

CITY OF SULTAN COUNCIL WORKSHOP-- January 21, 2021

Mayor Wiita called the workshop to order at approximately 7:00 p.m. The meeting was held via Zoom Internet Conference Service with all members in attendance at remote locations via computer or phone. Mayor called roll and the following were in attendance:

Councilmembers in attendance: McCarty, Aldrich, Walker, Sivewright, and Beeler. Absent: Vaughn, and Neigel.

Staff in attendance: Administrator Ibershof, Finance Director Koenig, Public Works Director Morgan, Utility Billing Specialist Mann, and City Clerk Pevey.

CHANGES/ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

On a motion by Councilmember Walker, seconded by Councilmember Aldrich to add public comment after changes/additions; Motion passed 5-0.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Sam Lowe, Snohomish County Councilmember provided an update on the Mann Road Bridge. This bridge isn't currently eligible for federal funds as score is well above 100 and must be below 40 for grant eligibility. Lot of comments recently and people concerned; reviewed the bridge information with public works and asked them to have traffic review the bridge and approaches from each direction to include signing, siding, and potential deck replacement. When bridge becomes eligible for replacement will take 6 years to complete. Also reached out to county patrol to review complaints regarding excessive speed in this area.

DISCUSSION

Utility Rate Increase

Administrator Ibershof provided history on utility rate set in 2018 with a multi year rate plan set to expire in 2022. In December 2020, Mayor Wiita signed an executive order freezing the rate increase until March 2021. The pandemic has affected the country financially due to government mandated shutdowns since March 2020 has caused an increased need for citizen financial assistance. Ibershof provided the amount in the utility reserve funds and presented three options for discussion.

- Let the order expire.
- Increase the utility rate mid year.
- Freeze the rate increase for 2020.

Administrator Ibershof then presented the three options impacts to revenues for the water, sewer, and stormwater budget. Discussion on the impacts of each option and additional factors for consideration. Finance Director Koenig, Public Works Director Morgan, and Utility Billing Specialist Mann were also present to answer questions. Many councilmembers in favor of continuing the utility rate moratorium until the end of June and bringing it back again for review to decide at that time whether to continue the moratorium or implement the rate increase at that time.

Low Income Senior/Disabled Utility Discount

Finance Director Koenig explained the current policy extends a 50% discount to low income senior citizen utility customers. Proposal presented is to expand the discount to include low income permanently disabled customers over 62 years of age. Change was initially brought before the council subcommittee early in 2020 and they agreed with the change. Customers of this discount would continue to be subjected to same total household income rate of 125% of the federal poverty level. Discussion on impacts and concerns. Utility Billing Specialist Mann also present to answer questions. Councilmembers in favor of moving forward with official policy update as presented.

Council Meeting Procedures Update

City Clerk Pevey explained the current council meeting procedures have not been updated since October 2015 and there have been a few changes that need to be implemented to include remote meeting attendance policy/procedures, as well as the recent addition of workshops in lieu of retreats. Opened the floor to council input on these subjects and

other areas of council concern. Request to review public comment language and during workshops place public comment at the end of the meeting; Review RCW Chapter 35A for any updates that impact the procedures, and review remote policy attendance to add potential language that when meetings return to the regular in person setting that a quorum of council must be present in person for a member to attend remotely, as well as insert language regarding consistency of in person attendance versus remote attendance. All councilmembers in favor of the suggested changes.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Councilmember Walker, seconded by Councilmember McCarty, the council meeting was adjourned at approximately 806 pm; all ayes. The zoom meeting connection was disconnected shortly thereafter.



Tami J. Pevey, City Clerk



Russell Wiita, Mayor