

City of Grand Coulee
Regular Meeting of the City Council
November 15, 2022

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER:

Mayor Townsend called the meeting to order at approximately 6:00pm.

- 2. Public Hearing 2023 Preliminary Budget:** Mayor Townsend opened the public hearing at approximately 6:00pm. Mayor Townsend read a statement to the council and audience stating that the city notification from Electric City Wednesday last week that they would not be renewing the police contract. This unfortunately has left a revenue shortfall in the general fund. The finance committee has not had the opportunity to meet to discuss this. Rick Paris, 919 Loma Lane: I had the opportunity to review the preliminary document, council was provided with two documents, one showing \$370,000 deficit and one showing a \$52,000 deficit. In years past departments have been told to live within their means, you need to live with in your means. We have been told in years past that salaries are 42% of the overall budget, payroll discussions later on the agenda are not reflecting a budget shortfall. As the former Fire Chief I still feel funding for equipment replacement needs to be a priority. In 2024 one of the fire engines will need to be replaced to maintain the lower insurance rating that the city currently has. Council needs to figure out a way to fund these large capitol purchases. Mr. Paris also commented on the resolution to increase the ambulance rates by more than the department had recommended which would increase the revenue but that the ambulance budget had been reduced by 2%.

As there was no other input Mayor Townsend closed the public hearing at approximately 6:09pm.

ROLL CALL:

The following were:

Present: Mayor Townsend, Council Members Anita Eylar, Tom Poplawski, Alan Cain, Gary Carriere

Excused:

Also Present: Clerk Lorna Pearce, Ryan Fish, Fire Chief, Chief Tufts, Dennis Francis, City Superintendent, Jolena Mills, Kris Thiesfeld, Rick Paris, Fred Netzel, Police Officers Martin, Johnson, Gilbert, Mackenzie, Ponusky, Kline, Travis Irwin, Andrea Schumaker, and Olivia Arnold also attending via ZOOM were Scott Hunter Star Newspaper

Mayor Townsend asked for a moment of silence in remembrance of Council Member Mike Horne who passed away unexpectedly.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIENCE:

- 3. VISITOR INPUT:** Rick Paris, 919 Loma Lane, At the October meeting ambulance rate increase was discussed and council was provided with information from the billing company regarding rates. The department had proposed a \$25. 00 rate increase for the ambulance service. Mr. Paris asked if council knew what it cost to take the ambulance out each time? Mr. Paris estimates that it cost approximately \$250.00. He estimates that the city receives
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approximately 60% of the annual charges billed for ambulance services provided. Mr. Paris stated that the increase proposed by council was approximately 62% but the increase for city utilities was being set at 4% for 2022.. Mr. Paris also stated that the proposed increase to the department heads wages did not reflect the expected shortfall in revenue, nor were they fair or equitable for all department heads.

Officer Martin raised the question of why council is looking at wage increases for department heads and discussing the possibility of having to reduce the workforce due to the revenue shortfall.

Mayor Townsend said that the reason for the increases to the department heads wages is due to the disparity between them. The mayor also said that the last thing council wants to do is to let people go. Mayor Townsend then said the proposed increase to the ambulance rates was to bring us closer to the state average. Current rates are below the Medicare minimum, we are leaving money on the table. The rate increase was also to begin preparing for the possibility of having to cover the cost of increased manpower for the ambulance as well as continue to fund the reserves.

Travis Irwin said that one of the department heads wage reflects more expected overtime than the other two. Mr. Poplawski stated that he has been reviewing state requirements for salaried positions, he feels that moving the department heads to salaried positions might make sense financially. He apologized for the error in the resolution for the department head salaries, that was the number he had suggested to the finance committee and it was accepted, they will be reviewing it. Mr. Poplawski commented that the ambulance attendants were well paid, they are not required to respond.

Fred Netzel, Coulee Dam, said that he took exception to the comment about the ambulance attendants being well paid. The attendants give up time at home with family and often do not leave town in case they are needed. He feels that any increase to the ambulance rates should benefit the ambulance.

4. DEPARTMENT REPORTS:

The 2022 3rd Quarter Financial Report was included in the council packet.

Chief Tufts reported that the department had responded 51 calls in October, and that the department had assisted tribal police with the double homicide. Chief let council know that he had applied for a grant from WASPC for emergency funding to assist in keeping the department staffed at the current number of officers.

Chief Fish reported there had been a couple of fire calls and 58 ambulance calls, he estimates that by the end of the year the ambulance will be close to 530 calls for service. Chief Fish invited the council and mayor to the annual department dinner December 10, 2022 at 6pm.

City Superintendent Francis reported that the park project is coming along, it is too cold at this time for any further progress until next year. The crew has been getting plows ready for the winter weather. They have replaced several meter boxes and street signs. They are also getting Christmas lights ready to be hung.

Clerk Pearce informed council of a grant opportunity through Recreation and Conservation for the preparation of park facility plan, the grant would cover 100% of the plan preparation. TIB will be announcing grant recipients early December, the city has three applications in at this time. Ms. Pearce let council know that there is a second air ambulance service in the area, they are not affiliated with LifeFlight and would require a separate membership to be covered in case of service.

5. COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Mr. Poplawski stated that the finance committee will be meeting to make adjustments to the budget document.

6. AGENDA REVISIONS:

Mayor Townsend asked that agenda section Old Business items be re-numbered to 8, New Business items to 9 and Adjournment to 10.

7. CONSENT AGENDA:

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- 7.1 Motion to approve Regular Council meeting minutes of October 18, 2022.
- 7.2 Motion to approve for Payment Vouchers, dated November 15, 2022, certified by the City Clerk/Treasurer as required by RCW 42.24.080, and expense reimbursement claims, dated November 15, 2022, certified by the City Clerk/Treasurer as required by RCW 42.24.090, voucher numbers 42562 through 42604 and EFT items in the amount of \$311,459.89
- 7.3 Motion to approve Payroll Vouchers, dated October 31, 2022, certified by the City Clerk/Treasurer as required by RCW 42.24.080, vouchers numbered 42543 through 42561 and Direct Deposit and EFTs (no sequenced numbers) as listed on the Payroll register in the total amount of \$160,482.24

Mr. Cain motioned to approve the consent agenda, Mr. Carriere second, motion carried.

8. OLD BUSINESS:

- 8.1 **Review of Fee Schedule:** Ms. Pearce told council that she had gone back through the code to book to verify which services required the use of the hearing examiner and adjusted those fees accordingly. Mr. Poplawski motioned to approve the fees as presented, Mr. Cain second, motion carried.
- 8.2 **Authorize the Mayor's Signature on Agreement for Hearing Examiner Services:** Ms. Pearce contacted neighboring cities to see if they utilize a hearing examiner and what their costs were for service. Coulee Dam currently does not have an examiner and Electric City uses Mr. Kottkamp so their costs would be the same. Mr. Poplawski motioned to authorize the mayor to sign the agreement for services, Ms. Eylar second, motioned carried.
- 8.3 **Ordinance 1089 Amending Ambulance Rates and Attendant Wages:** Mr. Carrier felt it would be best to revisit in December. Ms. Eylar agrees considering the information provided to council. By consensus council asked that Ordinance 1089 be brought back in December.

9. NEW BUSINESS

- 9.1 **Set a Date for Public Hearing on the Final 2023 Budget:** Council would like to have a budget workshop on December 6, beginning at 6pm. The public hearing for the final budget is set for December 20, 2022 at 6pm.
- 9.2 **Ordinance 1088 Amending Section 8.12.190 of GCMC:** Ms. Eylar motioned to approve Ordinance 1088, Mr. Carriere second, motion carried.
- 9.3 **Resolution 22-10 Establishing Sewer Utility Charges for 2023:** Mr. Poplawski motioned to approve Resolution 22-10, Mr. Cain second, motion carried.
- 9.4 **Resolution 22-11 Establishing Water Utility Service Fees for 2023:** Ms. Pearce asked that council wait until the December meeting to adopt the fees as the department head wages will impact this resolution. Ms. Eylar motioned to wait until December to make a decision on Resolution 22-11, Mr. Carriere second, motion carried.
- 9.5 **Resolution 22-12 Setting 2023 Property Tax Levy:** Mr. Poplawski motioned to approve Resolution 22-12, Mr. Carriere second, motion passed with 3, Mr. Poplawski, Mr. Cain and Mr. Carriere voting yes and 1, Ms. Eylar, voting no.
- 9.6 **Resolution 22-13 Setting Department Heads 2023 Salaries:** Ms. Eylar motioned to move this item to the December 20, 2022 meeting, Mr. Poplawski second, motion carried.
- 9.7 **Discussion of Solid Waste Rate Increase:** Ms. Pearce reminded council that they had received a copy of an email from Mr. Gotti, Sunrise Disposal, stating that Sunrise would be increasing rates by 8% for 2023. Ms. Pearce said she had gotten current rates from both Electric City and Coulee Dam and that Grand Coulee's rates were below both. She believes this is due to Grand Coulee not passing on two smaller

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- increases in previous years. The suggested rates are with the 8% increase. Ms. Eylar feels the city cannot afford to add the increase, Mr. Carriere is in agreement. Ms. Eylar motioned to increase the solid waste rates by 8% for 2023, Mr. Poplawski second, motion carried. Mayor Townsend stated that the Regional Board of Mayors is looking into the feasibility of providing pickup service through the regional board.
- 9.8 Discussion of AWC Scholarship Program:** Council received information from AWC about their scholarship program. They are offering \$1500.00 scholarships. Ms. Eylar motioned to establish a scholarship committee to oversee the program, Mr. Carriere second, motion carried. Mr. Poplawski asked that the committee members be presented to council in December.
- 9.9 Grant County Department of Health Agreement:** Mr. Poplawski motioned to not offer any funding on the city's behalf, Mr. Cain second, motion carried.
- 9.10 RBOM Draft Budget:** Ms. Pearce let council know that she had reached out to Electric City for additional information regarding the budget document. Ms. Pearce had requested a break down by employee on the wages and also information on what amounts within the budget was the administrative fee based on. The information on the administrative fee has not been received. Mr. Carriere motioned to wait to take any action until more information is received, Mr. Cain second, motion carried.
- 9.11 Request for Relief of Late Fee Acct. 2558.0/First Request:** Ms. Eylar motioned to authorize the removal of the late fee as this was the first request for this account, Mr. Carriere second, motion carried.
- 9.12 Open Council Position:** There was discussion about whether to fill the position or wait until the election cycle in 2023 as the position will have to be included on the ballot in 2023. Mr. Carriere motioned to advertise the position in December and review letters of interest in January 2023, Mr. Cain second, motion carried.
- 9.13 Wastewater Facility Plan/Date for Meeting:** Ms. Pearce suggested inviting Electric City council and mayor to the presentation so that the engineer would not need to make a third trip from Yakima to present the plan to Electric City council. Mr. Poplawski motioned to schedule the meeting for December 5, 2022 at 6pm and to invite Electric City to be present, Ms. Eylar second, motion carried.
- 9.14 Request to Close a Portion of Main St.:** Amanda Davis requested to close one half of Main St. on Saturday, November 19, 2022 from 3:30pm until 12:00am for a celebration of life for Mike Horne. Mr. Carriere motioned to allow Ms. Davis to close the street, Mr. Poplawski second, motion carried.

Mr. Poplawski thanked everyone for being there and their comments. The goal is to find a way to reach a resolution that is equitable.

ADJOURNMENT

As there was no objection, the mayor adjourned the meeting at approximately 7:35pm.

Paul A. Townsend, Mayor



Lorna Pearce, Clerk

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