CITY OF ELLENSBURG, WASHINGTON

Minutes of Council Meeting, Special Session
Date of Meeting October 11, 2004
Time of Meeting 7:00 p.m.

Place of Meeting Council Chambers, 102 North Pearl


Others present were City Manager Barkley; City Clerk Reno; Finance Director Carpenter; Budget and Accounting Supervisor Snider; Public Works Director Akers; Assistant Public Works Director Bollinger; City Engineer Lyyski; Executive Assistant Dufault, and one member of the audience.

The purpose of the special session is to review the 2005 preliminary budgets for the Public Works Department including the Engineering, Street, Water, Sewer, and Shop, Warehouse & Equipment Divisions.

ENGINEERING

Public Works Director Akers reviewed the preliminary budgets for the Public Works Department. In the Engineering Budget, there is a decrease in expenditures. The additional Civil Engineer authorized by Council filled from within the department. This position is being funded through the Water and Sewer Budgets and the position replaced in the department was filled at a lower wage rate. There is also a reduction in rental of office space due to moving to the new City Hall next year.

Council discussed the role of the Environmental Commission and the Commission’ s willingness to review more issues, such as State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) issues. Council also discussed the possibility of the Commission reviewing storm water regulations.

STREET

In 2004, the City did not fill an authorized position in the Street Department. This position is again included in the 2005 proposed budget. Expenditures have been increased to reflect salary changes in the labor contract and for disposal of street waste. This waste is now considered a hazardous waste that can be used as cover material in Wenatchee. However, it cannot currently be used at the County facility. Shipping costs to Wenatchee are reflected in the proposed budget, and the County Solid Waste Department is working on a reclassification of the Ryegrass facility in order to use the soil here. The goals of the Street Department are to reconstruct 15th Avenue between Stonebridge Street to Mt. Stuart School, rebuild two Central Business District (CBD) alleys, sealcoat approximately five miles of city streets, continue various sidewalk improvement projects, and continue an aggressive weed control program on city rights-of-way.
Mr. Akers handed out a document provided by the Association of Washington Cities for the Legislature that discusses the transportation crisis for Washington cities due to significant cuts in state funding, and loss of buying power associated with the un-indexed fuel tax. The City currently levies a one quarter percent Real Estate Excise Tax and has another one quarter percent available if adopted by Council resolution. Staff may be recommending that Council enact this tax after the first of the year in recognition of the challenges associated with forming Local Improvement District (LID) street construction. With the valuation experience on the Helena Street LID, it will be necessary to develop a revenue source to supplement the amount available from LID formation. Additionally, some thought should be given to development of additional revenue sources by implementation of any location option taxation made available through the State Legislature, or possibly collection of transportation impact fees.

The Arterial Street Fund reflects street construction projects that are financed with gasoline tax (1/2 cent gas tax), grants, and loans from outside sources. Twelve arterial street projects are proposed in the 2005 budget: 1) Bridge inspections; 2) Central Business District (CBD) alley reconstruction; 3) Cascade Way bridge replacement; 4) University Way overlay – Cascade Way bridge to west city limits; 5) Fifth Avenue (Main Street to Chestnut Street ) and CBD overlay; 6) signal optimization; 7) Mountain View Avenue/Ruby Street design; 8) methylmethacrylate overspray; 9) Helena Avenue LID – Airport Road to 1440’ east of Alder Street; 10) Transportation Plan; 11) Chestnut Street right-of-way/design – Spokane Avenue to Hobert Avenue; and 12) transfer to Engineering.

Capital projects include a new city aerial photo and the purchase of a Roadview Program.

The Sidewalk Improvement Fund was established for the purpose of repairing sidewalks in both the CBD and residential areas. The main revenue in the Fund is the contribution of the ¼ percent real estate excise tax. The 2005 program includes three projects: 1) Helena Avenue LID – transfer to Arterial Street; 2) residential sidewalk repair; and 3) paverstone sidewalk construction – North side of Fifth Avenue between Sprague and Anderson Streets.

WATER

The 2005 capital outlay projects are as follows: 1) City Well – rebuild pump and motor; 2) telemetry – upgrade CPU/backup; 3) City Well transmission main – CT’s; 4) metered water truck fill station; 5) new valve insertions; 6) new meter/service installations; 7) main line extensions/oversizing agreements; 8) new hydrants; and 9) hydrant adapters.

There is no recommendation for a rate increase for this budget, however, reserves will be spent down. At some point, there will be a bond sale needed to provide a funding source for new well replacements.

The Water Construction Fund includes a project to design the first City Well replacement well.

The operating transfers include funds transferred out for IT O&M, General Fund for Comprehensive
Plan review, and I-Net debt service.

SEWER

In the Sewer Budget, the capital outlay has been reduced to balance the budget. Staff will be proposing a rate increase of five percent each year for the next four years.

Capital projects include: 1) turbidimeter and continuous DO monitor at the Wastewater Treatment Plant and 2) sewer line extensions – oversizing agreements and extending sewer lines as needed.

The Sewer Construction Fund projects are cured-in-place sewer line replacement and design and construction of biosolid handling equipment at the Wastewater Treatment Plant.

A bond sale will be needed in 2006 for construction projects.

SHOP, WAREHOUSE & EQUIPMENT

Capital expenditures in the Shop, Warehouse & Equipment Division cover equipment purchases and construction of three 18' x 40' heated equipment bays. The budget will also be assuming ownership of the police vehicles being purchased in the Capital Outlay Fund, and these vehicles will be included in the rental program for regular replacement.

STORMWATER ISSUES

In response to questions from Council, Mr. Akers discussed the possibility of a storm water utility that may need to be created in 2006 to pay for the handling of storm water, due to new regulations.

ADJOURN Adjourn at 8:59 p.m. Carlson Affirmed

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Mayor

ATTEST: ____________________________ City Clerk