

CITY OF MCCLEARY
Regular City Council Meeting
Wednesday, December 3, 2014

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

ABSENT None.

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

PUBLIC COMMENT Mayor Dent will take public comments regarding the 2015 budget and will be limiting the comments to three minutes each and reminded the crowd this is not a debate. **It was moved by Councilmember Schiller, seconded by Councilmember Catterlin to allow public comments to be limited to five minutes, not three. Motion Carried 5-0.**

Tom Hawkins appreciates the Council and Mayor and hopes, however, this shakes out and it will be for the betterment of McCleary. He wants to commend Chief Crumb and Sergeant Graham for doing their duty day in and day out. They have gone above the call of duty, which he has seen. They put their lives in harm's way and with a limited amount of financial support. They've done an exemplary job. He also wants to commend the Council for what they are trying to do and hopes they come up with a positive solution.

Pastor Brian Orffer of Olympic Christian Center spoke in support of the police. He came to McCleary as a stranger to the community and fell in love with it. He appreciates the police department and the presence and relationship with the police. He said it's always been a comforting thing to see patrol cars around town. He felt a sense of dismay after hearing the budget restraints and the possible cuts to the police department. A few years ago, a secretary at the church noticed a strange car in the parking lot and contacted the police department, only to discover it was the getaway car for a bank robbery that was in progress. Another incident was when a woman who was not a custodial parent and had emotional issues, forced her way into their daycare and took a child. The staff called the police and the Police Chief met the woman a half of a block away and stopped the kidnapping. This was because the police were within minutes away. The police were able to come right away because they are so close. He has no problem with anyone from the County. He said there are so many people in the community that would be happy if we could work things out.

Kay Dunning stated she is not just speaking from a personal view point because everyone knows her son is on the police force. She said she is a thirty-year resident and is a senior citizen and believes the police help support this community. She said different circumstances over the years have happened and it's only going to get worse. There are a lot of seniors in this community. She stated she was speaking not as a mom but as a senior and needs to have that extra hand from the police.

Kathy Elofson said it is sad that it gets to the point where people have to take sides. She said it's not about sides, it's about money. McCleary does not have the money. She asked if people like the water and sewer rates this high. She said she has nothing against John Graham. He grew up across the street from her and has been a good friend of hers. She said we need to forget sides and she supports both sides. She asked if anyone thinks the police officers here could do an endurance test that would equal the County. She directed the police officers in the room and asked if they could run as fast as "Scott" and added, "No". She said that is one of the points of having the County. It's not that she has anything personal against McCleary Policemen. She likes this town but it's going broke. She supports whoever has the solution to get the money together but not by taxes. She added the community voted this summer for a levy and the majority won 70% no to 30% yes. We are just wasting money again.

Gary Atkins commented that we all voted a few months back and that vote was no. He said if schools get short of money, band goes out, if schools get short, football goes out, if towns get short, libraries go out. People have to understand if you are going broke as a town, you need to do something to make the town more attractive to people. The Sheriff will save us money. That is the bottom line, it's about money. He said he doesn't see our police standing up saying we'll take a pay cut or we will do whatever we can to protect our town because we love our town. They are saying pay us more and we're going to do less. You need to wake up folks because we are going broke. Nobody wants to open a business here because it's

too expensive. I had an opportunity to open two businesses in the last three months and he turned it down because it's too expensive.

Jennie Reed said she was at the same levy meeting at the VFW Hall and a question was asked of Councilmember Catterlin of, what happens if the levy fails, and he said if it does fail, it's up to the Mayor. Her understanding is when they voted, they voted for no taxes, not to get rid of the police department. Her understanding is that the Mayor has provided a balanced budget that does not include any increase in taxes. She asked if that is correct and Mayor Dent responded, yes. Councilmember Catterlin asked to respond to Ms. Reed's comments when the public comments are finished.

Karen Kienenberger from the Timberland Regional Library went off topic to invite everyone to come to the library on December 4th to listen to Author and former editor of the Daily World, Bill Lindstrom, discuss his new book, "John Torrow: Villain or Victim?"

Susan Carroll, Manager of Rainbow Park Apartments and Evergreen Apartments said she would put her McCleary Police force up against the County any day in an endurance test. She said she is a small business person and member of the Chamber and gets asked what the police will do that the County can't. She informs them she uses the McCleary Police all the time for prowler concerns and other nuisance issues. She believes the Sheriff won't come running here for a prowler right away. She also believes the vote was about taxes to keep the police. As far as she can see, the budget looks balanced and asked why can't we pass it tonight? She commented on a letter Helen Hamilton wrote to the editor of the Vidette and said it was a fantastic letter. She discovered from the letter that there had been a meeting in McCleary with County Commissioner Cormier and she was disappointed because she was not aware of the meeting and would have attended. She manages a property with senior citizens and thinks they will feel a whole lot better if we keep our police.

Councilmember Schiller responded to Ms. Carroll by saying last year they voted on the budget 4-1. He said the Mayor made a deal with the Council and it was never met and there is no resolution yet. He said when it comes to voting on this budget, the same deal that was made last year is on the table this year has still not been met. Mayor Dent told Mr. Schiller he was violating the public comments rules by debating. An audience member asked the Mayor how many new business have opened up this year and Ms. Carroll said two businesses have opened this past year.

Colin Orffer received a speeding ticket from the McCleary Police many years ago and he learned a powerful lesson from that experience that law and order are important. He hopes his own children can learn the same lesson by possibly having an officer there telling them that is a foolish decision. He said if you look around the country, you see places like Fergusson and we have a president that says there is a crisis of mistrust between their communities and their police departments. He said it is heart-warming to see a community like this that is the polar opposite. There is a lot of trust between our community and the police force. It's something we shouldn't take lightly. If you drive through this town and you don't see a fire station or a police department, is it really a town? Or are we just some destination between Olympia and Aberdeen? People appreciate the police and their presence. Sometimes you have to sacrifice too much. The police are an important part of our identity.

Bea Brinkly moved here four years ago and lives on Oak Street, and within a year's time, she has approximately five drug houses in front of her home. She said if it weren't for Officer Graham and Chief Crumb, it would be a lot worse. There have been four or five times those houses have been raided and she believes it would be a lot worse without the McCleary Police. She reported a bunch of quads being unloaded in her neighborhood and the McCleary Police responded and discovered they were stolen and the people got their quads back. If they had to wait for the county, they would be long gone.

MAYOR'S COMMENTS

Mayor Dent thanked everyone for commenting and stated the total budget with all funds combined are down this year. The City's beginning cash and investment balance is 24% of the budget. We are not spending a lot of the money.

CITY ATTORNEY COMMENTS

Dan Glenn contacted the auditor regarding the finding response and has not received a response yet. He worked with Todd and Wendy to put together a documented response to the finding. He wants to speak to the auditor's office to make sure what we are preparing is truly what they need. He reminded the Council that the budget is a fund level budget, not a line item budget. Because we budget by fund level, if the Council passes the budget and chooses to keep the police department, it will be fine, and if they decide to go with the County or other agency, that will still be funded. The budget can be adopted without affecting what police service decisions are made. He added that the budget can be amended so they should feel fine about adopting and moving forward, if that is what they wish. It just needs to be adopted by December 31, 2014. He said about 25 years ago, a Mayor in Montesano vetoed a budget. He said they called for a special meeting and resolved it. If we don't have a budget, the auditor will be watching us with care.

Councilmember Catterlin wanted to address Jennie Reed's comment earlier in the meeting. He said the Council hears your heartfelt comments of affection for our fine police officers. We have to understand emotion and fear won't create revenue and balance a budget. It is human and heartfelt to support them and nobody up here on the Council is having any fun. These decisions are hard. This Council voted 3-2 to increase property taxes and stormwater fees for the people of McCleary. These two items are another step in the wrong direction partnered with the fact that Montesano and Elma have water and sewer rates that are 323% lower than McCleary's. The leadership at this table has miserably failed the people of McCleary.

Councilmember Catterlin said Court cost in 2015 will most likely only save \$20,300, which is \$1700 short of making up the difference of the LEOFF1 increase. It is obvious to him the \$55,000 that was transferred from both the current expense reserve fund and light and power fund happened after the auditor found the finding and it is inappropriate. That \$110,000 was put in beginning cash and he believes that's how the Mayor is going to balance his budget. He stated the Mayor is using beginning cash of \$140,000 to \$160,000 and next year, it will push the City over the cliff. Kelly Collins, head of the audit management team, called that fiscal distress. Using beginning cash to balance a budget is irresponsible and unethical. It's putting the people of McCleary's financial future in jeopardy. Because of the Mayor's non transparency in explaining his plan to the council that shows this is completely dishonest. Every Councilmember at this table should feel completely insulted because he wouldn't explain anything, and told the Council they will see it in his budget. This budget will leave current expense with virtually no beginning cash next year and will put us in financial distress which is one step away from bankruptcy. It is our sworn duty to follow Washington State Law.

Councilmember Schiller has not heard one comment from the Finance Committee. He said the Council talked about the level of service for the police department, whether or not they contract with the County. They talked about what type of level of service they could afford and what can we afford for what type of acceptable level of service. That has never been discussed. We have to drop the level of service to afford police services. This budget lays out \$536,000, but what does that mean? That means we are keeping all the officers when we know we can't afford it. He asked the Mayor to show him what is the level of service we can afford. Addressing the level of service and what we can afford would be the financially responsible approach and it has not been addressed at all. This is where he stands on this whole dispute.

BUDGET ORDINANCE

It was moved by Councilmember Catterlin, seconded by Councilmember Peterson to adopt Budget Ordinance 806 with two contingencies; first is to take the law enforcement section of the current expense fund and put in a month to month contingency to be reviewed each month by the Council because the City is in the midst of contract negotiations with the County, and secondly, have \$150,000 be subtracted from the law enforcement expenditures to protect the integrity of the current expense operating fund beginning cash, which is its day to day operating cash. Roll call taken in the affirmative 3-2, with Councilmember's Ator and Reed voting in the negative. Ordinance Adopted.

Mayor Dent said he will consider the ordinance but he most likely, with the two provisions added to it, will veto the budget. Councilmember Catterlin responded by stating this Council has done its job by passing a budget for the year and if the Mayor veto's the budget, he stands alone in violation of the law.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Gary Atkins told the Mayor this is his town too and said, Mayor Dent might be the Mayor but he doesn't run the town. John Graham told Mr. Atkins to be careful how he approaches the Mayor. Mayor Dent said he is not putting up with that anymore from him.

An exchange between Mr. Atkins and Dan Glenn occurred regarding the City Attorney's role in the City.

Councilmember Schiller wanted to get back down to business and reminded the Mayor that it is December 3rd. He told the Mayor he can veto the budget but we only have 27 days left to come up with a budget, which Mr. Schiller believes we can. He said if the Mayor wanted to veto a budget, he should have done it last year. This year we have to make cuts and now is the time to decide what those cuts are going to be.

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

It was moved by Councilmember Ator, seconded by Councilmember Reed to adjourn the meeting at 7:40 pm. The next meeting will be Wednesday, December 10, 2014 at 7:00 pm. Motion Carried 5-0.

CITY OF McCLEARY

NOTICE OF CANCELED MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the regular meeting of the Council of the City of McCleary has been canceled for the meeting on:

DATE: December 24, 2014

PLACE: McCleary City Hall

TIME: 7:00 PM

The next regular scheduled meeting is Wednesday, January 14, 2015.

CITY OF McCLEARY

I DO HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THE ABOVE NOTICE OR A COPY THEREOF WAS DULY POSTED AS REQUIRED BY THE OPEN MEETINGS LAWS OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON.

SIGNED: Wendy Collins
City Clerk/Treasurer

Posted: The Vidette
City Hall