

League of Women Voters of Pullman Observer Report

Name of Agency: Pullman City Council

Date: December 14, 2021

Observer Reporting: Anne Lewis (via You Tube recording)

Length of Meeting: 7 pm-9: 15 p.m.

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

Members Absent: Chapman, Sorenson (both excused)

State Legislative Members: Mark Schoesler, Mary Dye, Joe Schmick

Others Present (e.g., media, public): Sparse Audience.

Business pertaining to League Positions or topics of interest:

Mayoral Announcements:

Commends Alan Davis for 45 years of service with Parks & Recreation

>League Priority: State & Local Governance, Representation

Annual meeting with the state legislators:

SENATOR MARK SCHOESLER

-10 billion more than **expenses** for the current and next biennium.

-What could we **do for the average taxpayer?** i.e., Sales, property, cell phone tax reduction discussion worth having.

-**Transportation**- Supports shifting state tax on vehicles to ????. Doesn't like using vehicle miles to tax (ie. rural), says gas tax not as effective as it used to be.

-**State Long-Term Care tax** is poorly thought out, wants to repeal and replace. Private market can supply long-term care.

REPRESENTATIVE SCHMICK

-Also wants to get rid of State Long-Term Care tax

REPRESENTATIVE DYE

-**Alternative view to Inslee's Climate Agenda.** Not behind carbon issues. Wants Climate Commitment \$ for flood and forest care, salmon issues, parks and recreation.

COUNCILMEMBERS requests and interaction:

Weller brings up **mental health**. Commends reps for being champions of the issue. Wants more providers in our area. Lack affects emergency services. There is an increasing homeless population.

Macoll: **Railroads**. Mentions playfields broken up by railroads. Could reconfigure that area and connect with the downtown and WSU. Also mentioned steam plant project (I am unfamiliar). Looking at economic benefit, safety. Schmick asks who owns it- City supervisor says the state. Schoesler supportive of steam plant project. Schmick asks if a map is available re: railroads looking to remove. Mayor notes have been working with Civic Trust. Will confirm and get them a map.

Observation: All avoided the term "railbanking" which tends to be (or used to be) resisted by legislators.

Transportation- Mayor brings up Hwy 26 (work seems to be stalled, i.e., for two lane). Also, north or south bypass for congestion. Needs help from legislators- an "ask" for help. Parks- truck traffic downtown impedes downtown experience. Schmick asks about south option. Mayor: North has more right of way (currently). Schoesler also asks about full cost- South: Ballpark of 53 million, North would be less (but don't have a good number). Mary Dye suggested speaking with KMR office- to see if/where can get \$ from the recently passed federal bill.

Mayor brings up **airport terminal**- Recognizes past support. Says even with city (Pullman, Moscow, schools) \$ in, there is more needed. If they know of a source...

Ann Parks: **Downtown revitalization**. Looking for ways to incentivize building owners to upgrade. Reiterates HWY 26.

Mayor stresses how much city appreciates legislators' representation (availability, responsiveness, engagement).

Schmick asks Police Chief Jenkins what he finds **the most "Egregious" of the year's bills**: **Response: Use of force bill**. Restricts ability to detain suspects of crimes. Can only use force if there is probable cause of arrest. {My note (from earlier session): "Force" includes detaining to question or bringing to station (not just hands on force).}

About 40 minutes of discussion with councilors. 5 minute break and then Regular Meeting.

>REGULAR MEETING

ZIPLY

- At request of council, discussion with Ziplly.
- Overview: 80+ right of way permits so far. Some held up due to community concerns (ie. property not cleaned up).
- 2 reps from Ziplly:

Rob Vigil-Director of Program Management for Ziplly and Tom _____, Manager of Engineering for Ziplly. Tom: Extensive project \replacing copper (old, antiquated) infrastructure with (state of the art) Fiber-Optic. Both stressing how big the project, accomplishments. Continued focus: To build a relationship, respond/fix issues...

Councilors Response:

Nathan- (After much lead in) describes Ziplly situation as "really, really bad."

Pat Wright- Her phone was out for 3 weeks. Similar experience all over town. All the great things you plan to do don't matter if you don't have customer service.

Mayor notes that city employees have spent considerable time, effort to deal with complaints.

Need to earn back trust. Ziplly is making Spectrum look good.

New Business

Nathan Weller requests emergency funds be used for **Community Action Center**.

City supervisor notes if 2021 item, need a budget amendment. If 2022, more flexibility.

Wright not sure this is a proper use of City Funds.

McAloon- Donation does not go against state Constitution.

Councilors uncomfortable with making decision to allocate money without full discussion, usual process.

Weller rescinds motion.

Motion to Select Consultant for **Strategic Tourism Plan**. Consultant selected: Place + Main.

Mayor ends the meeting by thanking Chapman and Sorenson for their time as well as Dan Records who is moving to the westside. Identifies the 2 council members in waiting: Megan Guido and Francis Benjamin. Wishes all Happy Holidays.