

WALLA WALLA CITY COUNCIL
Work Session Minutes
June 24, 2013

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.
(Councilmember Laib arrived at 4:15 p.m.)

Absent: Councilmember Conrado Cavazos, Jr.

City staff in attendance: City Manager Nabel Shawa, Deputy City Manager Tim McCarty, Public Works Director Ki Bealey, Finance Manager Jean Teasdale, City Engineer Neal Chavre, Utilities Engineer Frank Nicholson, Accounts Payable Clerk Jill Landwehr, Engineer Monte Puymon, Engineer Doug Eaton, and City Clerk Kammy Hill.

2. PRESENTATIONS

- A. Employee recognition – Accounts Payable/Purchasing Clerk – Jill Landwehr.

City Manager Shawa presented a certificate of appreciation to Jill Landwehr for thinking “outside the box” and using the City credit card to pay invoices to earn one percent cash back from U.S. Bank. The amount refunded to the City for 2012 was \$21,256.54.

- B. Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) Award.

City Manager Shawa presented Finance Manager Teasdale with the GFOA award for the City’s comprehensive annual financial report (CAFR). This is the fifth year in a row the City’s finance division received this award.

3. ACTIVE AGENDA

- A. Discuss alternatives for construction of the 2013 Rose Street TBD project.

Transportation Improvement Advisory Committee members in attendance: Doug Bayne, Dominick Elia, and Anne Haley.

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City Manager Shawa explained the Transportation Benefit District (TBD) funding and the citizen's survey listing Rose Street as the highest priority street for improvement.

Engineer Puymon reviewed:

- Rose Street TBD project chronology.
- June 30 bid results. The engineers estimate was based on a base bid for white-topping which came in much higher than estimated. The lowest bid is for removal of the existing concrete and repaving with hot mix asphalt. There was discussion on which alternative is the best for street use and longevity. The life span of white-topping is twice that of hot mix asphalt.
- Council alternatives:
 - Award the construction contract to Humbert Asphalt for the hot mix asphalt alternative.
 - Award the construction contract to Premier Excavation for the cement concrete white-topping alternative.
 - Reject all bids and rebid the project at a later date (approximately 6 months).
 - Reject all bids and pursue paving a different section of Rose Street in 2013; rebid the current project at a later date as a 2014 project.

There was discussion on the advantages and disadvantages of the alternatives.

- Utility impacts.
- After careful consideration of the alternatives, staff recommends rejecting all bids and rebidding the project in six months. If Council determines to move forward with the project, then staff recommends awarding the contract to Humbert Asphalt for hot mix asphalt.

There was discussion on the alternatives, costs, and public perception.

Mayor Barrow invited public input.

Don Ashley, Pediatrician, commented on the community health improvement plan. Obesity prevention through exercise is a top priority for Walla Walla County. Mr. Ashley asked Council to consider the healthiest long term pavement for our children and grandchildren. There are not that many roads that are safe in the downtown area for bicycling.

There was additional discussion on:

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- When the project would start if the contract were awarded to Humbert Asphalt. Staff indicated that in discussion with the contractor the estimated start date for the project would be July 8. The cutoff for laying hot mix asphalt, according to Washington State Department of Transportation guidelines, is the first of October.
- Councilmembers and Transportation Improvement Advisory Committee members stated their preference between the two options to ensure the project is done right.

It was the consensus of the City Council and Transportation Improvement Advisory Committee members to reject all bids and rebid the entire Rose Street project (Sixth Avenue to Carey Court) early next year.

B. 13th at Rose Street traffic signal update.

City Manager Shawa reported this project is very unlikely to move forward. The railroad, after numerous discussions, is now opposed to the project and is insisting on an additional set of gates at each of the two crossings, three separate train detection systems, and a full study of the impacts the advance detection system would have on other surrounding railroad signals. None of these components were included in the original estimates and exceed the project budget two to three times over. These issues mean that the rapid use grant of \$200,000 the City obtained cannot be obligated by July 1. The project barely met traffic warrants but there are still concerns with pedestrian safety and crossing Rose Street. Since a traffic signal is no longer feasible, another alternative is a highly visible flashing signal with a crosswalk.

Council observed that, based on the railroads new demands, it would almost be less expensive to build a pedestrian overpass over Rose Street. Valley Transit wants to safely transport citizens to the medical clinic but this means crossing Rose Street.

Dick Fondhan, Executive Director of Valley Transit, commented that pedestrian safety across Rose Street has been a long term concern of Valley Transit. Almost anything will be an improvement over what's available at this time.

City Engineer Chavre recommended a visible pedestrian crossing, with the design being included in the overall street improvement project. Public Works Director Bealey reported the City of Milton-Freewater has examples of the type of crossing staff envisions.

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There was discussion on the need to evaluate placement of a pedestrian crossing with adjoining property owners and ensuring adequate site visibility. Concerns were expressed that a pedestrian crossing would lead to a false sense of safety and could prove more dangerous. Council suggested additional enforcement of existing speed limits on Rose Street would help with pedestrian safety.

Council indicated they will wait to hear further details from staff before determining whether to consider a visible pedestrian crossing.

C. Wastewater – Failure to connect penalty.

City Manager Shawa reported he is trying to determine whether the City Council would consider repealing the current wastewater failure to connect policy. This failure to connect penalty generates \$149,000 in revenue per year for the wastewater fund.

There was discussion on:

- This is not a state mandate; it is a City policy that can be changed.
- The number of people actually motivated to connect to the wastewater system as a result of this policy.
- Whether the repeal of the policy changes requiring citizens to connect when their septic systems fail.

It was the consensus of a majority of Council to direct staff to prepare the enactments to eliminate the penalty provided property owners are not allowed to construct or reconstruct septic systems if they are within the city limits.

4. OTHER BUSINESS

Mayor Barrow reported he and Mayor Pro Tem Cavazos will be attending the Association of Washington Cities annual conference and will not be in attendance at the June 26 City Council meeting. The Council will need to select a member to chair this meeting. Mayor Barrow suggested selecting Councilmember Cummins as the senior member on the Council.

5. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:44 p.m.