CITY OF ELLENSBURG  Minutes of Council Meeting, Special Session
Date of Meeting  June 22, 2009
Time of Meeting  7:00 p.m.
Place of Meeting  Council Chambers, 501 North Anderson Street

Councilmembers Present: Bassett, Bottcher, Elliott and Mayor Pro Tem Tabb

Councilmembers Excused/Absent: Miller, O’Brien and Mayor Lillquist

Others present were City Manager Barkley; Finance Director Ariwoola; Parks & Recreation Director Case; Library Director DeSoer; Police Chief Miller; Community Development Director Smith; Financial Analyst Pascoe; Deputy Clerk Keno and two members of the audience.

CONSIDER REQUEST FOR EXCUSED ABSENCE FOR MAYOR LILLQUIST

Mayor Lillquist is requesting an excused absence for the June 22, 2009 meeting. Staff advises councilmembers O’Brien and Miller are also requesting excused absences for this evening.

Move to grant excused absences for Councilmembers O’Brien, Miller and Bassett

Mayor Lillquist. Affirmed

CONSIDERATION OF THE REQUEST FROM CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY FOR RPZ WAIVER ON 7TH AVENUE BETWEEN WALNUT STREET AND ANDERSON STREET

Central Washington University is requesting waivers for residential parking zone (RPZ) 2 on 7th Avenue between Walnut Street and Anderson Street for dates specified in a June 11, 2009 letter to the City Council. Lieutenant Tim Stowe, CWU Police Department, reviewed the University’s request and its purpose.

Move approval of request. Elliott

Council asked questions of Lieutenant Stowe. If Council wishes to revisit excluding the north side of 7th Avenue between Walnut and Sampson Streets from RPZ 2 further discussions will be need with CWU.

Vote on motion. Approved

PRE-BUDGET PLANNING

The purpose of the special meeting is to provide an opportunity for Council to identify priorities for the 2010 budget, and to give staff guidance in the preparation of the preliminary budget for 2010. The preliminary budget will form the framework for public
discussion later in the year.

Council viewed a slide presentation from the State of Washington Economic and Revenue Forecast Council. The Council believes the State is approaching the end of the current “Great Recession.” A chart was reviewed showing a comparison of purchases by group from the prior twelve months to the present. Construction, general merchandise, food service and motor vehicle sales comprise the bulk of sales tax revenue to the City and revenue in these areas is down. Nevertheless, the City is in pretty good financial shape right now. The City is trying to use cash to ride out the trough in the economy. Concern about what happens after next year. The City should be slow to fund any new projects or programs that do not bring a revenue source with them.

Finance Director Ariwoola reviewed a handout detailing the City’s financial outlook, including sales and property tax revenues and expenditures from 2008 to the present. The good news at this point is the City is not hurting as much as other entities.

Council asked questions of staff. Utility rate adjustments may be considered later this summer or fall due to the rise in commodity prices.

The proposed 2009 maintenance bond and projects that could be part of that bond issue were discussed. The handout distributed details projects totaling $1,720,000 with $70,389 spent to date. Council may wish to consider funding the City’s portion of the Dolar Way Project through the bond and in lieu of spending the City’s cash. The Alder Park project and the softball lighting project were discussed. The purpose of the bond issue is to 1) invest in major maintenance projects with a life span of at least 20 years; and 2) complete projects that were started and never finished. Council discussed the possibility of including sustainable services from the non-motorized transportation plan as part of this bond issue.

After discussion, Council direction was to include non-motorized transportation components in the bond issue. Council desires to continue to exercise the option discussed at the winter retreat to complete full City employment. In answer to Council inquiry, two police officers and a planning official position are not being filled. At this point the City is able to operate without these positions. Some councilmembers would like to see any occurring vacancies within the organization filled with current cross-trained employees whenever possible.

A future new Adult Activity Center was discussed in connection with a combined recreational facility. Such a facility would probably be initiated through a voter-approved bond. A possible site for such a facility was briefly discussed.

By August 2009 staff expects to be ready for a discussion of code revision framework to discuss process and priorities to update the code.

In answer to Council inquiry, Chief Miller gave a status report on the firing range. Local funds available total $70,000. Grants are not available at this time and the project is slated for the future at
this point. Concerning recent downtown issues some councilmembers expressed interest in dedicating specific funding for adding additional officers for the downtown. The Police Department has applied for grant funding for an additional officer and hopes to hear back by September, 2009. The grant funding would be good for three years.

The business incubator, code revisions, including the status of sign code revisions, was briefly discussed.

**ADJOURN** Motion to adjourn at 8:58 p.m. Elliott

Affirmed

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Mayor

ATTEST: __________________________________

City Clerk