ROLL CALL was answered by Councilmembers Bassett, Carlson, Collins, Lilquist, Perrie, and Mayor Barry.

Others present were City Manager Barkley; City Attorney Pidduck; Finance Director Carpenter; Budget and Accounting Supervisor Snider; Fire Chief Elliott; Police Chief Richey; Animal Shelter Manager Hake; Deputy Clerk Keno; and 56 plus members of the audience.

To accommodate the flow of tonight’s schedule, staff is requesting a closed executive session at the start of the meeting to discuss union negotiations. The session will not exceed thirty minutes and no action will be taken.

Council adjourned to executive session at 6:37 p.m. Councilmember O’Brien arrived at 6:50 p.m.

Council came back into open session at 7:01 p.m. with Councilmember O’Brien in attendance.

The purpose of the special session is to review the preliminary 2006 Budgets for the Fire Department and Police Department. Council will also hear a presentation on the Animal Shelter.

FIRE

Fire Chief Elliott reviewed his Department’s 2006 preliminary budget. Costs increase 5% due to projected increases in personnel costs and fuel. Total 2006 expenditures are $2,316,111. Goals and procedures for 2006 include the implementation of new callback procedures for staffing; complete certification of all Fire Officers; upgrade of pre-incident plans and accessibility of said plans; upgrade fire hydrant accessibility; and complete cost/benefit analysis of consolidation of services with Kittitas County Fire District #2. In 2006 the number of employees in the Department remain the same. Total revenue estimates for 2006 are fairly conservative at $844,300—a 3.5% increase due to ambulance use based on current rates and call projections. There will be an increase in ambulance fees that will not occur until next year. On the expenditure side, the Administration category increases $9,400 or 3.6% ($268,130) due to personnel costs. Fire Suppression pays for all of the reserve firefighters and reflects a $39,000 increase ($822,763)—which is driven by fuel and personnel costs. Fire Prevention reflects a $16,000 decrease ($91,565) over 2005 due to no retirements. Personnel Training increases $2,800 due to personnel costs; there will be no paramedic students in 2006.

The Facilities account group budget increases $6,000 (24% increase) to $33,500 and is entirely driven by energy costs. The Emergency Medical Services account group is budgeted at $944,396—an $85,000 increase over 2005. It includes the salaries and wages for nine paramedics as well as the
fuel costs for all of the medic units. The Department is looking at utilizing alternative fuel sources. Dispatch Services is budgeted at $37,194—a $3,200 increase—due to an additional year at the higher rate because of the callback system.

The overall Fire Department budget reflects a 5.9% or $128,000 increase over the 2005 budget—exclusive of personnel. Capital Projects for 2006 total $51,500.00 and include 1) $8,900 for office flooring; 2) $5,000 for new carpeting in the Old Council Chambers; 3) $33,000 for an SCBA Fill Station (the City’s portion of a grant request to FEMA that the City has a reasonable change of receiving; 4) $2,800 for EMS Kits; and 5) $1,800 for Life Packs. The EMS kits and Life Packs may be purchased out of the 2005 budget. In answer to Council inquiry, the EMS kits are 15 years old, need to be identical for efficiency and should be replaced on a 7-10 year rotation. The Life Packs are an additional request and are not an annual request. Council will be seeing a proposal to add the old City Council Chambers as well as the new Council Chambers to the meeting inventory space that the Hal Holmes Center manages. A modest fee structure for the use of these facilities will be formulated.

Expenditures from the Fire Vehicles Fund are budgeted at $20,000 for 2006. The Fund was established in 1994 to accumulate monies for the replacement of fire trucks and ambulances. In the past, regular contributions were made to the Fund; it has not been funded recently. This Fund will need to be looked at as part of the proposed consolidation with Kittitas County Fire District #2. As discussed previously, the actuarial study of the Fire Relief and Pension Fund determined the assets of the Fund not being sufficient to pay all future pension benefits. This issue must be addressed during this budgeting process. The City remains responsible for the medical costs of the former employees covered by this Fund. Expenditures of $119,973 are budgeted for 2006.

Revisions to the City’s ambulance fee structure are planned to take advantage of the increase in Medicaid/Medicare reimbursement rates as well as fuel cost increases. Council discussed the possibility of a program to subsidize the low income/elderly population with no insurance/Medicaid as well as the future of the second fire station. Both of these items will need to be placed on hold pending the proposed consolidation with Fire District #2.

**POLICE**

Police Chief Richey reviewed his Department’s 2006 preliminary budget. The Department is fast approaching the time for discussions about additional staffing. As the costs of providing service increase, the City needs to take a look at the level of service the Police Department provides and determine whether that level of service is acceptable to the community. Chief Richey reviewed items cut from the Department’s 2006 preliminary budget. Department personnel consist of 36.5 full time employees—26 commissioned officers, 4 office clerical staff, two code enforcement officers, and two animal control officers. There are four reserve officers. The Chief’s initial budget request included a request for six additional officers at $73,000 per officer for a total budget increase of $438,000 knowing that this money is not available. Growth is continuing and demands for service are continuing. If he had the six additional officers he would assign four to the patrol division to make five-
man squads and have a school resource officer and traffic enforcement officers. There is a direct correlation in calls for service and a decrease in officer related activities. It would take three years to have six additional officers trained and functioning. There is currently little extra room when the Department is short-staffed due to injury, etc.

The second item not funded in the 2006 Department budget is a $40,000 request for a staff and facilities needs analysis to include both the police and fire departments. This amount could probably be reduced to $25,000 due to the current ongoing discussions with the Fire Department and District #2 consolidation. The current Public Safety building is out of space. There are minor wiring and maintenance issues and more square footage is needed. Chief Richey encouraged Council to consider a professional independent study to look at those facility needs. He distributed information on department staffing levels from 1970-2005; an FBI article on staffing guidelines for departments, and a staffing forecast report for the Department for 2005-2025 prepared by Sergeant Brian McElroy. The value of consultant studies was briefly discussed. In answer to Council inquiry, putting a second police station in the proposed second fire station would probably amount to office space only. It would not be along the lines of a precinct. If the jail/courthouse initiative passes, the sales tax proceeds the City receives would closely match the Department’s unfunded budget request for more police officers.

Capital Projects for 2006 total $28,000.00 and include: 1) $4,000 for ballistic vest replacement; and 2) $24,000 for one patrol vehicle replacement. The vest replacement is ongoing each year and the budgeted amount reflects a 50% reimbursement for this expenditure. The patrol vehicle budgeted for replacement needs to be replaced. The original budget request asked for replacement of two police vehicles with the intention of expanding the patrol fleet from the current five patrol vehicles to six. Two of the current vehicles are assigned to the canine division. All of the vehicles run on a 24/7 schedule. A digital car camera system was requested but is not included in the budget. This system has been requested for the past two years to replace the aging VHS system. Security improvements are needed at the station for the front office lobby and in the alleyway.

The 2006 Drug Fund budget is $15,000—a $10,000 increase over 2005. Investigations conducted by the Department in 2005 have surpassed the $5,000 budget. A portion of the expenditures are offset by $4,000 from the Western State Law Enforcement Network, Department of Justice and Kittitas County Prosecutor’s Office. Revenues for 2006 are projected at $177,998 and are consistent with this year’s projections. Revenues from drug forfeitures and seizures has been utilized to fund the Drug Fund. In the past two to three years that source of funding has dropped off dramatically because of some changes in the law and court decisions regarding seizures. The City will have to look at funding the Drug Fund through sales tax in the General Fund.

Expenditures for 2006 total $3,395,534.00. Significant changes are increases in salaries, wages and benefits but for the most part it is a status quo budget. There is a slight increase in Insurance due to medical costs. The biggest increases are in Office/Operating Supplies ($46,000 in 2005 to $50,000 in 2006) which is attributable to inflationary increases and energy costs for fuel. The Fuel budget
increases from $26,000 in 2005 to $51,000 for 2006. This is due to correcting a glitch between the Department, City Shop and Finance going back to 2004 when fuel costs were charged to the wrong budget line item.

There have been early discussions about the proposed retirement of “Jordan”, the City’s narcotics dog. While this remains a popular program, as financial resources tighten the Department needs to look at the viability of its programs.

The Reserves budget for 2006 is $23,000. This is the time of year when the Department does recruitment for a joint reserves academy with the Kittitas County Sheriff’s Office to keep costs down. This program has not been successful for the Department; it has seen a significant decrease in the level of interest in the reserve program. Last year the start of the academy was delayed because not enough qualified people applied. The City currently has four reserves who are not getting many hours. Union problems make it hard to utilize the reserves as in the past.

The 2006 budget for Care & Custody Prisoners is $199,350—a 2% increase over 2005. The three year agreement with Kittitas County for jail services expires at the end of 2006. The flat rate contract that was negotiated has resulted in a tremendous savings in staff time. The Animal Shelter agreement with Kittitas County will also expire at the end of 2006. The Department expects a significant change in the jail rates for the next contract.

The Dispatch Services budget for 2006 is $257,133—a $19,000 increase over 2005. Animal Control revenues for 2006 are projected at $66,198. Expenditures for 2006 for Animal Control total $186,043. The balance of support comes from the City’s General Fund. It was briefly discussed that in 1983 the Shelter was a division of the Finance Department; in the 1970’s it was a function of the Police Department.

Council took a brief recess at 8:45 p.m.

**ANIMAL SHELTER PRESENTATION**

Council reconvened at 9:00 p.m. for the purpose of hearing a presentation on the Animal Shelter. Pam Buitrago, President of Friends of the Animal Shelter, gave a powerpoint presentation. The Friends have been circulating petitions requesting the City Council and City Manager make the Animal Control Shelter a priority in staffing, budgeting and facilities. A petition with 237 signatures was submitted to Council on September 6, 2005 and 319 more signatures were submitted this evening along with 14 letters of support.

The Friends are requesting the City add one full-time animal control officer plus other items. The history of the Shelter as well as current staffing levels and responsibilities was reviewed. Short-term goals for the Shelter include: 1) the addition of a full time Animal Control Officer ($50,000); 2) staff training by the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) ($3,000 estimate); 3) add a computer in the front office; 4) obtain City Attorney’s assistance to rewrite animal control ordinances; 5) add city
services and fence adjacent field; 6) add the Shelter to the City’s Comprehensive 10-year plan and to the City’s website; 7) add signage on Main Street; 8) give the Shelter its own budget line item; and 9) add a goal of decreasing euthanasia to the City’s Vision Statement and Comprehensive Plan. The Friends would like the short term goals to be accomplished within a year.

Long-term goals for the Shelter include: 1) continue lowering the euthanasia rates; 2) continue increasing adoptions; and 3) continue expanding volunteer programs (the Shelter currently has five volunteers). The Friends would like to see these goals accomplished within a 2-4 year span.

The presentation included how the staff shortage and lack of space and resources at the Shelter impact the current staff and make a stressful job more stressful for the employees. Animal Shelter Manager Hake advised Tuesday is the only day the shelter has adequate coverage. Following the presentation, Council took comments from the audience. Nine members of the audience spoke in support of the Shelter and the need for increased staffing and funding.

Chief Richey distributed a memorandum on Animal Shelter funding and level of services. He reviewed the Shelter’s 2006 budget. Revenues for 2006 are budgeted at $64,000 and include: 1) $7,500 from animal licensing; 2) $42,448 from Kittitas County; and 3) $14,000 from animal control fees and sales. Total expenditures are $186,000. Recent growth in the community has placed a significant demand on City services while at the same time the cost of providing services has exceeded available revenue. Continuation of the current level of services at the Shelter will require additional staffing. Without additional resources, it will be necessary to modify the level of services. Should a level of service reduction become necessary, staff is requesting direction from Council in regards to the type of shelter, programs and level of service that would be acceptable to the community. Any reductions in service need to be weighed against any negative impact those reductions may have on the Shelter’s efforts in promoting responsible pet ownership, adoption promotion and reducing the pet overpopulation in the community.

Chief Richey’s memorandum also included a survey of how other Washington cities handle their animal control issues. Options for the Ellensburg Animal Shelter include: 1) additional staffing; 2) reduction of public hours; 3) policy change regarding impound criteria; 4) increase in licenses and fee (limited revenue benefit); 5) contract services to another agency; and 6) regionalization (county-wide) of services. During past budget discussions the creation of an additional full time position or increasing the current .5 time position to full time was discussed. Chief Richey recommended the formation of a Council appointed study group of limited size that could meet independently and study these issues and present Council with a formal report and recommendations.

Animal Control Manager Hake advised Council that October 15 of each year is the Shelter’s annual licensing period when they are busiest in the front office. Approximately 1500 licenses renew during this time. The possibility of hiring temporary office help to assist with the license renewal process and/or utilizing Finance Department staff was discussed. Fees at the Shelter have not been increased since they were implemented in 1991. Council would like information from staff at the December 5,
2005 public hearing as to what could be done to address the short term goals requested. Joan Dumas, President of Friends of the Animal Shelter, stated their organization’s main charge is to help the City over and above what the City is able to provide. The Friends are willing pay half of the cost to train the Animal Shelter staff. Since 1999 the Friends of the Shelter have raised $17,000 in cash, labor and in kind materials to assist the Shelter.

Animal Shelter Manager Paula Hake and Chief Bob Richey prepare a proposal to establish Lillquist a committee to research issues at the Animal Shelter with the proposal to include recommendations for the makeup of the committee as well as a scope of work. The proposal to be presented to Council for adoption at a future regular meeting of the City Council.

Council suggested a regional solution to the animal control problem with involvement of all the cities in the County as well as Kittitas County. A solicitation of proposals from non-profit/private groups wanting to contract with the cities and Kittitas County to run the animal shelter should also be considered.

Vote on motion. Approved

**ADJOURN** Adjourn at 11:00 p.m. Carlson

Affirmed

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Mayor

ATTEST: ________________________________ City Clerk