

League of Women Voters of Pullman Observer Report

Name of Agency: Pullman City Council

Date: October 12, 2021

Observer Reporting: Anne Lewis

Length of Meeting: 7 pm- 8:58.

Members Present: Mayor Johnson; Councilmembers Weller, Macoll, Parks, Records, Wright, Chapman

Members Absent: Sorenson (Excused)

Others Present (e.g., media, public): Uncertain (I watched the recording on You Tube)

Business pertaining to League Positions or topics of interest:

League Priority: Affordable Housing

Report from Jeff Guyett (JG) of Community Action Center

- **56 unit Riverview Complex recently completed**— units for 28 households exiting homelessness plus set asides for disabilities, veterans. **Only met 10% of the need.** Already full, **1 year waiting list.**
- **Community Relief Fund**- Very flexible, which is biggest positive. Housing, transportation. Strongest support in 2016. Last 1-2 years it has been neglected/less stable donations (ie. some church groups have stepped back).
- Jeff coming to alert Council of **low CR funds** and see what questions they have, ideas, etc.

Nathan Weller has supported the program from the beginning.

Eileen Macoll asks about **rent assistance, income limits.** JG: For those that qualify, payment (of arrearage) made directly to landlord. Covid related criteria not critical. People who qualify sometimes are reluctant (others need it more, I can work something out, rural particularly worried about personal reputation).

Mayor asks about **utility** help. JG: Between CARES funding, utility funding, as well as federal light/heat dollars there are several resources. Likely every household would/could qualify to take care of arrearages. Pullman residents have utilized little of available resources. City Administrator confirms \$85k utilities 90 days+ overdue. JG says it might take threat of shut offs for people to utilize.

Local League Action Recommended: *Potentially advise members of Community Relief Fund. Community Action Center already on our chapter's "radar" (frequent guest speakers, etc.).*

League Priority: Open Government, City Livability

Public Hearing for the City of Pullman Downtown Master Plan

BDS Urban Planning & Design authored the plan.

Expects this to be adopted October 26 City Council Meeting.

City Council Questions & Comments: Macoll clarifies it is not an all or none plan.

No Public Comments

League Priority: City Government

Gary Jenkins seeks approval to create and seek candidates for **Administrative Sergeant Position** for police department. Passes unanimously.

City Supervisor seeks approval to **add Communications Coordinator City Position.** Councilman Chapman strongly supportive of position. Passes unanimously.

City Supervisor discusses **utility arrears.** (Essentially a follow up to JG presentation). 505 different customers, including large customers (at least 10%, at least 20% dollar wise) are behind in payments. Few utilizing

available resources (info re: those resources come with the utility bill). Currently no consequences for non-payment. **Supervisor seeking input on if it is time to initiate/schedule starting date for shut-offs.** Notes that we must wait 90 days after Sept 30 moratorium deadline before shut offs are an option. Seeking direction from council. Suggests residents be offered repayment plans of at least 6 months.

Weller- More sympathetic/open to flexible options for individuals than businesses. More willing to consider March 2022 (rather than the 90 days minimum) as starting date for shut offs. Wonders about personal touch/calling affected residents with resources. Personal Note: Observer supports this approach.

Records- More comfortable moving toward shut-offs because there is \$\$ available. More comfortable with Feb 1 or later for shut offs to resume.

Ann Parks: Supports strong press/increased and varied notifications of resources.

Local League Action Recommended: *Do members have ideas to share with Council re: getting more people to utilize available funds/resources? Has there been a newspaper or Community Update article about this?*

League Priority: Safety

Gary Jenkins reports of grant available to **purchase “less than lethal equipment.”** \$1 million available for Washington State. Pursue funding for compressed air launchers from the “less than lethal” grant. Unanimous move to support grant application.

Public Meetings of interest to League:

-Palouse Basin Water Summit will be Thursday, October 21, 6-8 pm on Zoom

Next City Council Meeting scheduled for October 19, 2021.