

City of Othello
City Council Workshop
November 2, 2009

CALL TO ORDER:

Mayor Shannon McKay called the workshop to order at 6:00 p.m.

Present: Mayor Shannon McKay; Councilmembers: Kenneth Caylor, Dan Dever, Kenneth Johnson, Mark Snyder, Marc Spohr, and Tim Wilson

Also Present: City Administrator Ehman Sheldon and Department Heads: Finance Officer Mike Bailey, Police Chief Steve Dunnagan, City Clerk Debbie Kudrna, City Planner Darryl Piercy, and Municipal Services Coordinator Jay Van Ness.

Absent Was: Councilmember Eleanor Brodahl.

ORDINANCE REGARDING RESIDENTIAL VEHICLE STORAGE REVIEW

City Planner Darryl Piercy presented the proposed ordinance regarding residential vehicle storage. He reviewed the additional changes that have been made to the original proposal, as directed by the Council. In general, the ordinance regulates parking in the front yards; does not regulate parking in rear yards, and limits the regulation of parking in the side yards. He advised that our citizens can park as many vehicles that they can fit in their driveway and any improved parking surface parallel to the driveway and the adjacent side yard. The idea is to have vehicles use a 30' curb cut to access their parking surfaces or use their rear yard to access improved parking surfaces.

Mr. Franz Laska wanted to clarify that as long as they access through the curb cut, then they could park on their front yard, as long as it was an improved surface. Mr. Piercy explained that the way the code is written, if they have an improved surface in their front yard, and as long as their improved surface is parallel to their driveway, they could park upon that improved surface. Councilmember Caylor made a suggestion about a statement in the ordinance referencing inoperable vehicles in 8.66.040 D stored on any property. Mr. Piercy explained there was no intent to regulate side or rear yard in that section. Councilmember Wilson suggested that a limit of the 30' width be the maximum for access to parking in the front yard. Councilmember Johnson advised it is a small percentage of our homes that are creating the nuisances. He would prefer to enforce the current ordinances that we have. He advised that the proposal now limits the length of recreation vehicles to 18' and according to the proposal they would not be able to park those larger RV's in their improved surfaces in the front yard. Councilmember Spohr stated that he would like to regulate the number of vehicles that are stored in rear yards. Mayor McKay advised that based upon the Council comments, the City will strictly enforce the current nuisance ordinances and if there are ordinances that need to be improved, then those will be addressed

Brent Reeder advised that he has collected vehicles to be restored and these are stored in his rear yard. He asked that the property owners be given a reasonable amount of time to rectify any problems if they are out of compliance. He recommended initial communication with home owners to help rectify any issues.

Councilmember Snyder advised that he would like to enforce the 30' curb cut and not allow use of the entire front yard as a parking surface. Mr. Piercy advised that Council has approved a new administrative review for code enforcement, which is a better enforcement process to seek resolution.

Shane Provost from the, Othello Independent stated that in some of the new developments, they have rolled curbs and they don't have any curb cuts. City Administrator, Ehman Sheldon advised that since that development, Council no longer allows the rolled curbs. Mr. Piercy advised that in most circumstances, cities are very restrictive to vehicle parking. Mr. Piercy suggested providing some limitations to the designated parking space in front and side yards. There was further discussion regarding the City's RV parking ordinances and not encroaching upon city right-of-way. Mr. Sheldon reviewed the current provisions in the municipal code relevant to vehicles parking upon city right of way. He suggested that staff bring two versions of the ordinance for Council's consideration at the next meeting.

SEWER UTILITY RATE REVIEW

Finance Officer Mike Bailey reported that staff is proposing a \$2.00 increase to the base sewer rates each year for 2010, 2011, and 2012. The increase would facilitate the accrual of reserves for future capital improvements and the regular upkeep of the existing sewer collection system and treatment plant. Staff also recommends a \$0.04 increase per year to the rates for the number of student/employees for school and the commercial water usage rate. A memo from Mr. Sheldon included a sewer rate survey, which indicated that Othello is the 4th lowest sewer rate in the state. Mr. Bailey reported that in the 2010 budget, there is a projected ending fund balance of over \$2 m in the sewer reserve fund. There was further discussion about the sewer permit process and the city's current lagoon system. Mr. Sheldon advised there is a requirement to have a joint meeting with Adams County Water District to review the proposed sewer rates. Mr. Sheldon advised that the \$2 per year increase is consistent with the recent sewer rate increases.

PRELIMINARY BUDGET DISCUSSIONS – GENERAL FUND

Finance Officer Mike Bailey briefly reviewed the 2010 budget beginning fund balances, revenues; resources; capital; expenditures, and projected ending fund balances. He reported that staff has presented a balance budget, excluding all capital projects. With the proposed capital projects, our expenditures exceed the projected revenues in the general fund. It was noted that if some of the capital projects were budgeted in the utility fund, it would reduce the expenditures in the general fund. Mr. Bailey then reviewed the 2010 general fund budget. It was suggested that we get estimates for painting the exterior of the City Hall building. Mr. Sheldon provided a justification for the proposed increase for the IT salary. Mr. Sheldon also advised that there are 4 collective bargaining agreements. Three of those have a 5% COLA increase in 2010. All four contracts will be negotiated in 2010. The Operating Engineers agreement has a range of 3%-5% COLA increase; based upon the contract language they will get a 3% increase. There are 16 non-union employees that do not have a labor contract. Typically, the non union employees have been given whatever the higher rate is for the union employees. The non union employee salaries reflect a 5% COLA increase. Councilmember Spohr advised that he would not support anything over 3% for the non union employees and those salaries should be evaluated annually. Councilmember Johnson advised that he will support the 5% COLA. Councilmember Caylor advised that it was difficult to come to an agreement during the past negotiations and what was agreed upon seemed appropriate. Mayor McKay advised that we have given non union employees the same COLA as the Teamsters COLA. He noted the City is in good financial position and we are able to hold our employees to an acceptable salary increase.

Mr. Bailey reviewed the 2010 budget in the Police and Fire Department and the proposed parks and recreation budget, which includes the new park and recreation director position.

Councilmember Dever stated that the Park and Recreation Department could become very large and one person could be responsible for programs throughout the year. Councilmember Spohr stated that our programs are well managed without the new position. Councilmember Snyder stated when we get a new park, that might be a better time for the position. Mayor McKay stated there will be a time when a park director will be necessary. Councilmember Caylor stated that the new position would relieve some of the responsibilities for the City Hall employees and feel with the development of a new park, it would be an opportune time. There was discussion on the proposed capital expenditures. Councilmember Caylor explained that the proposed \$10,000 is for the development of the centennial park, including infrastructure, lighting, and a Coulee Corridor kiosk. It was decided to not budget the \$10,000 at this time, and bring it back when the property ownership is worked out. There was discussion regarding the proposed \$65,000 for new lights and cameras in Kiwanis Park and on the proposed \$80,000 for a new parking lot. Mayor McKay suggested that we not budget for a new parking lot until the new park is developed.

Councilmember Wilson stated that the south parking lot in Kiwanis Park is in need of repair and staff was directed to provide an estimate for repair of the parking lot in Kiwanis Park and for additional parking for the pool. Mayor McKay stated it would make sense to incorporate a skate board park in the new community park. There was a discussion regarding budgeting for a community/visitor center. Councilmember Caylor advised that land was donated for a Coulee

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Corridor visitor center in 2004; that opportunity no longer exists. He now suggests that a visitor center be tied in with a community center. He believes there is now federal funding available to go towards a visitor/community center. He asked for Council to allocate reserve funds over a three year period to be used as matching funds if grant funds are obtained. Council consensus was to appropriate \$100,000 in the 2010 budget for a community center.

Mr. Bailey led a review of the Planning, Code Enforcement, Building Departments, and the Library fund. Mr. Sheldon noted the City is responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of the Library building. He also advised that staff is going to research the continued use of SAFEbuilt for contract inspections.

COMMITTEE REPORTS – COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEMBERS SHARE INFORMATION

Councilmember Johnson reported there is an ACDC meeting next Thursday in Ritzville. He reported that the Northland Cable committee met and they will decide whether to hold a public meeting to receive input of their services and the Council will need to decide if the cable charges are to be assessed the utility tax. Councilmember Caylor advised that SWAC met and decided there will not be an increase to the tipping fees. He stated that the City may want to discuss the collection costs, noting there may be a decrease in other fees. He attended the Columbia Basin Development League last week and a lot of information was shared. Mayor McKay reported on the gas summit meeting last week. He advised the meeting was well attended and it looks like we could double our gas capacity by 2013.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further items to discuss, Mayor McKay adjourned the workshop at 9:22 p.m.

By: _____
SHANNON MCKAY, Mayor

ATTEST:

By: _____
DEBBIE L. KUDRNA, City Clerk