

WALLA WALLA CITY COUNCIL
Work Session Minutes
June 7, 2021

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

Present: Councilmembers Yazmin Bahena, Riley Clubb, Myron Huie, Ted Koehler, Steve Moss, and Mayor Tom Scribner.
(Councilmembers Bahena and Clubb arrived at 4:05 p.m.)

Absent: Councilmember Susan Nakonieczny.

City staff in attendance: City Manager Nabel Shawa, Deputy City Manager Elizabeth Chamberlain, Fire Chief Bob Yancey, Finance Director Jean Teasdale, Development Services Director Preston Frederickson, Deputy Fire Chief Eric Wood, Planner Melissa Shumake, and City Clerk Kammy Hill.

Also present: Mara Machulsky, lobbyist (in person), and Luke Slaughterbeck and Martin Chaw, FCS Group (virtually).

2. ACTIVE AGENDA

Mara Machulsky, lobbyist, provided an overview of the 2021 State legislative session including transportation, broadband, and housing.

A. Establishment of an ambulance utility.

Staff reviewed the current financial situation for the City's ambulance service, revenues, the subsidies by the general fund, and the operating costs. \$4.7 million would be necessary in additional funding to recoup the entire amount necessary for the ambulance to be self-sustaining. Staff is proposing formation of an ambulance utility to impose a monthly fee of \$12.65 per ratepayer. The formation of an ambulance utility requires 30-day notice to all ratepayers which is anticipated to occur by the beginning of August. It is anticipated the public hearing will be held before Council in August.

Luke Slaughterbeck, FCS Group, reviewed:

- Scope of their work to update the 2019 rate study.
- 2019 rate study highlights.
- 2023 study update.

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- Why consider creation of an ambulance utility.
- Calculation of ambulance costs.
- 2023 projected ambulance revenues.
- Monthly utility rate options.
- Ambulance utility rate revenue versus general fund subsidy.
- Using existing occupancy provisions in the Municipal Code for ease in administering the utility.
- Comparison cities that have an ambulance utility and rates charged.

The City Council will be asked to consider implementation of the ambulance utility in August to be effective January 1, 2023.

There was discussion on the inability to restrict actions of future City Councils; ease of administration under the current proposed ordinance; no funds for equipment replacement; subsidies from the general fund; reduction in services if the general fund is required to keep subsidizing ambulance services; and formation of a regional fire authority will not eliminate the need for an ambulance utility.

- B. Discussion on interim ordinance to amend definitions of distilleries to be based solely on volume produced and amendment to use tables.

Staff reviewed the current provisions requiring small distilleries to use product of origin to make their product. This was based on standards imposed by the Washington State Liquor and Cannabis Board. The Second Street Distillery would like to expand their offerings to tequila and rum but are unable to do so under the current product of origin standard. The volume restrictions will remain in place because of fire prevention standards. This interim ordinance is scheduled to come before Council on June 23.

3. OTHER BUSINESS

There was discussion on a proposed letter to Congress asking that changes be made to the draft INVEST Act to address transportation funding for medium sized cities. It was the consensus of a majority of Council to have the Mayor sign the letter on behalf of the City.

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4. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:13 p.m.