

WALLA WALLA CITY COUNCIL
Work Session Minutes
June 29, 2015

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, Fire Chief Bob Yancey, Police Chief Scott Bieber, Finance Director Jean Teasdale, Public Works Manager Mori Struve, City Engineer Neal Chavre, Water Distribution Supervisor Adrian Sutor, Water Treatment Supervisor Tom Krebs, Utilities Engineer Frank Nicholson, Engineer Nathan Black, and City Clerk Kammy Hill.

2. ACTIVE AGENDA

A. LT2 Water Treatment Plant upgrade status report.

City Manager Shawa reported the LT2 water treatment plant upgrade is at thirty percent design. There are significant cost challenges.

Utilities Engineer Nicholson introduced the project team.

Pierre Kwan, HDR Engineering, and staff reviewed:

- History of water system and reason for LT2 improvements. The primary driver of the upgrade is cryptosporidium and secondary need is the age of the current water treatment plant.
- The steps taken by the City and HDR Engineering for design and testing of a slow sand filtration system.
- Major cost drivers:
 - Sixty percent increase in sand volume to meet Department of Health requirements.
 - Resizing and relocation of sand filtration sites.
 - Use of federal funds requires the purchase and use of American iron and steel which drives up the cost.

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- Construction costs have risen faster than other segments of the economy.
- The construction estimate in 2010 was \$14.4 million. The 2015 cost estimate is \$26.3 million. This is a ninety-two percent increase beyond the City's control.
- The cost for a slow sand filtration system is considerably higher than UV system.
- Staff recommends switching to a UV system. The estimated cost difference between the two systems is \$11 million. Plant staff and the general contractor, Apollo, both are comfortable switching to a UV system.

There was discussion on:

- Slow sand filtration system would also help with the impact of turbidity on surface water.
- Replacement and reuse of sand.
- Data is driving the need for the increased size of the sand filtration tanks.
- Existing water tanks would still be used under the UV system.
- Both UV and slow sand require electricity.
- Cost analysis if the City must issue bonds on the open market versus low-interest loans and impact on user rates.
- Construction of a UV system would shave a year off project completion.

Amy Jennings, Apollo Construction, has no concerns switching from construction of a slow sand filtration system to a UV system.

There was additional discussion on:

- A change in the proposed system would save the historic building located at the water treatment plant.
- A slow sand filtration system would allow the use of surface water sooner than a UV system when there is a fire in the watershed. Staff commented on a study performed by the U.S. Forest Service on the impact of fires on water turbidity. The U.S. Forest Service is highly committed to the watershed and would use necessary resources in case of a fire.
- The City has a redundant water supply with both surface water and groundwater.
- All issues must be carefully weighed to determine what is best for the City's water system, not just cost.
- Staff will present results of the utility rate study when complete.

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

3. OTHER BUSINESS

City Manager Shawa reported there is a high level of concern with the current record-breaking heat and potential impact of fireworks. Walla Walla County is not considering a ban but is encouraging responsible use.

City Attorney Donaldson reported that the City of College Place is unlikely to enact a ban. Staff has drafted an ordinance but a ban is unlikely to be enforceable. A special meeting would be necessary to consider an ordinance that would allow the fire chief to enact a ban for future years.

There was discussion on:

- Governor Inslee has asked the public to voluntarily suspend the use of fireworks this year.
- The risks and dangers that fireworks pose this year due to the high heat.
- Informing the public that enforcement of current restrictions will be vigorously pursued.
- Elimination of the public display of fireworks may lead to the use of more individual fireworks.
- Enforceability of current firework restrictions and difficulties faced by officers.
- Educating the public on the existing code requirements restricting hours of discharge and types of fireworks.
- Putting an issue on the City's State legislative agenda so firework changes can be addressed on a statewide basis.

A majority of Council was not in favor of holding a special meeting to consider a proposed ordinance to allow for a ban.

Council suggested consideration of the ordinance at a regular City Council meeting.

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

4. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:03 p.m.