

WALLA WALLA CITY COUNCIL
Retreat Minutes
January 14, 2017

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Pro Tem Barrow called the meeting to order at 8:10 a.m. in the Fulton Community Room, 54 E. Moore Street.

Present: Councilmembers Jim Barrow, Barbara Clark, Jerry Cummins, Steve Moss, Tom Scribner, and Mayor Allen Pomraning.
(Mayor Pomraning arrived at 8:19 a.m.)

Absent: Councilmember Dick Morgan.

City staff in attendance: City Manager Nabel Shawa and City Clerk Kammy Hill.

2. 2017 OBJECTIVES AND UPDATES

City Manager Shawa reviewed and discussed the following objectives and updates:

- Clear direction and progress on chronic homeless citizens.
- Ambulance financial sustainability.
- City Hall fire code update.
- City Council Chambers update.
- Security systems at City facilities.
- State legislative amendment for growth management act opt-in cities to authorize implementation of Real Estate Excise Tax (REET) 2.
- Economic development projects/proposals.
- Leadership team and staff development: LEAN and emergency management continuity of operations.
- Byron Olson has been hired for a limited duration as Deputy City Manager. Initial projects include Americans with Disabilities Act compliance; City Hall fire code improvements; updates to the Council Chambers; security system updates for City facilities; and assisting with City excellence development and training.

3. BREAK

The meeting was recessed for a break at 10:00 a.m. and reconvened at 10:09 a.m.

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4. COUNCIL ISSUES

Mayor Pomraning announced each Councilmember will be given fifteen minutes to speak on any City issues. The order will be based on seniority on the City Council.

Councilmember Cummins reviewed the following items/issues:

- Limiting the items/responses under new and unfinished business. Any new major legislation should be reflected as an agenda item for public transparency.
- Quarterly reports from the police department.
- Ambulance services.
- Installing fiber optic conduit as part of the City's infrastructure improvements.
- Work towards burying utility lines.
- Enhancing communication of snow removal routes.
- Building true community partnerships (both accountability and financial) towards reducing homelessness.
- State of the City presentations by City Manager reflecting the Council's legislative goals (infrastructure, homelessness, police relations, Town Center, economic development, Mill Creek channel).

Councilmember Clark reviewed the following items/issues:

- Homelessness: Need a City committee; County should contribute money towards the City's current homeless expenses.
- Council response to public comments during a Council meeting. There was a consensus of a majority of Council to have the Mayor provide clear direction/feedback to staff at the conclusion of the public comment period.
- Replanting trees along Rose Street adjacent to the Red Lion Hotel.
- Formulation of an urban tree policy.
- Promoting strong neighborhoods including giving block captains a role in alerting neighbors to events such as leaf pickup and snow plowing.
- Development of an affordable housing policy and encouraging the construction of affordable housing as part of other housing projects.
- Installation of a public restroom in the downtown area.
- Expanding the low income discount for City utilities to those other than just senior or disabled citizens.

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Councilmember Barrow reviewed the following items/issues:

- Opposed to a utility rate structure based upon a customer's ability to pay.
- Installation of conduit during infrastructure improvement projects to get serious about undergrounding utility lines.
- Alternative fuel vehicles for the City and installation of electrical vehicle charging facilities.
- Preparation of an annual report.
- Resume City Manager written updates on a regular basis.
- Explore the offer by Alliance for the Homeless to donate "Conestoga" houses for homeless shelter.
- Structured quarterly meetings for more public involvement and feedback.

Mayor Pomraning reviewed the following items/issues:

- Look for opportunities to build revenue while controlling and reducing expenses such as:
 - Annexation of islands.
 - Cumulative effect of additive wells based on recent Supreme Court decision and impact on City.
 - Regulate and tax short-term rental housing.
 - Implement a \$5 annual vehicle license fee to give future City Councilmembers leverage with state legislators.
 - Construct and lease a commercial concert stage. Remove amphitheater from Fort Walla Walla Park.
 - Raise landfill tipping fees to cover City's direct costs.
 - Encourage marijuana processors as businesses within the City.
 - Close Jefferson pool.
 - Restructure emergency medical services or negotiate a reallocation of EMS levy funds.
 - Look at excess City properties and start a process to surplus these properties.
 - Create a policy to eliminate "scope creep" at the aviary. The aviary is not a business program.
 - Value of municipal tree ownership and the need to have a capital program to address tree replacement and liability.

Councilmember Scribner reviewed the following items/issues:

- Ad hoc committee is still reviewing election of Council by wards and other means of increasing the diversity of Council members, including an increase in compensation.
- Affirmative direction from Council for future lodging tax allocations.

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- Necessity of the Deputy City Manager position.
- Combining the Downtown Walla Walla Foundation, Chamber of Commerce, and Visit Walla Walla organizations to reduce overhead expenses.
- Work towards undergrounding utilities.

Councilmember Moss reviewed the following items/issues:

- Work towards undergrounding utilities.
- Continue discussion and relationships with undocumented citizens such as exploring status as a sanctuary city.
- Hold a Work Session on the comprehensive plan amendment process and explore ways to encourage affordable housing.
- Explore installation of an electric vehicle charging station.
- Hold joint meetings with the County, Port, and City of College Place when appropriate to support collaboration among the agencies.
- Work on the relationship with the Union Bulletin.

5. LUNCH AND WRAP UP DISCUSSION

There was general discussion on:

- Expansion and promotion of community block watch programs.
- Council liaison appointments with the return of Councilmember Morgan.
- Networking among neighborhoods.
- Use of GPS and GIS technology for "live" leaf pickup reporting.

6. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:31 p.m.