

League of Women Voters of Pullman Observer Report

Pullman City Council Meeting: April 17, 2018

Attending: Mayor Johnson, Eileen Macoll, Dan Records, Brandon Chapman, Pat Wright, Ann Parks, and Al Sorenson. Nathan Weller was excused.

The room was almost filled to capacity due to the four presentations before the Council - glass update, traffic safety, and police department, and fire department staffing.

Glass Update: Public Works Director explained that there has been an issue of glass in the recycling, but there has been a 50% reduction. It is now more expensive to get rid of waste due to a change of policy in China. It costs \$80 a ton to get rid of recycling instead of generating any money. Rick Finch from WSU reported that the cost to get rid of single stream recycling is over \$110 a ton. There is too much contamination in the recycling at WSU. Devon Felstad from Pullman Disposal is considering rate increases or going back to separated recyclables. He is hoping the recycling market will come back.

Traffic safety: DN Traffic Consultants gave the presentation. (This was also featured in the Daily News recently.) Most of the traffic equipment is outdated and the signal visibility is poor. Signals are uncoordinated with no central control. Brandon asked about the scope of the study. There was no info about pedestrian or bicycle issues. Total cost of changes on Grand, Main, and Bishop - \$6,000,000.

Police Report by Gary Jenkins: Pullman ranks 15th in per capita staff in cities of 25,000-50,000 population. Only one is lower in WA State. There has been a significant increase in calls over the past few years with very small increases in staff. There are three officer vacancies. Expecting 5 more vacancies in the next two years.

Fire Department: Ryan Schornhorst, Deputy Chief. The ratio of firefighters to 1,000 population chart reveals that Pullman is very low. It would take 16 more firefighters to get to the national average. The request will be to add 4. The Council members were conflicted about addressing staffing needs of police vs fire. There is a national grant application due by April 27th.

Year-end financial report: LeeAnn Hubbard. Actual revenue for 2017: \$22,000,000. Property tax is greatest source of revenue - 31%. It increased 3%

from 2016 to 2017. Salaries and benefits = 71% of budget. The City maintains a 13% cash reserve but often these funds are used.

Public Hearing on city bus routes: An additional route is being proposed from Sunnyside Hill to downtown and to WSU. This presentation was given after 9:00 PM!! I didn't capture all of the details. Revenues are projected to be increased by over \$600,000. There clearly is enough money to add routes. A complete system overhaul is being proposed.

I left at 9:30 although there were still many items to be covered including 3 Resolutions and the discussion of increasing parking fines downtown. Scott Jackson stayed for this as it was in the paper this morning.

Submitted by Libby Walker
7:00-9:30 pm