

WALLA WALLA CITY COUNCIL
Budget Work Session Minutes
November 9, 2020

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

Present: Councilmembers Yazmin Bahena, Riley Clubb, Myron Huie, Ted Koehler, Steve Moss, Susan Nakonieczny, and Mayor Tom Scribner. (Councilmember Huie joined the meeting at 4:12 p.m.)

Absent: None

City staff in attendance: City Manager Nabel Shawa, Deputy City Manager Elizabeth Chamberlain, Finance Director Jean Teasdale, Police Chief Scott Bieber, Public Works Director Ki Bealey, Parks & Recreation Director Andy Coleman, and City Clerk Kammy Hill.

2. ACTIVE AGENDA

A. 2021-2022 Budget Presentation.

Staff reviewed the addition of a police officer position and Deputy Fire Chief position in the proposed biennium budget; the challenges for the ambulance fund; and increasing the internal utility excise tax from 13 percent to 16.25 percent, which will increase the revenue to the General fund in order to backfill forecasted ambulance fund shortfalls.

The City will internally fund this increase by utilizing financial reserves from the enterprise funds. Drawing down these financial reserves will not impact planned operations or planned capital improvements over the biennium. The Finance Committee and staff recommend including a sunset clause that will automatically reduce the internal (water, wastewater, stormwater, sanitation, and landfill) utility excise tax back to 13 percent on January 1, 2023. This will allow time to further pursue the feasibility of implementing an ambulance utility fee and formation of a Regional Fire Authority with Fire District 4 and City of College Place.

The vacant positions to be funded in 2021 and those that will remain vacant were reviewed, along with the projected ending fund balances in the General fund. Highlights of notable public works and parks and recreation projects were provided.

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There was discussion on:

- Amount of funding necessary to realign all the veteran headstones at the cemetery.
- Completion of the wedding fountain at Pioneer Park.
- Developing a "wish list" of City projects and needs for private donors.

Staff reported an email had been received from John DeLong on November 9 with additional questions on the proposed budget. Responses to these questions will take additional research and will be provided at the November 28 Council meeting.

3. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:43 p.m.