

League of Women Voters of Pullman Observer Report

Name of Agency: Pullman City Council **Date:** August 24, 2021 **Observer Reporting:** Anne Lewis

Length of Meeting: 7:00- 9:25 pm. Hybrid. Watched recording via YouTube Channel.

Members Present/Absent: All council members present

Others Present (i.e., media, public): Masked audience

Announcements:

Mayor Johnson notes **masks are again required indoors**. WSU students back- be careful 😊.

Pullman School District starts tomorrow. **2 Electric Buses** on the road.

Presentations:

1. **Mike Heston (Fire Chief)** awarded an employee a certificate for completing a training program of some sort. (Sorry, unsure of details).
2. **Pullman Building Inspectors**
 - **Dwelling Life Safety Program.** Free to public, goal of inspection is life safety compliance to codes (v. enforcement). Inspector goes through the dwelling/building with owner or property manager.
 - Council member Chapman asked what issue was seen the most. Presenter, who doesn't do field inspections, wasn't certain. Egress concerns, bare wires, some examples.
 - After being asked to weigh in by Mayor, Sorenson notes that **renters and liability insurance** should be held by tenants.
3. Megan Parks re: **Stand Alone Pullman Municipal Court- Note: Upon quick search, I didn't find the Presentation Slides to make available (for this extremely detailed issue/presentation).**
 - PhD. Student and Current Public Research Fellow; Pullman Criminal Justice project.
 - **2 options:** Continue current contract with the County or transition to Stand-Alone Municipal Court
 - **Consider** cost, local control, service levels, location, impacts on associated criminal justice services.
 - **2019-2020 Court Study.** Now at Phase 4: Review and Summarize Previously Conducted Study.
 - **Pullman** is the 2nd largest user of Whitman District Court after WA State Patrol. Parking violations comprise the largest proportion of caseload. 68% of Pullman misdemeanors qualified for a public defender.
 - **Net Costs if Move to Stand Alone:** Start up: approx. \$210K. Risk of \$330-\$526k in first 5 years if "outstanding cases and financial obligations are not transferred from District Court at start up."
 - \$471k is the current yearly contract with the County.
 - Seems to be an option of keeping County for Jail Services. Note: Jail use "the most expensive part of the criminal justice system."
 - **Location:** City Hall (Paradise Street) v. new Pioneer Center (by LMS).
 - Councilman Records: Report supports that we are not really looking at cost savings. He says it raises interesting issues re: approach/focus of system, rehabilitation.

4. **Annual Report Pullman Police Department-** Gary Jenkins

- 2019 and 2020 Annual Reports. 2019 was being worked on March/April 2020, which is why it is delayed.
- 2019 Highlights: Crime Rate Changes: 2018-2019. Crimes against persons 20% down, state up 4%. Total crimes decrease, state increase. Larceny & vandalism a big driver of crimes
- 2020 Highlights: 21% decrease in crimes against persons. Similar decreases down the line. State had increases. Notes that decreases not necessarily sustainable plus Pullman is growing. Larceny & vandalism the big drivers of crime.

Regular Agenda:

1. **Resolution flood mitigation.** Public Works Director speaks. Notice of Preliminary Grant Application for FEMA Grant that could potentially be used for Missouri Flat Creek Flood Improvements and/or Carwash Hydraulic Removal. Nathan Weller notes that currently people parking/using that site (ie. Taco food truck)- is it owned by city or private? PW Director confirms it is a private owner who potentially might not agree to allow work. Council question- Would we then need to look at a different project? Would that be possible under grant? Takeaway: Interested in the grant, but scope mentioned in presentation problematic without answers to questions re: the property. Resolution adopted unanimously (as this is a *preliminary* grant app).
2. Motion to allow staff to release RFP: **Consultant Design Services for Downtown Improvements.** Next step in Downtown Master Plan/Implementing the Master Plan. Passed unanimously.
3. Motion to authorize acceptance of Fiscal **Year 2020 Assistance to Fire-Fighter Grant Award.** Didn't get the EMS portion. Did get Driver's Side Training.

New Business

Mark Whitmore, Pullman resident and long-time farmer speaks re: **property dispute? behind Evergreen Tire.** Whitmore owns an elevator in the property area. Whitmore has been in 6.5 years of litigation, has requested assistance from city attorney multiple times. Provides handout to councilmembers and hopes they look at the issue and provide guidance/ideas.

Council adjourns for 10-minute Executive Session.

Council returns from Executive Session –that lasted 20 minutes? - and immediately Adjourns the Council meeting.

Your Comments/Opinions:

1. Stand-Alone Municipal Court: My comment (which may not be accurate): This seems dependent on whether the County holds on to cases (to necessitate both going at the same time/receiving \$\$) or lets the cases go.

Location: City Hall (Paradise Street) v. new Pioneer Center (by LMS). My observation: Not sure both equal options currently. I believe a comparison was done a few years ago.

Process & Protocol (Observations about participants, conduct, and procedures of the meeting):

i.e., Did the members appear to have done their "homework"? Were members courteous to each other and the public? How does the group respond to your presence? Council prepared.