

**WALLA WALLA CITY COUNCIL**  
**Work Session Minutes**  
**July 8, 2019**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Clark called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

Present: Councilmembers Riley Clubb, Jerry Cummins, Myron Huie, Steve Moss, Tom Scribner, and Mayor Barbara Clark.  
(Councilmember Scribner arrived at 4:07 p.m.)

Absent: Councilmember Yazmin Bahena.

City staff in attendance: City Manager Nabel Shawa, Deputy City Manager Byron Olson, Finance Director Jean Teasdale, Parks & Recreation Director Andy Coleman, Development Services Director Elizabeth Chamberlain, Fire Chief Bob Yancey, Arborist Kyle Clemens, Accountant Liz Moeller, Customer Service Supervisor Rachel Warren, and City Clerk Kammy Hill.

**2. ACTIVE AGENDA**

A. Continued discussion on low income utility discount program.

Staff reported there have been several Work Sessions on this issue with the City Council wanting more time to consider the issue. The recommendation is to move forward with a twenty-percent discount for all eligible low-income households (defined as 125 percent of the Federal Poverty Guidelines) with a utility tax increase of .5 percent to fund the expansion of the program.

There was discussion on:

- Income eligibility ranges and impact of increasing the discount.
- Cost if participation increases.
- Average utility cost compared to average income.
- Importance of maintaining services and infrastructure without basing costs on low-income household's ability to pay.

Staff will begin to proceed with development of an implementation plan with a proposed ordinance for consideration the end of August or beginning of September, based on the recommendation.

## WORK SESSION MINUTES

JULY 8, 2019

PAGE 2

### B. Funding of urban forestry program through stormwater fees.

Staff reviewed the status of the City's urban forest; the benefits of trees for stormwater management; and reviewed a plan to use stormwater fees to help maintain the urban forest along streets and to support green infrastructure. The recommended stormwater fee is \$1.12 per equivalent dwelling unit to fund the urban forestry and green infrastructure program in 2020.

There was discussion on:

- Changes in the urban forest canopy over the last twenty years.
- Importance of ongoing tree maintenance, trees in neighborhoods and funding a program to manage this City asset.
- Inequality of trees in some of the lower-income neighborhoods.
- Quantifying the impacts and benefits of the program.
- Allowing adjacent property owners to continue to follow the existing process to maintain or replace their street trees.
- Relationship between trees and stormwater maintenance.
- The program will not be fully funded by stormwater. The general fund will continue to fund tree maintenance in the parks.

Staff will proceed with the necessary steps and prepare action for Council to implement the program as outlined.

### C. Continued discussion of the annexation process.

Staff reviewed the annexation process and philosophy for inclusion of properties with outside utility agreements and street rights-of-way in annexation boundaries to minimize irregular boundaries and service inefficiencies. The City does not initiate annexations. The process begins when a property owner, contiguous to the City boundary, petitions to be included. Staff would like to know what the City Council's philosophy is on annexations and what information is missing from staff presentations to help Council make decisions on annexations. Staff is looking at some changes to the annexation process to allow submittal of a petition for annexation twice per year in January and September to improve staff efficiencies rather than throughout the entire year.

There was discussion on:

- Whether a fee should be charged to file a petition to annex to recover part of staff time, survey, and other associated expenses.

## **WORK SESSION MINUTES**

**JULY 8, 2019**

**PAGE 3**

- Advantages and disadvantages of establishing time periods for the filing of annexation petitions.
- One reason staff may recommend rejecting an annexation petition would be the cost of service.
- Inclusion of an economic analysis and cost projection for annexations.
- Determining growth rate of City compared to Comprehensive Plan projections and ensuring City has enough land types in its urban growth area to meet projections.
- Planning for growth provides predictability and assists in providing the right mix of services for residents.

### **3. OTHER BUSINESS**

No other business was discussed.

### **4. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:08 p.m.