CITY OF ELLENSBURG

Minutes of Council Meeting, Special Session

Date of Meeting

November 12, 2013

Time of Meeting

1:00 p.m.

Place of Meeting

Council Chambers, 501 North Anderson Street

Councilmembers Present: Aronica, Elliott, Lillquist, Scheffer and Mayor Tabb. Councilmember Morgan will be a few minutes late.

Councilmembers Absent: Miller (Excused November 4, 2013 regular meeting.)

Others present were City Manager Barkley, City Attorney Weiner, Public Works Director Akers, Energy Services Director Dunbar, Parks and Recreation Director Case, Finance Director Ariwoola, Chief Miller, Human Resources Director Smith, and Deputy Clerk Keno.

Mid-Biennial Budget Review

The purpose of the special meeting is to review issues raised by Council and staff and to discuss how those issues could impact the biennial budget going forward into the second year.

Council received a handout prepared by Councilmember Miller detailing items he proposes Council recognize as potential needs.

City Manager Barkley summarized the financial health of the City. The City’s revenue stream is not where it was five years ago but it is slowly improving. It will probably be 2015 before the City sees significant spending again.

Construction activity at the University is starting to pick up. The City is seeing improving balances in the combined sales tax and general funds. Caution and restraint is encouraged at this point in time.

General sales tax is up 5.1%. The City has seen strong growth in motor vehicle sales. Construction activity is down more than any other category. The City is looking at models for self-insurance for health insurance. The City may be looking at a modest increase in premiums to no increase in premiums.

Finance Director Ariwoola reported the City will use $800,000 of the general fund balance in 2013. Beginning in 2014 he estimates the City will do better than projected in 2013 by $400,000. Nothing was budgeted in 2013 from the 2010 Maintenance Bond so $72,000 of those proceeds has not been spent.

Public Input

No one came forward to speak during the time scheduled for public comment from 1:20 p.m. to 1:35 p.m.
Energy Services

Energy Services Director Dunbar gave a powerpoint presentation entitled “Telecommunications System Services Request for Proposals”. This item is not included in the 2014 budget and no action is requested. The purpose of the presentation is to keep Council informed as the project moves forward. Council asked questions of Director Dunbar.

Library Director DeSoer arrived at 1:51 p.m.

Public Works

Tree canopy maintenance is an eligible activity under the stormwater utility. A job description is being created that would shift the arborist position into a stormwater role within the stormwater utility. Weed responsibilities will be added to the position as well. The plan has been submitted to the union in conceptual form for approval. If the plan moves forward this will free up some revenue in the general fund.

Reecer Creek Maintenance

Discussion of maintenance costs. Staff believes the City can do the maintenance for less than what it is currently costing and hopes to get a grant to assist with the maintenance. To date, expenses are $27,000 for hand watering, hand pulling weeds, weed eating and mowing. The City can mow with temporary workers for half this amount. Council and staff discussed the length of time needed for establishment of the plantings.

John Wayne Trail Reconnection Funding

The City is building a reserve in the sidewalk replacement fund; some of those monies may be available for trail acquisition. This fund receives monies from the real estate excise tax. Council consensus was to bring the issue back as a resolution for Council approval.

Police Department

Public Safety Facilities

The Department has done a gap analysis to determine needs. If the Kittitas Valley Fire and Rescue (KVFR) station plan is successful, the Department proposes to use a $50,000 bequest received in 2009 to hire a consultant to do a needs analysis for the Public Safety Building to determine the building’s viability for remodeling, expansion, etc. Decreasing the City’s bond debt would free up revenue for this project.

Community Garden Lot Visioning (Councilmember Miller Item)

The City has received a grant to do an LID demonstration project for the Public Safety Building
parking lot.

**Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE) Program (Councilmember Miller Items)**

Chief Miller reported funding from the City is probably not needed at this time. ASPEN is monitoring the situation and is giving the hospital $5,000 next year. Giving more money to the hospital at this time will not improve the situation.

Council took a five minute break at 2:57 p.m. and reconvened at 3:05 p.m.

**City Manager Recruitment Planning**

Human Resources Director Smith discussed the process for replacing the City Manager when he gives notice to the City. The Manager’s contract requires 30 days notice; the Council will have to appoint an Interim Manager during the recruitment process. Director Smith distributed the City Manager brochure developed for the position along with a Hiring and Interview Schedule for Council consideration. Approximately $35,000 is projected for the search. Supplemental questions will accompany the application; Councilmembers were requested to submit proposed questions to Director Smith. Consensus was the screening committee will be comprised of the Mayor, City Attorney and Human Resources Director.

Council discussed the possibility of holding a special meeting to discuss qualities it is looking for in a new City Manager and possibly using a facilitator to lead the discussion.

Councilmember Aronica left the meeting at 3:31 p.m.

**Library Collection Budget and Staffing**

Director DeSoer reported she has a $65,000 materials budget for all formats. Patrons are checking out almost twice the amount of materials now that they were checking out the first of the year. The materials budget has been $13,000 short for the last twelve years; Director DeSoer is asking again for restoration of the lost funds and would like a materials budget of $80,000. In 2000 the library had 7,000 registered borrowers, now that figure is up to 11,000. Council requested the supplemental budget include $80,000 for library materials.

In 2009 staffing was cut. Director DeSoer requested a couple more hours a week for the Hal Holmes Facilities Assistant as well as funding to hire a second assistant for the summer reading program. She would also like a third part time person for June, July and August. Council requested payroll numbers from the Library Director.

Council briefly discussed doing a more encompassing public logo plan than the logo passed out for the library.

**Parks and Recreation**
**Wippel Park**

Discussion of whether to give Wippel Park back to the Wippel family. Parks Director Case distributed a Memorandum detailing the history, amenities and maintenance of the park along with a photo of the park. The City acquired the park in 1940 when several other City parks did not exist. The City’s Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan needs to be updated in 2014, as part of that process an analysis of existing park facilities would be done to determine if existing parks, such as Wippel, are being used to their highest and best use. Based on this information, staff and Council will be able to implement strategies and make decisions on what should be done with facilities like Wippel Park.

**Planning for Rotary Park Improvements**

The Rotary Park Master Plan was completed and adopted by Council in May, 2013. There is no strategy in place to start implementing improvements. At some time Council needs to decide what it is it wants done at Rotary Park now and into the future.

**Kittitas Valley Memorial Pool – Exercise Equipment**

The exercise equipment at the pool is in poor condition. The four pieces purchased from Hans Gym when it closed are starting to fail. The Department is still able to order replacement parts for the four pieces purchased new in 2005. There are no dedicated replacement funds for exercise equipment. If the pool were to replace the failing equipment it would cost approximately $19,000 to replace the four pieces. Council and staff discussed removing the exercise equipment entirely. The room currently used for the equipment could be utilized for other purposes. Council and staff discussed surveying patrons on keeping the exercise equipment as part of the facility.

**Park Staffing (Councilmember Miller Item)**

Council and staff discussed park staffing levels which have not changed since the 1970’s while the City has continued to acquire and expand park facilities. This issue should be incorporated with an updated evaluation of staffing needs for all departments for Council review as suggested by Councilmember Miller.

**Community Center Project Update**

The Community Center Project Committee has gone about as far as it can. Circumstances beyond its control such as the middle school and fire station projects impact the ability to move forward. Council and staff discussed folding this project into the larger comprehensive plan discussion and possibly hire a consultant to provide expertise for such a project. The project seems to be viewed as needed in the community. Council would like to see the survey results.

**Major Maintenance Bond**

Finance Director Ariwoola distributed a handout showing the status of the Proposed 2010 GO Bond
Projects as of October, 2013. A project authorized for the pool (brick, wall and roof repair) was not done because it came in over bid so $72,000 of the bond remains unobligated. After discussion, council consensus was to find the rest of the money for the project and complete it.

**Consideration of Council-Funded Programs (Councilmember Miller Item)**

Council reviewed the requests and discussed making some adjustments. Council requested staff divide the requests into contracts for services and grants and bring back the list for Council review. Some councilmembers felt criteria needed to be established for receipt of funding and some type of cap established on the amount awarded.

**Council Stipend**

After discussion, Council will review the council compensation survey and bring back the issue if it wishes to pursue it.

**ADJOURN** Motion to adjourn at 4:57 p.m. Elliott

Approved

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Mayor

ATTEST: _______________________________

City Clerk