

WALLA WALLA CITY COUNCIL
Work Session Minutes
April 14, 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. (Councilmember Plucker arrived at 4:10 p.m.)

Absent: None

City staff in attendance: City Manager Nabel Shawa, Fire Chief Bob Yancey, Police Captain Terry Heisey, City Engineer Neal Chavre, and City Clerk Kammy Hill.

2. ACTIVE AGENDA

Mayor Cummins announced that the agenda was being re-ordered and Item D would be considered first.

D. All employees meeting discussion.

City Manager Shawa reported he would like the opportunity to bring all employees together for quarterly meetings. This would entail shutting down City facilities for no more than two hours. The all employee meetings would be helpful in breaking down departmental silos and ensuring the same message is communicated throughout the entire City organization.

There was discussion on:

- It is a good idea for all employees to hear the same message at the same time and many local businesses also hold these types of meetings.
- Staff will seek a no cost facility large enough for all City employees.
- Feasibility of holding two separate employee meetings so facilities are not required to close.
- Minimizing impact to the public if facilities are closed.
- Whether or not City facilities should be allowed to close.
- Use technology to provide services to the public.

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City Manager Shawa indicated he would further discuss this issue with the senior leadership team.

C. 2014 Alder Street project overview and grant discussion.

City Manager Shawa and City Engineer Chavre reviewed:

- Challenges and constraints.
- Base project is estimated at \$2,000,000 to replace traffic signals at 3rd, 1st, and Colville; repave Alder from 3rd to Colville; ADA upgrades and pedestrian safety improvements at 3rd, 1st, and Colville; and restripe roadway including diagonal parking from 5th to Palouse.
- Two additive alternates. Ability to include these options will depend primarily on bid cost:
 - Additive alternate #1 - \$200,000. Re-pave from Colville to Palouse; and ADA upgrades and pedestrian safety improvements at Spokane.
 - Additive Alternate #2 - \$400,000. Install new street lights from 3rd to Palouse.
- Funding sources total approximately \$1.56 million secured with an additional \$1.03 million pending grant award.
- Project purpose and goals are:
 - Replace outdated, unsafe traffic signals at 3rd Avenue, 1st Avenue, and Colville Street.
 - Replace poor roadway surface.
 - Improve pedestrian access and safety.
 - Meet ADA standards.
 - Increase downtown parking.
 - Promote economic development.
 - Maintain character of historic downtown.
- The additional grant should allow replacement of street lights with the "historic downtown standard" lights.
- Next steps, remaining challenges, and risks.

There was discussion on:

- The Downtown Walla Walla Foundation is still continuing to work towards a local improvement district (LID). This LID will primarily be for some of the downtown amenities, trees, and landscaping.
- The Alder Street improvements are first on the list of the Walla Walla Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization's projects and are highly likely to receive the additional grant funds.

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- The lane-configuration selected and impact on trucks making deliveries to businesses.

Mayor Cummins invited public input.

Dr. Don Ashley, 1128 SW Bade, College Place, expressed concerns with restricting deliveries and potential impact on commerce.

A. Legislative Wrap Up.

Dave Mastin, lobbyist for the coalition of local cities, County, and Port of Walla Walla, provided an overview of the past legislative session including:

- Number of bills considered by the State legislature versus the number that passed.
- The legislative makeup.
- Geopolitical dynamic.
- Budget.
- Outcome for the medium security wings at the Washington State Penitentiary.
- Bills that were enacted and those that did not pass.

There was discussion on the need for cities and other agencies to hire lobbyists to represent their interests before the State legislature.

B. Fireworks report.

City Manager Shawa reported the City's ordinance is more restrictive than what is allowed under State law. Enforcement of the City's fireworks restrictions is very difficult because Walla Walla County and City of College Place follow the State requirements. The simple solution is to change the City's firework regulations to conform to State law.

Fire Chief Yancey reviewed the fire and police response statistics and reiterated the difficulty in enforcement.

There was discussion on:

- Passage of the current ordinance was a result of a huge outcry from the public for banning fireworks. A difference has been noticed in the duration and times of discharge representing a change in behaviors.
- The public outcry was also the result of the impact of fireworks on domestic animals.

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- There were several serious fire incidents that were directly attributable to fireworks. The current ordinance is a compromise and doesn't satisfy everyone.
- Laws should improve public safety and be enforceable. There is no evidence that the current law is enforceable. The data does not show that the community is safer as a result of the current restrictions.
- Whether the City Council should consider loosening the types of fireworks allowed while maintaining the current date and time restrictions.
- The restrictions on allowable fireworks have impacted fundraising for local organizations.
- The violation of the current fireworks regulations is a criminal act. In order for the police to issue a citation, they must catch the perpetrator in the act and prove there was intent to commit a crime. This creates ill will within the community.
- Concerns with fire staffing being inadequate due to current mutual aid agreements.
- Abolishing the current law would send a negative statement and impact socially acceptable behavior.
- Laws should not be public statements when they can't be enforced. Laws should be based on sound policy issues.
- The current law was a middle ground to address the public's concerns and this has had a positive effect.
- Whether this should be a topic for Peak Democracy for feedback.
- Feasibility of changing the penalty to an infraction. This is not allowed under the City's adoption of the State law.
- Changing the types of fireworks that are allowed to be discharged on only July 4.

It was the consensus of a majority of Council to leave the current firework regulations in place.

3. OTHER BUSINESS

City Manager Shawa reported the Police Department's new mine-resistant, ambush-protected (MRAP) armored vehicle is available for viewing in front of City Hall.

4. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:29 p.m.