



THE FLASH

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An update from City Administration, Planning, Public Works and Police Departments

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Talent's Interim City Manager

As Talent wishes those departing our employ the very best, please join me in welcoming Jamie McLeod-Skinner as Talent's Interim City Manager on a 6 month contract.

Jamie's resume is a tight glove fit after a very difficult year. With miles to go, it will take a right fit for our wonderfully unique community, for the resident volunteers, for the public officials team who you overwhelmingly voted in, as well as the staff members who will all work together to recover Talent from the devastation of 2020; prioritizing housing solutions for our displaced neighbors.

Jamie restored community in Kosovo and Bosnia. She is a civil engineer and has a law degree. She has been a Sr. Planner and a City Manager in two different cities. She has been an elected city councilor. Her network is as wide and long as the State and beyond.

Our strategy is to build the best team short and long term, to keep the Talent running and to respond to this crisis. We need to improve city communication including for our Spanish speaking population and meet the objectives mandated by the recent election. Jamie's hire represents that strategy. and offers Talent incredible opportunity. Welcome JMS!

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In Gratitude to Talent's Departing City Councilors

By Councilor Eleanor Ponomareff

This month Talent welcomes new city councilors Ana Byers and Derek Volkart, who, along with returning incumbent Jason Clark, swept the elections with their promise to rebuild the city that embraces our economic and cultural diversity and to "bring our families home."

We also bid farewell to four Talent city councilors, each of whom have helped shape the Talent we know: The integrated pest management plan spearheaded by Councilor Stephanie Dolan, the beautiful storm drain art project shepherded by Councilor Daria Land, or the ways our roads were made safer by the traffic and safety commission chaired by Councilor John Harrison.

All of these efforts have contributed to what Talent is today, but none more so than those of Council President Emily Berlant.

Years ago, Emily hosted conversations about climate change in her living room. She helped guide those conversations into what became Talent's Clean Energy Action Plan. And now, Talent is one of the first cities in Oregon with a Clean Energy Element as part of our Comprehensive Plan.

"We are so grateful to Emily for her service on City Council," said Rogue Climate Executive Director Hannah Sohl. "Her commitment and passion for waste reduction and clean energy while on council has set a strong foundation for Talent to continue to move towards greater sustainability for years to come."

Talent is better because of these efforts. We will remember them with gratitude as we move forward, manifesting the best Talent we can imagine.

Community Response to the Rire and the Mutual Aid Station

In the immediate aftermath of the Almeda Fire, the heart of Talent shown through in a way that should make us all proud to be part of such a caring and compassionate community. Relationships are the key to community resiliency, and the response of neighbors helping neighbors across the city demonstrated that our community is, indeed, a resilient one.

In the face of disaster, several local non-profit organizations rose to the challenge with heroic efforts. On September 9th, while fires were still burning, the Rogue Action Center (RAC) was already providing immediate relief by setting up a pop-up aid station in a Talent neighborhood. Two days later, RAC, Rogue Climate, Talent Maker City, and other partners set up a mutual aid station in the parking lot of Wagner Plaza providing the community hub for resources, information, volunteering, and community support that would continue through the coming months.

Members of the community contributed in myriad ways. Material donations of every variety poured in from our generous community and once received, were organized, sorted, and distributed to impacted families through the power of well-organized volunteers. Today the mutual aid center continues at the Shoppes at Exit 24 in Phoenix under the leadership of Rogue Action Center and Rogue Climate.

Resiliency will be on all of our minds as we re-vision, rebuild, and restore our Talent community. Thankfully, we can go forward knowing that we have the kind of community relationships among people and groups that make Talent united and strong, unidos y fuertes.

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