

WALLA WALLA CITY COUNCIL
Regular Meeting Minutes
November 6, 2013

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Barrow called the meeting to order at 7:00 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, City Attorney Tim Donaldson, Deputy City Manager Tim McCarty, Public Works Director Ki Bealey, Police Chief Scott Bieber, Deputy Fire Chief Brad Morris, Utilities Engineer Frank Nicholson, and City Clerk Kammy Hill.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/MOMENT OF SILENCE

Councilmember Cummins led the pledge of allegiance followed by a moment of silence.

3. PRESENTATIONS

- A. Mayor Barrow read and presented the proclamation declaring the week of November 16 through November 24, 2013 as "National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week in Walla Walla" to Reverend Dorothy Knudson. Reverend Knudson introduced Tim Meliah and Susan Kralman, representatives of the Interfaith Coalition on Poverty, and reported on the problem of hunger in the Country. Reverend Knudson encouraged the community to view the documentary film "A place at the table" and outlined local events to raise awareness.
- B. Mayor Barrow read and presented the proclamation declaring the week of November 10 through November 17, 2013 as "International Education Week" to Linnea Keatts. Mrs. Keatts introduced the international exchange students in attendance and reported the exchange students will be making presentations to the community throughout the week.

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4. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Robert Keatts, 711 Clay, Walla Walla, Chair of the Sasayama Sister City Affiliation Committee, reported on the October visit of five Walla Walla students to Sasayama, Japan and introduced Hogara Ikuma, an exchange student from Sasayama, Japan. Mr. Ikuma described his reasons for returning to Walla Walla to further his learning of English and American culture.

Elizabeth Moss, 757 Lewis Street, Walla Walla, commended the City on the Rose Street Transportation Benefit District project.

5. CONSENT AGENDA

City Clerk Hill introduced the Consent Agenda, Items A through G, as follows:

- A. Washington State Liquor Control Board: Change of location from El Mirador Wines to JLC Winery, 1115 W. Rose Street, Suite B.
- B. Washington State Liquor Control Board: Change of LLC member for Dama Wines, 1102 Dell Avenue.
- C. Washington State Liquor Control Board: Change of application for Mansion Creek Cellars, 9 South First Street.
- D. Resolution No. 2013-120 authorizing the City Manager to accept a stormwater grant, authorizing grant acceptance, and taking other action related thereto. (Department of Ecology- \$170,000)
- E. Resolution No. 2013-121 awarding the bid for rehabilitation of sewer lines to Columbia Pumping & Construction Inc. and taking other action in connection therewith.
- F. Resolution No. 2013-123 awarding the bid for installation of emergency power supply facilities and taking such further action needed therewith. (WESCOM Remote radio site generators project)

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- G. Resolution No. 2013-124 approving and authorizing the City Manager to execute a professional services agreement with HDR Engineers, Inc. and taking such further action needed therewith. (Sudbury Landfill financial assurance, closure/post closure, master plan)

Mayor Barrow invited public input. No one in the audience chose to address the City Council on any of these items.

Councilmember Laib moved to adopt Consent Agenda Items A through G. Councilmember Plucker seconded the motion. The motion unanimously carried with 6 yes votes and 0 no votes.

6. ACTIVE AGENDA

- A. Public hearing on 2014 regular property tax levy and Resolution No. 2013-125 authorizing property tax increases for the City pursuant to RCW 84.55.120.

City Manager Shawa reviewed the schedule for review of the budget modification and approval of property tax levy. A recent article in the Union Bulletin was not entirely accurate in that the Council Finance Committee has discussed the property tax levy but no action was taken to recommend an increase.

Deputy City Manager McCarty reported the proposed levy for 2014 is a one percent increase on the 2013 property tax levy which is the maximum limit established by statute, plus an increase for new construction and improvements. This results in an overall increase of 1.73 percent in the total property tax levy amount.

There was discussion on:

- Out of the total property tax bill, approximately 21 percent is the amount for the City of Walla Walla.
- The proposed levy rate for 2014 is \$2.55, an increase of 4 cents per thousand assessed value.
- The County increased sales taxes by .01% last year for mental health funding.

Mayor Barrow declared the public hearing open at 7:35 p.m.

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Tom Carter, 955 Hobson Street, Walla Walla, had questions on how the City's proposed increase is allocated and spent.

There being no further comments from the audience, the public hearing was closed at 7:37 p.m.

There was discussion and comments on:

- The allocation of property taxes and the many services the citizens receive from police, fire, streets, parks, and library for these taxes.
- If streets are the number one priority, then the one percent increase in property taxes should be set aside for street repairs without supplanting any existing money in the street fund. Staff suggested the appropriation would be made through the budget modification, not through the property tax levy process.
- The increase is necessary to continue to provide excellent services for a quality city or important services will be reduced.
- If the median home value in Walla Walla is \$180,000 then this increase is under \$8.00 per year for the average property owner. This is a very modest increase to maintain essential services that are not otherwise affordable if everyone had to pay for them individually.
- Streets have been the number one priority for citizens in recent surveys. The residents want more money dedicated to street improvements but the Council also needs to maintain the overall quality of life.
- There are many in the community that simply cannot afford any increase in taxes at all.
- People don't want to pay more in taxes and the proposed increase will not dramatically impact services so it is suggested that the propose increase be banked.
- An increase in street repairs is necessary to avoid having to spend more to rebuild failing streets.
- The increase is necessary to continue to fund existing services. If the property taxes are not increased, then expenses will need to be reduced or the ending fund balance will be reduced.

Councilmember Cummins moved to adopt Resolution No. 2013-125 contingent upon a separate resolution to restrict the funds from the increase in the property tax levy to the street fund without supplanting any existing funds in the street fund. Councilmember Laib seconded the motion.

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There was discussion on street funding, using additional funds from the ending fund balance, and making budget decisions at this point.

The motion failed with 2 yes votes by Councilmembers Cummins and Laib, and 4 no votes by Councilmembers Clark, Jenkins, Plucker and Mayor Barrow.

Councilmember Plucker moved to adopt Resolution No. 2013-125. Councilmember Clark seconded the motion.

Councilmembers expressed their individual opinions on whether the increase is necessary and if it should be earmarked prior to the presentation of the budget modification.

The motion to adopt Resolution No. 2013-125 failed with 3 yes votes by Councilmembers Clark, Laib, and Plucker and 3 no votes by Councilmembers Cummins, Jenkins, and Mayor Barrow.

City Attorney Donaldson reported alternative resolutions had been prepared. One would authorize the levy for new construction, bank the one percent increase, and specifically authorize increases for voter approved bonds. The other alternative would bank the entire amount for new construction and the one percent increase, and specifically authorize increases for voter approved bonds.

There was discussion on the alternative resolutions.

Councilmember Clark moved to adopt an amended Resolution No. 2013-125 to levy the amount for new construction and bank the one percent increase. Councilmember Cummins seconded the motion.

There were comments on whether this is an appropriate action without knowing why the increase may be necessary.

The motion to adopt an amended Resolution No. 2013-125 to levy the amount for new construction and bank the one percent increase failed with 1 yes vote by Councilmember Clark and 5 no votes by Councilmembers Cummins, Jenkins, Laib, Plucker and Mayor Barrow.

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Councilmember Plucker moved to adopt an amended Resolution No. 2013-125 to bank the levy amount for new construction and the one percent increase. Mayor Barrow seconded the motion.

There were comments on the proposed action and that if the money is necessary then staff can use the ending fund reserves but this at least banks the funds for future use.

The motion to adopt an amended Resolution No. 2013-125 to bank the levy amount for new construction and the one percent increase failed with 3 yes votes by Councilmembers Clark, Plucker and Mayor Barrow and 3 no votes by Councilmembers Cummins, Jenkins, and Laib.

Staff commented that the City Council will need to take action at their November 20 meeting so the levy amounts can be certified to the County on November 21.

- B. Resolution No. 2013-122 approving and authorizing the City Manager to execute an amendment to a professional services agreement with HDR Engineers, Inc. for the LT2 slow sand filtration pilot project.

City Manager Shawa reported this contract amendment is for further testing of the slow sand filtration improvements necessary at the water treatment plant. City Manager Shawa outlined the tests that were performed in the summer months and the need for testing during winter months to satisfy the Department of Health. If the Department of Health places restrictions on use of water from the winter months, this could constrict the future growth of the City due to water constraints.

There was discussion on:

- The water fund is in strong financial shape.
- The necessity of further testing.
- Improvements are necessary at the water treatment facility for both cryptosporidium and impacts due to a fire in the watershed.
- The testing is necessary to maximize use of the Mill Creek surface water rights.

Mayor Barrow invited public input. No one in the audience chose to address the City Council on this issue.

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**Councilmember Clark moved to adopt Resolution No. 2013-122.
Councilmember Laib seconded the motion. The motion unanimously
carried with 6 yes votes and 0 no votes.**

C. Resolution No. 2013-119 authorizing the City Manager to apply for a FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant, authorizing grant acceptance, and taking other action related thereto.

City Manager Shawa reported this resolution will authorize the City to apply for FEMA grants for a new remote radio site for WESCOM and for a new fire engine.

Council asked where the money would come from for the local match if the grant is successful for a new fire engine. Staff indicated the matching funds would come from the general fund ending fund balance.

Mayor Barrow invited public input. No one in the audience chose to address the City Council on this issue.

**Councilmember Cummins moved to adopt Resolution No. 2013-119.
Councilmember Jenkins seconded the motion.**

There was brief discussion on when the grants are awarded and if the chance of being successful would be greater if the application was limited to one project rather than both.

**The motion to adopt Resolution No. 2013-119 unanimously carried with 6
yes votes and 0 no votes.**

D. Approval of minutes of the Work Session held October 21, 2013.

**Councilmember Laib moved to approve the minutes of the Work Session
held October 21, 2013. Councilmember Jenkins seconded the motion.
The motion unanimously carried with 6 yes votes and 0 no votes.**

E. Approval of minutes of the regular meeting held October 23, 2013.

**Councilmember Laib moved to approve the minutes of the regular
meeting held October 23, 2013. Councilmember Clark seconded the
motion. The motion unanimously carried with 5 yes votes, 0 no votes, and
1 abstention by Mayor Barrow.**

7. COUNCIL MEMBER MEETING REPORTS

Mayor Barrow, with the concurrence of Council, reported that Council Member meeting reports would be deferred until the next meeting.

8. UNFINISHED AND NEW BUSINESS

Mayor Barrow reported he would be gone the week of November 18 and would not be in attendance at the Work Session or City Council meetings that week.

9. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:48 p.m.