

League of Women Voters of Pullman Observer Report

Name of Agency: Pullman City Council

Date: January 11, 2022

Observer Reporting: Anne Lewis

Length of Meeting: 7 pm- 9:17 pm

Members Present: Mayor Johnson; Councilmembers Guido, Weller, Macoll, Parks, Benjamin, Wright and, by the end, Councilmember Deubin!

Members Absent: None.

Others Present (e.g., media, public): Several, in particular Brandon Chapman's' family (I watched the recording on You Tube)

Mayor Welcomes new councilmembers: Megan Guido and Francis Benjamin

Outgoing members receive plaque/recognition. Dan Records-challenges became opportunities; Brandon Chapman-Gratitude, quality of life/Pullman Proud, service. Al Sorenson not present.

League Priority: Civic Engagement

1. Filling Open Ward 2 Position

Candidates: Melissa Emerson, Bill Whitman, Rebecca Dueben, Garren Shannon.

Each current councilmember asks a question, each candidate gets 2 minutes to respond, starting candidate changes each time. Observation: LWV style 😊.

Guido: What do you view as the responsibility of a Councilmember ?

ME- Listen to concerns of citizens. Best serve citizens and community.

BW- Ear of the community, provide input, make decisions, "awesome responsibility."

RD- Listen and then active, educate (re: constraints); represent the citizens such that the citizens feel they are part of the city government

GS- Listen, fiduciary duty

Parks- Please share what Diversity, Equity and Inclusion mean to you and why they are important.

BW- Diversity is Pullman (all religions, races).

RD- We make a mistake if we think Pullman will be the same city in 5 years as it is now. Skills: trained facilitator and have experience in DEI.

GS- Strives for "belonging."

ME- More than "cultural" exclusivity (i.e. Disability). "Homogeneity is boring."

Weller: What is your definition of a public servant (v. a politician) and its importance?

RD- We owe a debt of service. PS is a humble, giving position.

GS- Care for your community/neighbor. Service is all the time, "politician" is a learned skill.

ME- Politician looking forward to the next election. Can be a public servant, but that isn't the bottom line. Public Servant serving the issue at hand, regardless of future. **

BW- (He had an answer, but I apparently didn't write anything down)

Macoll- What do you like/dislike about the Downtown Master Plan (be specific)?

GS- Need better parking, transportation safety; Downtown Association an active function that will improve downtown.

ME- Not entirely familiar with the whole thing. Went to some early meetings.

BW- Not well versed in master plan. I understand it is a great challenge.

RD- Very little that I don't like about it. ArtWalk, lane changes. Reminder that it is people important, not just practical (she said this better).

Wright- *Tell me about a time when you had to navigate discussion among peers/colleagues and how you reach consensus?*

ME- A lot of disagreement is because people aren't listening to each other. Finding common ground- aren't necessarily on opposing sides. Find agreement and expand on that.

BW- Conflict resolution. Be an active listener, input from all, identify problem.

RD- Conflict not necessarily a bad thing, can be an opportunity. Combine both needs (ie. Rigor and diversity/inclusion).

GS- Listen, empathy

Benjamin- *3 Most Pressing Concerns for the City and your approach to them?*

BW- Work on mobility/transportation flow in city, sidewalks need work, encourage new/different businesses

RD- Carrying out the Master Plan, Communications Director to work with groups within the city, housing.

GS- Agrees with RD. Additionally mentions northern bypass, airport terminal

ME- Traffic (not complaining on time level, rather congestion, little tweaks for traffic), revitalize Pullman

Now to one-minute responses:

Guido- *Why do you want this position?*

RD- Without Dan will be an absence in DEI- RD wants to fill that, Pullman needs that.

GS- Ran against Dan previously. Some things he wants to get done: Skills Center, Gladish

ME- Needed someone to be in this position. "Threw my name in."

BW- Lived and worked in Pullman all but a few years of my life. Like to contribute back.

Parks- *What have you done recently to prepare for the role of councilmember?*

GS- Pullman 2040, on Planning Commission?, Teacher during COVID

ME- Nothing "specifically." Work all day with people in the community.

BW- "Not done anything specific for this position," but experience in groups, multi-volunteer.

RD- Upped participation in town- Parks & Rec Position, Library?, reviewed Master Plan, listened to Council Reports of past year

Weller- *What is the best and worst thing about Pullman?*

ME- Best: Safe, community, not isolated or stifled by size; Dislike: People come and go quickly.

BW- Best: Opportunities for rec, education, sports; Dislike: Weather & Covid

RD- Best: Inclusion, feel at home; Dislike: Not everyone feels completely included as I do

GS- Best & Worst: Per 2040 survey "Game Day." Similar concept- small town, but need business.

Macoll- Pass

Wright- *Describe for me how you address conflict between parties (i.e. Council, public, staff) and what you see as their roles.*

BW- Be sure you are clear on problem/issue; resolve/work through in comfortable, appropriate setting.

RD- Listening, consensus on general idea. Council can educate. Lots of work outside of meeting.

GS- Cut through emotion.

ME- Get people to talk and communicate. Practical: Codes, rules, hierarchy.

Benjamin- *If you are elected, what are you going to give up to spend time on council?*

RD- From Thur-Tue, setting aside time to review, understand. Less writing time.

GS- YouTube. He is ready to do what it takes (study, research).

ME- Free in the evenings. Has time available, hopes not to give up anything.

BW- Sanity. Will give up position as President of Colton Booster Club. New challenge. Flexible with time.

Executive Session to Evaluate Qualifications of Candidates. 8:18-8:28.

Rebecca Deubin nominated and sworn in.

League Priority: Civic Engagement

1. **Election of Mayor Pro Tem**- Eileen Macoll; Alternate Mayor Pro Tem-Megan Guido

2. **Library Board Positions**

Ann Parks relays Library Board proposals:

Dr. Donna Potts as a recommendation to fill vacant position for Library Board. Mayor in agreement.

Appointed.

Reappointment of Mary Jane Neill to fill term expiring 12/21

Regular Agenda

Creation of Hearing Examiner Ordinance that replaces the Board of Adjustment.

Benefit: No further issues with quorum, greater ability to avoid conflicts of interest, decisions based on legal perspectives, fewer appeals. Estimate cost- \$5200 for remainder of calendar year.

Amends city code - **Passes.**

<https://pullmanradio.com/city-of-pullman-moves-to-hearing-examiner-system-for-some-land-use-decisions-to-streamline-process/>

Execution of Public Works Agreement. Welch Comer Consultant team to design downtown master plan.

Mayor Ends meeting with observation that, for the first time, majority of the Council are women.

Your additional comments/opinions:

I'm uncertain how "big a deal" the change from having a Board of Adjustments to a solo Hearing Examiner is. It is certainly something that required a significant amendment/deletion of prior city code sections. Presented as something that is beneficial and (more) appropriate for a city our size. Are Hearing Examiner's by design (definition? Selection?) impartial?