CITY OF ELLENSBURG, WASHINGTON

Minutes of Council Meeting, Special Session

Date of Meeting February 10, 2003

Time of Meeting 7:00 p.m.

Place of Meeting Council Chambers, 100 1 North S. Pearl Street


Others present were City Manager Barkley; City Attorney Pidduck; Community Development Director Witkowski; Energy Services Director Titus; Finance Director Carpenter; Library Director Kline; Parks & Recreation Director Archer; Police Chief Richey; Public Works Director Akers; Aquatic & Recreation Supervisor Hoctor; Ellensburg Racquet and Recreation Center Coordinator Case; Deputy Clerk Keno and two members of the audience.

IAFF LOCAL #1758 LABOR AGREEMENT

Staff has completed negotiation of a three-year collective bargaining agreement with the International Association of Firefighters, Local #1758. Negotiations transpired over the course of approximately five months. A tentative agreement was reached between the parties’ negotiating teams on January 28, 2003; the agreement was ratified by the Union membership on February 5, 2003.

Authorize the Mayor and City Manager to sign the agreement with IAFF Local #1758, Barry including the related memoranda of understanding that is attached. Affirmed

City Manager Barkley announced a brief executive session will be needed following the special meeting to discuss acquisition of real property related to the library expansion project. No specific action is planned and the executive session will take approximately ten minutes.

PRIORITIES FOR 2003 – CITY COUNCIL DISCUSSION

The purpose of the special meeting is to give Council an overview of City department programs from the Directors in preparation for Council’s retreat on February 21, 2003. Staff is requesting direction from Council on priorities it would like to discuss in more depth at the retreat.

The following items are on the City’s work plan for 2003:

? Implement IT Plan

? Design and construct new City Hall

? Building North Water Street
Completing Strategic Plan & Engineering for West Ellensburg Park

What is the City’s role as a commercial developer?

Library and Hal Holmes Center Project Planning

Public Safety Facilities on the north side of the community and downtown priorities

City Manager Barkley stated this is a plan of work that will stretch staff resources to the maximum.

Community Development Director Witkowski distributed a handout of items in progress for 2003 along with future issues in the Department’s work program. Items in progress include: 1) critical area standards; 2) off-street parking standards; 3) Central Business District Public Restroom; 4) Land use appeals/SEPA ordinance; and 5) Sub-Area Plan for the West Interchange. Several of these items will be on Council’s agenda in the next few months. A strategy for West Ellensburg as well as C-C and C-C II redevelopment have not been discussed. Staff will be providing Council with a preliminary plat for West Ellensburg. For Council’s retreat staff recommends West Ellensburg strategy and C-C and C-C-II redevelopment. Council requested a scorecard on the status of office zoning applications in the C-H and C-T zones since its adoption of code revisions allowing this use.

Energy Services Director Titus outlined issues in 2003 impacting gas and electric rates as well as staff workload. On the electric side, BPA will be imposing a 15% rate adjustment in October 2003 that was not anticipated in the City’s financing plan. Federal government pressure continues to implement deregulation of the electric industry. Staff plans to put rate adjustments into place in August of 2003; the City may be looking at another multi-year phase-in of rates. On the natural gas side, the warm winter has impacted revenues. Staff will be asking Council for a natural gas rate increase as well as an increase in the customer service charge. Natural gas usage compared to last year is down 10%. The Department expects another busy construction year. Staff will be involved with implementation of the IT Plan as well as providing project manager support for the City Hall project. New gas and electric programs will be more difficult to implement due to this staffing shortage.

The Finance Department’s focus will be the implementation of new finance and utility billing software. Staff hopes to be able to request Council award a vendor contract by late March. A very aggressive time frame is planned for converting data capable of conversion and having the system operational by the end of September. Two planned retirements by the end of the year will result in modifications of the job descriptions for the two positions.

Major issues for the Fire Department include addressing the need for a north end fire station as well as future renovation and expansion of the existing Public Safety Building. The continuing decline in Medicare and Medicaid reimbursement payments continues to increase City subsidization of ambulance services which in turn impacts the General Fund. Additional resources such as an EMS
levy may be needed in the future to meet increasing demands for fire services within the community.

Library services will move temporarily to the Holmes Center as a result of passage of the February 4 bond levy election to expand the Library and Holmes Center. Director Kline expects an impact on public services at both facilities for a period of 6-8 months. Planning is underway to try to relocate children’s summer programs and Center clients to other city or school facilities. Library checkouts continue to increase along with computer use and children’s programs. While the expansion project will include a self-checkout station to help with the increase in circulation, it does not provide for the significant increases in computer use and children’s programs and the need to add staff as demand for service increases. Center revenue may be affected. Usage statistics are expected to decline during the project with an anticipated jump after project completion. Services and grants to public libraries may be reduced due to more budget cuts at the State Library being proposed by the Governor.

Major issues for the Parks and Recreation Department include completion of Phase I construction items for the West Ellensburg Park Expansion and the beginning of Phase 2 items such as the restroom/concession facility, parking lot completion and infrastructure. Director Archer outlined long-term management issues, including adequate staffing, for the Department’s existing facilities and infrastructure and cited the increased impact on maintenance from new facilities at West Ellensburg Park and McElroy Park. Usage at all facilities has increased. The reconnection of the John Wayne Trail will take a lot of work from all participating agencies (the City is the lead agency), and at some point the advocacy group for a proposed Off Leash Dog Park will be back before Council.

The three most critical issues facing the Police Department and impacting public safety fall into three categories: (1) crime, (2) resources, and (3) capital facilities. Police Chief Richey cited the challenge of addressing alcohol related activities in the downtown business district and throughout the community while balancing the Department’s resources with demands for increases in Police Services in other areas. Code Enforcement and Animal Control are two divisions in need of additional staffing and are having difficulty in meeting current demands for service. Additionally, there is a need to address future renovation and expansion of the existing Public Safety Building; current space does not meet the immediate or future needs of the Department.

The Public Works Department’s major issues are completion and implementation of the City’s Strategic Water Plan as well as development of a program to fund expansion of the City’s utility infrastructure to development locations within the Urban Growth Area (UGA). Director Akers reported the Department’s workload is aggravated by the current regulatory environment, citing issues with National Pollution Discharge Elimination Systems (NPDES) and Endangered Species Act (ESA) regulations. A water rate increase will be likely in 2004 to establish financial support for the capital plan portion of the Strategic Water Plan. Another issue is the continued shrinkage of State funding for transportation projects due to incorporation of new cities. The pot of money is staying the same while the number of cities participating is increasing. The City’s development codes are in urgent need of
Council briefly discussed the feasibility of forming a traffic bureau to receive funds from City non-contested traffic infractions.

After discussion, Council selected the following issues for in-depth discussion at the February 21, 2003 retreat:

- Planning Public Safety Facilities on the North Side and Downtown
- The City’s role as a commercial developer
- Sign Code Amendments
- Downtown Parking and Off-Street Parking requirements
- C-C and C-C-II development and redevelopment
- Legislative involvement—intergovernmental relations
- Long term maintenance and operations costs on new facilities
- Revise utility and street development standards (need outside continuity between departments, consistent reasonable standards, customer focus)

RECESS

Council recessed to executive session at 9:11 p.m. for approximately ten minutes to discuss the acquisition of real property related to the library expansion project. No specific action is planned and Council will not reconvene.

ADJOURN

Adjourn at 9:30 p.m. Barry

Affirmed

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Mayor

Attest: ________________________________
City Clerk