

PALOUSE CITY COUNCIL AGENDA
Public Hearing – 2022 Preliminary Budget
Followed by Regular Council Meeting
November 9, 2021 @ 7:00 pm
Palouse Community Center 230 E. Main St
MASKS MUST BE WORN

CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Sievers called the 2022 Preliminary Budget Public Hearing and Palouse Council Meeting to order at 7:01 pm.

ROLL CALL:

Deputy Clerk Misty La Follett took Roll Call.

Council members present Mary Welcome, Bill Slinkard, John Snyder, Jim Fielder, Libby Akin, and Katie Cooper.

City staff present: Deputy Clerk (DC) Misty La Follett, Public Works (PW) Supt. Mike Wolf, and Police Officer Joel Anderson.

PUBLIC HEARING: Public Hearing for 2022 Preliminary Budget

Michael Echanove shared that he had submitted suggestions regarding the budget. No other citizen in attendance addressed the Council regarding the 2022 Budget. Mayor Sievers closed the hearing at 7:06 pm and called the regular council meeting to order.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Councilmember Slinkard introduced a **MOTION** to approve the minutes from the regular council meeting on October 26, 2021; **MOTION** was seconded by: Councilmember Akin. All other council members present approved, and the **MOTION** passed.

OPEN FORUM:

Tracy Lee Sivers and Sarah Bofenkamp of the Palouse Christmas Cheer Committee asked the Council to use the City RV Park for a drive-in Christmas Movie double feature on December 18, 2021. PW had no concerns, and he will make sure that the RV park is plowed if needed and Officer Anderson has no safety concerns.

Councilmember Cooper introduced a **MOTION** to approve the use of the RV Park as a drive-in theater for a Christmas Movie double feature. **MOTION** was seconded by: Councilmember Fielder. All other council members present approved, and the **MOTION** passed.

PUBLIC WORKS REPORT:

Supt. Wolf provided Council with his written report.

Supt. Wolf stated that the Cove Sidewalk Project had used 100 tons more gravel than anticipated. He also expressed his concerns regarding the project's design, and he brought his concerns to Munir Daud and White Diamond Concrete. Supt. Wolf feels the project needs an additional two catch basins, the gravel is sluffing off above the retaining wall, and there are some uneven places on the sidewalk. White Diamond Concrete has not returned to install the fencing.

Inland Fiber Network has been working on installations and has not been crack sealing the City's streets. They did contact Supt. Wolf about a repair on Whitman Street, and he instructed them to use cold mix and next summer Inland Fiber Network can use a hot mix to complete the repair.

Supt. Wolf reminded Council that several homes in Breeding's Addition were required to connect to the City's sewer system by the end of 2021, and 3 of yet to do so.

The Snowplows are ready for the winter, and the pool and bathrooms are all winterized.

Supt. Wolf stated that a rock was stuck down in the motor of the rake at the sewer plant, which caused the motor to tear up the conduit. The PW department was able to make this repair.

Councilmember Fielder asked if the repairs to the grader were complete, Supt. Wolf stated they had been made but have yet to be tested. Councilmember Fielder also asked if water meters were winterized, Supt. Wolf said that he believed they had been, but he will check.

*PW report attached to the minutes.

POLICE REPORT:

Officer Anderson presented his report to the Council. There were nine calls for service and one call-out from October 26, 2021, to November 5, 2021; there were ten calls for service and six call-outs.

A citizen called about Zipty attempting to install underground lines on their property. Officer Anderson stated that homes should call him if this happens. He also said citizens have been calling Kara Riebold at the Port of Whitman, and she is aware of the situation.

Officer Anderson has been ticketing, and towing abandoned vehicles throughout Palouse.

Officer Anderson did arrest an individual for violating a no-contact order, and they were booked in the Whitman County Jail.

Officer Anderson stated that the Trunk or Treat event was a success; he estimated that between 75-100 kids participated.

Councilmember Slinkard asked about the theft on his report; Officer Anderson said he would get back the Councilmember Slinkard with the details.

Councilmember Snyder asked if the Palouse Police Department should be using body cameras. Officer Anderson stated that he did not believe so; Officer Anderson said he would research the matter and respond to Councilmember Snyder.

Mayor Sievers recommended that everyone should attend the Truck or Treat event in the future.

*Report attached to the minutes.

CITY ADMINISTRATOR/DEPUTY CLERK REPORT:

DC La Follett presented to Council a bid from Inland Fiber Networks to upgrade the City's phones system and to possibly add an emergency call box for the RV Park Park, Pool, and park to use in case of emergency.

DC La Follett gave the Council an estimate for an upgrade to the Springbrook/Bias software from Basic to Advanced Payroll. The software the City currently uses for payroll will no longer be supported after 2021, and we will need to upgrade.

We received a payment schedule from White Diamond Concrete for the Cove Sidewalk Project. There are some concerns regarding this invoice that will be addressed with White Diamond Concrete by Supt. Wolf and Munir Daud. Once these issues are resolved, we can make this payment. DC La Follett has spoken with Cody at the City of Garfield, and this should be a simple process.

YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD REPORT:

Ainsely Sievers presented the Youth Advisory Board (YAB) Report to Council.

Ms. Sievers stated that the YAB discussed options for conducting a survey of the youth in Palouse and the possible questions for the survey.

The YAB further discussed putting up flyers and setting up an email for the YAB.

Councilmember Welcome stated that she was excited that Ms. Sievers was in attendance and that the YAB had resumed. Councilmember Cooper expressed the same sentiments.

OLD BUSINESS:

Michelle Bly from TD&H was present to address Council on the water main update and the steps the City needs to take to advance this project.

Ms. Bly stated that this process started as an abbreviated analysis of our water system, highlighting some key points, and it turned into a water main replacement project focused on three areas, Church Street, Culton Street, and Sgt. Jacob Demand Way, formerly H Street.

This project includes upsizing the water main and fire hydrants. TD&H went before the Public Works Board, and the City received approval for a pre-construction loan for the design, which is complete. TD&H did return some money because they did not use it all in the design process. TD&H again applied for a construction loan from the Public Works Board on the City's behalf, which the City did receive.

The next step is for the City's attorney to review the contract from the Public Works Board, and after that, the Mayor will need to sign the documents.

Once the City signs the Public Works Board's loan documents and receives these loan documents, the City would need to consider signing a contract with TD&H.

Now that TD&H knows who will be funding the project, they will tighten up the forms for the agency financing the project. Next, they will put the project out to bid around February 1, 2022, and hopefully start construction in the spring of 2022.

TD&H will provide construction management and inspection through the project. TD&H, the contractor, and the inspector with the Public Works Board will meet each month and present a pay estimate to the City. Upon the City's approval, the pay estimate will be sent to the Public Works Board to issue a check to City. Once the City receives that check, the City can pay the contractor.

TD&H will walk the City through the entire process.

This is a loan from the public Public Works Board, and TD&H would recommend raising the rate on the water/sewer bill by \$5.00 per month to cover the cost of this loan.

If the City gets its water/sewer rate more in line with what other similar size cities charge, the City would be eligible for more grants for more upgrades in the future.

Councilmember Cooper asked if 8/20/21 was an incorrect date to start paying back this loan, and Ms. Bly stated that it was an error.

Mayor Sievers stated that the interest rate on this was .94%

Mayor Sievers informed Council that they would need to authorize the Mayor to sign the contract with the Public Works Board if they wish to proceed. The second step would allow the Mayor to execute the contract with TD&H for total contract management.

Councilmember Cooper asked if there was any chance of any funds being made available through the new infrastructure bill. Ms. Bly stated that this was the best funding source for this project. Ms. Bly said that there

could be grant money available, and if the City applied and were awarded this money, they could use it to pay this loan off sooner.

Councilmember Akin introduced a **MOTION** to authorizing the Mayor to sign the loan documents with the Public Works Board; **MOTION** was seconded by: Councilmember Snyder. All other council members present approved, and the **MOTION** passed.

Councilmember Snyder introduced a **MOTION** to authorizing the Mayor to sign the contract with TD&H; **MOTION** was seconded by: Councilmember Fielder. All other council members present approved, and the **MOTION** passed.

NEW BUSINESS:

Mayor Sievers asked DC La Follett to summarize the Criminal Justice Contract with Whitman County. DC La Follett informed Council that the City has been without a contract with Whitman County since 2008. The City has continued to pay for these services without having a contract in place. This contract covers the incarceration, prosecution, and adjudication of crimes committed in Palouse.

Councilmember Snyder asked if this contract covers felonies and juvenile offenders or does the City needs another agreement with Superior Court. DC La Follett did not know, but she will find the answer to his questions. He also wanted to know if traffic infractions went to a different court and needed a contract with them.

Councilmember Cooper asked if the City's Attorney had reviewed this contract; DC La Follett said that it had not been sent to Mr. Hanson.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Budget, Finance, & Major Acquisitions, Chair Welcome: Chair Welcome thanked DC La Follett and Ann-Marie Zuniga, the CA contractor, for their hard work on the Preliminary 2022 budget, as well as Councilmember Cooper. Chair Welcome asked that all comments and questions regarding the budget be emailed to her.

Policy & Administration, Chair Cooper: Chair Cooper stated that we are working on getting the ending balances and the reserves on the Preliminary Budget. Chair Cooper also asked that all concerns regarding the budget be emailed to her and Councilmember Welcome.

Chair Cooper said that we had completed our preliminary budget hearing, but we need the county's tax revenues, which we are still waiting to receive.

We need to have our second budget hearing on November 23, 2021, but Chair Cooper will be out of town. All other council members will be in town to proceed with this second budget hearing on that date.

After that will, we will need to have our final budget hearing on or before December 6, 2021. Chair Cooper recommends that we have our Final Budget Hearing on this date at 7:00 pm.

After this hearing, we will need to adopt our final 2022 budget and any amendments to the 2021 budget on or before December 31, 2021. Chair Cooper wanted to ensure that all council members will be available for the upcoming City Council meetings in December to complete all the steps to get the 2022 Budget approved and adopted by December 31, 2021.

Councilmember Copper introduced a **MOTION** authorizing a Final Budget Meeting on December 6, 2021, at 7:00 pm; **MOTION** was seconded by: Councilmember Welcome. All other council members present approved, and the **MOTION** passed

Chair Cooper stated that the Policy and Administration met to set policy for filling a Mayoral vacancy. The committee determined three options: Option one is to put into the City code that we want to solicit letters from the community, including current council members. Option two is an appointment by the Council. Option three is to appoint a member of the Council. (Clear up language with councilmember Cooper)

These options would need to be reviewed by the City's attorney.

Mayor Sievers agrees that we need to eliminate any uncertainty and define this process moving forward.

Chair Cooper asked that citizens please email her with their input in this matter.

Personnel, Chair Snyder: Chair Snyder stated that the last candidate who applied for the CA position withdrew her name from consideration. Councilmember Welcome asked about salaries and raises for the City Employees. Chair Snyder stated that it is in the purview of the Mayor. The Mayor should be meeting with the department heads to discuss their departments. The salary model that former Mayor Cook implemented is based on longevity and performance and is what the City will be following moving forward.

Mayor Sievers stated that meeting with the department heads and employee reviews should have been started over the summer, but it was not. The current 2022 proposed budget does not have any pay increases built into the budget.

Streets, Properties, & Facilities, No Chair at this time: No report.

Joint Fire Board, Chair Fielder: Chair Fielder had no report, but the Fire Station received an upgrade to LED lights.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: No Execution Session;

MAYOR'S REPORT:

Mayor Sievers reported we met with Michelle Bly with TD&H, and she helped bring him up to date on the water improvement project.

He also met with VERELA regarding possible upgrades to the sewer plant.

Mayor Sievers will be meeting the Department of Ecology to conduct the interviews with the top three candidates regarding the Value Engineering Planning on November 12, 2021, for the wastewater plant.

The original proposal for the wastewater plant upgrade is far too high for a City the size of Palouse. We are looking for cost savings from these candidates and some outside-the-box ideas, and this is the question Mayor Sievers will ask these candidates. The City is doing everything we can in partnership with the Department of Ecology to do what they want us to do. Once a candidate is selected, the City will step back from the process as the consultant completes their proposal.

Mayor Sievers stated that it appears that the two levies on the ballot are passing, and there have been some questions from the community regarding Mayor Sievers's open council position. Should he win the council seat and the results are certified, an appointment would be made to that position. The person appointed to that seat would remain in the seat until the next regular election. This process would start after the first of the year.

Traditionally, the Council would accept applications for the position, conduct interviews, and make the appointment. We will work on clarifying this process and making sure that it goes out to the citizens on the email listserv and possibly by regular mail.

The election is still in the process of being certified; we will move forward from there.

Councilmember Slinkard stated that he felt the Mayor was doing a great job.

Mayor Sievers stated that the entire City staff is stepping up, and we are moving forward as a team.

ALLOW PAYMENT OF BILLS:

Councilmember Snyder introduced a **MOTION** to allow the payment of bills. Councilmember Slinkard seconded the **MOTION**; **MOTION** unanimously passed.

ADJOURN: Councilmember Welcome MOVED to adjourn; Councilmember Fielder seconded the **MOTION**. The **MOTION** passed. The council meeting adjourned at 8:19 pm.

APPROVED: _____ ATTEST: _____