



## **CITY COUNCIL MINUTES**

### **November 15, 2017**

City Council of the City of Ephrata, Grant County Washington met in regular session on November 15, 2017. 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 Anna Franz, Community Development Director Ron Sell, Public Works Director Bill Sangster, Community Relations Director Traci Bennett, Police Chief Mike Warren, and City Clerk/Finance Director Leslie Trachsler.

Pledge of Allegiance was said.

No public signed up to speak.

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

**Presentations:** None

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

Items on the consent agenda are as follows:

Claims #87567 through #87632 in the amount of \$129,427.34

Manual Claims #86112017, 87112017, 88112017 & 89112017 in the amount of \$2,670.09

Minutes of the November 1, 2017 Council meeting

**Public Hearing: Ordinance 17-10 - 2018 Budget:** Mayor Reim opened public hearing at 7:01 p.m. This is the first of two public hearings. Crago reported that the goals and objectives established by Council were used to set the budget. The draft budget is 90% complete and is projected to be \$18.9 million which represent an increase of 4.3%. It includes two public works projects:

- Basin Street Waterline Project
- 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue bridge

Aside from these projects the projected increase is 2.7% which can be attributed to the increase of new construction and the local economy growth as reflected in increased sales tax and home construction. Insurance rates have increased and have been re-allocated to reflect expense where actual costs is incurred and the minimum wage increases have an effect and rates will need to be increased.

Staff expects to have the budget completed by the end of next week.

There being no public comment, Mayor closed public hearing.

**Public Hearing: Street Maintenance Funding Options:** Mayor Reim opened public hearing at 7:05 p.m. This is the last of three public hearings on the Street Maintenance Funding Options. Crago advised that the Community Priorities Team conducted an evaluation of community needs regarding street maintenance and came up with two recommendations:

- \$20 car tab fee
- 0.2% sales tax

Both options to be voter approved.

Crago explained how funding for street maintenance from State sources has dropped from 64.5% to 32.1% since 2000. In the same time frame, City has reduced staffing by 32.4% and cut spending while the population has been on a steady incline of 14.1% which means increased need for services.

Crago discussed pros and cons on the two options.

- **\$20 car tab** – Cons: permanent fee; produces less revenue; only Ephrata residents pay; recovers no costs from others who use city streets; not all licensed vehicles use City streets; disproportionately impacts the poor. Pros: It's a direct fee – cars cause wear and tear.
- **0.2% sales tax** – Cons: Current sales tax rate is 8%; not necessarily a direct fee. Pros: Sunsets in 10 years; voters approve extension after 10 years; does not impact food sales; visitors/commuters pay share of road use; grows with the community; produces more revenue over time; spreads burden over wider number of people.

There being no public comment, Mayor closed public hearing.

**Public Hearing: Policy 10010 – Snow Removal:** Mayor Reim opened public hearing at 7:10 p.m. Crago advised that following last winter, the entire staff gathered and re-evaluated our priorities and rationale for snow plowing. Effort was put in to explain the policy better and a few changes were made to the operational-side of plowing.

Crago reviewed the policy:

- Why – To keep access open for emergency services. Roads must be kept as wide as possible.
- When – After the event is over and there is at least 2” of accumulation.
- How – Plowing is done from the center of the road out. This distributes equally to both sides of the street. Salt is mixed with sand to promote melting.

Plowing Priorities:

- Main arterials – Division, Nat Washington Way, 1<sup>st</sup> Ave NW, Frey Road, C Street, A Street and Alder Street
- Secondary arterials – Hills and downtown area (including parking lots)
- Open Basin Street intersections
- Access to schools
- Basin Street berm removal
- Residential neighborhoods – North-to-South then East-to-West

Some of the challenges outside our control are timing of the event; too much too fast; forecasting; WSDOT schedule; and winds. Challenges within our control are cars that never move; blocking plows from doing their job; snow being pushed back into the streets. Staff has proposed penalties for this type of interference and to encourage people to do the right thing.

Public comment. Question was asked regarding the number of passes a plow makes on a street. Crago advised that the plows make 3 passes on each side of the street. What provisions for sidewalks such as businesses, where are they to put snow. The Basin Street area WSDOT plows to the center but businesses can pile snow around the tree wells. The sidewalk is the responsibility of property owners.

There being no further public comment, Mayor closed hearing at 7:23 p.m.

**Ordinance 17-02 – Snow Removal:** This ordinance creates Chapter 10.30 of the Ephrata Municipal Code for Snow Removal and creates a penalty structure for pushing snow back into the street and interfering with the snow plowing process.

Motion to authorize and accept Ordinance 17-02 entitled “Snow Removal”. (m/s Knitter/Wanke) Council discussion ensued regarding penalties and enforcement, motion carried.

**Policy 10010 – Snow Removal:** Motion to approve and accept Policy 10010 – Snow Removal. (m/s Mora/Moore) Motion carried.

**Street Maintenance Funding Options Decision:** Crago reported that the general consensus gained from the many open forums and group presentations, is to move forward with sales tax for street funding. Also, the City department heads formally recommend Council take the sales tax option to the voters next spring.

Council discussion ensued regarding the two options. Six council members spoke in favor of the sales tax option and one council member spoke in favor of the car tabs.

By Council consensus, staff was directed to proceed with 0.2% sales tax increase for Street Maintenance Funding Option. Crago advised that staff will begin working on the formation of a Transportation Benefit District. This issue will go before the voters at a special election on April 24, 2018.

**Award Bid for Abatement of Overgrown Property at 315 10<sup>th</sup> SW to Scheib's Lawn Care:** Following a call for bids, staff recommends Council authorize agreement with Scheib's Lawn Care for the abatement of 315 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue SW. This bid came in at \$702.00

Motion to authorize administration to enter Agreement with Scheib's Lawn Care for the abatement of 315 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue SW. (m/s Moore/Knitter) Motion carried.

**Award Bid for Abatement of Overgrown Property at 465 6<sup>th</sup> SW to Dircio's Lawn & Garden Care:** Following a call for bids, staff recommends Council authorize agreement with Dircio's Lawn & Garden Care for the abatement of 465 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue SW. This bid came in at \$1,080.00

Motion to authorize administration to enter Agreement with Dircio's Lawn & Garden Care for the abatement of 465 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue SW. (m/s Wanke/Moore) Motion carried.

**2018 Six-Year Street and Six-year Capital Facilities Plans:** Council was given the current plans and was advised that staff is seeking input regarding any additions. On January 17, 2018, Council will consider the 2018 updates.

**City Administrator Report:**

2017 Budget Report: Overall budget is tracking normally. Expenses are 30% below budget and revenues are 25% below budget. Cash reserves are up. The combined sales tax numbers are up and are at record highs.

There being no further business meeting adjourned at 7:39 p.m.

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Bruce Reim, Mayor

ATTEST:

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Leslie Trachsler, City Clerk