

MINUTES

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
OF
APRIL 9, 2012
5:30 P.M.
THE DALLES CITY HALL
313 COURT STREET
THE DALLES, OREGON

PRESIDING: Mayor Jim Wilcox

COUNCIL PRESENT: Bill Dick, Carolyn Wood, Brian Ahier, Tim McGlothlin

COUNCIL ABSENT: Dan Spatz

STAFF PRESENT: City Manager Nolan Young, City Attorney Gene Parker, City Clerk Julie Krueger, Finance Director Kate Mast, Public Works Director Dave Anderson, Administrative Fellow Cooper Whitman, Community Development Director Dan Durow, Police Captain Ed Goodman

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Wilcox called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Roll call was conducted by City Clerk Krueger; Councilor Spatz absent.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Wilcox invited the audience to join in the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Councilor Ahier asked that Action Items A and B be reversed on the agenda. It was moved by Ahier and seconded by McGlothlin to approve the agenda as amended. The motion carried unanimously, Spatz absent.

PRESENTATION

Brian Goodwin, School District 21, 300 West 21st Street, The Dalles, provided the Council with a description of a new Research and Development lab program for the high school in the Fall. He said each class would be two hours long, there would be two teachers and approximately 50 students per class. Mr. Goodwin said this would be a real world sustainability program and said he hoped local governments and businesses would help provide challenges for the students and help with mentoring.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

Jeff Clifford, 1280 Oak Hill Drive, The Dalles, asked if the public would be allowed to make comments during the Action Items section of the agenda. Mayor Wilcox said he would not be taking public comment during that portion of the agenda.

Link Shadley, 2437 East 10th Street, The Dalles, requested that the City Council formally oppose the coal trains traveling through the Gorge. He said our resources should not be sent overseas and said he had visited a city that was smelly and dirty from coal and said he did not want our community to be that way.

Mayor Wilcox said the matter would be discussed at the April 16th Town Hall meeting at the Mid Columbia Senior Center and invited Mr. Shadley to attend.

CITY MANAGER REPORT

City Manager Young reported that Cooper Whitman had been offered a position as Executive Director for the Dickenson, North Dakota Chamber of Commerce and would be leaving the City. He said there was an opportunity to use the remaining funds for this position for an intern and asked the Council for permission to recruit for a summer intern position. It was the consensus of the Council to direct the City Manager to recruit for a summer intern.

Young reminded the Council that Budget Committee meetings would begin on April 30 and said the budget would be delivered next week.

CITY ATTORNEY REPORT

City Attorney Parker said he was working with Police Department staff to complete the Second Hand Dealers Ordinance and hoped to bring it back for approval in May or June.

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Parker said he was working on revisions to the employee handbook, but these were administrative policies and would not need to be approved by City Council. He said he would bring the ordinance to repeal the yard sale sign requirements for approval at the May 14th meeting.

CITY COUNCIL REPORTS

Councilor Ahier reported that the Council of Governments Board had developed a new funding formula for participation in the nutrition program, based on number of seniors in the counties and the number of meals served.

Ahier said he had an ongoing frustration with not allowing citizens to speak on certain agenda items. He said he was opposed to that policy and would like the public to have the opportunity to comment.

Mayor Wilcox said he had attended a meeting regarding a process to get State and Federal agencies to work together in local permitting issues. He said there had been good input from the City and he hoped it would help streamline the process.

Wilcox reminded the Council there would be a League of Oregon Cities meeting in the Council Chamber on April 12 at 5:30 p.m. to review the recent legislative actions.

Wilcox said Coastal Farm Supply was still waiting for a fill permit and said the delay in issuance of that permit was causing them to lose money and not be able to hire employees for our local economy.

Mayor Wilcox asked Airport Manager Covert to report on the recent bid opening for the airport runway rehabilitation project. Chuck Covert said the engineers and staff were meeting to review the two bids and would bring the matter to Council at the April 23 Council meeting.

CONSENT AGENDA

It was moved by Wood and seconded by Ahier to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Items approved by Consent Agenda were: 1) approval of March 26, 2012 regular City Council meeting minutes; and 2) Resolution No. 12-004 concurring with the Mayor's appointments to various committees.

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Recess

Mayor Wilcox called a brief recess at 6:05 p.m. to discuss protocol with the City Manager and City Attorney.

Reconvene

The meeting reconvened at 6:12 p.m.

Mayor Wilcox said he would allow public comment on the Action Items but that he would not allow personal or performance comments. He asked that any testimony be directed toward positions and money.

ACTION ITEMS

Approval of Salary Adjustment for Department Managers

City Manager Young reviewed the staff report.

Councilor Ahier thanked the Mayor for allowing public input. He said he appreciated the work done by the City Manager and supported the philosophy of creating three categories for the Department Managers. Ahier said he supported creating three separate categories.

Councilor Wood disagreed, saying it took a long time to achieve a cohesive management team and they should all be kept on the same pay scale and considered a team. She said separation would cause disparity.

Mayor Wilcox said he believed there should be more pay for those managers who had more staff, larger budgets and more responsibility. He said he didn't want anyone to receive a reduction in pay, but thought it was more fair to separate the managers into different categories. Wilcox said he did not agree with comparing benefits of union and non-union employees, saying City employees were very well paid compared to private industry and that in a bad economy, no cost of living adjustments should be granted.

Councilor Ahier said the salary survey had shown the Police Chief and Public Works Director positions did not match up with comparable cities. He said that needed to be corrected.

Councilor McGlothlin said he thought the timing was poor to grant wage increases.

Councilor Dick said he appreciated all the positions stated, but questioned whether the staff was comfortable with the proposal. He said he supported Councilor Wood's position to keep the managers in one category and to look at the issue in a year.

Wood said if there were concerns about hiring new employees to fill the management positions in the future, the City would know through the recruitment process and applications, whether they needed to increase the salary to get qualified candidates.

Mayor Wilcox said under-paying the managers sent a message to current and future people in the position that they were not valued. He recommended the positions of Police Chief and Public Works Director be increased one level.

It was moved by Ahier and seconded by McGlothlin to create a new Range A+ 3% higher than the current Range A and place in that range the Police Chief and Public Works Director, effective July 1, 2012.

Public Comment

Jeff Clifford, 1280 Oak Hill Drive, The Dalles, compared Wasco County per capita income, household income, and property values against State figures, noting that Wasco County was well below the State numbers and said there was a large discrepancy between public and private sector salaries. He questioned what would happen when timber funds were no longer available and where money would come from to pay salaries. He urged the Council to reject any increases in salary and said if the employees left their positions, the City would find people to fill the jobs.

Councilor Ahier pointed out the salary survey compared the City's positions with like positions of other municipalities with similar populations.

Marilyn Clifford, 1280 Oak Hill Drive, The Dalles, said the city should not allow long term employees, saying it took away from the representative form of government. She said the jobs should be opened up for others.

City Manager Young disagreed, saying the City Council were the elected representatives and policy makers of the City and that long term employees were valuable because of the experience they brought. He said looking at the successes in our community, the results of that expertise spoke for itself.

Councilor Wood agreed, saying The Dalles was very fortunate to have such a professional staff. She said the representative form of government was the City Council, not the staff and it was important to have a high level of professionals.

Councilor Ahier said he was grateful to have such a professional staff.

Alex Jara, 4405 Highway 30, The Dalles, said with the current difficult economic times, he did not agree with giving salary increases and that if there was money, it should be used to help others in the community. He said the long term employees should retire and others could have their jobs.

The motion to create a new Range A+ 3% higher than the current Range A and place in that range the Police Chief and Public Works Director, effective July 1, 2012, was voted on and carried: voting yes, Ahier, McGlothlin and Wilcox; voting no, Dick and Wood.

Approval of Exempt Employee Compensation Package for Fiscal Year 2012-13

City Manager Young reviewed the staff report.

Councilor Ahier said he did support the recommendation to cap insurance premium increases at 9%. He said he could support a small cost of living adjustment but was struggling with a 2% increase.

Mayor Wilcox said he did not support granting a cost of living adjustment for the upcoming year.

Councilor Ahier said he did not support granting increases and changing benefits for various groups of employees based on what other groups had received or negotiated.

Councilor Wood said that was a typical public employee salary system. She said it would not be fair to not recognize the exempt employees because they weren't in a union and couldn't negotiate benefits and pay.

City Manager Young noted the public employees did tend to lag behind the economy in benefits. He said during a healthy economy, they did not receive the cost of living adjustments to meet the rate of inflation and last year they only received a 1% adjustment for half of the year. He said the economy was beginning to turn around and cautioned against a wage freeze.

Councilor Ahier agreed that it didn't seem fair to not give exempt employees a cost of living adjustment when the other groups of employees did receive one.

Mayor Wilcox said the employees could choose to stay in their jobs or leave them and that wages should be compared with our local economy. He said the employees were already paid well and it would be better to use the money for a community need.

City Manager Young said the City was not as challenged financially by employee compensation because it did not participate in the PERS retirement system. He said the City had lower contributions to retirement accounts, with the exception of the Police who had to have a plan equal to PERS by law.

It was moved by Wood and seconded by Dick to approve an exempt employee compensation package for fiscal year 2012-13 that included a 2% cost of living adjustment effective July 1, 2012, increases to the City's contribution toward an employee's insurance premium no more than 9% and increase vacation accrual to match Police Union contract.

Public Comment

Jeff Clifford, 1280 Oak Hill Drive, The Dalles, spoke in opposition to the motion for reasons stated in his previous testimony regarding salary increases.

Cheryl Jones, 1220 East Ninth Street, The Dalles, said she was opposed to salary increases and said she didn't think public employees should earn more than the tax payers earn.

The motion to approve an exempt employee compensation package for fiscal year 2012-13 that included a 2% cost of living adjustment effective July 1, 2012, increases to the City's contribution toward an employee's insurance premium no more than 9% and increase vacation accrual to match Police Union contract was voted on and failed: voting yes, Wood and Dick; voting no, Ahier, McGlothlin and Wilcox.

It was moved by Ahier and seconded by Dick to approve an exempt employee compensation package for fiscal year 2012-13 that included a 1.5% cost of living adjustment effective July 1, 2012, increases to the City's contribution toward an employee's insurance premium no more than 9% and increase vacation accrual to match Police Union contract. The motion carried; McGlothlin voting no.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Discussion Regarding Plan for City Assistance to the Main Street Non-Profit Program

City Manager Young reviewed the staff report.

Mayor Wilcox said he had received a detailed list of downtown businesses and property owners contact information from a member of the Main Street program and said it would be a great tool. Wilcox asked if there was a time frame for the Program to match the proposed contribution by the City.

City Manager Young said the City would only match the salary contribution when the economic improvement district (EID) was formed and there was a commitment for the matching funds.

Mary Merrill, 2437 East 10th Street, The Dalles, said several committees had been created through the program and members were working to recruit businesses to the downtown. She said the steering committee had created the database of information of downtown businesses and owners. She said leadership and coordination which would be provided by a staff person, was vital to keep the program moving forward.

City Attorney Parker said he was working on an ordinance to allow for economic improvement districts and hoped to have it to Council for approval in May.

Chuck Covert, 101 East Second Street, The Dalles, said he had attended a recent meeting about downtown revitalization and was pleased to hear so many creative ideas and enthusiasm for the Main Street program. He said as a downtown business owner, he supported the implementation of an EID. Covert said he appreciated the support the City has given to the Main Street program.

Councilor Ahier asked if other agencies were involved. It was noted that the Mid Columbia Economic Development District and Chamber of Commerce were working in collaboration with the City.

Councilor Wood said many other cities in Oregon had great success with the Main Street Program.

Councilor Dick said he was a part owner of a downtown building and asked if that caused a conflict of interest regarding the EID. Councilor Wood said she also owned a building in the downtown area.

City Attorney Parker said when the ordinance was considered, the Councilors should disclose the information, but it was a large group and he did not think there would be a conflict of interest.

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It was the consensus of the Council to approve the City's contribution as presented and direct the City Manager to include \$30,000 under City Council contractual services in the 2012-13 budget for consideration by the Budget Committee and further direct the City Attorney to assist the Main Street non-profit organization in their efforts to create an Economic Improvement District.

ADJOURNMENT


Being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:48 p.m.

Submitted by/
Julie Krueger, MMC
City Clerk

SIGNED:


James L. Wilcox, Mayor

ATTEST:


Julie Krueger, MMC, City Clerk