This past year was a very busy year, it seemed like there was something going on every week. The parks stayed busy through the summer months with the concerts in the park, BMD, Home Free concert, and of course the return of the Eugene Symphony. The Mayors bike ride on Row River Trail, and yes I rode the whole trail. We also had events such as Kickin’ with the Cops at city hall and Party in the Park with the public works equipment and employees. The South Valley Farmers Market set up on Thursday’s downtown and moved inside to the Armory for the winter months.

Celebrating is something we like to do in Cottage Grove, so remember to mark your calendar for 8/18/18 when the community gets back the World Record for the largest Toga Party in celebration of the 40th anniversary of the filming of the movie Animal House.

We started the year with the retiring of two department heads, Jen Wellman, Public Works and Howard Schesser, Community Development. This resulted in the combination of both departments and the hiring of Faye Stewart to oversee those departments and reducing administrative cost in excess of $125,000.

Police Department upgraded the analog radios to new digital radios. This will allow the police to communicate with other agencies throughout the county and help them be more efficient and safer. They have also filled their final open position which will help since the case numbers have increased by over 800 from 2016. The Community Service Officers along with patrolling illegally parked vehicles cover jail duties in place of police officers. The CSO’s cover over 1000 hours a year in the jail that would otherwise be done by patrol officers.

The Engineering Division hired Ryan Sisson, a civil engineer, to assist City Engineer Ron Bradsby, for project development and management. Completed construction of the Taylor Pump station improving water service to Taylor, Parks, Red Hill and Cottage Heights homeowners. Installed 6 crosswalks on south 10th along Bohemia Park and added cross hatching to crosswalks at 10th and Main. Grind and repaving of South 6th Street and Mosby Creek projects were completed.

Utility Division, Supervisor Tony Kirk retired after 40 years of service and Mike O’Reilly was promoted to Utilities Supervisor. The department has also been repainting striping throughout town as well as maintaining and repairing the sewer and water main lines in town.

Maintenance Division, Combined the Building Maintenance Department and Parks Department which allows for flexibility with staffing during the spring and early summer for park maintenance. Installed new lighting along Row River Trail starting at Trail Head and continuing east to 16th Street. Installed irrigation at LuLu’s Dog Park

Building Division had 148 commercial permits issued with a total value of $26.5M, 489 Residential permits issued with a total value of $7.5M and 46 new home permits issued.

Planning Division started the housing needs analysis. Also a full time Planning Tech was added, this position will handle land use compliance violations and assist the City Planner in processing planning
applications. FEMA rating of level 7 saving homeowners in the flood plain 15% on their flood insurance. Third annual Emergency Preparedness Fair at Cottage Theater. Repainted Opal Whitley Mural and 98 planning permits processed.

Water Treatment Plant, New emergency generators were installed at the Holly pump station and Reservoirs site. Cleaned the inside of the water reservoirs and high service booster pump station at the water treatment plant. Installed scada at all pump stations and reservoirs connecting them electronically to the water treatment plant.

Waste Treatment, Erich Schroeder was promoted to Waste Treatment Superintendent. Purchased 2 portable water samplers, installed a security camera system. Hosted the Pacific Northwest Clean Water Association September Board meeting and rebuilt Effluent filters with a staff saving of over $20,000.

Armory, Lead removal of the exterior staircases and thorough cleaning resulted in a no lead detected in test. Upgraded the power breaker box on stage and lighting. Completed window restoration and awarded bid for construction documents. 37 events were hosted at the Armory in 2017, and 21 are already booked for 2018.

2017 Safety Record, Administration, public works and development, and finance departments worked 51,586.23 hours without a loss time accident.

Library is the hardest to cover because so much goes on there. Like hosting “A Place For All People” from the Smithsonian Exhibit or “Bridging Cultures” a display of Islamic and Muslim books, art, film and music. Pete Barrell, Community Services Director, received the Movers and Shakers award from the Library Journal Magazine and honored at the American Library Association annual conference. Each week during the summer the library took forty kids on Outdoor Adventure field trips. They hosted 44 summer programs for all ages. Over 1400 children attended summer reading program special events, 220 children read books in the summer reading program. The Community Center was home for almost 40 groups or organizations for meetings or events.

Finance Department prepared a $33M budget that the budget committee and city council adopted. Over 23% of utility bills are being paid on line. They also participated in the purchase of the police radio upgrades. The finance staff was involved with researching the best way to move forward with our meter reading equipment. Hand held meter reading devices had increased in price to be over $4,000 each. They were able to replace the equipment using smart phones and software that allows the phone to be used as a reading device and upload the information immediately to the cloud. This allows for better customer service when a leak is suspected, with a much shorter turnaround time to address the potential leak.

The Youth Advisory Council had a great year presenting their Nitrous Oxide bill to the Legislation at the State Capitol. The YAC was recognized throughout the state and was asked to speak at the League of Oregon Cities conference.
I’d personally like to take a moment and thank my employer Weyerhaeuser and the management lead team. Their support of me in this position and willing to let me be flexible with my schedule has truly helped in the success of this past year.

Every year at the state of the city we recognize individuals and businesses who have been outstanding in the community, first I’ll start with the outstanding business.

Grocery Outlet, Owners Ed and Kori Sowa began operation of the Cottage Grove Grocery Outlet in January of 2014. Since they open they started making donations to local groups and organizations. For the past two years they have provided turkeys as donations at thanksgiving time. Ed coaches Little League through South Valley Little League. They are both active with South Valley Athletics including sponsor of a team every season, hold fundraisers in the store with proceeds going to South Valley Rec. They also give gift cards for treats or snacks during the season. They are active in the Rotary. They are active in the downtown Halloween event and are committed to being part of the community.

Next outstanding individuals;

Gary Roberts, Gary is the athletic director at Cottage Grove High School, the level of success that the sports program is playing at is a reflection of his leadership. He was Coach of the Year for the second consecutive year, Rookie Athletic Director of the Year in 2017. This past year 4 different sports teams were honored here at city council for attending state playoffs, with the football team being state champions for the first time in history.

Last summer I was asked to attend a Rotary meeting, they had a guest speaker that day, Cheryl Bord. I knew who she was because she works where I bank, but I soon learned she does a lot more than work at the bank. Cheryl started pillowgrams. Cheryl along with her daughter Casie and granddaughters Addison, Josie, and Emma, makes pillow cases for children who have to spend the night at Sacred Heart Medical Center Riverbend. These homemade pillowcases help add a touch of home to these children giving them comfort in a difficult situation.