

League of Women Voters of Pullman Observer Report

PULLMAN CITY COUNCIL MEETING: MARCH 23, 2021

OBSERVER: Libby Walker

LENGTH OF MEETING: 1 hour 50 minutes

ATTENDING: Mayor Glenn Johnson, Council members Ann Parks, Eileen Macoll, Pat Wright, Al Sorensen, Dan Records, and Nathan Weller. Brandon Chapman was absent.

OTHERS: Laura McAloon, City Attorney; Dee Stiles-Elliot, City Clerk; Mike Urban, City Administrator; Joanna Bailey, Director of Neill Public Library; Molly Sanchez, Innovia Foundation; Clayton Forsman, Deputy Public Works Director; Kevin Gardes, Public Works Director; Wayne Thompson, Transit Manager; and RJ Lott, Director of Planning.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: MAYOR JOHNSON announced that Whitman County has moved into **Phase 3** of COVID Planning. COUNCIL MEMBER RECORDS announced the Town Hall meeting tomorrow night at 6:00 pm to gather public comments on the **mural project**. Sign-ups are due by 4:00 tomorrow. Speakers will be contacted by 5:45 with instructions. It is expected that each speaker will have 3 minutes for his/her comments. MAYOR JOHNSON announced that there will be a **rally** on Sunday at 2:00 pm in Rainey Park **in support of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders**.

Jonna Davis was confirmed unanimously as **Finance Director** to replace Mike Urban. She has been an assistant state auditor since 2016. She lives locally and will begin her position on April 21, 2021.

NEILL PUBLIC LIBRARY DIRECTOR JOANNA BAILEY asked for approval of **two grants**: \$22,133 from the Sherrod Family Memorial Fund for custodial expenses at Neill Public Library and \$16,000 from the Thomas and Winnifred Neill Fund for materials collections. **MOLLY SANCHEZ** from Innovia Foundation was introduced. This organization distributes grants to Whitman County and Northern Idaho. The grants were approved.

CITY ADMINISTRATOR/ FINANCE DIRECTOR MIKE URBAN gave the **Financial Report** through December 31, 2020. **Revenue** for the general fund was slightly higher than anticipated at \$24 million, largely because of \$1.6 million in CARES Act money received by the City. Sales tax revenue was up 84% because of construction; retail sales tax was down 6%. Building permit revenue, real estate excise taxes, utility fund revenues and lodging taxes were all down. Neill Public Library's budget was cut \$700,000 and the Parks and Rec budget was cut \$1,000,000 - both due to COVID. Pullman's share of the American Rescue Plan is expected to be \$7 million.

DIRECTOR OF PLANNING RJ LOTT presented the **Canyon Crest Planned Residential Development plat and plan** which involve 75 lots on 10.3 acres near Kamiak Elementary School. Sixty-eight homes from 1,000-2,000 square feet will be built there. None will have garages, but there will be covered parking stalls and open community parking spaces. This development will address the need for more affordable entry-level housing in Pullman. It is estimated to take 3 years to complete.

TRANSIT MANAGER WAYNE THOMPSON summarized the **2020 transit report**. Ridership decreased from 7,000 to 1,000 riders in March of 2020. Buses were limited to 10 riders. Senior Meals and library services were picked up. Fixed rides decreased by 64%. CARES Act funds were used to supplement the budget. The 2021-2026 Transit Plan includes purchasing one new bus and one new van alternate years. Buses will hopefully all be replaced with electric buses. Facility expansion is planned.

COUNCIL MEMBER NATHAN WELLER wanted to add an idea to the Planning Meeting minutes of March 6th but could not do that. His idea is to start a program to increase student voting registration by forming a coalition of partners including the League of Women Voters, the school district, WSU, and others. There were no comments by the Council members.

Meeting adjourned at 8:50 pm

Submitted by Libby Walker