

WALLA WALLA CITY COUNCIL
Regular Meeting Minutes
March 27, 2019

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Clark called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m. at Edison Elementary School, 1315 E. Alder Street.

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

Absent: Councilmember Steve Moss.

City staff in attendance: City Manager Nabel Shawa, City Attorney Tim Donaldson, Fire Chief Bob Yancey, Development Services Director Elizabeth Chamberlain, Finance Director Jean Teasdale, Public Works Director Ki Bealey, Technology Services Director Chris Owen, Human Resources Director Pam Taylor, Fleet Services Manager Matt Edwards, Transportation Engineer Mike Laughery, Accounting Supervisor Liz Moeller, and City Clerk Kammy Hill.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/MOMENT OF SILENCE

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

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Jean Dolling, 208 Detour Road, Walla Walla, expressed concerns with the roundabout proposed for the Alder/Palouse Street intersection.

4. CONSENT AGENDA

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

- A. Resolution No. 2019-36 awarding the bid for the undergrounding of the overhead utilities on Spokane Street to M&M Excavation, LLC, in the amount of \$110,612.18.
- B. Resolution No. 2019-37 authorizing the purchase of one new model Rotary Contour Mower and Debris Blower from Western Equipment Distributors for \$68,600.

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- C. Resolution No. 2019-38 awarding the base bid and Alternative A1 for the Howard -Bryant bridge replacement project to Nelson Construction, Corp. in the amount of \$659,219.17.
- D. 2019 Interfund loan review.
- E. Acceptance of resignation of Abra Bennett from the Sustainability Committee due to a relocation.
- F. Approval of minutes of the Work Session held March 11, 2019.
- G. Approval of minutes of the regular meeting held March 13, 2019.

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 through G. Councilmember Clubb seconded the motion. The motion unanimously carried with 6 yes votes and 0 no votes.

5. ACTIVE AGENDA

- A. Public hearing and Ordinance No. 2019-08 establishing the ambulance service as a public utility.

City Manager Shawa reported staff is recommending the City Council hold the public hearing and delay action on a proposed Ordinance until April 10. Staff is also seeking direction on their recommendation to establish a \$3.50 utility fee for 2019 and 2020, instead of the previously proposed increase to \$6.00 for 2020.

Fire Chief Yancey reviewed:

- Reasons why staff is recommending establishment of an ambulance utility fee.
- Citizen satisfaction with fire and ambulance services.
- Establishment of occupancy classifications:
 - Residential dwelling.
 - Assisted living facilities.
 - Hotels/Motels.
 - Non-residential - any city location not included in residential, assisted living facilities, or hotel/motel categories.

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- Rate and account implementation. Staff proposes implementing the Ambulance Utility Fee using a formula which establishes Equivalent Residential Units (ERUs).
 - The ERU would be based on the average household size within the City limits of Walla Walla as published by the U.S. Census Bureau.
 - For the initial calculations, the average household size in the City of Walla Walla is 2.34 persons per household.
 - Staff has reached out by phone to every business.
 - For those businesses staff was unable to talk with, a letter was sent asking them to respond with their full-time equivalent (FTE) employee count.
 - Businesses will be assigned the number of FTEs reported in their business license application/renewal, or their Labor and Industries reports, or other available information.
 - The City's utility billing system will be used to bill the Ambulance Utility Fee.
 - For residential dwellings, each separate dwelling unit will be considered a billing unit.
 - For hotels/motels, the fee will be based on the number of rooms multiplied by the average occupancy (57.7%) multiplied by the average number of occupants per room (1.2) divided by the average household size in the City of Walla Walla (2.34 persons per household).
 - For assisted living facilities, the fee will be based on the number of beds minus Medicaid exemptions divided by the average household size (2.34 per household in Walla Walla).
 - Non-residential, the fee will be calculated on the number of FTEs divided by average household size (2.34 per household in Walla Walla).
- 2019 Total Fire and Ambulance Department Expenditure Budget Distribution Based on 2016 FCS Study.
- Current Ambulance Revenue Sources without Ambulance Utility (based on FCS study).
- The Ambulance Utility is proposed to start in 2019:
 - 2019 – the proposed rate is \$3.50 per ERU
 - Staff now recommends leaving the rate at \$3.50 per ERU for 2020 as we evaluate the progress of the Regional Fire Authority discussion, anticipated retroactive revenue for the ground emergency medical transport (GEMT) program for 2017 and 2018, and the unknown impact to revenue due to ambulance

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services being provided by County Fire District #4 and College Place Fire Department.

- Ambulance transport and other service fees will stay the same.
- With the implementation of the Ambulance Utility Fee, the level of service will be improved by enhancing the state-of-readiness through increased funding for equipment and vehicle replacement.
- Ambulance fund recap and why an ambulance utility fee is being proposed.
- Staff recommendation:
 - Hold the public hearing and discuss the proposal but postpone the vote on the Ambulance Utility Fee until April 10, 2019, when the full Council is present.
 - Adopt the \$3.50 Ambulance Utility Fee and do not adopt the additional \$2.50 fee increase planned for 2020; leave the \$3.50 fee in place.
 - In approximately one year, reassess the need for any fee adjustment, based on Regional Fire Authority status, GEMT revenue, loss of market share to Fire District #4 and College Place, and potential changes in the distribution model for the emergency medical services levy.

There was discussion on:

- Use of revenues within the ambulance fund for replacement vehicles and personnel.
- Whether the cost allocations in the FCS study between fire and ambulance services are accurate.
- Cost savings to both fire and ambulance due to the combined efficiencies in service. Staff is not attempting to shift all of the costs identified in the FCS study from fire to ambulance.
- Ambulance fund has required annual transfers from the general fund to address negative cash balances.
- Whether the proposed formula double counts people as both residents and employees and students.
- Ambulance services are provided outside of the City limits, but the ambulance utility fee will only apply to properties within the City limits.
- Whether there are any other methods of collecting the utility fee other than the City utility bill. The statutes require the fee be collected on the utility bill.
- Using the square footage of property to determine the utility fee. Staff explained that it is people that need ambulance services and believe

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assessing the fee on a people-based formula is a fairer way to attribute the cost for service.

- Increase in projected expenses are related to increased personnel costs and the need to replace ambulances and equipment.
- No formula is going to be perfect, but it is smart to spread the costs based on people.
- The City cannot ignore the need to replace vehicles.
- The bad debt consists of Medicare and Medicaid write-offs and people that cannot pay for the service. The City knows this is going to occur but is unable to reduce projected revenue until the write off occurs.
- The City Council will be looking at the possibility of expanding the low-income utility discount beyond the discount offered to seniors and people with disabilities.
- Correspondence received from Providence St. Mary Medical Center regarding cost of air ambulance service and lack of other alternatives to move patients needing care that cannot be provided locally. The ambulance utility fee may open the door to be able to consider providing long distance transports. An annual subscription to Life Flight is also available for people to purchase.
- Best approach to providing emergency medical services in the area is the establishment of a regional fire authority.

Mayor Clark declared the public hearing open at 8:07 p.m.

Becky Crump expressed concerns with increasing costs on the City utility bills.

Rogelio Jara, through Councilmember Bahena as translator, asked if the City had explored other options for increasing ambulance revenues other than taxes and fees.

R.L. McFarland suggested exploring the option to purchase ambulance insurance, similar to what is being offered by Life Flight, and the benefit to the airport by having air ambulance services available.

John Sutliff felt that businesses that have part-time employees should also be charged the utility fee for these employees.

Kathy Mulkerin asked how the City would replace the ambulance service if there was a catastrophic event and spoke in support of the utility fee.

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Jean Dolling felt the real problem is Medicare and Medicaid not paying their equitable costs for service.

Mayor Clark declared the public hearing closed at 8:23 p.m.

Councilmember Cummins moved to table Ordinance No. 2019-08 until the April 10, 2019 meeting. Councilmember Clubb seconded the motion. The motion unanimously carried with 6 yes votes and 0 no votes.

It was the consensus of Council to have the Ordinance brought back for consideration on April 10 to contain an amendment that the fee for 2019 and 2020 would be \$3.50. Staff reported the ordinance does capture part-time employees in calculating the number of full-time equivalents.

- B. Resolution No. 2019-39 authorizing a contract for the purchase of Munis and EnerGov software and implementation.

Finance Director Teasdale reviewed:

- Why the transfer to new software is necessary.
- Cost benefit to transfer from Eden to Munis and EnerGov.
- Steps taken to date.
- Enterprise resource planning.
- Project management approach, scope and timeline.
- Migration costs.

There was discussion on:

- Security of having the software cloud-oriented.
- Annual maintenance costs are comparable to those paid for current software.

Mayor Clark invited public input.

Becky Crump asked what the lifespan is anticipated for the new software.

Technology Services Director Owen responded that staff expects a longer lifespan than the eighteen years currently experienced with Eden, which is the software being replaced.

Councilmember Clubb moved to adopt Resolution No. 2019-39. Councilmember Huie seconded the motion. The motion unanimously carried with 6 yes votes and 0 no votes.

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- C. Resolution No. 2019-35 awarding the bid for the Tietan and Sunset infrastructure repair and replacement project to Premier Excavation, Inc., in the amount of \$1,825,720.61.

City Manager Shawa reported this project had been previously reviewed with the City Council. Staff is proposing a mini roundabout at the Tietan Street/3rd Avenue intersection. The bid came in slightly lower than the engineer's estimate. There was brief discussion on how and why a contractor shows up on the debarred contractor listing. The project is anticipated to begin on or before May 1 for completion prior to the fair.

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

Councilmember Cummins moved to adopt Resolution No. 2019-35. Councilmember Bahena seconded the motion. The motion unanimously carried with 6 yes votes and 0 no votes.

- D. Ordinance No. 2019-06 amending the 2019-2020 maintenance and operations budget; and
Ordinance No. 2019-07 establishing new projects and amending the capital improvement project budget.

Finance Director Teasdale reviewed the proposed amendments.

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

Councilmember Cummins moved to adopt Ordinance No. 2019-06. Councilmember Huie seconded the motion. The motion unanimously carried with 6 yes votes and 0 no votes.

Councilmember Cummins moved to adopt Ordinance No. 2019-07. Councilmember Huie seconded the motion. The motion unanimously carried with 6 yes votes and 0 no votes.

6. COUNCIL MEMBER MEETING REPORTS

Councilmember Huie reported attendance at the Work Session held March 25; and the Port of Walla Walla Economic Development Advisory Committee meeting held March 26.

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Councilmember Bahena reported attendance at the Downtown Walla Walla Foundation Board meeting held March 19; the Civil Service Commission meeting held March 20; the Valley Transit Board meeting held March 21; and the Work Session held March 25.

Councilmember Cummins reported attendance at a KUJ radio interview held March 15; a stormwater fairness equity group meeting held March 19; the Valley Transit Board meeting held March 21; the Port of Walla Walla Economic Development Advisory Committee meeting held March 26; and a lobbying effort in Olympia on March 24 and March 25.

Councilmember Clubb reported attendance at the Visit Walla Walla Board meeting held March 20; and the Work Session held March 25.

Councilmember Scribner reported attendance at the Blue Mountain Humane Society Board meeting held March 19; the agenda preparation meeting held March 20; the Valley Transit Board meeting held March 21; and the Work Session held March 25.

Mayor Clark reported attendance at the summer parkways event planning meeting held March 14; a greeting of students from Sasayama, Japan on March 19; the agenda preparation meeting held March 20; the Sustainability Committee meeting held March 22; the Community Development Block Grant Advisory Committee meeting held March 25; the Work Session held March 25; the Port of Walla Walla Economic Development Advisory Committee meeting held March 26; and the Arbor Day planning meeting held March 27.

7. UNFINISHED AND NEW BUSINESS

Mayor Clark reported that the roundabouts have already been approved by the City Council and no further action will be taken.

City Manager Shawa reported the April 10 City Council meeting will be held at the Courtyard by Marriott on Rose Street.

8. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:21 p.m.