

WALLA WALLA CITY COUNCIL
Regular Meeting Minutes
September 25, 2019

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

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

Absent: Councilmember Tom Scribner.

City staff in attendance: City Manager Nabel Shawa, City Attorney Tim Donaldson, Deputy City Manager Byron Olson, Public Works Director Ki Bealey, Finance Director Jean Teasdale, Development Services Director Elizabeth Chamberlain, Transportation Engineer Monte Puymon, and City Clerk Kammy Hill.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE/MOMENT OF SILENCE

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

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Sharon Schiller, Walla Walla, suggested keeping youth occupied to deter vandalism in the parks, such as installing a half court basketball court at Washington Park.

John Keithley and Teresa Bristol, Walla Walla, asked for an update on the issue of allowing all-terrain vehicles on City streets.

Vic Diaz, Walla Walla, speaking on behalf of the Walla Walla Sunrise Movement Hub, asked how the City plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and how the City is tracking their results.

Meg Duhr, Walla Walla, expressed concerns with trucks using compression brakes on Highway 12 and asked for additional signs and perhaps additional noise restrictions within the City.

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Staff responded as follows:

- The issue of all-terrain vehicles on City streets is scheduled for discussion at the October 7 Work Session.
- The City is not tracking greenhouse gas emission data and described the sustainability actions the City has enacted.
- Compression brakes are illegal. The City will draft a letter to the State asking for additional enforcement along Highway 12.

Council asked for additional discussion on greenhouse gas emissions during new and unfinished business.

4. CONSENT AGENDA

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

- A. Resolution No. 2019-109 awarding the water system leak detection contract to Utilis in the amount of \$81,750.
- B. Resolution No. 2019-110 authorizing a contract with JUB Engineers for an update to the general sewer plan to evaluate the biological oxygen demand (BOD) analysis of the load capacity of the Wastewater Treatment Plant in an amount not to exceed \$96,300.
- C. Resolution No. 2019-111 authorizing a contract with Andrew Kottkamp with Kottkamp, Yedinak, and Esworthy to provide hearing examiner services.
- D. Resolution No. 2019-112 authorizing a contract with Northwest Groundwater Services for hydrogeologic services related to improving and expanding the City's aquifer storage and recovery (ASR) program in the amount of \$187,826.
- E. Resolution No. 2019-113 declaring items surplus and authorizing their disposal.
- F. Ordinance No. 2019-19 amending the 2019-2020 biennium maintenance and operations budget; and Ordinance No. 2019-20 amending the capital improvement project (CIP) budget.

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G. Approval of minutes of the Work Session held September 9, 2019.

H. Approval of minutes of the regular meeting held September 11, 2019.

Council had questions on Item C as to whether hearing examiner services could be procured closer to Walla Walla to reduce travel costs. Staff reported this is a very specialized field and only one response was received to the request for proposals.

Council commented on the budget amendment and revenue coming into the ambulance fund from the GEMT program.

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 H. Councilmember Moss seconded the motion. The motion unanimously carried with 6 yes votes and 0 no votes.

5. ACTIVE AGENDA

A. Resolution No. 2019-114 authorizing a contract with Anderson Perry & Associates for the Alder/Poplar – Merriam to Colville project in an amount not to exceed \$925,444.

Transportation Engineer Puymon reviewed:

- The Poplar/Alder Street corridor will be divided into four projects over multiple years.
- A corridor study was performed to improve safety on this roadway that has the highest accident rating within the City.
- The roadway will be modified from four lanes to three lanes with a dedicated bicycle lane.
- Council has previously approved the design to include roundabouts at Alder/Park Street and Alder/Palouse Street.
- This four-phase plan is estimated at a total of \$22 million, with the first phase estimated at \$5.9 million.
- Schedule and cost.
- Scope of contract and special items.
- Letter from United Blind of Walla Walla expressing concerns with visually impaired people navigating a roundabout at

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Alder/Palouse Street was received after the extensive public outreach efforts. There is a cost savings for a four-way stop but may result in the loss of grant funding. The grant application favors a roundabout for safety.

- Traffic signals at 1st, 3rd, and 4th Avenues are not warranted for traffic but may be beneficial for pedestrians. It is approximately \$750,000 to update these signals.
- Council options:
 - Approve contract as scoped.
 - Reduce scope by replacing roundabout at Alder/Palouse with a four-way stop as requested by United Blind of Walla Walla.
 - Pursue another consultant.

There was discussion on:

- Preferred method of land acquisition is through negotiation. Eminent domain is the last resort.
- The lane configurations were established through the study and public outreach efforts.
- Elimination of signals at 1st, 3rd, and 4th Avenues and replacing with rapid flashing beacons for pedestrian safety.
- Concerns expressed by United Blind of Walla Walla with the Alder/Palouse roundabout.
- Improving pedestrian crossings around St. Mary Medical Center.
- Clarification on the scope of work and further public outreach on the proposed removal of traffic signals.
- Refining the design of the roundabouts with visual depictions for pedestrian crossings.

Mayor Clark invited public input.

R.L. McFarland, Walla Walla, commented that there are three churches and the public library at or near the Alder/Palouse intersection and it is important to address pedestrian safety versus receipt of grant funds.

There was additional discussion regarding pedestrian safety at the proposed roundabout at Alder/Palouse Street. Pedestrian access for the visually impaired is what will be affected at the roundabout as the "normal" cues of a vehicle stopping at an intersection will be absent. Roundabouts are safer for pedestrians as vehicle speeds are much lower resulting in less severe injuries in the case of a pedestrian/vehicle

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accident. A grant application has already been submitted for a roundabout based on earlier action taken by the City Council.

Councilmember Moss moved to adopt Resolution No. 2019-114. Councilmember Huie seconded the motion. The motion unanimously carried with 6 yes votes and 0 no votes.

- B. Ordinance No. 2019-21 amending the Municipal Code to expand eligibility for low-income utility discounts.

Finance Director Teasdale reviewed:

- Current program is restricted to low-income seniors or disabled people and serves 132 households in Walla Walla.
- This proposed ordinance will expand the program to all low-income households defined as those with income at 125 percent of the federal poverty guidelines. With the available additional revenue, it is estimated the program eligibility will expand to 369 households.
- The program will be capped at \$136,000 and will be first come, first served. A waiting list will be kept if the number of participants exceeds the revenue amount. The program will be evaluated after 2020.
- Staff recommends adoption of the ordinance.

There was discussion on:

- The program will not sunset after one year, staff will just evaluate and report back.
- Council has been looking at ways to make City utilities more affordable while maintaining infrastructure.
- Utility rates have gone up 71 percent over the last ten years.
- Rate increases have been necessary to continue to invest in maintaining critical infrastructure and address changing regulatory requirements.
- Washington is the number one most regressive tax state. This program will provide some relief for the lowest income earners.
- No rate increases were implemented due to the water treatment plant improvements. Forty percent of the rate increases have been due to the infrastructure repair and replacement program.
- Concerns with the addition of staff positions funded by the utilities, such as the recent approval to add an arborist funded by the stormwater utility. There is a process for adding staff positions through the budget.

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Mayor Clark invited public input.

Sharon Schiller, Walla Walla, asked how frequently the program will be evaluated for eligibility and if the revenue is capped will low income seniors or disabled people be ineligible. Staff responded that eligibility will be reviewed on an annual basis and discounts will be applied on a first come, first served basis.

There were additional comments by Council on expanding the utility discount program.

Councilmember Clubb moved to adopt Ordinance No. 2019-21. Councilmember Bahena seconded the motion. The motion carried with 4 yes votes and 2 no votes by Councilmembers Cummins and Huie.

- C. Approval of the August 31, 2019 accounts payable register containing check numbers 203812 through 204213; 990949, 990950, 990952 through 990955; and 9532 through 9547 totaling \$3,461,610.39.

Councilmember Cummins moved to approve the August 31, 2019 accounts payable register containing check numbers 203812 through 204213; 990949, 990950, 990952 through 990955; and 9532 through 9547 totaling \$3,461,610.39 with the exception of the checks to Riley Clubb, Jerry Cummins, Walla Walla School District, and the Alliance for the Homeless. Councilmember Moss seconded the motion. The motion unanimously carried with 6 yes votes and 0 no votes.

Councilmember Cummins moved to pay the checks to Walla Walla School District and the Alliance for the Homeless. Councilmember Moss seconded the motion. The motion unanimously carried with 4 yes votes, 0 no votes, and 2 abstentions by Councilmember Bahena and Mayor Clark.

Councilmember Cummins moved to pay the check to Riley Clubb. Councilmember Moss seconded the motion. The motion unanimously carried with 5 yes votes, 0 no votes, and 1 abstention by Councilmember Clubb.

Councilmember Clubb moved to pay the check to Jerry Cummins. Councilmember Moss seconded the motion. The motion unanimously

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carried with 5 yes votes, 0 no votes, and 1 abstention by Councilmember Cummins.

6. COUNCIL MEMBER MEETING REPORTS

Councilmember Moss reported attendance at the Anchor Community presentation on youth homelessness held September 12; the Howard-Tietan Park block party on September 12; the Work Session held September 23; the Port of Walla Walla Economic Development Advisory Committee meeting held September 24; and the Housing Council subcommittee on community land trusts held September 24.

Councilmember Huie reported attendance at the Howard-Tietan Park block party on September 12; the Jim Bock radio show held September 13; the employee barbecue held September 19; and the Work Session held September 23.

Councilmember Bahena reported attendance at the Howard-Tietan Park block party on September 12; the Downtown Walla Walla Foundation Board meeting held September 17; the Civil Service Commission meeting held September 18; the Valley Transit Board meeting held September 19; and the Work Session held September 23.

Councilmember Cummins reported attendance at the Howard-Tietan Park block party on September 12; the Valley Transit Board meeting held September 19; the Housing Authority Board meeting held September 23; the Work Session held September 23; and the Port of Walla Walla Economic Development Advisory Committee meeting held September 24.

Councilmember Clubb reported attendance at the Anchor Community presentation on youth homelessness held September 12; the Blue Mountain Action Council Board meeting held September 19; the Work Session held September 23; and the Housing Council subcommittee on community land trusts held September 24.

Mayor Clark reported attendance at the Howard-Tietan Park block party on September 12; the Grapevine radio show held September 13; the agenda preparation meeting held September 18; the employee barbecue held September 19; the Sustainability Committee meeting held September 19; the City's continuity of operations exercise held September

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20; the Community Development Block Grant Advisory Committee meeting held September 20; the Adam West Day celebration held September 21; the Work Session held September 23; and the Port of Walla Walla Economic Development Advisory Committee meeting held September 24.

7. UNFINISHED AND NEW BUSINESS

Council discussed whether to develop measurements for reductions in greenhouse gas emissions; and tools and resources for measuring and inventorying greenhouse gas emissions.

It was the consensus of a majority of Council to refer this issue to the Sustainability Committee.

There were comments on providing factual information to residents on the financial impacts of Initiative 976. Staff reported that since the voters approved a sales tax increase for funding the Transportation Benefit District and Council did not assess an increase in auto registration fees, there is no negative impact to the City from Initiative 976.

Council suggested additional signage at the Tietan Street mini roundabout to assist drivers.

Council asked whether open union negotiations have been considered by staff. Staff explained that some cities and government agencies have opened negotiations to the media, but this has not been considered by the City. No interest was expressed by Council in pursuing this issue.

Staff introduced Resolution No. 2019-115 authorizing submission of an application for an E2SHB 1923 grant program and taking other necessary action related to the grant.

Development Services Director Chamberlain reported on the proposed grant for regional collaboration to develop a housing action plan. The consultant will prepare a housing needs assessment, housing barriers assessment, beneficial incentives and financial analysis, and public outreach to prepare the regional housing action plan. The application is for \$110,000 with in kind services from staff. The grant application must include a letter from the Mayor committing to legislative action on the outcome of the study.

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There was brief discussion on role of the County in the grant. Staff responded that the grant is targeted to cities, but it is anticipated that the County can use the housing action plan as a model.

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

**Councilmember Moss moved to adopt Resolution No. 2019-115.
Councilmember Clubb seconded the motion. The motion unanimously carried with 6 yes votes and 0 no votes.**

8. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:29 p.m.