CITY OF ELLENSBURG

Minutes of Council Meeting, Special Session

Date of Meeting
October 20, 2004

Time of Meeting
7:00 p.m.

Place of Meeting
Council Chambers, 102 North Pearl Street


Others present were City Manager Barkley; Budget and Accounting Supervisor Snider; Police Chief Richey; Fire Chief Elliott; and Deputy Clerk Keno.

The purpose of the special session is to review the 2005 preliminary budgets for the Fire Department and the Police Department.

FIRE

Fire Chief Elliott reviewed his Department’s preliminary budget. On the organizational side, 2005 will see the retirement of Fire Marshal Al Nielsen after 29 ½ years with the City. Captain Joe Seemiller is transitioning into the Fire Marshal position. A new individual has transferred into the Training Officer position. A reserve firefighter will fill the vacancy created as a result of the Fire Marshal’s retirement; that individual is anticipated to start on December 26, 2004. The Department’s budget request, exclusive of capital programs, is $2,155,078.00 compared with an approved budget of $2,021,808.00 in 2004. This represents an increase of 6.6% or $133,270.00. Cost increases reflect projected call volume increases ($10,000), increased medical supply costs ($5,000 for drugs that previously were billed through the hospital and a health care premium increase), Fire Marshal retirement ($29,000), fully budgeting the Training Officer position ($29,000) and increased labor costs secondary to a contractual agreement (3% increase = $60,000). The Department’s revenue projections represent an increase of $35,000 or 4.5%.

Total revenues are budgeted at $820,150. Revenue includes the following: 1) $620,000 for ambulance transports; 2) $300.00 for ambulance standby; 3) $1,200.00 in EMS Trauma Grants; 4) $3,000 in fire prevention fees; and 5) $190,000 from CWU Impact Fees.

Fire Administration account group expenditures increase approximately 6% to $244,299.00 (from $230,376.00 in 2004) due to increased labor costs, increased professional services costs, an additional retiree to the LEOFF medical system and increased L & I rates. The “Professional Services” line item increases substantially to $30,000 (from $4,000 in 2004) due to significant legal bills to address issues with the Firefighters Union. This line item also includes hiring costs for new firefighters, promotional test expenses and software maintenance. Staff anticipates a repeat of legal expenses to deal with labor issues both in terms of contract negotiations and in on-going resolution of labor-management issues.

The 2005 budget for the Fire Suppression account group is $764,242.00. Reserve Fire Fighter salary
and benefits have been transferred into this account group to better reflect the cost of fire suppression services. A wage increase of 3% is reflected in this section. Additionally, all three Captain’s positions will likely be filled by paramedic certified personnel which increases the wages by 2% respectively. A new line item entitled “Medical Plan Grievance Settlement” with a budget of $3,000 will be used to pay Local 1758 members when claims are filed against the new medical plan as compared to the old plan. This grievance settlement occurred in January of 2004.

The 2005 Fire Prevention budget increases $9,230 or 15.3% to a total request of $111,473. A significant portion of this increase is the benefit buyout for Al Nielsen’s retirement ($19,650.26) and Captain Seemiller’s wages of $60,192. The 2005 budget for Personnel Training is $113,374. This account covers all training expenses except overtime and staffing costs for shift personnel. This line item was funded at 60% in the 2004 budget. The Facilities account group is used for maintenance of facilities and utilities. In 2005 the budget increases to $27,000 (from $22,800 in 2004) due to costs associated with the aging of the building.

The Emergency Medical Services account group is budgeted at $859,312. “Fuel” is budgeted at $5,000 based on projected costs for 2004 year to date due to increasing call volume and rising fuel costs. “EMS Patient Supplies” increases $5,000 for a 2005 budget of $39,000 due to a change in the way drugs are purchased through Kittitas Valley Community Hospital. The City now pays for the drugs and is attempting to recoup the costs through medical billing. The old method had the drugs purchased and billed through the hospital. “EMS Professional Services” is budgeted at $60,000. The Department’s share of Kittitas County EMS will be $30,285 which represents a 1.8% increase over 2003 secondary to population and call volume. This line item also includes the service contracts for four defibrillators which have increased by one over last year. A slight increase ($1,977) is budgeted in Dispatch Services due to an increase in radio traffic for a total of $34,678.

The Fire Vehicles Fund budgets $90,000 in capital outlay to remount the 1995 Braun Northwest Medic Unit patient care compartment on a new 2005 Ford Chassis. This remount includes a thorough check of all systems and upgrades if necessary. This unit is ten years old and is beginning to be unreliable with multiple mechanical issues.

Capital Projects for 2005 total $18,781.00 and include 1) $8,581 for bunker gear replacement as part of the Department’s annual replacement program; 2) $1,200 for a fire investigator air monitor to facilitate fire investigations; and 3) $9,000 for rope rescue equipment to allow Department personnel to assist the Kittitas County Sheriff’s Office in high and low angle, confined space, trench and water rescue events in the County. All of these capital projects are funded from the Sales Tax Reserve Fund.

Chief Elliott identified his Department’s goals for 2005. Two major goals are the application and enforcement of the recently adopted International Fire Code as well as the development of rope rescue capability to supplement the Kittitas County Sheriff’s Department capabilities. A strategic plan will come before Council in the future that will take the fire service through the next ten years.
POLICE

Police Chief Richey reviewed his Department’s 2005 preliminary budget. Total expenditures are $3,143,787— an increase of $98,000 over 2004. Most of this increase is tied to personnel costs, KITTCOM and jail services increases. Total projected revenue for 2005 is $186,166.

In the Police Operations account group “Fuel” increases from $19,800 in 2004 to $26,000 in 2005. The Personnel Training account group increases $3,000 in 2005 due to increases in per diem costs and registration fees to send officers to training outside the City. In addition, the State legislature continues to mandate officer training, for example, a June 1, 2005 requirement for training in domestic violence investigations within Police Departments as a result of the Brame incident at the City of Tacoma.

Under Care & Custody Prisoners there is a $3,800 increase (from $188,700 in 2004 to $192,500 in 2005) representing the 2% annual increase for the third year of the jail contract. The negotiation of this contract has resulted in significantly lower total costs than in previous years. The Department hopes to be able to renegotiate this contract for 2006-2009 at the same favorable rates. Miscellaneous is budgeted at $3,000 and includes the billing for medical care costs of inmates. This line item is a wild card for the Department. Dispatch Services increase $13,600 as a result of the funding formula based on usage and shows how busy the Department is. The amount budgeted for 2005 is $230,324.

The Animal Control account group has the most changes within the 2005 Police Department budget. The Overtime line item increases from $1,400 in 2004 to $4,000 in 2005. Animal Shelter staffing was discussed. Two and one-half employees keep the shelter open to the public six days a week. Since someone has to be on the premises seven days a week for feeding and kennel maintenance overtime is often needed. In answer to Council inquiry, it would be better to have three full time employees and one 16-hour part-time employee. Council requested budget numbers for a staffing increase at the Animal Shelter. There has been a 5% increase in animal control calls for services. This can be directly tied to increases in the City’s square mileage and population. The time is fast approaching for an increase in staffing at the Shelter.

The “Professional Services” line item increases to $10,000 (from $6,000 in 2004) related to the adoption program for spay and neutering. These costs are recovered in the cost of adopting the animal. “Rentals” increase $3,800 to $8,000 in 2005 to cover the cost of a new animal control van for the Division. The current pick up is not suitable. The van will have a sliding door on the side with the animal cages inside. Because of the change in vehicle style and rental costs through the Shop, Warehouse and Equipment Fund, the annual rental cost of this vehicle will be $8,000 annually.

In the Police Operations account group the “Rentals” line item decreases $34,000 in 2005 to zero because the Department did not pursue a proposed vehicle lease program for patrol vehicles. All
The 2005 Drug Fund budget is the same as 2004. This budget is totally funded by forfeitures and seizures. Recent Court cases are causing the Department to exercise caution in pursuing seizure and forfeiture actions.

Capital Projects for 2005 total $61,900.00. Two patrol vehicles are scheduled for replacement ($48,000) as well as ballistic vests ($8,400). The original entrance gate at the Animal Shelter will be replaced by an automated gate at a cost of $5,500. These capital projects are funded from the Sales Tax Reserve Fund. A $4,200 grant from the Department of Justice is anticipated to pay half the cost ($4,200) of the ballistic vest replacement.

**ADJOURN** Adjourn at 8:49 p.m. O’ Brien

Affirmed

_____________________________
Mayor

ATTEST: ________________________________

City Clerk