

Special Palouse City Council Meeting
PUBLIC HEARING – 2020 preliminary budget proposal
followed by Regular Council Meeting

November 12, 2019

CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Echanove called the Council Meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

ROLL CALL: Councilmembers present: Chris Cook; Bill Slinkard; Tim Sievers; John Snyder; Rick Wekenman; Katie Cooper. Staff present: Police Chief Jerry Neumann; City Administrator Kyle Dixon; & Deputy Clerk Ann Thompson.

OPEN PUBLIC HEARING, 2020 preliminary budget proposal at 7:01 pm:
No comments. Mayor closed the public hearing at 7:02 pm.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Councilmember Slinkard **MOVED** to adopt the minutes of the Regular Council Meeting of October 22, 2019 as written. Councilmember Cook seconded. Motion carried.

PUBLIC WORKS REPORT: Supt. Griffin submitted a written report.
WWTP operator Tyler Furchtenicht has resigned his position effective Nov. 27, 2019, due to time commitment issues. He is leaving on good terms with the city. His replacement, Walter Fealy, will begin November 18, 2019, which will allow a week of training together.

POLICE REPORT: Chief Neumann reported:
-HP went well. Colfax Officer Alacanter assisted the Palouse PD during the event. One reason HP continues to be a safe venue is due to the PD, FD, EMS, etc. always on location throughout the event.
-Chief's vehicle is experiencing some brake issues and is being repaired at Chappell Auto. Snow tires are also getting put on.
-Kimberling case in Garfield is still ongoing. He is still in jail for violating a restraining order. Federal trial is pending on the weapons charges.
-Had another complaint regarding skateboarders using the memorial benches as jumps, etc. and causing damage. Officer Snead made friendly contact and explained why the benches around town aren't to be used for skateboarding and that they should be using the skatepark for skateboarding. Chief is still planning on having skateboard rules & safety education in the spring with the students.
-Ongoing dog complaints. What's the threshold of a "nuisance" dog? Chief would like complainants to video the barking dog(s) for at least 15 minutes to prove an actual "nuisance" and not just dogs being dogs. It also helps should it go to court.

CITY ADMINISTRATOR REPORT: CA Dixon reported:
-Budget discussion. City is in a good spot financially right now. CA Dixon reviewed various line items in the budget.
-CA Dixon & Mayor Echanove attended IACC meeting in Wenatchee last month. IACC conference puts local government together with state agencies and funding partners to get problems solved and projects financed. It's important to maintain our presence there. We had the opportunity to meet with ECY (Dept of Ecology), our permit manager Diana Washington, and other ECY officials to discuss our wastewater facility plan. ECY indicated that M&O of water reclamation (final piece of preferred course of action approved by council earlier this year) could pose a significant financial burden. Mayor Echanove, CA Dixon and Varela lamented the lack of viable options available to meet ECY's stringent regulations. ECY posed the possibility of applying for and receiving a variance to the TMDL requirements (effluent discharge limits). If granted, a variance would allow Palouse to continue to upgrade our wastewater facilities with the best available science at the time, in 5-year intervals. This would allow a more phased and financially responsible approach to improvements, rather than forcing the city to fund a roughly \$15 million project all at once. City of Spokane is currently working on submitting a variance to ECY for discharge limits in the Spokane River. Diana Washington indicated that our situation is a great example of why the variance option was created and that she would help us complete the application. No municipality in the state of Washington has ever been granted a variance, but Palouse has been the first to do many things, so there is hope.
-Mayor & CA Dixon will be in Olympia next week to meet with state agencies and district representatives.
-TD&H will be at our next meeting to discuss water line improvements on Church Street and next steps, if any, for the larger water system improvement project.
-City had our three-year audit exit conference with the state auditors. Councilmembers Cooper and Wekenman were also in attendance. Everything looks good, had a great meeting. The cost of the audit went about \$2,000 over original estimate.
-Haunted Palouse donated \$1,000 to the city to help repair the flathouse door as that is where all the HP supplies are stored year-after-year and the door has taken a beating. Thanks HP!

OPEN FORUM:
Andres Sena was present to request having a home swim meet at Palouse. Council is very agreeable to having that but there needs to be a few things done to make it work: 1) swim team needs to provide their own volunteers for the meet; lifeguards are to be lifeguarding only; 2) needs to be a Tuesday (vs. Thursday) for the meet; 3)volunteers also need to ensure that RV guests have access to the RV Park and that all 10 RV sites remain open and unblocked. Andres Sena said they have a lot of volunteers and can guide traffic to park elsewhere.

NEW BUSINESS:
Ord. No. 983 adopting the property tax increase for collection in 2020: Mayor read aloud the ordinance in its entirety. The dollar amount of the increase over the actual levy amount for the previous year shall be \$1,811.57 which is an increase of 1%. 1% is our lawful amount we can increase our levy amount without a vote. Councilmember Wekenman **MOVED** to adopt Ord. 983. Councilmember Cooper seconded. Motion carried.

Ord. No. 984 adopting the property tax increase for Emergency Medical Services for collection in 2020: Mayor read aloud the ordinance in its entirety. The dollar amount of the increase over the actual levy amount for the previous year shall be \$299.27 which is an increase of 1%. Voters approved 6-year EMS levy in November of 2017. Councilmember Slinkard **MOVED** to adopt Ord. 984. Councilmember Snyder seconded. Motion carried.

Ord. No. 985 setting the levy amounts for 2020: Mayor read aloud the ordinance in its entirety. Special street levy: \$44,000; Special pool levy: \$34,000; Voted regular EMS levy: \$32,060.37; General levy: \$194,069.99. Councilmember Sievers **MOVED** to adopt Ord. No. 985. Councilmember Cook seconded. Motion carried.

COMMITTEE REPORTS/REQUESTS:

Water & Sewer, Chair Slinkard: Committee met Nov. 5 to discuss in-depth a long-overdue need to increase various service fees. Rate and fee structures from our immediate geographic areas (Garfield, Colfax, Pullman, & Moscow) were considered when making these recommendations. Those four communities' fees were totaled and averaged to get our figures. The city is still charging water & sewer hookup fees that were set in 1980! We've determined to make changes accordingly to make us more in alignment with 2020 prices.

New water service hook-up will go from \$200 to \$1,825 to take effect July 1, 2020

New sewer service hook-up will go from \$250 to \$1,825 to take effect July 1, 2020

Reconnection fee will go from \$35 to \$50 to take effect July 1, 2020

Also discussed in length was the issue that inactive accounts on the water and/or sewer system should be sharing the cost burden of infrastructure upgrades and maintenance that are currently being paid by everyone active on the system. Inactive accounts are still benefitting from the all upgrades and maintenance but aren't sharing in the expenses. Effective July 1, 2020, property owners with inactive meters will have two options: 1) pay monthly, half of the base water/sewer charges, or, 2) they can choose to abandon their water and sewer lines to avoid this ongoing monthly obligation. If and when service is requested to be restored, abandoned lines will then be subject to the water and sewer service hookup fees. Inactive meters include: snowbirds (partial year users); meters on vacant lots; vacant homes; new developments; inactive business/commercial meters. Details are still being ironed out. Those choosing to abandon their lines will do so via signature on legal document to be written by city's attorney.

Streets & Sidewalks, Chair Sievers:

-Councilmember Sievers met with the owner of The Congress regarding the outdoor seating encroaching on sidewalk too far and blocking pedestrian traffic and staying in ADA compliance. Owner stated they are looking at different seating arrangement next year.

-Councilmember Sievers also discussed with Supt. Griffin the poor visibility at the corner of H & Alder intersection. It's a bad corner. Supt. Griffin will trim the trees.

-There was a no-injury wreck into the guardrail at H & Alder Street due to speeding in icy conditions. The guardrail will be replaced at the expense of the driver's insurance.

Personnel & Pool, Chair Cook,

-Budget discussion continued. In addition to the across-the-board 3% raise for all staff (set three years ago), Mayor Echanove proposed a salary increase of 5% to Supt. Griffin, 10% to Public Works Asst. Mike Wolf, and 6% to CA Dixon and Deputy Clerk Thompson. The Personnel committee considered the Mayor's salary increase recommendations. There was a level of consensus among the committee to stick with the 3% raise originally recommended by council in 2017. Staff evaluations and merit-based salary increases will be implemented next year. Councilmember Sievers **MOVED** to direct CA Dixon to put a 3% salary increase across the board into the proposed 2020 budget. Councilmember Slinkard seconded. Motion carried.

Finance, Property, & Equipment, Chair Cooper:

-Chair Cooper attended the exit audit conference. She shared the auditors' praise of CA Dixon and Deputy Clerk Thompson.

MAYOR'S REPORT:

-Liquor license renewal for The Congress. No objections.

-Mayor read aloud a letter from Carly Schoepflin resigning from the Palouse Planning Commission. Mayor Echanove accepted her resignation.

-Mayor read aloud a letter of interest from Holly White to serve on the Palouse Planning Commission. Pending verification that she resides within the city limits, Mayor Echanove is appointing her to the PC.

-Mayor's Roundtable is this Thursday.

-October 16th Mayor Echanove, Councilmembers Cooper & Cook, Garfield Mayor Jared Pfaff, and a Garfield councilperson met to discuss the police contract with Garfield. Garfield wants to continue the contract and a long-term relationship with a few caveats: 1)they want a two-year contract; 2)the current time of response to Garfield is currently set at 20 minutes but they will accept a 30 minute response time; 3)they would like to see a joint committee, comprised of mayors & a couple councilmembers, to meet quarterly to review the performance for evaluation purposes; 4)they want to see if our PD could do a better job of integrating into the Garfield community (in particular Officer Anderson is unknown to them); 5)they want a copy of weekly work schedule.

The short-term objective is to get the contract renewed for two years. It's in the hands of the city attorney. Not yet discussed is Garfield's contract amount for services. Palouse will seek monetary increase from Garfield. This needs to be an integral part of this decision.

ALLOW PAYMENT OF BILLS: Councilmember Slinkard **MOVED** that the bills against the city be allowed. Councilmember Cook seconded. Motion carried.

The following checks are approved for payment:

Payroll Paid	10/31/19	Ck. 10416-10421, & 10423-10435, & EFT	\$43,243.52
Claims Paid	11/12/19	Ck. 10415, 10436-10476, & EFT	\$46,951.96

ADJOURN: Councilmember Sievers **MOVED** to adjourn. Councilmember Slinkard seconded. The motion carried. The council meeting adjourned at 9:45 PM.

APPROVED: _____ ATTEST: _____