

WALLA WALLA CITY COUNCIL
Work Session Minutes
February 10, 2014

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Cummins called the meeting to order at 4:00 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, Deputy City Manager Tim McCarty, Public Works Director Ki Bealey, Finance Manager Jean Teasdale, City Engineer Neal Chavre, Public Works Manager Mori Struve, Solid Waste Manager Damon Taam, Sustainability Coordinator Melissa Warner and City Clerk Kammy Hill.

2. ACTIVE AGENDA

- A. Review of 2013 Citizen Engagement and Priority Assessment; and Employee Engagement Survey.

City Manager Shawa and Deputy City Manager McCarty provided a brief introduction on the reasons and need for citizen and employee surveys; and introduced William Saint Amour of Cobalt Community Research participating via teleconference.

Mr. Saint Amour reviewed:

- The number of responses and statistical validity.
- Why the research matters.
- Study goals.
- Methodology.
- Bottom line is the City's overall American Customer Satisfaction Index (ASCI) is a 59. Benchmarks reflect a Washington State Average of 71; Four-State regional average of 65; Western regional average of 63; and a National average of 62.
- In-depth review of results and areas where improvement can have significant impact on engagement are:
 - Economic health
 - Transportation infrastructure (especially road maintenance)

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- Shopping opportunities
- Local government management
- Demographical information for survey questions.
- Outcome scores compared to benchmarks.
- Graphing of strategic priorities.
- Top themes.
- Perception versus reality: Minimize distortion or fix real performance issues.

Staff reflected on the value of the survey results and focusing on what is important in making strategic improvements and changes. There were comments on use of previous survey metrics to trend results; the balancing of resources for services; and keeping Council apprised of the communication plan as it is developed.

- B. Sustainability operations plan data collection/Georgetown University Energy Award.

Sustainability Coordinator Warner introduced Erendira Cruz, Director of the Sustainable Living Center.

Alex DeMambro, Chair of the Sustainability Committee, and Sandra Cannon, Sustainability Committee member, reviewed:

- Mission of Sustainability Committee
- Three spheres of sustainability: environmental, social, and economic.
- Purpose of sustainability plan.
- Goal setting baselines and process.
- Status and results of goals for 2013.
- Recommended next steps for 2014.

There was discussion on:

- Determining how to best reduce use of resources.
- Function of similar committees in other communities.
- Using a separate questionnaire for employees rather than including questions on an employee satisfaction survey.
- Use of software to calculate resource savings and providing data to citizens.

A majority of Council indicated they were comfortable having the Sustainability Committee gather cost estimates for software similar to that

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used by the Walla Walla School District to record, calculate and report on cost-saving measures.

Erendira Cruz, Director of the Sustainable Living Center, described:

- The Georgetown University Energy Prize.
- Why the City of Walla Walla should participate.
- Proposed partners and roles.
- Timeline.
- Steps necessary to competing for the prize.
- Next steps:
 - Confirm City commitment in participating.
 - Identify all interested partners.
 - Identify a proposal coordinator and staff leads for each partner organization.
 - Promote efforts and generate interest, enthusiasm and momentum from the community.
- Things needed from the City of Walla Walla to compete. The Sustainable Living Center and Cascade Natural Gas will take on the major roles.

There was discussion on:

- Components of a successful plan.
- The cost to the City of Walla Walla. Ms. Cruz indicated there would be no expense or staffing commitment from the City.
- The City has signed a letter of intent. The City Council will see an item on the agenda to authorize the City to proceed before any further commitments are made.
- The level of involvement by the City will determine costs. It is anticipated that it will mainly be staff time at meetings. Implementation of the plan may have costs, depending on funding.
- The competition includes both the municipality and citizens of Walla Walla.

It was the consensus of a majority of Council to support the voluntary participation in the Georgetown University Energy Prize competition by the City at this time.

3. OTHER BUSINESS

Mayor Cummins reported the Public Works Trust Fund Board approved a low interest loan of \$12.5 million for the LT2 water treatment plant upgrade.

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Mayor Cummins introduced the subject of the annual AWC Center for Quality Communities scholarship program and suggested that all local students be allowed to participate through their school counselors. The City would ask the scholarship counselors to submit one or two applicants from their school. A committee of one to two Councilmembers and staff will then review the applications and submit a finalist for consideration. The Council concurred with this suggested process.

Council commended staff for their recent snow clearing efforts.

4. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:07 p.m.