

WALLA WALLA CITY COUNCIL

Work Session Minutes

November 5, 2012

1. CALL TO ORDER



Mayor Barrow called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

Present: Councilmembers Barbara Clark, Jerry Cummins, Mary Lou Jenkins, Shane Laib, Chris Plucker and Mayor Jim Barrow.

Absent: Councilmember Conrado Cavazos, Jr.

City staff in attendance: City Manager Nabel Shawa, Deputy City Manager Tim McCarty, Public Works Director Ki Bealey, Parks & Recreation Director Jim Dumont, Public Library Director Beth Hudson, Police Chief Scott Bieber, Finance Manager Jean Teasdale, Human Resource Manager Jennifer Seekamp, Deputy Fire Chief Brad Morris and City Clerk Kammy Hill.

2. ACTIVE AGENDA

A. Citizen Satisfaction Survey Review.

City Manager Shawa reported a citizen satisfaction survey was just completed in partnership with the State Auditors office. Meghan Elliott, State Auditors office, and Stuart Elway were present via conference call.

Ms. Elliott described the efforts and support provided by the State Auditors office for performance measures. The State Auditors office felt this was a good opportunity to partner with the City of Walla Walla and Stuart Elway to conduct a citizen satisfaction survey. This survey template will be available on the State Auditors office Local Government Performance Center website for use by other local governments. A database will be developed to provide benchmarks to measure performance. The State Auditors office is committed to partnering with local government agencies to help them do a better job and improve performance.

Mr. Elway reported they used the voter registration rolls to obtain the random survey sample of City of Walla Walla citizens. There were comments on the under representation of Latino voters and matching telephone and cell phone numbers to the voter registration records. Mr. Elway reviewed the survey questions and results. There were brief comments on the findings contained in the survey.

Mayor Barrow invited public input.

Craig Keister, no address provided, indicated it will be interesting to see comparable data for other cities of similar size and composition. Staff and Ms. Elliott indicated that benchmark data is one goal of the survey.

B.2013-2014 Proposed Budget.

City Manager Shawa reported the City Council finance committee has put in considerable time and effort on the budget. The proposed budget represents a significant compromise. The citizen satisfaction results were used to refine priorities and programs in the budget. City Manager Shawa reviewed:

- Budget process.
- Major funds.
- Cost increases for 2013-2014 include:
 - Medical and dental insurance premiums (6 percent in 2013 and 10 percent in 2014).
 - Retirement contributions. (PERS increase from 7.5 percent to 9.1 percent)
 - Salary step increases and reclassifications plus salary related benefits.
 - No cost of living adjustments are included; these are subject to labor negotiations.

- Full reinstatement of vehicle replacement. (General fund - \$149,190 increase in 2013 and \$173,780 in 2014)
- Street fund budget:
 - Ending fund balances will meet required 5 percent but not the desired 10 percent.
 - Establishment of an annual \$100,000 emergency reserve for uncontrollable incidents such as large snow events and street failures.
 - Planned chip seal and grind/overlay projects total \$481,570 in 2013 and \$506,570 in 2014. This does not include separate Transportation Benefit District (TBD) or Infrastructure Repair and Replacement (IRRP) projects.
 - Utility street cut repairs are funded at \$242,000 annually.
 - Winter pothole patching is budgeted at \$51,110.
 - Traffic marking budget of \$99,600 annually provides for painting of all centerlines, crosswalks, and bicycle lanes.
 - Street lighting and traffic signal power and maintenance are \$450,000 annually.
 - Traffic signage maintenance budget is \$48,000 annually.
- 2013-2014 Street Activities (not including TBD or IRRP projects).
- Stormwater Fund budget and proposed projects.
- Water Fund budget and proposed projects.
- Wastewater Fund budget and proposed projects.
- Transportation Benefit District and Infrastructure Repair and Replacement project activities.
- Sanitation Fund budget and proposed activities.
- Landfill Fund budget and proposed projects.
- Monthly utility rate increase. Based on citizen survey results, it is proposed to move to biweekly recycling to keep the proposed rate increase down.
- General Fund. Ending fund balances are artificially high due to ongoing labor negotiations and the proposed budget does not include any cost of living/cost of labor adjustments. Budget assumptions include:
 - Property tax increases of one percent per year plus tax from new construction (\$71,860).
 - Use of one-half of banked levy capacity (\$185,228).
 - Sales tax forecasted at a two percent increase in overall revenue.
 - City utility excise tax increase of .05 percent in 2013 and .025 percent in 2014 (internally absorbed; does not require a utility rate increase). Estimated revenue increase of \$130,000.
 - Property tax increase due to proposed annexation in 2014 (\$125,500 per year estimate plus utility taxes estimated at \$86,000).

- Transfer investment interest income to general fund - \$30,000.
 - Increase parking fines - \$19,000.
- Proposed library budget changes:
 - Loss of \$245,000 from Rural Library District contract.
 - Increase City support by \$120,000 resulting in a net budget reduction of \$125,000.
 - Eliminate vacant library technician position.
 - Eliminate library specialist position.
 - Reduce hours for three library associates.
 - Add one-half library associate position.
 - Decrease budget for materials by 10 percent in 2013 and 28 percent in 2014.
 - Reduce open days to five days per week (closed on Sunday and Monday). This reduces operating hours from 47 to 37 hours.
 - Decrease budget for professional services by 47 percent.
- Proposed parks & recreation budget changes:
 - Close city aviary – budget includes funding for three months in 2013 to relocate birds and additional funding for removal of pens and site restoration (savings of \$55,000 per year after closure).
 - Suspend endowment care fund contributions and use for cemetery maintenance (\$20,000 per year).
 - Facilities maintenance – reduce janitorial at Police Department from 5 to 4 days per week and Library to 5 days per week. City Hall is currently at 4 days per week (\$17,000 per year).
 - Increase various recreation program fees - \$7,000.
 - Increase cemetery fees by 5 percent in 2013 and 3 percent in 2014.
- Proposed fire department budget changes:
 - Eliminate one fire prevention officer position (\$105,000).
 - Reduce Walla Walla Fire Technical Response Team from 17 members to 9 members and join the Tri-County Team (Richland, Kennewick, Pasco, and Yakima). Net savings - \$17,000.
 - Miscellaneous other reductions totaling approximately \$65,000.
- Proposed police department budget changes:
 - Leave current police officer opening vacant (\$80,000).
 - Reduce sick leave payout due to no anticipated retirements in 2013 (\$24,000).
 - Increase parking fines from \$5 to \$10. Estimated revenue increase of \$19,000.

- Add \$25,000 for downtown seasonal patrol. Provides two officers dedicated to downtown bicycle/foot patrol, Memorial Day through Labor Day, 3-4 days per week.
- Proposed Support Service department budget changes:
 - Eliminate currently vacant part-time secretarial position (\$48,000).
 - GIS cost recovery for enterprise fund work projects. \$97,000 increase to the general fund.
- Community program changes:
 - Community Center for Youth – external organization assisting with funding - \$15,000.
 - Downtown Walla Walla Foundation - \$15,000 moved to lodging tax fund.
 - Commitment to Community – continue contracting for service with public works.
- General fund transfers to other funds:
 - Transfer to street construction: \$250,000 to Myra Road; \$100,000 to 13th Avenue at Rose Street traffic signal, phase 2.
 - Transfer to streets: \$69,690 for traffic signal upgrades – 17 traffic detection cameras, 5 control cabinets, 1 controller, Roosevelt/Isaacs vehicle detection loops.

There was discussion on:

- This is the preliminary budget and there may be changes throughout the process.
- Whether there was one-hundred percent agreement by all members of the Finance Committee. Councilmember Cummins indicated the Finance Committee collectively agreed to move forward. The members understand these changes are necessary but there was not one-hundred percent agreement on all items.
- The dollar amount of the increase by the Department of Retirement System for retirement contributions. Staff indicated they will provide the dollar amount on November 12.
- Finance Committee was trying to provide, as close as possible, the same level of service with fewer resources.
- Economic conditions reflect a balancing in the private sector but not in government services. Taxpayers are paying down debt and this has consequences on the amount of sales tax collected. Washington State governments are heavily dependent on sales taxes as there is no state income tax like other states.
- Regret was expressed regarding the likelihood of closing the aviary.

Mayor Barrow invited public input.

Craig Keister, no address provided, indicated he found the City government to be approachable, accessible and friendly. Thousands of people had contributed to keeping the aviary open the last two years. Mr. Keister asked for the City Council to consider at least partial funding of the aviary through the utility roundup program and he will continue to ask the public for financial support. Council thanked Mr. Keister for his efforts and suggested working with staff to try to identify solutions.

Mayor Barrow indicated he would not be available for the Council Work Session on November 12.

3.Other Business

No other business was discussed.

4.ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.