

WALLA WALLA CITY COUNCIL
Special Meeting Minutes
July 31, 2014

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Cummins called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Present: Councilmembers Jim Barrow, Barbara Clark, Mary Lou Jenkins, Dick Morgan, Chris Plucker, Allen Pomraning, and Mayor Jerry Cummins.

Absent: None.

City staff in attendance: City Manager Nabel Shawa, City Attorney Tim Donaldson, Public Library Director Beth Hudson, Finance Manager Jean Teasdale, Technology Services Manager Vikki Peterson-Rea, Communications Manager Rosa Jimenez and City Clerk Kammy Hill.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/MOMENT OF SILENCE

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

2. ACTIVE AGENDA

- A. Consideration of early termination of the Interlocal Agreement establishing the Walla Walla Joint Community Development Agency.

City Manager Shawa reported the Walla Walla Joint Community Development Agency (JCDA) was formed in late 2010 and started on January 1, 2011. The JCDA submitted its 2015 budget for comment to the City on July 8, 2014. This budget is an eighteen percent increase from the 2011 funding level provided by the City. The City's single planner, Assistant Development Services Director Brian Walker, submitted his retirement notice for August, 29, 2014, on July 15. A review of the workload shows an additional staff person is necessary to perform the planning duties needed by the City. The Finance Manager performed an analysis of the cost of contracting for permitting services with the JCDA and adding two planners. It was determined the City would be able to provide the same services previously provided by the City's Development

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Services Department at less cost than continuing with the JCDA and hiring two planners.

Due to the timing of the JCDA's adoption of their budget and the notice requirements in the Interlocal agreement, staff is recommending the early termination of the Interlocal agreement with Walla Walla County establishing the Joint Community Development Agency. Staff believes the re-establishment of a City Development Services Department is in the City's best interest.

There was discussion on:

- The amount saved by re-establishing the City's Development Services Department is relatively small. When the JCDA was formed, the City assumed it would perform nearly the same services as the former Development Services Department. The issue is the JCDA doesn't have the flexibility to perform the services needed by the City.
- The resumption of code enforcement services by the City is calculated in the proposed budget but the Code Enforcement Officer would actually report to the Police Department.
- The gap in planning services created when the JCDA was formed; the current duties performed by Assistant Development Services Director Walker; and the long-range planning services needed by the City.
- The staff's recommendation to re-establish a City Development Services Department is based on economics and gaps in service.

Mayor Cummins invited public input.

Tom Glover, Walla Walla Joint Community Development Agency Director and Director of the Metropolitan Planning Organization, 55 E. Moore Street, Walla Walla, refuted City Manager Shawa's comments on the work performed by the JCDA and the reported eighteen percent increase in the JCDA proposed budget. Mr. Glover expressed concerns with the impact of this action on the Metropolitan Planning Organization and the investment in the Trakit software. Mr. Glover felt that City Manager Shawa was acting impulsively and that no concerns have been raised or addressed with the JCDA.

Dominick Elia, 302 S. Roosevelt, Walla Walla, JCDA Board Member, reported the formation of the JCDA was due to economics and customer

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service. The level of complaints has diminished since establishment of the JCDA. Mr. Elia expressed skepticism with ten employees being able to adequately perform the same service previously performed by fifteen employees. The City estimated savings of \$37,000 is unrealistic. This is a major decision and requires due diligence. The City of Walla Walla has made no request for the JCDA to expand their services and it would be a mistake for the City Council to take this action.

Greg Tompkins, Walla Walla County Commissioner, 49 NW B Street, College Place, had comments regarding the establishment of the JCDA and asked Councilmembers to think about the issue from a county-wide perspective. Mr. Tompkins felt this proposed action is a result of the City needing to be in control and expressed his frustration with the lack of communication from the City.

Bill Clemens, Chair of the Joint Community Development Agency, 650 E. Douglas, Walla Walla, indicated he was not privy to the duties of Mr. Walker but the list of long-range planning issues are the same issues that were on the City's Planning Commission work plan years ago.

Paul Tompkins, 1795 Highland Road, Walla Walla, professional land surveyor, commented on the need to do what is best to facilitate growth in the Walla Walla valley.

Rick Boyd, 1444 Grant Street, Walla Walla, JCDA Building Inspector, commended the efforts of Tom Glover and expressed concerns with the budgetary analysis and the impact of this decision on staff.

Todd Blevins, 1311 Magnolia Drive, Walla Walla, JCDA Building Inspector, reported he was initially opposed to the formation of the JCDA. Mr. Glover made the employees work together and the builders are very happy to have a "one stop shop". Mr. Blevins expressed skepticism with the City being able to perform the duties with only ten employees and asked the City Council not to take this action.

Mayor Cummins declared the public input closed.

City Manager Shawa reviewed:

- The staffing analysis was prepared by Assistant Development Services Director Walker and Finance Manager Teasdale based on professional experience. After a review of the building activity within

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the City limits and number of permits issued, staff believes ten employees will be able to adequately handle the permit workload and necessary planning services.

- The review of permits and planning activity over the last two years also reflects that the activity within the City and County is about equal, yet the City is paying sixty-two percent of the JCDA budget.
- The eighteen percent increase in the JCDA budget was determined by calculating the difference between their 2011 budget and 2015 proposed budget.
- The Interlocal agreement determines how the assets of the JCDA are to be returned/split between the City and County.
- The 2013 City's citizen satisfaction survey indicated that citizens were not happy with code enforcement. This is a function that was performed very effectively under the Police Department.

City Attorney Donaldson reported the City must address the need for a Planning Department. The JCDA does not provide the City with planning services or policy issues. City staff underestimated the amount of necessary planning work when the JCDA was formed.

There were questions whether the current Interlocal agreement could be modified so the JCDA would meet the needs the City has for planning services. City Attorney Donaldson reported that the City and County have different views on planning. This creates a healthy friction to balance urban versus rural needs. Because of this difference in planning philosophies, it is impossible for the JCDA to provide planning policy direction to both the County and the City.

There was further discussion on:

- The Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is making an effort to becoming a separate entity. They need a financial reserve fund to accomplish this. Mr. Glover reported the administrative costs of the MPO are covered by the Department of Transportation. The MPO is working on establishing a reserve fund through grants and matching funds required from the MPO partners. The necessary amount for this reserve fund is \$50,000 divided among the nine members. If the JCDA is discontinued then the MPO will have to be hosted by another entity.
- The concept of a "one-stop shop" was never realized. The recent policy change to require annexation prior to connection to City

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utilities will take care of the problem of residents in the UGA being bounced around between the City and County.

- Trakit is commercial software and was not developed for specific use by the JCDA.
- The formation of the JCDA helped both the City and County weather the financial downturn in the economy. Any future downturn would be handled through good management, cash reserves, and limiting staff growth.
- In 2010, the City was looking at extensive staff reductions. The creation of the JCDA was envisioned to create efficiencies and a positive experience for the customer. The level of service and efficiencies are not what was anticipated and the City needs additional planning services. The contract requires a reasonable period of notice which is what the City is considering.
- The agreement for the JCDA was anticipated to be modified and changed as issues arose. The City was not successful when they asked approval from the JCDA Board to eliminate the provision of Code Enforcement so this service could be resumed by the Police Department.
- There is an inherent conflict between the City and the County goals regarding planning and it is unlikely to be resolved with further discussion. Providing notice of the City's intent would not stop further discussion but does fulfill the City's contractual obligation.
- The Council recently tabled a decision regarding public use at the golf course. This issue was first raised when Mr. Walker provided notice of his retirement on July 15. This is a partnership with the County that is worth the effort and the money is not enough to warrant the strain on this relationship.
- There are difficult shortcomings in the Interlocal agreement between the City and the County. This is not a reflection on the efforts of the JCDA employees but is a reflection of the different needs that have not been adequately addressed.

Councilmember Pomraning moved that the City of Walla Walla formally notify the Walla Walla County Commissioners and the Walla Walla Joint Community Development Agency Board of Directors that the Walla Walla City Council is exercising the early termination clause 15.3 of the Intergovernmental agreement, and terminate funding of the Joint Community Development Agency effective January 1, 2015.

Councilmember Clark seconded the motion.

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Councilmembers expressed their individual opinions on the proposed action.

Jim Johnson, Chair of the Board of County Commissioners, 985 Reser Road, Walla Walla, commented it is very clear there are problems but if the City takes this action they can't be resolved. This vote by the City Council will be the end of the JCDA.

Councilmember Barrow moved to table the motion until August 27, 2014 for further discussion and possible resolution. The motion died for lack of a second.

There were additional comments on the impact of the proposed action.

The motion that the City of Walla Walla formally notify the Walla Walla County Commissioners and the Walla Walla Joint Community Development Agency Board of Directors that the Walla Walla City Council is exercising the early termination clause 15.3 of the Intergovernmental agreement, and terminate funding of the Joint Community Development Agency effective January 1, 2015 carried with 6 yes votes and 1 no vote by Councilmember Plucker.

3. UNFINISHED AND NEW BUSINESS

There was no new or unfinished business.

4. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.