



CITY COUNCIL MINUTES May 4, 2016

City Council of the City of Ephrata, Grant County Washington met at 6:30 p.m. to conduct a training session on the use of Chromebooks and Website Tools in preparation of going to a paperless agenda.

City Council of the City of Ephrata, Grant County Washington met in regular session on May 4, 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 and Kathleen Allstot.

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

Pledge of Allegiance was said.

Motion to excuse Council member Mora. (m/s Allstot/Millard) Motion carried.

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

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

Presentations: None

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

Items on the consent agenda are as follows:

Claims #84912 through #84980 in the amount of \$164,263.19
Payroll #44430 through #44458 in the amount of \$38,297.14
Payroll Claims #84893 through #84911 in the amount of \$216,735.11
Direct Debit in the amount of \$6,125.00
Direct Deposits in the amount of \$154,108.85
Minutes of the April 20, 2016 Council meeting

Approval of Fireworks Stand Permit for J&M LLC at Moore Furniture Parking Lot

Special Event Applications:

- Columbia Ridge Bike Rodeo on May 6, 2016 at 7:30 a.m. on East Division Street
- Autism Awareness Event on May 21, 2016 at 9:00 a.m. at Courthouse to Beezley Hill
- Dash of Color Run on May 14, 2016 at 6:00 a.m. at the Port Area

Staff Report on Northeast “Pocket Parks” Construction: Crago reported that a developer defaulted on his bond to develop two parks off 2nd Avenue NE. The City collected on the bond and has been working on completing those two parks. With the help of city staff, the land was cleared and top soil was hauled in. Sprinkler system was installed and hydro seeding completed last week. To complete the park, benches will be purchased from Job Corp and a couple of trees will be planted.

Discussion on draft Ordinance 16-04 – New EMC 16.08 entitled “Unfit Buildings”: This ordinance would create a new Chapter 16.08 of the Ephrata Municipal Code to address structures in Ephrata that are dangerous, uninhabitable, or otherwise harmful to the health and welfare of city residents.

This ordinance provides a very clear public process of notifications, hearings, appeals and consequences. It is based on RCW 35.80 which establishes procedures for the abatement of unfit buildings that authorize a lien for abatement costs with the same priority as county property taxes. This ordinance provides an additional step which gives the property owner the opportunity to enter into a voluntary correction agreement. Crago pointed out that this ordinance has three vital points for consideration – it’s transparent, provides a final appeal process to superior court and better opportunity to recover our abatement costs.

Crago reviewed the 9 basic steps outlined in this ordinance:

1. Notice to property owner of violations
2. Meeting to discuss and offer of voluntary agreement
3. Comply or conduct Hearing w/Building Official
4. Issue Order to comply
5. Appeal to Hearings Examiner
6. Appeal to Superior Court
7. Warrant of Abatement Request
8. City performs work/clean up
9. Lien and Certification to County to assign abatement costs to property

Before adoption, there would be two public hearings scheduled for public review and comments.

Council discussion ensued regarding the lien priority, what constitutes “moral” for non-compliance and how did we determine that 50% damage makes a building unfit. Counsel

advised that RCW 35.80 provides the best possible priority giving the City the same priority level as property taxes. The verbiage comes from the State Legislature and is verbatim from the statutes. The percentage comes from case law which has been supported in a number of lawsuits.

General consensus is that this Code would be good to have as a tool to enforce compliance.

Crago advised that this Code will take time and effort by staff to implement. For serious violation the city would have to front the work either by doing ourselves or hiring a company to come and abate. We need to be prepared financially to move forward. This is not something we would use often or casually.

The first public hearing is scheduled for May 18th.

City Administrator Report: None at this time.

There being no further business meeting adjourned at 7:24 p.m.

Bruce Reim, Mayor

ATTEST:

Leslie Trachsler, City Clerk