



CITY COUNCIL MINUTES

April 20, 2016

City Council of the City of Ephrata, Grant County Washington met in regular session on April 20, 2016. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Mayor Bruce Reim.

Members Present: Mayor Bruce Reim, Mayor Pro Tem William Coe, Council members Mark Wanke, Matt Moore, Valli Millard, Stephanie Knitter, Tony Mora, and Kathleen Allstot.

Staff Present: City Administrator Wes Crago, City Attorney Katherine Kenison, Public Works Director Bill Sangster, Police Chief Mike Warren, Fire Chief Jeremy Burns and City Clerk Leslie Trachsler.

Wes introduced Meredith Plagerman, an Ephrata High School Senior, who for her Senior Project is job shadowing the City Administrator. Meredith will be presenting the Budget Report tonight. Also, Judge David Estudillo was welcomed to the meeting.

Pledge of Allegiance was said.

No public signed up to speak; this meeting is not being recorded.

Agenda: There were no additions or corrections to the agenda.

Presentations: Public Works Field Supervisor, Dennis Ohl, introduced Mark Ballinger to Council. Mark was recently hired as the new Public Works Utility-I worker. He has an extensive background in construction and has already proven to be an asset.

Consent Agenda: Motion was made to approve consent agenda. (m/s Allstot/Millard) Motion carried.

Items on the consent agenda are as follows:

Claims #84751, #84771 through #84775 in the amount of \$16,787.39
Manual Claims #86042016, 87042016, 88042016 and 89042016 in the amount of \$5,263.55
Voided Claim #84379 for \$50.00
Payroll Checks #44403 through #44429 in the amount of \$38,194.66
Payroll Claims #84752 through #84770 in the amount of \$225,370.89

Payroll Direct Debit in the amount of \$6,125.00
Payroll Direct Deposit in the amount of \$168,528.08
Claims #84776 through #84892 in the amount of \$317,318.36
Minutes of the March 16, 2016 Council meeting
Approval of Special Events Permits:

- Grant Elementary Bike Rodeo at Lion's Park April 29, 2016 at 8:15 a.m.
- Farmers Market Saturday's May 28 – October 22 on C Street SW from 6:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
- St. Rose of Lima Parish March – May 29th on Nat Washington Way at 12:15 p.m.

Resolution 16-956 – Setting Public Hearing: Staff received a request to vacate a portion of a public utility easement dedicated on the Orchard View Homes Division #3, Lot 7 Plat. This resolution sets the Public Hearing on the vacation for May 18, 2016.

Motion to approve Resolution 16-956 setting public hearing for May 18, 2016. (m/s Moore/Mora) Motion carried.

Authorize Administration to enter Agreement with Valbridge Property Advisors for Appraisal Services: Crago reported that in response to Council Objectives for 2016 (maintain financial stability and improve efficiency) will involve examining surplus properties owned by the City. In order to prepare for possible surplus of city properties appraisals should be performed. Following guidance of local appraisers, staff has engaged Valbridge Property Advisors of Spokane to evaluate two parcels of city-owned properties.

Motion to authorize Administration to enter Agreement with Valbridge Property Advisors for appraisal services. (m/s Moore/Knitter) Council discussion ensued regarding the use of an out-of-town appraiser. Crago advised that the local appraisers are all very busy and they advised the use of a specialized appraiser for commercial properties. Motion carried.

Authorize Administration to enter Agreement with Braun Manufacturing for purchase of Ambulance-Rescue Truck: Staff finalized the specifications for the Ambulance-Rescue Truck with Braun Manufacturing out of Chehalis. The City is piggybacking off Snohomish County Fire District-3 bidding process as approved by Council with the passage of Resolution 16-955. The final cost without taxes is \$139,632.

Motion to authorize Administration to enter Agreement with Braun Manufacturing for the purchase of an Ambulance-Rescue Truck. (m/s Allstot/Wanke) Council discussion ensued regarding delivery. Chief Burns advised it would take 280 days from date of order to delivery. Motion carried.

Authorize Administration to continue Agreement with EM Solutions for Engineering Services: This is our annual contract with EM Solutions which provides oversight on our behalf of the clean-up work taking place at the Grant County Landfill.

Each year they submit a proposed budget for that years estimated costs. These costs are reimbursed 100% by our insurance carrier. Estimated budget for 2016 is \$318,540 of which \$94,650 is rolled over from last year's budget.

Motion to authorize Administration to continue Agreement with EM Solutions for Engineering Services. (m/s Mora/Moore) Motion carried.

Discussion of possible Unfit Buildings Ordinance: Crago advised that in keeping with the 2016 Objectives set by Council (protect long-term viability of residential and commercial properties) involves property clean-up, specifically in the downtown area. The current code has an abatement process and staff has initiated the process on some properties, but this is a very slow process. Due to efficiencies in the Police Department, one of the clerks has been able to take on the responsibilities of Code Enforcement Officer on a part-time basis.

As another tool, Crago advised that Council could consider an "Unfit Building" ordinance which would allow the Building Official to declare a building dangerous, unfit or requiring repairs. After the public notice and appeal process, the Building Official can issue an order to take action. The City may enact that action and the cost of abatement would become an assessment on the property at the same priority level as property taxes.

This type of abatement is more expedient but also more costly for the City up front. It has been utilized successfully by other communities. Staff is seeking direction from Council if they would like a draft example of an "Unfit Buildings" ordinance.

Legal Counsel advised that this statute is a very old statute that allows for the abatement to be a priority so that the liens are not extinguished during a foreclosure process for non-payment of property taxes.

Council discussion ensued. It takes approximately 4 months from beginning to end. City can recoup additional costs to cover staff time spent in pursuing the abatement. Property owners are made aware of the process as there is a voluntary compliance step which spells out the consequences of non-compliance. It's a no surprise type of process. The city currently has several properties that would fall within the parameters for abatement. City needs more leverage when a property moves from public nuisance to public hazard.

Motion to direct staff to draft an ordinance for Council review. (m/s Millard/Wanke)
Motion carried.

City Administrators Report:

2016 Budget Report: Meredith Plagerman reported that cash balance fell slightly in fund 001. A snapshot of the overall budget shows expenses are 7% below budget and revenue are 8% below budget. Staff will continue to control spending and monitor closely.

Don Guillemette thanked Chief Warren and Chief Burns for their quick response when his granddaughter quit breathing. He wanted to express his deep gratitude and appreciation for their professionalism and assistance.

There being no further business meeting adjourned at 7:23 p.m.

Bruce Reim, Mayor

ATTEST:

Leslie Trachsler, City Clerk