

## Amy Johnson

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**From:** Brian Hines <brianhines1@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, February 05, 2017 11:08 PM  
**To:** Brad Nanke; Chuck Bennett; Courtney Knox Busch; citycouncil; Cara Kaser; Dan Atchison; Glenn Gross; Jim Lewis; Kacey Duncan; Kenny Larson; Lynda Rose; Matthew Ausec; Mike Gotterba; Natasha Zimmerman; Peter Fernandez; E-Mail Public; Ruth Stellmacher; Sally Cook; Steve McCoid; Steve Powers; Tom Andersen; Tami Carpenter; Amy Johnson  
**Subject:** Additional advance testimony for Feb. 6 council work session

Dear Mayor, City Councilors, and other City officials:

Below is the content of a blog post I wrote tonight which I'll be speaking about during the public comment period of the Monday, February 6, City Council work session about a new police facility plan. Since this post is fairly lengthy, with quite a few numbers, I thought it would be helpful to share this with you ahead of time, so you'd have an opportunity to review the material before the work session. The images are easier to read in the actual post. See:

<http://hinessight.blogs.com/salempoliticalsnark/2017/02/new-plan-for-salem-police-facility-too-costly-beaverton-shows-how-to-do-it-right.html>

— Brian Hines  
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## New plan for Salem police facility too costly. Beaverton shows how to do it right.

Last November citizens in Salem and Beaverton each voted on bond measures to build a new police facility. Here in Salem, voters *rejected* an \$82 million, 148,000 square foot plan that cost \$555 per square foot by a margin of 52% to 47%.



In Beaverton, voters *approved* a \$35 million, 90,000 square foot plan that cost \$389 per square foot by a margin of 50% to 49%.



This was the second try for Beaverton. In November 2014 voters there rejected a different public safety plan, which included a new police facility, by 53% to 47%.

Tomorrow, Monday, February 6, at 6 pm, Salem's City Council will be discussing plans for a reduced cost/size police facility in a work session. Public comments will be heard. I'm going to be speaking along the line of this blog post's central theme:

**If a PLAN B proposal is going to be approved by Salem voters in May, just six months after they rejected the original over-priced plan, City officials need to demonstrate that they've (1) markedly reduced the cost of the police facility, and (2) heard the call of voters that the Library and City Hall need to be made earthquake-safe, just as the new police facility would be.**

Since I led the fight against Measure 24-399, the \$82 million original proposal, I'm very familiar with the "Vote NO" arguments that resonated most strongly with voters.

Namely, (1) and (2) above.

The overall cost of the police facility plan was too high, as was the total development cost per square foot. Also, people in Salem didn't like the idea of moving Police Department staff out of City Hall, a building that would collapse in the coming Big One earthquake, while then moving other City employees into the same space -- and also leaving the Library without vitally needed seismic retrofitting.

You can review the new plans of City officials by [clicking on this link](#).

This information was only made publicly available on Friday, February 3. So citizens were given very little time to inform themselves about those plans before the City Council work session tomorrow. This is no way to handle public participation and open government. Obviously more meetings need to be held where people can weigh in on the new police facility proposals.

I'm pleased that a 115,000 square foot plan has been put forward. It eliminates construction of a new 911 Center that can stay in current leased space for about another ten years. It also reduces the number of very expensive spaces in a parking structure from 163 to 100.

Together, it looks to me like these steps reduce the cost of the police facility by about \$12.5 million.

But since seismically retrofitting City Hall and the Library [is estimated to cost](#) \$19,155,000 (\$12, 696,000 for City Hall; \$6,459,000 for Library), obviously the cost of a PLAN B bond measure would end up being higher than the original \$82 million measure if the police facility cost is *reduced* by only \$12.5 million while making City Hall and the Library earthquake-safe *add* more than \$19,000,000 to the bond measure.

Thus the big problem that needs to be addressed is the very high total development cost per square foot of both the original and new Salem police facility plans. As noted above, the original plan had a cost of **\$555** per square foot, which is by far the highest of any police facility built in Oregon recently.

The new 115,000 square foot plan isn't very different: the total development cost is **\$551** per square foot (this includes construction, furnishings, land acquisition, architectural design, contingency, and some other costs).

By contrast, the 90,000 square foot Beaverton police facility bond measure approved by voters last November had a cost of **\$389** per square foot. Some proponents of the original \$82 million plan for Salem have claimed that this Beaverton cost didn't include all of the elements that go into a total development cost calculation.

But this isn't true, from what I can tell. Here's a section of the description of the Beaverton bond measure 34-250 in the voter pamphlet. See:

[Download Beaverton Police Facility bond measure](#)

**SUMMARY:**

Approval of this measure authorizes the city to finance the capital costs of constructing and equipping an earthquake-resistant public safety center on property already owned by the city. The building would house the city's police department, emergency management division and other public safety services.

The city would issue up to \$35 million in general obligation bonds to pay for the capital costs of the public safety center and for bond issuance costs. Costs would include: public safety center design and construction; site and access improvements; and building fixtures, furnishings and equipment.

Note that the Beaverton police facility will be built on city-owned property, while a new Salem police facility is planned for the site previously occupied by the O'Brien auto dealerships just north of downtown.

So to make the total development cost figures for Salem and Beaverton comparable, I took out the \$5,473,000 land acquisition cost for the Salem police facility.

This brings the original \$82 million cost down to \$76,527,000, which, when divided by 148,000 square feet, makes the total development cost per square foot **\$517**. And it brings the \$63,396,000 cost of the new 115,000 square foot plan down to \$57,923,000, which equates to a total development cost per square foot of **\$504**.

Thus when land acquisition costs are taken out of consideration, Beaverton is planning to build a new police facility for **\$389** per square foot, and a new plan put forth by City officials for a 115,000 square foot Salem police facility costs **\$504** per square foot -- 1.3 times the per square foot cost of the Beaverton facility.

Which is a lot of extra money taxpayers would be expected to fork out.

If the 115,000 square foot plan cost only \$389 per square foot, this would make the total without land acquisition \$44,735,000. Add in the land cost, and we get \$50,208,000. Compare that to the \$63,396,000 cost projected by the City of Salem. It's a **\$13,188,000 difference**.

Why is Beaverton able to build a new police facility for so much less money than Salem? This question needs to be examined closely and carefully by the Salem City Council, concerned citizens, and City officials. Here's a couple of reasons that pop out for me.

(1) Beaverton, I'm pretty sure, is using surface parking, not a parking structure. The cost of 100 spaces of structured parking for the Salem police facility is \$2,645,000. I've never understood why this is a necessity. There should be plenty of room to park police vehicles in available surface parking on the O'Brien site. Why not use the largely empty Marion Parkade, just a block away, for parking of other vehicles used by Police Department employees?

(2) Salem hired Chicago's DLR Group to come up with the size and cost of the original police facility plan. Beaverton hired the Mackenzie architectural firm, a local company. Mackenzie also designed the Canby police facility, which was built in 2012 for only \$220 per square foot. It seems clear that serious consideration should be given to dumping the DLR Group and hiring Mackenzie to work on a new Salem police facility plan, since Mackenzie has demonstrated that it can build a modern police facility for about 30% less per square foot than the DLR Group can.

Here's a conceptual image of the Beaverton police facility. Sure looks good to me.



And [here is a link to information about the Beaverton police facility](#), which is a great model for Salem. The page starts off with:

In November 2016, Beaverton voters approved a ballot measure to construct a modern, earthquake resistant police and emergency management building.

Beaverton's public safety center will consolidate police services, move police facilities out of a flood zone, and meet residents' needs for the next 30 years:

- Built to critical-facility standards.
- Private areas for crime victims and juveniles.
- Onsite storage for property and evidence—eliminating need for offsite rented space.
- Flexible design for future growth.
- Community meeting rooms.
- Emergency Operations Center, with modern equipment, that is ready for emergency response during major wind, storm, flood and other events.

*Meet residents' needs for the next 30 years.* This is important, because the number of square feet per police officer is about the same for the Beaverton facility (**657 sq. ft.**) and a 115,000 square foot Salem police facility (**635 sq. ft.**).

(2014 FBI statistics indicate that Beaverton had 137 police officers and Salem had 181.)

So if the Beaverton police department has concluded that a police facility which currently provides 657 square feet per officer will meet the city's needs for the next 30 years, I don't see why this doesn't also apply to a 115,000 square foot Salem police facility that provides 635 square feet per officer, just 3% less.

For all the reasons in this blog post, I believe that Salem needs to follow in Beaverton's footsteps:

- Build a 115,000 square foot police facility with a total development cost, excluding land, of about \$389 per square foot.
- Seismically retrofit City Hall and the Library to save lives and property when the Big One Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake hits Salem, a matter of when, not if.
- Ditch the over-priced DLR Group, which came up with the original over-priced and over-sized plan. Consider hiring Mackenzie, which designed the Beaverton police facility.

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