

CITY OF POCA TELLO, IDAHO
CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION
AUGUST 13, 2020

AGENDA ITEM NO. 1: Mayor Brian Blad called the City Council Work Session to order
ROLL CALL at 9:00 a.m. Council members present were Heidi Adamson, Roger Bray, Rick Cheatum, Linda Leeuwrik, Claudia Ortega and Chris Stevens.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 2: Larry Morton, Chair Person; Greg Allbright, Concessionaire
GOLF ADVISORY Representative; and John Banks, Parks and Recreation
COMMITTEE UPDATE Director/Staff Liaison; from the Golf Advisory Committee were present to discuss the Committee's goals and projects, as well as Council's policies and expectations. Jerold Myler from Fore Golf was also in attendance.

Mr. Morton gave an overview of members that make up the Committee. He noted the Committee will continue to work with Fore Golf as the City's concessionaire and the golfing community to keep the courses running well. Mr. Morton gave an overview of improvements made over the past year. He noted the COVID-19 Pandemic made play on the courses slow at the beginning of the season. However, the Committee has put procedures in place that opened the golf courses for play. The rounds played are up this year.

Mr. Myler gave an overview of the challenges they have encountered at the golf courses this year. He noted they expanded some of the season pass guidelines in 2020. There is now a family pass that has proven to be effective. Mr. Myler mentioned they have also created a Combo pass and Senior pass. The new passes have been a successful addition to the golf program.

In response to questions from Council, Mr. Allbright explained Riverside Golf Course is an easier course to walk if a player would like to get more exercise. He noted that golf courses have remained open during the COVID-19 pandemic and Pocatello's courses have been busy. Mr. Allbright also noted staff continues to combat problems with geese on the golf courses.

In response to questions from Council, Mr. Banks estimates the cost to renovate the club house at Riverside to be roughly \$1 million. Mr. Banks explained he and Mayor Blad gave a presentation to Premier Technologies asking them to become a possible donor for the club house. Mr. Banks explained the project has been put on hold because of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, he and Mayor Blad will approach Premier Technologies representatives again at a later date.

Ms. Stevens would like the City to build up funds to go toward renovating the Riverside club house. She also noticed while floating the Portneuf River there appeared to be a lot of erosion along the banks near the golf course. There doesn't appear to be enough greenery to keep the erosion at bay.

Mr. Banks explained how funds are divided into maintenance and capital accounts. Mr. Banks noted that he will check on the condition of the levee along the section of the golf course. He is open to suggestions regarding upkeep of the area.

Mayor Blad reminded Council that the Army Corps of Engineers require close vegetation removal along the levees. He noted the Army Corps met with City staff a few years ago to discuss levee maintenance.

In response to questions from Council, Mr. Allbright shared the process to remove dead trees in the golf course. He noted the trees are very labor intensive to remove.

Mr. Banks explained the City has engaged Top Notch Tree Service to provide tree removal in City parks. Staff may be able to utilize funding for Top Notch Tree Service to remove trees in the golf courses. Mr. Banks noted it is a challenge to keep the golf course open while doing tree removal.

Mr. Morton mentioned there is a section between the golf course and the river levee. He feels the problems Ms. Stevens addressed were most likely from vegetation removal as mentioned by Mayor Blad.

Infrastructure needs and the economic impact of the City's golf courses were discussed. Irrigation system needs and replacement were reviewed.

Ms. Stevens shared her concerns regarding club house renovations and irrigation system needs at Riverside golf course. She would like a plan developed so that a portion of golf course revenue flows into a fund to make these upgrades.

Mr. Banks explained there is a stipulation in the golf concessionaire agreement regarding golf course upgrades. The funds are earmarked to go toward a special capital account.

General discussion regarding funding for the golf course and other recreation needs was held.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 3: Fred Balzer, Chair Person; and John Banks, Parks and RECREATION AND RECREATION Recreation Director/Staff Liaison; from the Parks and ADVISORY COMMITTEE Recreation Advisory Committee were present to discuss the UPDATE Committee's goals and projects, as well as Council's policies and expectations.

Mr. Belzer, thanked Mayor Blad and City Council for the opportunity to present. He gave an overview of the Committee and how often they are meeting to discuss Parks and Recreation topics. Mr. Belzer gave an update of the Committee's activities which included the Ross Park Master Plan. He noted the Committee has worked with an engineer to create a design based upon input from residents and stakeholders. The Plan will come before Council for their consideration at a future meeting. Other City park updates were given.

It was noted that development of partnership activities for park improvements is being researched. A brochure has been developed with information to approach local businesses and individuals to partner in park improvements. The Committee has been working on this concept since the summer of 2019. The successful partnership with Connections Credit Union for Zoo Idaho was shared. The Committee will continue to work with staff within budget guidelines and look for opportunities to make improvements.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 4: Andy Moldenhauer, Pocatello Fire Union representative, gave FIRE UNION QUARTERLY the Council an update of their activities for the past quarter. UPDATE

Mr. Moldenhauer clarified the Collective Bargaining Agreement was extended for one year due to COVID-19 meeting restrictions which would have made negotiations difficult. He explained the Union is looking at emergency response models to limit exposure to their membership. Mr. Moldenhauer noted that many of their regular outreach functions have been placed "on hold" due to COVID-19. However, the Union is going to try and conduct their annual "Fill the Boot" campaign through virtual software.

General discussion regarding outreach activities in the City followed.

Ms. Stevens mentioned that she appreciates the Union activities update. However, she would like to have a special meeting on a quarterly basis to discuss other Union matters such as employee concerns, etc.

Mayor Blad mentioned this agenda item may allow additional conversation regarding Union concerns.

Mr. Bray shared that he would like more information regarding Union negotiations and would like the City Attorney to clarify what can be discussed under this agenda item.

Ms. Stevens suggested the City Attorney provide a bullet list of what can be discussed in the Union Quarterly Update agenda item.

Mayor Blad called for a recess at 10:08 a.m.

Mayor Blad reconvened the meeting at 10:19 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 5: Ashley Linton-Welsh, Chief Financial Officer/Treasurer,
FISCAL YEAR 2021 reviewed public comments and Council discussion from the
BUDGET DISCUSSION August 6, 2020 Budget Hearing.

Mr. Bray stated he has scanned the Ms. Welsh's presentation and does not agree with the content. He mentioned that eight different people have shared their concerns regarding higher property taxes. Mr. Bray described concerns felt by the individuals. He was under the impression that the Council was going to reduce the amount of taxes the City will take in Fiscal Year 2021 by over \$1 million. Mr. Bray noted the Fiscal Year 2021 budget is not something he can support in its current format.

A motion was made by Mr. Bray, seconded by Mrs. Ortega, to reject the proposed budget as outlined in Ms. Welsh's presentation. Upon roll call, those voting in favor were Bray, Ortega and Stevens. Those voting in opposition were Adamson, Cheatum and Leeuwrik. Due to a tie in voting, Mayor Blad was required to cast the deciding vote. Mayor Blad voted in opposition to the motion. The motion failed.

Ms. Welsh gave her presentation outlining suggestions for the City's Fiscal Year 2021 budget.

Council debate followed regarding the tax solution spreadsheet and Ms. Welsh attempted to clarify the figures shown on the spreadsheet. Concerns with the levy rate was also debated. Historical value of property located in Bannock County was reviewed.

ESTIMATED PROPERTY TAXES - \$31,343,115.00

Estimated shortfall \$84,759.00. The shortfall is the result of receiving less revenue than initially estimated in new construction revenue.

Ideas to correct the shortfall and reduce taxes:

Increase Sales Tax Revenue by \$250,000.00; Increase Highway User Tax Revenue by \$350,000.00; Estimated property taxes \$30,743,115

Decrease of \$443,071.00 from Fiscal Year 2020.

Council discussion regarding property taxes and suggested decreases to the proposed City budget was held.

Mr. Bray shared his concerns regarding the proposed one-time bonus of \$350,000.00 for City employees. He would like to remove the one-time pay adjustment from the budget. Mr. Bray does not feel the adjustment should be given to employees since the decrease in health benefit costs is not the direct result of employee involvement. He reiterated that he thought the Council was cutting over \$1 million from the Fiscal Year 2021 budget.

Council debate continued regarding the proposed budget.

In response to questions from Council, David Gates, Fire Chief, reviewed the Urban Search and Rescue Team program. It was suggested that staff establish a permitting fee for future fiscal years. The process to move forward with the program was reviewed.

A motion was made by Ms. Stevens to remove funding for the Urban Search and Rescue Program from the proposed Fiscal Year 2021 budget, but continue to provide this service for one year. At the end of one year, staff will implement a process to provide the service. Motion died for lack of a second.

In response to questions from Council, Mr. Gates explained he does not manage his budget by each line-item. He noted, if funds are needed elsewhere he will use the funds for a more critical need.

A motion was made by Ms. Leeuwrik, seconded by Mr. Cheatum, to leave the Urban Search and Rescue Program in the budget for Fiscal Year 2021 and Council discussion will be held to establish a fee for this service in the next fiscal year. Upon roll call, those voting in favor were Leeuwrik, Cheatum, Adamson, Bray, Ortega and Stevens.

A motion was made by Ms. Adamson, seconded by Ms. Leeuwrik, to increase Sales Tax Revenue by \$250,000.00 for the Fiscal Year 2021 budget. Upon roll call, those voting in favor were Adamson, Leeuwrik, Bray, Cheatum, Ortega and Stevens.

A motion was made by Ms. Leeuwrik, seconded by Mr. Bray, to increase Highway User Tax Revenue by \$350,000.00 for the Fiscal Year 2021 budget.

In response to questions from Council, Tom Kirkman, Deputy Public Work Director, gave an overview of the revenue dollars anticipated for Highway User Tax. He noted Highway User Tax revenue has been the same if not more than anticipated for this year. Mr. Kirkman feels comfortable with the addition of \$350,000.00 for anticipated revenue in Fiscal Year 2021.

Ms. Leeuwrik's motion was voted upon at this time. Upon roll call, those voting in favor were Leeuwrik, Bray, Adamson, Cheatum, Ortega and Stevens.

Ms. Stevens provided a list of budget items that she would like to review for further clarification.

A motion was made by Ms. Stevens, seconded by Mrs. Ortega, to eliminate \$5,000.00 designated for Marshall Public Library bathroom renovations from the proposed budget.

In response to questions from Council, Eric Suess, Library Director, explained the bathroom renovations include plumbing repairs and other upgrades. He noted the renovations are not just cosmetic needs.

Ms. Stevens withdrew her motion.

In response to questions from Council, Ms. Welsh clarified that information regarding many of the items on Ms. Stevens' list was available for review at the public hearing held on August 6, 2020.

A motion was made by Ms. Adamson, seconded by Ms. Leeuwrik, to instruct staff to create an ordinance for the Fiscal Year 2021 City Budget based upon the figures as discussed.

Mr. Bray shared that he still has concerns regarding giving a one-time bonus to City employees.

Mrs. Ortega shared her concerns that the proposed budget is more than she is comfortable with and would like to rescind the City Council and Mayor's Office pay increases given the previous year.

Ms. Stevens shared her concerns regarding property taxes and cost of living as a result of the proposed budget. She would like the one-time pay adjustment to City employees removed from the budget.

Ms. Leeuwrik shared her thoughts regarding keeping property taxes as low as possible. She noted the tax levy is lower than when Council first started their budget discussions.

Mrs. Ortega feels the increase in revenue projection is not the same as a decrease in the City's budget. She would like City spending to be reduced regardless of whether there is more revenue available.

Ms. Adamson feels because the City is not taking 3% in property taxes allowed by State Code, the Fiscal Year 2021 budget has actually decreased.

Ms. Adamson asked that the motion on the floor be voted upon.

Ms. Adamson's motion was voted upon at this time. Those voting in favor were, Adamson, Leeuwrik and Cheatum. Those voting in opposition to the motion were Bray, Ortega and Stevens. Due to a tie in voting, Mayor Blad was required to cast the deciding vote. Mayor Blad voted in favor of the motion. The motion passed.

Ms. Stevens shared that two major employers in town are furloughing their employees. She is still concerned with the amount of property taxes individuals are being required to pay.

Ms. Leeuwrik shared the City must provide services to the community and the costs to provide services has increased. Services such as sanitation, water and sewer are different than optional services provided by the private sector.

ADJOURN

APPROVED:

BRIAN C. BLAD, MAYOR

ATTEST AND PREPARED BY:

RUTH NEWSOM, CITY CLERK