

League of Women Voters of Pullman Observer Report

PULLMAN CITY COUNCIL MEETING: OCTOBER 27, 2020

OBSERVER: Libby Walker Length of meeting: 2 hours 40 minutes

Members present: Mayor Johnson, Council members Brandon Chapman, Eileen Macoll, Pat Wright, Nathan Weller, Ann Parks, Al, Sorenson, Dan Records.

Others attending: Mike Heston, Fire Department Chief; Mike Urban, Finance and Administrative Services Director and Acting City Administrator; Kevin Gardes, Public Works Director; Dee Stiles-Elliott, City Clerk; Laura McAloon, City Attorney.

Mayor Johnson announced that the staff moved to the **new city hall** during the 2nd week of October, but the building is closed to the public.

The public can have virtual input into the **Palouse Regional Transportation plan** until November 20th.

Mayor Johnson made some preliminary comments about the **20-21 and 21-22 biennial proposed budget**. Departmental budgets were trimmed when the pandemic hit. There are temporary furloughs. The search for a new city administrator is on pause until the first quarter of 2021. The previously selected candidate was lost due to a low salary offered. Liability insurance increased 31%. More than \$4.1 million in savings is needed to balance the two-year budget.

Mike Urban presented the details of the **proposed budget**. There will be a **public hearing on the budget and the property tax levy on November 17th**. All non-emergency purchases were moved to the 2nd quarter of 2021. Bids for the **Lawson Garden Building** will be accepted next month. If the bids come in excess on the bond amount, the city could re-bid the project, look for additional funding sources, or redirect the money to another capital improvement project. The bond funds need to be allocated by 2023. The city is moving forward on land acquisition for the **third fire station** by the end of 2021.

City expenses for 2021 total \$72,827,000. Salaries and benefits are the largest %. Expenses for 2022 total \$70,207,000 not including any money for the airport. Fire/Ambulance and Law Enforcement make up 60% of the budget. Urban explained that although \$4.1 million from reserves will be spent to balance the budget, he expects that this amount will be replenished by the end of 2022.

Councilman Chapman encouraged planners to **connect the dots between Pullman goal-setting work and the departmental budgets**. This should be obvious to the public at the public hearing. Mike Urban is the acting city administrator and pledged to make sure this happens. His goal is a priority-based budget.

New business: Mike Urban recommended that **\$362,880 set aside for new equipment** for utility reading not be included in CARES Act money. He presented some options on how the money could be used: \$230,000 for payroll reimbursement for August - November; \$40,000 for more PPE; new sewer line equipment; auto pulse equipment for one ambulance.

The Council voted to approve the payroll item, the PPE item, the auto pulse tool, with the remainder going to more Small Business Grants. This would be \$74,380.

Meeting adjourned at 9:37 PM.