



McCleary Special City Council Meeting

Thursday, December 21, 2023 – 6:30 PM

McCleary Community Center & Zoom Virtual Meeting

Minutes

Call to Order/Flag Salute/Roll Call

Meeting called to order at 6:30pm.

Present:

Councilmember Jacob Simmons
Councilmember Brycen Huff (Mayor Pro-Tem)
Councilmember Max Ross
Councilmember Andrea Dahl
Councilmember Keith Klimek

Agenda Modifications/Acceptance:

Motion made by Councilmember Dahl, Seconded by Councilmember Huff to accept the agenda.
Voting Yea: Councilmember Simmons, Councilmember Huff, Councilmember Ross, Councilmember Dahl, Councilmember Klimek.

Public Hearing

None

Public Comment:

Carri Comer thanked the Council for letting her observe and feel that her voice is heard. She said it has been a rough year of division. Filling the room is appreciated and feels more like a community. She asked to please appoint Andrew Pittman as Fire Chief. She also asked Council to include resources for a full forensic audit of the City finances.

Kyle Comer said last week he was asked to leave the meeting, he apologized for the disruption. He stated he does not respect the Police Chief or Mayor.

Ordinances and Resolutions

1. 2024 Budget Ordinance:

Jenna Amsbury, Clerk-Treasurer, provided a staff report. This version of the budget includes a 2% CPI and added projects to compensate for additional revenue. If there is a decision to do 0% CPI increase to utilities there are notes to the side of what the 2% figure is. There is no COLA increase for the Director of Public Works, Clerk-Treasurer or Police Chief. Reduction of one police officer including salary benefits and extras. Reduction of all tentative FOP Contract increases. Removal of Program Manager position and addition of Professional Services for outsourcing IT services. This budget maintains the PW Assistant position as is, removes two vacant public works utility positions and one summer help. No ARPA is being used to balance the Current Expense budget. She noted Councilmember Simmons had asked \$50,000 lean to project, and verified it was removed from the budget.

Councilmember Klimek wanted to make sure the service agreement with Aktivov is in place and an extension is allowed in the contract for 2024. Chad Bedlington, Director of Public Works, explained the

extension to the contract has not been done yet for 2024, as he is waiting to see what is passed in the budget. There is a contract for 2023 that was approved in 2022.

Councilmember Huff asked about the decrease to police salary decrease. Jenna explained it was a role back to current salaries as the contract has not been approved. Councilmember Simmons asked about the ending balance for Current Expense. Jenna stated it is at \$8,000 right now and there are still reserve funds in place as well.

Councilmember Huff stated approximately \$200,000 in the ARPA can be used for the 3rd Street project matching funds, which would leave \$20,000 for additional uses. Huff asked what the cost would be for a more in depth financial audit. Jenna Amsbury stated she spoke to an outside firm that estimated a cost of \$250 an hour plus travel, they are from Bellingham. The State Auditors stated they are available for an extra fee, to provide a more detailed review while they are here this year, we can be charged hourly for this work. Councilmember Huff proposed using \$10,000 in ARPA funds to allow for the additional audit. Council was in agreement.

Councilmember Huff asked about a hearing for this new version. Jenna explained all three hearings are completed. There is not a requirement for any further.

Councilmember Huff asked about the salary for the Clerk being \$105,000. Jenna Amsbury confirmed this is the salary she was hired on with and she does not take health insurance benefits through the city, which saves around \$24,000 annually.

Councilmember Ross stated he is ready to take action.

Councilmember Simmons wants more discussion on the CPI. He wants to know what the people are getting for the additional 2% increase. Councilmember Klimek said things are three times more expensive for supplies. He doesn't want to raise the utility rates, but we have to be realistic. Public Works Director Chad Bedlington went over the City's projects that were added and changed. Manholes, Fire hydrant replacement and a cut in capital outlay materials. The projects are listed that were added back in to the budget with the increase to rates.

Senior Lineman Paul Nott stated he understands the thoughts on rates, but unfortunately we can't choose material costs. The Utility Rate study suggested a 8.5% increase, which is a big number and 2% is minimal in comparison. We can't reduce rates. Hoquiam doubled utility tax for EMS \$18-\$36 a month. Councilmember Huff said 2% is doable and not a huge hit to the pocketbook. It will lessen the blow down the road.

Councilmember Ross is OK with small increments so that there doesn't have to be large ones coming up.

Sergeant Randy Bunch said layoff of the officer was not needed, the city has the money in ARPA funds. This week I have to find coverage and will be working every day this week. You have the money but don't want to spend it on public safety.

There was consensus to act on the CPI before the final budget adoption.

2. Resolution for 2% CPI for 2024:

Motion made by Councilmember Ross, Seconded by Councilmember Klimek to adopt Resolution 758 to approve a 2% CPI increase to utilities in 2024.

Voting Yea: Councilmember Simmons, Councilmember Huff, Councilmember Ross, Councilmember Dahl, Councilmember Klimek.

Action on Budget Ordinance - Item No. 1:

Councilmember Simmons asked about overtime costs for police in 2023. Jenna Amsbury stated there is \$11,300 to date spent in overtime. Staffing levels were discussed with overtime amounts. On-call overtime was brought up and the Chief has stated it is not his first choice to do this. Councilmember Ross asked what happens when the FOP Contract is approved for the budget. Jenna Amsbury stated the budget can be amended in 2024 once there is a decision.

Motion made by Councilmember Ross, Seconded by Councilmember Klimek to adopt Ordinance 889 for the 2024 budget with the addition of \$10,000 from the ARPA funds for a forensic audit of 2022 and 2023.

Voting Yea: Councilmember Simmons, Councilmember Huff, Councilmember Ross, Councilmember Dahl, Councilmember Klimek

Council Comments:

Councilmember Klimek said the Mayor should appoint Andrew as permanent Fire Chief and stop with the politics.

Councilmember Simmons thanked Jenna Amsbury and the Council for working through the budget process. Merry Christmas.

Adjourn

Meeting Adjourned at 7:09pm

Motion made by Councilmember Ross, Seconded by Councilmember Klimek.

Voting Yea: Councilmember Simmons, Councilmember Huff, Councilmember Ross, Councilmember Dahl, Councilmember Klimek