

State of the City January 14, 2020

Welcome to 2020.

It is my pleasure to begin a celebration of our 2019 accomplishments.

Coburg has been an incorporated city for 173 years, I have been mayor for only 3 of those years. As the elected head of Coburg City government, It's my duty and honor to present to you a summary of our city's accomplishments and progress towards our goals set by our City Council. I want to thank you all for coming to be a part of tonight's recognition of the work done by our city staff and so many volunteers that make Coburg such a great town.

The year of 2019 was a very busy time for our staff and council. Multiple projects have been in the works and we have been prepping for more work in 2020.

Our city administrator Anne Heath, will give us a more focused presentation of many of our accomplishments later. It was a bit of a challenge for us to make a presentation that truly illustrates what our city government and it's staff has accomplished in 2019. So we decided many of our accomplishments will be best illustrated in a 5 year comparison. When we go back to 2014 and compare the numbers to 2019 they are truly astounding.

In those 5 years, We have grown from just under 1,100 residents to nearly 1,300 residents, a 20% increase. Our utility billing has gone from 450 to 572 customers, a 27% increase. We have gone from a city operating with a large general fund deficit to a city with appropriate reserves and operating funds. We have moved forward from years of providing little to no investment in our infrastructure and equipment to purchasing newer, safer equipment that allows us to be more efficient with staffing and expenditures.

Equipment slide

A simple example is the recent purchase of a newer backhoe and dump truck. These two pieces of equipment were each about 40 years old, becoming unsafe and unreliable. Repairs and tow bills added to the frustration of the inefficiencies of our old equipment.

With the newer equipment, our staff is able to safely complete jobs in less time additionally, we are able to do more of the work that used to be contracted out at much higher costs.

City of Coburg Chart

We have also created a much broader base of citizen input through committees, open houses, surveys and active participation in our government.

I have stated many times that my focus as mayor is to bring the community into our city government. With the help of our City Council and the hard working staff, we have made great advances to opening lines of communication with our citizens and the 85 licensed businesses in Coburg. As always, we still have a lot of work to do, but our progress is worthy of celebration.

Communication is a key element to building trust of our government with our citizens. Our hope is to create an atmosphere that dispells intimidation and anxiety and thus encouraging citizens to interact and participate in our city government.

Vision Statement slide

The hope of our communication plan is to improve our process of informing the community on upcoming council actions. We want share the information that the council uses to make important decisions. Although state law requires public notice of all decisions made by the city government, we have gone beyond the minimum requirements. We have done this with our bi-monthly city newsletter, mini newsletters enclosed in our utility billing, and social media. City Council also increased our standards for public notifications on land use issues. While we aren't where we want to be yet, we have made significant progress on our communication goal.

Another aspect of communication is how we receive public testimony at our council meetings. The city council adopted Council Rules of Governance that can allow open dialogue with citizens during testimony before City Council. This has allowed a much better exchange of information so that the council may be more informed and thus make stronger decisions. One of my primary duties is to run the public meetings efficiently. As Mayor, allowing dialogue can be a considerable challenge during emotional topics. So far, I have been blessed with respectful behavior from citizens and council members.

The Vision of Coburg is an important product that I believe is not being given it's proper place in our community. I have heard statements from citizens stating "it's a city document".

Vision Open House slide

I am here to assure you, it's really a community document. The vision process and the statement is a product derived from the input of nearly 100 citizens that attended meetings and workshops to create a vision of what they wanted Coburg to be.

I believe it is very important to have all our partners in Coburg recognize this Vision Statement for what it is, a statement of goals from our citizens to our community leaders. While some may disagree with some parts of the vision, I think it is so important to understand that it is a compilation of some very significant input from our residents. The overwhelming number of people that participated in the vision process is the key indicator of how important we all should regard this product.

Vision Outcome

I want to repeat the statement of "bring the community back to city government". Community is a big part of city government. Volunteers step forward as committee members, planning commission members, city councilors and yes, Mayor.

City Council Actions

In 2019 the City Councilors averaged about 60 hours each to accomplished the following:

11 city council meetings

2 urban renewal district meetings

4 work sessions

3 budget committee meetings

Council Retreat

And of course the State of the City

In those meetings we adopted 21 resolutions and 9 Ordinances. We held 17 public hearings, and referred a successful gas tax increase to the voters for investing in street repairs.

Community Engagement

I want to say thank you to the citizens that courageously step forward and dare to make a difference. I say courageous because it truly takes considerable courage to sit in public meetings and be accountable to our friends and neighbors for the decisions we make. The commitment of time and energy these volunteers make, is the lifeblood that makes Coburg great.

Cover Slide

While 2019 was a busy year, 2020 looks to be even busier. We have over \$5 million worth of water system improvements in progress. We have spent 2019 completing engineering, environmental assessments, and financial planning. 2020 will bring about the actual work of boring a water line under I-5, upgrading portions of the water delivery system, including a new well, and an elevated water storage tank. These projects will increase our capacities but more importantly will make Coburg better capable to deal with firefighting needs and natural disaster resilience.

With the passage of the increased gas tax, we will move forward with our goal to upgrade and repair our streets. Tonight, our City Council will move forward with our street improvement goals to prioritize and finance the \$2.5 million backlog of maintenance and repairs.

The city has been very progressive in our disaster planning. We have a new Emergency Services Coordinator. Jim Bell has an extensive background in disaster planning and he has generously stepped forward to help us. We attained FEMA Incident Command training for all of our employees in 2019.

Emergency planning has been brought to the forefront of agencies throughout lane county due to the high profile events being hosted at University of Oregon's Hayward Field, which includes 2020 Olympic Trials and World Athletics Championships in 2021.

This awareness has made Coburg recognize the need to look to our neighbors and discuss mutual aid agreements to formalize sharing resources during many types of emergencies. This type of agreement benefits participating agencies by having a larger pool of equipment and trained personnel to get a situation under control and reduce damage and losses.

City of Coburg Chart

Coburg is a dynamic city with dynamic people. We love our small town feel, and we are proud of our history. We need to prioritize the preservation of stories and items from our past.

As we look to the future, We must continue to maintain vigilance on zoning and codes to keep our small town feel.

We have a tremendous amount of parks and open spaces. Our staff and Parks committee will continue to work on our wetlands park and Johnny Diamond Park in 2020. Planning and preparation are essentially complete, and work at Johnny Diamond park will begin this Spring.

We constantly work to improve our communication process so that citizens are made aware of and have greater opportunity to participate in important decisions. My hope is to make participating in government rewarding to all involved.

Community Engagement

2019 is a year worth celebrating. The hard work of all of our employees along with our elected, appointed and volunteer citizens have taken on an enormous number of challenges and made incredible achievements.

We are a small city, but we continue to make big accomplishments.

I report the State of the City as:

Accomplished but learning

Proud but humble

Professional but caring

Small but strong

The State of the City is good and Coburg has a bright future because of it's people.

Thanks to all of you for making it work

Mayor Ray Smith