

CITY OF MCCLEARY
Regular City Council Meeting
Wednesday, November 19, 2014

ROLL CALL AND FLAG SALUTE Councilmember's Reed, Schiller, Ator, Catterlin and Peterson.

ABSENT Mayor Dent was absent. Mayor Pro Tem Ator Chaired the meeting.

STAFF PRESENT Present at the meeting were Todd Baun, Wendy Collins, George Crumb, John Graham and Chris Coker attended for Dan Glenn.

PUBLIC HEARING

PUBLIC HEARING PROPERTY PROPOSED BUDGET The hearing opened at 7:00 pm. No comments were made. The hearing closed at 7:00 pm.

PUBLIC COMMENT Tom Hawkins wanted an explanation of what's going on with the police department. He understands a motion passed last week about negotiating with the Sheriff's department. He is opposed to it and feels we will lose a little bit of our town. He believes our services now are more than adequate. He said we will lose continuity and we are a community and this community is being torn apart over this issue. He said the Elma Fire Chief lives up the road so why don't we sell the fire department to Elma. It will only take a few more minutes and it will save a lot of money. If we sell the police department to the sheriff and have the, "Catterlin form of justice", it will take a few more minutes to show up, but if a person dies, we still have financial balance and the reserve we need. We are talking about peoples lives here. He said the Mayor did a good job toning down the budget to protect what we have here. He hopes we have the best interest of the City in mind. We take a gentleman who has worked 29 years to make the rank of an officer or above and now you want to strip him down. What is that going to save us other than a few dollars? We need to bypass the sheriff's department and keep what we have.

Deanna Stevens comes from a long line of law enforcement and her dad was Harold Sumpter, previous Sheriff of Grays Harbor County for several years. She lived in Grays Harbor all her life except for last five years. She loves the community and feels safe and secure with the police department here. She supports keeping the police here in McCleary.

Helen Hamilton supports keeping the police department here. The local police know her and she knows she can pick up the phone any time and call them and they will help her. You can't do that everywhere.

Gary Atkins is on the other side of the fence. He doesn't think we need the police department. For the amount salaries that we pay those three individuals, we can do a lot more with our town and make it more inviting. He said the other gentleman was talking about them losing their jobs but nobody made any comments about the judge losing his job. Elma and McCleary are very close and very tight knit and there is no reason why we can't work off each other. If you drive around town at night, they get paid over \$100,000 a year a piece, and you never see them. He said he doesn't see the police begging for their jobs or offering to take a pay cut to keep their jobs. They want more money, or as much money, and they want to do what they've been doing, which isn't much. He said police in Seattle get paid less and there's not that much crime going on here.

Helen Hamilton said the unions make the contracts with the City and it sets the amount of what the employees get paid. The Council votes on it and last year, they voted in favor of it. Gary Atkins said the Council should renegotiate with the union and cut their pay and make it more affordable. We are paying three people over \$300,000 to keep their jobs and he thinks it's ludicrous.

John Graham said he doesn't make \$100,000 but he wishes he did. He said there are other people that work for the City that do make over \$100,000 but it's not him or the Chief. Councilman Catterlin asked if he added in his benefits package and Mr. Graham asked if he really wants to go there? Does he really want him to tell what all the other City employees make? Mr. Graham said they are the lowest paid police officers in the county. He said he was questioned by an unnamed councilmember about making \$150,000 a year, so he brought them his W2 and showed that in his best year, he made \$84,000 but he worked 1800 hours on top of his 2080 hours. He worked two years' time in one year on call. He emphasized it's not overtime, it's on call. He is one of the lowest paid employees and averages \$19 an hour for every hour he works. He offered Councilmember Catterlin to come look at what he makes. Mr. Catterlin told John he is missing the point. John was not speaking to his benefits compensation, which is close to \$35,000 per year and does not show up on a W2. John asked why is he singling out the police department and not asking what the PUD makes or what the front office makes.

Councilman Schiller reminded John Graham that he knows this is the current expense fund that is being discussed and the other positions he mentioned are not budgeted out of that fund. He told Mr. Graham to talk facts. He said current expense is in trouble not the other funds.

Gary Atkins asked if the police get paid when they are on call on standby and John Graham said yes, he gets paid \$7.00 an hour but he can't have a beer, can't mow the lawn or go to his child's recital. He said a fireman does the same things they do but they get paid their full hourly rates and everything while they sit at the fire hall. He asked what was cut in the budget to save the police department? Councilmember Schiller said nothing was cut and the police department is proposing to get \$43,000 more dollars this year in the budget. Mr. Catterlin said it's sad because you are a police officer and you don't know the law. He said State law, backed by the Attorney General, says you can't take money from the utility funds to fund current expense.

Councilmember Catterlin read a letter that was distributed around town in support of the police department. It asked what other budget cuts were looked at. Councilmember Catterlin said the Mayor has cut everything in the current expense fund to skeletonize to barely nothing. He contracted the court with the county and, all in all, that is going to realistically save around \$22,000 a year. The rest of the money comes from the beginning cash, which is over \$140,000 and is a financial joke and will leave us in a disastrous position next year. There isn't anywhere to cut any more money out of current expense except for the police department. The letter stated \$200,000 has been cut out of the police department and it is a blatant misstatement. The police budget actually increased. Their budget went up \$11,600 for next year. He asked the police to show him where to cut more money out of the budget because there isn't anywhere.

Councilmember Catterlin said this council better be thinking about the LEOFF1 increase. What happens if the other retiree needs home care? We have no money and you can't run a fund down to pennies just to get what you want. Helen Hamilton added that everyone is hurting, including all the other cities. She thinks there are things we can give up and cut back on to help. She asked how would they like it if the ambulance had to come from Aberdeen? Councilmember Schiller asked, didn't we just do this? Didn't District 5 just go out for a levy and pass it? We ran a levy for police and if failed.

BUDGET ORDINANCE

It was moved by Councilmember Catterlin, seconded by Councilmember Schiller to table the budget ordinance until the next meeting. Motion Carried 5-0.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chief George Crumb asked to make a comment and he verbally stated the salaries and benefits for John Graham and Randy Bunch and himself. Gary Atkins asked where does the extra money go then? If the budget report shows they make this amount, and they claim they are making this other amount, then where is the money going? That is a big difference so somewhere there is funny money hidden in somebody's pocket. Councilmember Catterlin reiterated the difference of what the salaries are without adding the benefit compensation. He is not saying anyone is not worth what they are getting paid, he is saying it's about the fiscal solvency of the City. This town cannot afford \$535,000 a year. The property taxes are what mainly funds current expense and the tax base of this city cannot afford that much money. The surplus created by contracting the police department, which would be around \$275,00 a year, would allow the city to pay back the money from the finding from State Auditor's Office and make huge balloon payments on the water and sewer loans so we can lower the rates for utility customers.

Chief Crumb believes the people in McCleary want to keep the police department but they just didn't want more taxes. He said the Mayor submitted his budget to keep the police through next year and wonders why, when this is already done, certain members of the Council are against the budget. Councilmember Catterlin said you don't balance a budget by using all of the beginning cash up. Chief Crumb asked who determines profit at the end of the year, is it the Councilmen or is it the Mayor's job, who was elected, to determine profit and to move monies around? Councilmember Catterlin told him he wasn't listening because you can't move money around the funds. Chief Crumb asked what the RCW's stated that gives the Mayor the right to move profit? Councilmember Catterlin believes there isn't one and the State Attorney General doesn't believe there is one. Chief Crumb said entities don't make profit off of their cities other than to continue their service to the city. He stated if the Mayor needs to move money per the RCW to beef up an agency within the City, then he thinks Mr. Catterlin believes that is wrong even though the money is spent within the City with tax payer dollars. He added that Montesano and Oakville have been doing it for years.

A gentlemen stood up and said has been working for the Sheriff's department for 8 years. He is not against the Sheriff's coming here. He added that he likes the McCleary Police Department and gets along with the guys really well. He said a few years ago the County was in the same position and were five officers short and they were going to have to lay off another three. They got together and gave the County back all their holidays plus another 3% of their pay and that year he lost \$16,000. He is not against the police but he believes if they would have come to the Council before the voting had taken place for the levy and said they were going to give up their holidays and cut back their pay by 3% because they want to help make this work, the people would have seen the police trying to make this work. Making a cut is hard for everybody but if you want something you have to sacrifice to make it work, and when you sacrifice, you show the people you are willing to work with them to make things stay.

Peter Sing thinks the police are doing a good job. He knows the police are here and he sees people follow the law and not speeding in the community. There is low drug problem and he said if there is no local police, theft and crime will increase. He said the police have wisdom. He stated security is something money cannot buy.

Councilmember Peterson asked how it would have been if the police could have made some cuts. John Graham said most police departments get overtime after 40 hours and there is Federal law that backs that up. McCleary Police Department decided to use on call pay instead of overtime because they didn't have the manpower to cover it all. He said they work below the state minimum wage and they could probably push that up if they wanted to. He said they work a lot of hours. Last month Randy worked over 300 hours on his time card and John worked around 300 hours and a lot of that time was at the 25% of their hourly rate. He should be getting about \$40 per hour. He said they already take a lot of cuts. We are in negotiations right now and we are hyper sensitive of what we decide. There are only three of us, not six of us like it should be. We've already sacrifice a lot of money and time to get us to where we are now. Mr. Graham said he's been doing this for 17 years and it's like we've done this for all this time to help the City out and they've never build it up (the budget).

John Graham said we try to help the City out and it should cost \$800,000 to a million to run a police department with full staffing and equipment and we've been doing it for half that or less, so you are already getting a bargain. We are the lowest paid employees when you look at all the City employees. When you rank the City employees in the budget and you rank McCleary City employees job for job, with Elma and Montesano, you will see our police department are the low paid ones. John Graham offered to everyone to come talk to him about it and he will show them the truth. He said they actually work for a lot less than they should be working for but he is not complaining, it's just the truth. Gary Atkins added that we have the least amount of people in our City too. Councilmember Catterlin said in a perfect sense, a police department would cost \$800,000 to run a fully equipped department, however, the issue here is McCleary simply cannot afford it. John said if you lose us, you won't get us back.

Councilmember Catterlin said we will actually have extra coverage because of the local County Deputies that live in town. The response time thing is really negligible. George Crumb said he is responsible 24 hours a day when a call comes in for the City. He feels obligated to respond. Even for animal complaints, they will get up out of bed and respond. He said it is nice to have five guys to cover 24 hours and still get time off. It's difficult now with only three officers but it's doable. He said somebody has to be on call during uncovered hours. The union says we have to pay the officers for standby time. Other employees go home at 4:30 or 5:00 but he is morally obligated to be available 24 hours a day. He asked how they should cut back anymore, do they drive around less? They have to pay an on call person for being available. They can't cut back any more officers and cover 24 hours. Councilmember Catterlin said it is a rock and a hard place. Chief Crumb said response time is very important and officer presence is one of the primary things in law enforcement. John Graham questioned what about the grade school in a high response situation?

A gentlemen said thirty days ago he called 9-1-1 at 8:00 pm on a Sunday night and he lives only two blocks away from City Hall and it took more than 15 minutes for an officer from this town to respond but a deputy from the Sheriff's Department responded 5 minutes before them.

Councilmember Schiller asked where were we at this time last year? They were talking about the same thing that they were going to have to cut the police department and cut current expense. Elma and Hoquiam are going through the same problem. We noticed this problem last year and last year when we voted on the budget, the Mayor promised we would negotiate with the County Sheriff's Department. He promised to do something. Finally, last week, he allowed Councilmember's Catterlin and Peterson to start negotiating. We have to start thinking about what's best for the City, regardless if it's popular or not. We are at that point that we have to make a decision. I don't want to make that decision but I'm willing to make it. Mr. Schiller said that is why he voted the way he did last year. The bottom line is we don't have the money. The Mayor can't raise the amount in the budget and then say he's cutting. He asked for someone to show him where the Mayor made cuts. Councilmember Catterlin said there is no other place to make cuts because current expense is already in the cellar. Our Mayor, over the last three years, has cut everything in current expense to nothing. There is no other place to make cuts and that's why we have to make this tough decision. He is sorry but that is just the way it is.

Gary Atkins wanted to know if they have \$40,000 set up for mandatory overtime because they don't have enough people for coverage, and they did what this gentlemen did and they took a pay cut and gave their holidays back, and if they take that \$40,000 in overtime, couldn't they hire another officer, since the one officer said he only makes \$50,000 per year? They could lower their debt and get more coverage with less hours and still keep their jobs. Mayor Pro Tem Ator said they'd have to negotiate that. George Crumb said they didn't make the budget. He said they suggested a 10% cut. Gary Atkins said this is the first he's heard of that. George Crumb has no problem taking a 10% cut, but it wasn't taken.

Helen Hamilton would like to hear from the rest of the Council and what they feel.

Someone asked if we are taking \$140,000 out of what we are starting with, and we have approximately \$180,000, that leaves us with \$40,000 to start the year, so doesn't that automatically cut the police department next year. He has family that are police officers and has nothing against the police department. He said he is a greedy person and wants to sell his house in a few years and doesn't want the high water and sewer rates to effect any chance of selling, and if he decides to stay, he still doesn't want it to effect his daily living.

MINUTES APPROVED	None.
CITY ATTORNEY REPORT	None.
MAYOR'S COMMENTS	None.
DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS REPORT	None.
APPROVAL OF VOUCHERS	None.
EXECUTIVE SESSION	None.

MEETING ADJOURNED

The meeting was recessed at 7:47 pm until December 3, 2014. It was moved by Councilmember Catterlin, seconded by Councilmember Peterson to cancel the November 26, 2014 meeting due to the Thanksgiving Holiday. Motion Carried 5-0.