

MINUTES
CITY OF STEVENSON SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING
June 03, 2019
6:30 PM, City Hall

1. CALL TO ORDER/PRESENTATION TO THE FLAG: Mayor Anderson opened the meeting at 6:30 pm, lead the group in reciting the pledge of allegiance and conduct roll call.

PRESENT

Councilmember Robert Muth
Councilmember Amy Weissfeld
Councilmember Paul Hendricks
Councilmember Jenny Taylor (arrived at 7pm)
Councilmember Matthew Knudsen

City staff in attendance: Leana Kinley, Stevenson City Administrator; Ben Shumaker, Stevenson Community Development Director

Others attending: Rob Farris, Stevenson City Fire Department Chief; Karl Russell, Skamania Fire District 2 Commissioner; Scott Griswold, Skamania Fire District 2 Commissioner; volunteer firefighters.

2. NEW FIRE HALL PROJECT:

a) **Discussion:** Mayor Anderson welcomed everyone and announced the purpose of the meeting was to facilitate communication between the Stevenson City Council and the Fire Department regarding the proposed construction of a new Fire Hall. He noted the city is also facing \$16 million in upgrades to its water and sewer systems and money was an issue.

Due to soil conditions found through a geo-tech analysis, excavation costs at the proposed Fire Hall site are expected to be approximately \$880,000, much higher than anticipated. Total cost of the project is currently estimated to be between \$5.7 and \$6.3 million. The Council is seeking input from the Fire Department in finding ways to reduce project costs while maintaining required features and safety considerations. Halving the project cost to approximately \$3 million was one suggestion put forward by members of the Council.

Past needs assessments for a new Fire Hall performed in 2013 and 2016 were reviewed. Mayor Anderson asked if any of the designated items could be changed or removed to lower costs, or if other alternatives were available. He advised that area of Stevenson is set to grow in the next few years with a developer having purchased the old Mill site with the intent to build housing.

A number of options were explored and discussed. Several attendees cautioned against short-sighted planning, noting it can backfire and create costly problems in the future. The pros and cons of changes in building design, including other city departments and services at the site, sharing space with the Skamania County Emergency Operations Center, leasing some of the facility for public use, renovating the existing fire hall site or finding an entirely new site were all considered.

Fire Chief Rob Farris pointed out that a number of items were required by NFPA (National Fire Protection Association) codes and standards. Seismic design requirements and ADA regulations add to costs. Moving the utilities underground is also expensive. The Planning Commission has suggested at least 30 parking spaces be a part of the final plan. He reminded the Council that McKenzie had presented previously low and high cost estimates as well as a value engineered list of cost-cutting measures that can be taken to get the overall project cost down. Chief Farris determined there were several things that could be changed or eliminated to reduce costs:

- Eliminate the drive thru bays, while increasing the set-back and apron.
- Reduce the number of vehicle bays to 3, with an option to expand to 4 in the future.
- Delete the EOC portion of the building.
- Build a small kitchenette instead of a full-size kitchen.
- Reduce the size of the meeting room from its current design.
- Eliminate the Chief's Office.

He also noted there could be changes made to the quality of the flooring and furnishings, wooden studs could be used in place of metal, diaper changing stations in the restrooms could be eliminated and the building interior could be partially finished. Even with these ideas Chief Farris related that would not reduce the project cost by the amount the Council is looking for.

Several questions were then raised about available sources of funding for the Fire Hall. Grants are possible, and the state and federal government could contribute some direct funds towards the project. Having the city pass a bond would help in applying for grants as it shows the funder there is community support for the project. When asked about BNSF's possible contribution it was noted by Administrator Kinley they have a \$50,000 cap on projects such as this.

One difficulty is the uncertainty about what the final project will look like-will there be just the Fire Department housed there or will there be accessory uses in place? That can change how and where funds can be obtained. Will there be cost sharing between various departments, will the city own the building and lease it to the Fire Department, or will both the city and county need to pass a bond measure? It was agreed a more complete picture is needed prior to approaching funders.

Mayor Anderson remarked that no hard choices or decisions were to be made at this meeting. He then asked for participants to serve on several committees: Needs, Funding, and Accessory Uses to help resolve questions. Tyson Schupbach and Tom Delzio volunteered for the Needs Committee. The Funding Committee volunteers were Howard Hoyt, Greyson Rudd, Ray Broughton and Leana Kinley.

After discussion it was asked if members of the original Executive Committee would be willing to reconvene to perform an analysis comparing building on the current/existing site to the other sites considered. Members of the original committee in the meeting agreed to reform. Ben Shumaker requested that only one Fire District Commissioner be on the committee to reduce the burden from the Open Public Meetings Act. The revised committee consists of Ben Shumaker, Scott Griswold and Paul Hendricks.

3. ADJOURNMENT - Mayor Anderson thanked everyone for their ideas and participation and for being part of the solution. He adjourned the meeting at 8:00 pm.

Approved _____; Approved with revisions _____

Name	Date
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Minutes by Johanna Roe