

MINUTES

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
OF
OCTOBER 10, 2011
5:30 P.M.
CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBER
313 COURT STREET
THE DALLES, OREGON

PRESIDING: Mayor Jim Wilcox

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

COUNCIL ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: City Attorney Gene Parker, City Clerk Julie Krueger, Community Development Director Dan Durow, Public Works Director Dave Anderson, Finance Director Kate Mast, Administrative Fellow Cooper Whitman, Police Chief Jay Waterbury

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Wilcox called the meeting to order at 5:33 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Roll call was conducted by City Clerk Krueger; all Councilors present.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

It was moved by Ahier and seconded by Wood to approve the agenda as amended, by adding a Breast Cancer Awareness Proclamation. The motion carried unanimously.

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PRESENTATIONS/PROCLAMATIONS

Presentation by YouthThink Regarding Search Institute Asset Survey

Debby Jones, 4575 Basalt Road, The Dalles and Nikki Lesich, PO Box 643, The Dalles, provided an overview of a recent Search Institute Asset Survey completed for the YouthThink program. It was noted the results of the survey were very similar to the same survey taken ten years ago. Jones explained the survey included sixth through 12th grade students and asked questions regarding substance use and risk taking behaviors. She said the results were measured against the number of developmental assets of each student.

Nikki Lesich thanked the City Council for their support of YouthThink programs and for keeping youth issues in the Vision Plan.

Breast Cancer Awareness Proclamation

Mayor Wilcox read a Proclamation, declaring the month of October, 2011, as Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

Scott Green, Northern Wasco County Parks and Recreation District Director, thanked the City Council for their support of the newly constructed skate park. He said the park was well used by the community and noted Fall plantings and irrigation would be installed as the next step. Mr. Green presented the Mayor with a framed photograph of the ribbon cutting ceremony.

CITY ATTORNEY REPORT

City Attorney Parker reported he had attended the City Attorney's meeting at the League of Oregon Cities conference and there was a good session about codes enforcement issues. Parker said he was working on the yard sale ordinance updates and second hand dealer ordinance and hoped to have them ready for Council review in November.

CITY COUNCIL REPORTS

Councilor Wood reported on a recent tour of watershed lands with the Wasco County Commission and US Forest Services. She said the upper portion of the lands was much improved from one year ago.

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Councilor Spatz said the Mid Columbia Economic Development District Board had met last month. He said the Regional Strategies Team would be having its first meeting on October 14th.

Mayor Wilcox announced that the City Manager was doing well and was mostly working from home this week. He said a City employee's daughter had a serious accident and asked that everyone keep them in their prayers.

Wilcox commended community members for taking such great care of their properties and especially thanked Sam and Anne Marie Woolsey and Tom and Debbie Conklin for the extra care they took in maintaining their properties.

Wilcox asked the City Council to let the City Clerk know if they had any particular topics they wanted to discuss at a future Town Hall meeting.

Mayor Wilcox provided a report about his experiences at the recent League of Oregon Cities Conference, noting the City of Ontario's current problems in regulating medical marijuana dispensaries; an opportunity to host a future Oregon Mayor's Conference in The Dalles; a report from Senator Ron Wyden about County timber payments being restored and re-authorization of transportation programs; availability to research topics on the League's website through their A to Z index; and economic development presentation by Columbia County regarding how they help citizens to get the assistance they need. He complimented Executive Secretary Izetta Grossman for her willingness to always help citizens in this manner. Wilcox said he had been impressed with the City of Sandy's social media/Facebook presentation and noted that Izetta Grossman also did a great job for the City in managing the City's Facebook page. Wilcox said he had nominated Representative Greg Walden for an award, which he did receive. He recommended all City Councilors attend at least one League conference.

CONSENT AGENDA

Councilor Ahier noted for the record that the September 26th meeting minutes had indicated that he was unsure whether the transportation systems development charge credits had spurred new development but that his intention was to say he did believe it had spurred development. Ahier said he wanted to clarify his comments.

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

The item approved by Consent Agenda was approval of the September 26, 2011 regular City Council meeting minutes.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Public Hearing to Receive Testimony Regarding Water Rate Options

Mayor Wilcox reviewed the procedures to be followed for the hearing.

Public Works Director Anderson reviewed the staff report. He specifically reviewed the four proposed alternative residential rates and said all the proposals would generate the same amount of revenue, which was needed to accomplish the projects identified in the previously accepted Option 2B schedule. Anderson noted there was no proposal to change the proposed four percent increase for the commercial rates, which was approximately 38% of the water rate revenues. He recommended the selected rate schedule be re-evaluated in about one year to confirm the anticipated revenues were being realized, allowing for adjustments if necessary. Anderson further recommended the schedule outlined in Option 2B be implemented as originally proposed with 10% increases on September 1 of each year 2012 through 2014; 8% increases years 2015 through 2017; and 10% increases in years 2018 through 2020.

Testimony

Bruce Harris, 812 West 13th Street, The Dalles, said he owned a business installing sprinkler systems. He said many of his customers told him they could not continue to water their lawns if the water rates continued to increase and some of them were paying \$250 per month for water currently. Harris said the City had an abundant supply of water and said it was less expensive to provide water from the City wells than from the water treatment plant. He said if the City reduced water rates, they would sell more water and people would use more water.

Mayor Wilcox asked what the irrigation consumption might be on a standard lot if a person had a sprinkler system. Harris said an average person would use approximately 15,000 gallons per month for irrigation.

Councilor Dick asked if Mr. Harris was advocating that the City not lower the base gallons. Mr. Harris said that was correct. He said he would support increasing the base gallons.

Councilor Ahier said he didn't think increasing the number of gallons for the base rate would help increase revenue which was needed to complete the needed projects.

Michael Leash, 206 Court Street, The Dalles, expressed concern regarding commercial rates. He said his establishment was charged approximately \$800 per month for water and sewer and that basing the sewer rates on available seating, when it was seldom at capacity seemed unfair. He asked the City to review the methodology for setting commercial sewer rates.

Public Works Director Anderson said the charges for commercial water rates were based on the size of the water line. He explained that the sewer charges were not solely based on seating, but other factors such as kitchen and bar waste.

Hearing no further testimony, the public hearing was closed.

Council Deliberation

Councilor Spatz asked if there was a cost of service analysis. Public Works Director Anderson said one had been included in the 2006 Water Master Plan. He said initially, there had been a 15,000 gallon base for residential and 7,000 gallon base for commercial customers.

Anderson said consumption had been very constant and increasing the base gallons could result in the delay of some water source development projects, which were needed for the future growth and economic development of the community.

Public Works Director Anderson responded to a comment from Mr. Harris regarding the high cost of water, noting that if a person used between 15,000 and 20,000 gallons of water, their monthly bill would be approximately \$42 to \$52 per month. He said if a person had a \$250 monthly water bill, they would be using about 250,000 gallons of water.

Councilor Spatz asked the average consumption during the winter months. Public Works Director Anderson estimated it was between 3,000 and 4,000 gallons per month. Spatz asked if staff had considered a seasonal rate structure. Anderson said that had not been considered, but said people did have the ability to participate in the average billing program.

Councilor Wood reminded the City Council that they had previously selected Option 2B for the water rate increases because it was the least amount of increase for the highest amount of projects to be completed. She said the City had a responsibility to pay for the improvements, operations and to repay bonds. She recommended the base gallon amount be left at 10,000 so as not to cause families an extra financial burden.

Councilor Dick said he supported maintaining the 10,000 gallon base or even increasing it. He said he could support proposed Alternative 1 with a 2% increase to the base rate, a 10,000 gallon base, and a 29.7% increase on the volume charge.

Mayor Wilcox said he also supported Alternative 1.

Councilor Ahier said he thought it was important to pay for what you use and was not opposed to reducing the base gallons, but felt Alternative 1 was a modest increase. He said it was important that the City Council adopt a reasonable and responsible rate structure.

Councilor Spatz questioned how many rate payers used the average bill pay program. Finance Director Mast said she did not know the number, but not very many people currently used the program. Spatz suggested the program be publicized to ensure the citizens were aware of the option.

Spatz said he understood the need to be responsible and believed it was wise to review the rates in a year, but was opposed to increasing the rates during the poor economic times.

It was moved by Wood and seconded by Dick to direct staff to prepare a water utility rate resolution using Option 2B, Alternative 1; to re-evaluate within one year to confirm revenues were being realized and to be implemented as originally proposed with 10% increases on September 1 of each year 2012 through 2014; 8% increases years 2015 through 2017; and 10% increases in years 2018 through 2020.

Mayor Wilcox asked staff to provide information regarding the number of customers who use more than 10,000 gallons and more than 15,000 gallons of water.

Councilor Ahier said he could support the motion.

Councilor McGlothlin said no one wanted to raise rates, but felt it was the Council's job to do the responsible thing. He said the increase was minimal and hoped the public could be educated as to the impact of the increase to take away people's fears about high water rates.

Councilor Wood said people were more understanding of the need to raise water rates when it was explained to them that the water infrastructure was 150 years old.

The motion to direct staff to prepare a water utility rate resolution using Option 2B, Alternative 1; to re-evaluate within one year to confirm revenues were being realized and to be implemented as originally proposed with 10% increases on September 1 of each year 2012 through 2014; 8% increases years 2015 through 2017; and 10% increases in years 2018 through 2020 was voted on and carried; Spatz voting no.

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ACTION ITEMS

Special Ordinance No. 11-543 Annexing a Portion of the Property Identified as 2505 Wright Street (Honald Consent Annexation)

City Attorney Parker reviewed the staff report and noted the ordinance had been posted according to the City's requirements for adopting by title.

City Clerk Krueger read Special Ordinance No. 11-543 by title.

It was moved by Wood and seconded by Spatz to adopt Special Ordinance No. 11-543 by title. The motion carried unanimously.

Approval to Apply for an Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) Flexible Funds Grant for the Washington Street Connection Project

Administrative Fellow Cooper Whitman reviewed the staff report.

It was moved by Ahier and seconded by Wood to authorize staff to apply for an Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) Flexible Funds Grant for the Washington Street Connection Project. The motion carried unanimously.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Discussion Regarding Potential Land Exchange Near the Intermediate Reservoir

Public Works Director Anderson reviewed the staff report.

It was the consensus of the City Council to proceed with the proposed land exchange, correcting easement and right of way issues through the exchange.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mayor Wilcox recessed the meeting to Executive Session at 7:37 p.m. in accordance with ORS 192.660 (2) (e) to conduct deliberations with persons designated by the governing body to negotiate real property transactions.

Reconvene to Open Session

The meeting reconvened to open session at 7:50 p.m.

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DECISIONS FOLLOWING EXECUTIVE SESSION

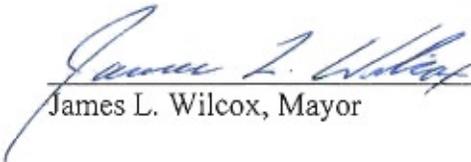
None.

ADJOURNMENT

Being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Submitted by/
Julie Krueger, MMC,
City Clerk

SIGNED:


James L. Wilcox, Mayor

ATTEST:


Julie Krueger, MMC, City Clerk