in the Legislature as a representative for Salem, leaving in 2001 to run for Governor. Due to redistricting, he now represents Keizer as well as a portion of Salem.

Despite a walk-out by some senators, the House kept busy this past session and as a result, the session achieved several major initiatives, he said. Perhaps most important was more funding for schools.

There was work toward dealing with the homeless crisis, including partially addressing mental health, drug and alcohol addiction and rehabilitation issues. In the upcoming short session, legislators will need to address a true process of rehabilitation, he said. The session did not address decriminalization of street drugs and there has to be an opportunity for police to intervene, as well as a focus on rehabilitation. He will push for more accountability but also the facilities needed to handle increased law enforcement intervention. Some rural areas lack sufficient jail space to process drug use enforcement activity.

Transportation is a major focus for Rep. Mannix. He serves on the Transportation Committee, which is looking into bridge construction. The governor has said there are to be no road tolls, so a new committee, of which he is vice chair, will look at ways to fund road construction.

He also would like better support for Oregon's short line railroads, which move a lot of goods. Another big issue is getting a commuter train service from Salem to Wilsonville to hook into the Portland area service.

Another of his priorities is a third bridge across the Willamette. This connects with the issue of

improvements to the Brooklake Road intersection with I-5. There is a need there for short-term improvements and this is the area where efforts toward a third bridge are now focused since Salem has nixed a project within its city limits. In answer to a question, he said the Legislature probably will need to revisit traffic safety at the I-5 exits at Woodburn because of the increases in vehicle usage due to industrial development (Amazon) and new apartment complexes.

In terms of local projects, he was able to get funding for a turf soccer field in E. Salem, though a request for the project at Keizer Rapids Park did not go through. He said he will revisit the KRP turf field funding in the upcoming session. He is now on the Ways and Means Committee and will have more sway in such matters.

He said he's looking for practical things he can do for communities and wants projects people can see. One achievement he highlighted was a change in the estate tax exemption for farms, woodlands and fishing operations that are family owned. He and Sen. Hansen wrote a bill that increased the exemption from \$1 million to \$15 million for these operations and the Governor has signed it into law.

He believes in working across the aisle to get the job done. "We need to work together. Results are the goal," he said.

He introduced his community outreach specialist Kimberly Castro Monroy, who works for his law firm but also serves as a connection to his constituents. She can be reached at Kimberly@mannixlawfirm.com

Police Chief John Teague – Rhonda thanked him for helping WKNA get a speed table to slow traffic at Cummings Elementary and flashing speed signs on Shoreline to remind drivers of the speed limit. And there has been other assistance through his years of service to Keizer.

He began by congratulating Lt. Andrew Copeland, who will succeed him as Police Chief starting in October. He said he was asked by Lyndon Zaitz, editor of Keizer Times, what he appreciated most about the job and he said it was what he's been able to do for the staff. His goal was to hire good people and make their lives better.

It helps the city get better justice. You don't want police who are fearful for their jobs, he said. Part of their evaluation is what they have done to prevent wrongful convictions. It happens, he said, so Keizer is very attentive to that possibility. They bring in a "devil's advocate" during discussions of cases and evidence to make sure they have the right person. He said he believes Lt. Copeland will carry that focus forward when he takes over the job as Chief.

He sees the job as maintaining order and promoting safety and freedom. He pointed to the way they approach the homeless situation as an example. The work to prevent disorder from occurring and enforce the law that says where people can and can't camp.

Keizer has 39 police personnel, down from the 42 he said was sufficient when the police support fee was enacted in Keizer several years ago. The national average is 2.1 police/1,000 population. By that calculation, Keizer should have 84 but he maintains there is no need for that many, or even the state average of 64 for a town Keizer's size. Forty-two is enough to achieve a balance between the safety of citizens and their freedom, he said. He doesn't know if there will be a push to get back to 42 positions -- that discussion hasn't been held.

Keizer police work their cases hard, he said. Criminals "know we are going to get them." Every day in Salem there is postal theft (from the communal postal box installations). There are very few in Keizer. And despite an overall rise in retail theft, the occurrences are going down at Keizer Station. Keizer

Police works Keizer Station every day, he said. Target Corp. has advised its stores to contact KPD about how to work with local police to prevent this kind of snatch and grab theft.

He has led his department with problem-oriented policing and a “procedural justice” policy. Those accused deserve a chance to be heard, to be treated with respect, officers should build trust in the process and make reasonable and informed decisions. It’s the same policy within the agency and staff.

After a brief question and answer period, the meeting celebrated the chief’s service to the city with cake and lemonade. Chief Teague is retiring after a 34-year career, 10 of those as Keizer’s Chief of Police.

REPORTS

City Council Liaison – Councilor Laura Reid reported on the leash law enacted by Council. It serves as a tool for Keizer Police if there are complaints. Council is currently working a possible permitting for public events that last 72 hours or more (such as Keizerfest and Miracle of Lights Christmas display). The biggest issue is community outreach to get consent and participation by-in. Council also held its annual parks tour in conjunction with the Parks Advisory Board on Monday. They visited Keizer Rapids Ben Miller and Bob Newton parks. She noted how great Robert Johnson, parks division manager, is to work with. The turf fields at KRP will be bid out at the end of September and they hope for completion by next summer. A \$15,000 Community Prosperity Initiative grant from Marion Co. will be used to extend electrical to the south section of KRP to help facilitate events such as Keizer fest. Six pickleball courts also are to be added at KRP by the volleyball area. The last Trashy Tuesday event of the summer will be held Sept. 26 at KRP.

Food barrels – July: 168 lbs at BiMart; 756 lbs. at Copper Creek (a large restaurant donation.) August: 227 lbs at BiMart; 11 lbs. at Copper Creek. Dennis Phipps said there also was about 36 lbs at Keizer Fire District.

Keizer United meeting, Carolyn – She reported that KPD plans a Faith in Blue event in October at the church on west Chemawa Road. The guest speaker at the meeting was Patrick Pardo from Keizer CERT, who also will be the November speaker for WKNA. John Knox Presbyterian Church has a new Little Library and they have renewed their Backpack Buddy program to benefit kids at Cummings Elementary. There will be a Halloween costume exchange event in October and a drop-off barrel will be in the City Hall lobby.

Cummings PTA liaison Amber Zimbelman -- She said the PTC meeting this week had 19 attendees for a great start to the year. There was good participation for the Beautification Day Sept. 9 – lots of bark dust spread. The speed table at Delight and Cummings Lane, so slow traffic on Cummings Lane, has been redone and seems to be working well. The school Jog-A-Thon will be held Sept. 29. There were about 700 people at the Back to School open House. The next PTC meeting is Oct. 20.

Carol D. reported that the school plantings done by Carol Phipps look great and she is watering to keep them thriving.

Parks

Palma Ciea -- Rhonda thanked Gary Blake for his regular work to keep the park looking good. He has trimmed bushes and collected debris.

Willamette Manor -- Carolyn reported that about half the kinnikinnick that was planted to help stabilize an eroding hillside is taking hold, Carol Phipps plans to write another grant to Parks Board

to purchase replacement plants that can be planted in October. The fall weather should be more conducive to plant survival.

Wallace House – Trashy Tuesday was held here Aug. 29. Carol and Martin Doerfler attended and personally collected over 50 pounds of trash.

Traffic Safety Bikeways Pedestrian Safety Committee –

Neighborhood Associations are still hoping to have input on the Neighborhood Traffic Management Program, which is being revised by the committee. We will keep following up on this. The speed table at Cummings was insufficient as originally installed but the repair is done and seems to be more effective.

Planning Commission – Robb reported that WKNA is being sent notifications of partitions, middle housing projects and other land-use related matters. We do not plan to comment if the project meets all zoning requirements unless a neighbor raises a concern. We will share copies of any land-use matters we're notified about.

Keizer Community Library – Betty Hart reported that the Library has funding through 2023 and is working on longer-range funding. They are trying to provide the best services they can with the resources they have. They have added assistance for those doing genealogy work. The assistant is available 2 times a month. The annual book sale is coming up in October.

Keizer Fire District open house -- This will be held Oct. 9.

WKNA Little Library, Carol D – The Little Library needs more toddler board books. The library recently received a big donation of scholastic readers from Cummings School.

Next meetings:

Oct. 5 – WKNA Board meeting –contact Rhoda Rich for more information

Oct. 12 -- WKNA General meeting. Guest speakers Keizer Fire District Chief Ryan Russell and a Board representative, Joe Van Meter, to talk about the upcoming KFD bond measure election. Also scheduled to speak are Cummings Elementary Principal Andy Kronser and Marion Co. Parole and Probation Deputy Eric Bandonis.

Nov. 9 – WKNA General meeting. Guest speaker: Keizer CERT representative Patrick Pardo

Go to www.westkeizerna.org or Facebook for current information

Meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.