

WALLA WALLA CITY COUNCIL
Regular Meeting Minutes
January 23, 2019

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

Present: Councilmembers Yazmin Bahena, Jerry Cummins, Myron Huie, Steve Moss, Tom Scribner, and Mayor Barbara Clark.

Absent: Councilmember Riley Clubb.

City staff in attendance: City Manager Nabel Shawa, City Attorney Tim Donaldson, Fire Chief Bob Yancey, Police Chief Scott Bieber, Finance Director Jean Teasdale, Human Resources Director Pam Taylor, Fleet Services Manager Matt Edwards; Accounting Supervisor Liz Moeller, and City Clerk Kammy Hill.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/MOMENT OF SILENCE

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

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS

R.L. McFarland, 3731 Middle Waitsburg Road, Walla Walla, suggested improving lighting in front of City Hall.

4. CONSENT AGENDA

City Clerk Hill introduced the Consent Agenda, Items A through F, as follows:

- A. Resolution No. 2019-01 rejecting all bids for the library security project.
- B. Resolution No. 2019-07 declaring City property surplus and authorizing its disposal.
- C. Resolution No. 2019-08 authorizing acceptance of a 2019 traffic safety grant from the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs.

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- D. Approval of minutes of the Work Session held January 7, 2019.
- E. Approval of minutes of the regular meeting held January 9, 2019.
- F. Approval of minutes of the leadership training held January 12, 2019.

Mayor Clark announced Item B was being removed from the Consent Agenda for separate consideration.

Mayor Clark invited public input. No one in the audience chose to address the City Council on any of these items.

Councilmember Cummins moved to adopt Consent Agenda Items A, C, D, E and F. Councilmember Moss seconded the motion. The motion unanimously carried with 6 yes votes and 0 no votes.

5. ACTIVE AGENDA

- B. Resolution No. 2019-07 declaring City property surplus and authorizing its disposal.

Staff reported the first two guns on the surplus list are duty service weapons. These guns will be purchased by the Police Guild to present to a member that is retiring and one that is leaving the City's employment. The other weapons have not been used for many years and are taking up room in the armory, so staff is recommending their disposal. When the police department does not know the origination of the guns, they are destroyed. Otherwise the weapons are traded in for credit at a federally-licenses firearms dealer.

There was discussion on:

- The guns will likely be refurbished and sold by the dealer.
- The Police Guild pays for the actual cost to replace the service weapon.
- The State preempts any ability by the City to modify gun laws so the City can only ask for voluntary considerations, such as destroying any City surplus guns.
- This item was removed from the Consent Agenda to ask Council to consider postponing action until policy can be developed on the disposal of guns.

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**Councilmember Moss moved to table Resolution No. 2019-07.
Councilmember Cummins seconded the motion.**

Police Chief Bieber asked that Council consider declaring surplus only the two Glock service weapons due to a retirement of an officer next week.

Councilmember Moss, with the consent of Councilmember Cummins, modified his motion to table Resolution No. 2019-07 to exclude the two Glock service weapons. The motion to table failed to pass with 3 yes votes by Councilmembers Bahena, Cummins and Moss and 3 no votes by Councilmembers Huie, Scribner and Mayor Clark.

Councilmember Scribner moved to adopt Resolution No. 2019-07 with a modification to specify that the guns other than the two Glock service weapons are destroyed. Councilmember Moss seconded the motion.

Mayor Clark invited public input.

Janet Perry, no address provided, asked for the approximate value of the guns being considered for destruction.

Mike Allison, no address provided, felt that the City needed the money towards the purchase of an ambulance and some of the guns may be of value to collectors.

Staff responded that the trade-in value of the weapons is approximately \$1500, and the cost of a new ambulance is roughly \$208,000.

Jeff Jenkins, no address provided, commented that the shotguns would likely be converted by a law enforcement agency to a less than lethal weapon.

There was discussion on:

- Ensuring that background checks are completed if/when the guns are sold in a lawful manner. Staff reported that background checks are required of gun purchasers in all fifty states.
- The trade-in value for the weapons is not included in the budget.
- Feasibility of the guns being used in an assault-type situation.
- The intent in destroying the guns is mainly symbolic and reflects a position of not wanting to contribute to making more guns available.

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- Having a Work Session to establish a policy on how surplus guns are disposed of or destroyed.

The motion to adopt Resolution No. 2019-07 with a modification to specify that the guns other than the two Glock service weapons are destroyed failed with 3 yes votes by Councilmembers Bahena, Scribner and Mayor Clark and 3 no votes by Councilmembers Cummins, Huie, and Moss.

Staff suggested consideration of an alternate Resolution No. 2019-07 that would remove all the items from the surplus property list with the exception of the two Glock service weapons and the two Crown Victoria sedans.

Councilmember Cummins moved to adopt Resolution No. 2019-07 with a modification to remove all items from the surplus property list with the exception of the two Glock service weapons and the two Crown Victoria sedans. Councilmember Huie seconded the motion. The motion unanimously carried with 6 yes votes and 0 no votes.

- A. Presentation and public input on proposal to establish an ambulance services public utility.

Fire Chief Yancey reviewed:

- The need for an ambulance utility fee for continuation of quality ambulance services.
- Fire and ambulance services consistently receive the highest rating on the citizen satisfaction surveys.
- Proposed establishment of occupancy classifications: residential dwelling; assisted living facilities; hotels/motels; and non-residential.
- First step for determining the most equitable way to charge for services: flat fee or equivalent residential unit. Staff is recommending the equivalent residential unit based on type of classification.
- The City's utility billing system will be used to bill the ambulance utility fee.
- Total fire and ambulance department expenditure budget distribution based on the 2016 FCS Study.
- Current ambulance revenue sources without imposition of the ambulance utility with amount of general fund contribution.
- Proposed ambulance utility rate for 2019 is \$3.50 per equivalent residential unit with an increase in 2020 to \$6.00 per equivalent residential unit.

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- Ambulance fund recap with inclusion of the proposed ambulance utility revenue.
- The ambulance utility fee is needed for: funding ambulance vehicle replacements; lack of any reserve funds; and maintaining the quality of emergency medical services and rapid response.

There was discussion on:

- Amount of general fund subsidy for ambulance services.
- Lack of vehicle replacement funding for ambulances and fire trucks.
- The City has committed to continuing to provide ambulance services outside of the City limits until expiration of the emergency medical services levy on December 31, 2020.
- Charging businesses on an employee basis when the employee may also be a City resident and whether this could be considered double-charging. There is no perfect equitable solution, but a flat fee would shift more of the funding burden on residents.
- Use of general fund revenues for fire and ambulance services.
- Proposed increase in expenditures to restore funding for ambulance vehicles necessitates an increase in the amount of the proposed rate.
- Billing will be based on existing utility accounts.
- The main crux of the problem in funding ambulance service is the amount reimbursed by Medicare and Medicaid is far less than the cost of the service.
- Number of personnel for fire and ambulance staffing.
- Advanced life support is a much higher level of service than what is being provided by neighboring jurisdictions.
- Exploring creation of a regional fire authority for fire and ambulance services.
- Determining a fair amount for the number of trips to a location.

Mayor Clark invited public input.

John Liebenrood, no address provided, suggested that the number of ambulance runs is likely based on age rather than location.

Jeff Jenkins, no address provided, asked how ambulance utility rates would be established in the future and whether advanced life support personnel are sent out on all medical calls.

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Mike Allison, no address provided, felt it was unfair for property owners to be assessed the fee and it would have a negative impact on affordable housing.

John Sutliff, no address provided, commented on the negative impact to property owners that have leases with existing businesses and suggested they be billed directly. Mr. Sutliff also asked if the State and County will be exempt from the utility fee.

Mike Allison, no address provided, asked if the Housing Authority and Whitman College would be exempt from the utility fee.

Manuel Almanzar, no address provided, commented that Walla Walla has a first-class ambulance service and this utility fee will support continuation of this service. If ambulance services are privatized, there will be a drastic reduction in the level of service. This fee should be supported for a continuation of service.

John Sutliff, no address provided, asked if the number of employees will be shown on the utility bill.

Staff responded to the questions as follows:

- The location of people drives the number and costs for service. Sparsely populated locations will not have the same number of service calls as the more populated areas.
- Rate increases will be confined to the cost to provide the service as defined by the financial study.
- The City is unable to bill businesses unless there is a utility account established for them.
- The only exemption to those responsible for paying the fee are Medicaid patients currently receiving in-home or nursing facility care. There are no exemptions for government agencies, schools, or hospitals.
- Dispatchers uses a triage system to dispatch the necessary services in response to emergency calls. The City only staffs for advanced life support services within the City limits.
- Customers can check with the Finance Department to verify the number of equivalent residential units being billed and there will be an appeal process.

Council commented that there are three main issues:

- What is the appropriate level of service?

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- How much are people willing to pay for the service?
- How will the charges will be assessed?

No action was taken.

6. COUNCIL MEMBER MEETING REPORTS

Councilmember Moss reported attendance at the leadership training held January 12; and the Water & Wastewater Advisory Committee meeting held January 16.

Councilmember Huie reported attendance at the leadership training held January 12; and the Fort Walla Walla Museum Board meeting held January 15.

Councilmember Bahena reported attendance at the leadership training held January 12; the ad hoc ward education committee held January 15; the Civil Service Commission meeting held January 16; and the Valley Transit Board meeting held January 17.

Councilmember Cummins reported attendance at the leadership training held January 12; the Good Roads Committee meeting held January 14; the Borleske Stadium Association Board meeting held January 14; the Visit Walla Walla annual meeting held January 16; the Valley Transit Board meeting held January 17; and the Valley Transit General Manager Selection Committee meeting held January 21.

Councilmember Scribner reported attendance at the Arts Commission meeting held January 10; the leadership training held January 12; the Blue Mountain Humane Society Board meeting held January 15; the ad hoc ward education committee held January 15; the agenda preparation meeting held January 16; and the Valley Transit Board meeting held January 17.

Mayor Clark reported attendance on the Grapevine radio show held January 11; the leadership training held January 12; the Borleske Stadium Association Board meeting held January 14; the Emergency Management Executive Committee meeting held January 15; the ad hoc ward education committee held January 15; the agenda preparation meeting held January 16; the Visit Walla Walla annual meeting held January 16; a meeting with the Washington State University landscape architecture students held January 17; the Sustainability Committee

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meeting held January 17; and the Port of Walla Walla Economic Development Advisory Committee meeting held January 22.

7. UNFINISHED AND NEW BUSINESS

Councilmember Cummins moved to excuse the absence of Councilmember Clubb since he is absent due to City business. Councilmember Moss seconded the motion. The motion unanimously carried with 6 yes votes and 0 no votes.

Staff will look into the issue of lighting in front of City Hall.

Baker Boyer Bank is offering no interest loans for Federal employees that have been furloughed by the Federal government. City staff will work with furloughed Federal workers that may be having a difficult time paying their utility bills.

8. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.