

MOSES LAKE CITY COUNCIL
December 9, 2014

Council Present: Dick Deane, Bill Ecret, Karen Liebrecht, Jason Avila, Jon Lane, David Curnel, and Todd Voth

The meeting was called to order at 7 p.m. by Mayor Deane.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Mr. Voth led the Council in the pledge of allegiance.

PRESENTATION AND AWARDS - None

CONSENT AGENDA

Minutes: The minutes of the November 25 meeting were presented for approval.

Approval of Claims, Prepaid Claims, Checks, and Payroll: Vouchers audited and certified by the Finance Director as required by RCW 42.24.080, and those expense reimbursement claims, certified as required by RCW 42.24.090, have been recorded on a listing which has been made available to the Council for approval and is retained for public inspection at the Civic Center. As of December 9, 2014 the Council does approve for payment claims in the amount of \$1,185,059.78; prepaid claims in the amount of \$21,013.44; claim checks in the amount of \$1,460,860.29; and payroll in the amount of \$305,931.05

Action Taken: Mr. Voth moved that the Consent Agenda be approved, seconded by Mr. Avila, and passed unanimously.

COMMISSION APPOINTMENTS - None

CONSIDERATION OF BIDS AND QUOTES - None

PETITIONS, COMMUNICATIONS, OR PUBLIC HEARINGS

GRANT COUNTY ANIMAL OUTREACH - LAND ACQUISITION

Carmon Derting, Shelter Manager for Grant County Animal Outreach, requested time before the Council to discuss land options in order to construct a larger animal shelter and provide additional services.

Blair Koak, Board President, stated they average over 200 animals a month and have had to turn some people away due to lack of space. With a larger facility more animals could be housed.

Joseph K. Gavinski, City Manager, provided some background on the existing building.

There was some discussion on the availability of land and it was the consensus that Grant County Animal Outreach contact city staff concerning possible locations for a new building.

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

ORDINANCE - 2014 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENTS - 2ND READING

An ordinance was presented which adopts the 2014 Comprehensive Plan Amendments.

The ordinance adopting the 2014 Comprehensive Plan amendments and completing the periodic update of the Comprehensive Plan required by RCW 36.70A.130 was read by title only.

Action Taken: Mr. Ecret moved that the second reading of the ordinance be adopted, seconded by Mr. Avila, and passed unanimously.

ORDINANCE - AMEND 2014 BUDGET - 1ST READING

An ordinance was presented which amends the 2014 budget.

The ordinance amending the 2014 budget for the City of Moses Lake, Washington was read by title only.

Action Taken: Mr. Lane moved that the first reading of the ordinance be adopted, seconded by Mrs. Liebrecht, and passed unanimously.

REQUEST TO CALL FOR BIDS - None

REFERRALS FROM COMMISSIONS - None

OTHER ITEMS FOR COUNCIL CONSIDERATION

STRATFORD ROAD SIDEWALK - DEVIATION

The City and Grant County have been awarded a grant from the Washington State Transportation Improvement Board to install sidewalk along Stratford Road from SR17 through Maple Drive. There will be approximately 1,200' of sidewalk installed along the west side and 200' along the east side of Stratford Road inside the city limits. There is not sufficient right-of-way to construct the sidewalk to city standards so a deviation of the standards is being requested to allow a 5' sidewalk with no planter strip on the west side and a 6' sidewalk with no planter strip on the east side.

Gary Harer, Municipal Services Director, explained the project and mentioned that the needed right-of-way will not be provided by the property owners. The request is for a deviation to allow 5' and 6' sidewalks instead of the required 8'.

Teresa Adkinson, Grant County Health District, stated that they worked with the City and the Trails Planning Team on safe streets and this area has been a concern for a long time. She pointed out that there are many low income residents in this area who walk to the various stores nearby and sidewalks are needed even if they are less than what is required by the community standards.

Greg Wright, Grant Transit Authority, stated that they are partnering with the City on this project and the sidewalks are needed as is a bus pull out.

Action Taken: Mr. Lane moved that the request be granted, seconded by Mr. Voth, and passed unanimously.

NON-AGENDA ITEMS AND PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

PERSONNEL

Matt Borschowa, Firefighter, provided information to the Council concerning the disagreement he has with the City over whether he should be required to use vacation or sick leave to care for his spouse and that the Department of Labor and Industries has determined that if the vacation leave is not changed to sick leave the City would be fined. He mentioned that if the leave is changed from vacation to sick leave, no fine would be assessed.

REAL ESTATE EXCISE TAX

Mark Fancher, 301 Inglewood, objected to the Council's adoption of the one quarter of 1% real estate excise tax on a single reading of the ordinance.

Joseph K. Gavinski, City Manager, stated that the possible passage of this ordinance was discussed one meeting before its actual passage and was included in the following meeting's agenda, which is posted on the City's website for any one from the public to view.

Mayor Deane pointed out that the issue of the tax was reported in the various medias. He mentioned that the county has had the tax in place for a number of years and only 2 cities in the county have not already adopted this additional real estate excise tax.

Carol Calder, 5776 Ridgeview, President of the Moses Lake-Othello Association of Realtors, stated that the Association was concerned about the impact of the tax on their clients and felt that the tax should be repealed.

Mr. Voth stated that contrary to the newspaper article he did not feel that he had made a mistake in voting for the tax and that the ad placed in the paper by the relators was misleading and alarmed the citizens.

Rick Serra, 117 E. Belair, questioned the passing of the tax as he felt it was targeting only the property sellers. He also wanted to know when the City knew that REC was appealing its tax assessment.

Joseph K. Gavinski, City Manager, stated that the assessment was appealed to the local Board of Equalization and the decision was communicated to the City in August 2014. The Council was informed at the first meeting in September of the budget shortfall for 2014. The full impact of the lack of payment of the taxes by REC is in the 2015 budget.

COMPLAINT

Ray Castoreno, 902 S. Hawthorne, stated that he wished the Council to know that he was unhappy about his treatment at the hands of the justice system including police officers, the prosecutor's office, and the entire judicial system.

AMBULANCE SERVICE

Dr. James Irwin, Samaritan Hospital, felt that the City should retain the ambulance service.

Jerry Lease, 222 Linden, Firefighter in Spokane and volunteer with Grant County, felt that turning the ambulance service over to a private company would be a disaster.

REC - REAL ESTATE TAX

Peter Stephens, 836 E. Plum, felt that the way to address the discrepancy in the tax assessment between what the county assesses and what REC feels is the value is to have a flat rate tax.

COUNCIL QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

AMBULANCE SERVICE

Mr. Ecret felt that the City should retain the fire and ambulance service in its current form and was opposed to volunteers, or any more cuts to funding or equipment.

Mr. Lane suggested that staff investigate a levy for emergency services, eliminate the day car, re-instate the volunteer program, and encourage the Fire Department to investigate cost saving measures.

Mr. Avila suggested that the day car be eliminated and the city raise the ambulance utility tax to \$15 and encourage the community to accept the raise.

CITY MANAGER REPORTS AND COMMENTS

BUILDING ACTIVITY REPORT

The November Building Activity Report was provided.

INVESTMENT REPORT

The City received \$19,763.62 in investment income for October 2014.

SALES TAX/TRANSIENT RENTAL INCOME

The City received \$493,879.14 in sales tax and \$56,268.68 in transient rental income in November.

The regular meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

ATTEST

Dick Deane, Mayor

W. Robert Taylor, Finance Director