

**CITY OF KALAMA  
CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP  
SEPTEMBER 27, 2018**

**1. OPENING**

Mayor Mike Reuter opened the City Council meeting at 6:00 p.m. Councilmembers present were Sandra Macias, Mike Dennis Langham, Rosemary Brinson Siipola and Mary Putka. Councilmember Mike Truesdell was absent. City staff present were City Administrator Adam Smee, Director of Public Works Kelly Rasmussen, Clerk/Treasurer Coni McMaster, and Police Chief Ralph Herrera. Members of the public present are listed on the sign-in sheet.

**2019 BUDGET - PROJECTS WORKSHOP**

**A. On-going Projects – Staff**

Clerk/Treasurer Coni McMaster review all the items that staff is spending time on which include subdivision proposals, infrastructure construction related to development, annexation, Shoreline Master Plan update, numerous code amendments, updates to personnel policies and job descriptions and the day-to-day operating functions. When looking at the projects to be completed, staff time needs to be a consideration as well as funding.

**B. Draft Capital Facilities Plan**

A copy of the draft Capital Facilities Plan was provided which includes the ongoing projects, proposed projects for funding as recommended by staff, and unfunded needs of the City. Clerk/Treasurer Coni McMaster noted that the City has committed funds and time to certain projects in all departments, so those will move forward.

**a. General Fund**

The General Fund includes facilities and equipment for the Police, City Hall, Building, Library, and the Community Building. On-going are the new Police facility and the ADA requirements at City Hall. Items for flood prevention are included for the Library. She noted that the concerns with the roof have been addressed and it will only need maintenance. Proposed are computer, printer and some equipment upgrades along with a vehicle purchase that are considered funded. Proposed is also an upgrade to the City website, but funding has not been included in the proposed budget.

**b. Parks**

Parks include the promised Maruhn Monument and park area development along Meeker drive as a funded project. Also listed are the Dog Run Park and new playground equipment for Toteff Park which are both tentative based on community fundraising efforts.

**c. Stormwater**

The City has contracted with their consulting engineers to complete a Stormwater Plan to establish a stormwater utility and provide funding. The plan will be presented to the Council and a public hearing will be held to move forward with implementation of the utility and set the funding. This should take place no later than November so that it can be included in the 2019 budget. Once established and funding put in place the City move forward to address issues with the existing system. City Administrator Adam Smee elaborated on the process. It has been past practice to piece meal repairs and the stormwater system has not received the required maintenance to address issues. Past administrations have chosen not to address the need for a funding mechanism to provide for stormwater maintenance and improvements. He explained that the General fund is divided into “buckets” to fund many departments which includes streets where stormwater funding has currently been allocated. As a “Utility,” Stormwater will become an enterprise fund which has a dedicated funding source. According to info in the draft plan the existing system would require one full – time employee for just the maintenance work. There are still system improvements that need to be done. There has never been a dedicated funding source to address stormwater issues which has led to an old system in need of repairs. The Plan will make recommendations and staff hopes the Council will take immediate action to move forward with establishing the utility and funding it. Once the funding is established, staff will suggest taking out an interfund loan to begin work and also seek grants to address the issues downtown. The newly established revenue stream will repay the loan. One of the first projects will be a comprehensive plan and mapping of the system to further identify what needs there are. The draft plan does include significant improvement recommendations that total \$1.5 million. The comprehensive plan will look at a 20-year horizon so codes and standards can be amended and written to address the rain, the river, future development, all the factors that affect the stormwater runoff in Kalama. The City needs to have the plan and analysis to determine what can be done. Administrator Smee noted the City does recognize the need and action needs to be taken to address the problems. The issue was also identified in the Downtown economic development plan as need to help improve the downtown to attract new business.

Resident Linda Dolph confirmed the City has never been on top of the issues that have flooded the community in years past and the City is now working to address them. She asked where will funds come from? It will be from property owners, citizens, and is estimated at around \$5 per month added to the utility bills. The calculations to determine these fees are based on impervious surface calculations for homes and businesses. Hopefully the City can start collecting at the first of the year. Hopefully we can begin work once we know there will be funding to draw on whether to pay loans or make improvements. The City will also look at the grants and revenue bond funding for the future. The City will look better to grant holders and loaning agencies once we have the utility in place with dedicated source funding. It was noted that the system has never been mapped or fully camera so the City doesn't know what is in the ground nor its condition. We can obtain the information, but there is a cost that we currently don't have any funds for. The development of the draft plan has come in under budget, so the engineers have been requested to use the remaining funds to begin the survey mapping of the downtown Director of Public Works Kelly Rasmussen noted that the City is hoping to work with Longview who has a dedicated pipe camera team, under an interlocal agreement in an effort to reduce the costs to camera the system.

Business owner Tayrn Nelson, acting as a spokesperson for downtown business owners to address the stormwater/flooding issue downtown. They are not pointing fingers, but want to

find a solution and are willing to partner with the City. The potential for flooding downtown impacts the businesses. She read from a prepared statement expressing the urgency the stormwater deficiency problem be addressed in the coming budget hearings as a priority item. They want to see dedicated funds in the 2019 budget for the comprehensive study and additional funds to address the prevention estimating that at \$50,000. They based the prevention estimate on the work done last year that made some differences that provided some relief. A local engineer suggested continuing in the direction started then. The business owners second request is to develop a storm drain work group including business and building owners, city public works, and the City Administrator to determine the priorities in the system. Those affected by the storm surges can provide input to build a composite of what is happening in all the areas downtown and if they are connected. The businesses are asking the Council to consider it. It was noted this should be done before park work or webpage updates. There was much discussion on the areas that have an affect on the downtown stormwater which include the Columbia River, I5, the railroad, the hillside drainage, several drainage basins and drainage ditches. The largest drainage ditch is on Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) land and was built for I5, but they don't regularly maintain it. It has also been designated as a wetland by Department of Ecology. WSDOT did help the City last year under their WSDOT exemption to work in the wetland and cleaned it out. Ditch was designed by WSDOT but it competes with the downtown capacity. It was asked if the City is doing anything about impervious surfaces being developed in the future. The City will require mitigation as development happens. There was some discussion on why the sewers backed up during the 2015 event. It was explained this is caused by water levels and pressure creating a flow into the sewer which then backs up. Kalama citizen Maureen Jenkins stated she is from the Midwest and basements always flooded. She added that she has attend budget meetings over the last 2 years and following grants and improvements and concerns with the older parts of town and the amount of money being spent. Rates have increased and tax bills have been going higher and higher and now to hear the City will need another fee is a slap in the face. Why not addressed two years ago if they knew about and how much was going to put on the citizens. It was suggested the City contact the legislative representatives to have them represent us better to deal with the impact to the downtown area. Business owner Dena Ott stated that she has spoken with both representative Debolt and Representative Orcutt who are willing to discuss the issue if we take it to Olympia. Ms. Jenkins noted that the citizens will still see another increase to their utilities. It was noted that currently the utilities are for water, sewer and garbage and not stormwater.

There was discussion regarding the pump system status and why it seems like there is more water coming down the hill since 2015. No one is aware of any particular reason for the increase but more home has been built and there are some changes to the weather. The pumps downtown are meant to deal with a rising river and not rain events. Interstate 5 works like a dike and the pumps require valve gates to be shut which then block water coming in and out of Kalama forcing water back to the Columbia. For it to work there has to be no water coming down off the hill. It was noted that for a time the water downtown seemed to lessen but now it has become a problem again. Ms. Ott thanked the Council for having the study done. The business community didn't know it was being done but do appreciate it. This is another reason to form the work group, to help foster open communication with the business owners. The businesses are still uncomfortable that nothing is in the budget for emergency actions as the new utility will need to build funds once established. Meanwhile the City and the businesses will continue to deal with the problems. Administrator Smee stated the City knows

there is a problem and is concerned when the rains start each year. There are funds allocated as part of the operating budget, but it is only around \$20,000. It was asked what the Council felt. They agreed the stormwater utility is the highest priority of the City. They will need to adopt and get the funding together to address as soon as possible. It has to be done and should have been done. Councilmember Siipola noted that Kalama is the only community in the region without a stormwater utility fee. The business owners still want the general fund to have funding included in the budget. It was explained that the staff carved out funding for the study in 2018. We can look at what we could do before the end of the year. If we find funding it will come at a cost of other issues. No one disagrees with the audience and the need. Councilmember Macias noted that she worked with Kelly when she first was on the Council to address the needs downtown for which the Council approved added funds in 2017. There were two or three smaller projects undertaken that did have positive impacts on the areas. One of the other areas include fiber optic locations making access and improvements very difficult. The other projects for the system are costly for more funding than the City has available. Business owner Mr. Dennis Ott offered that the City sell the Community building and use the funds to fix the problems. There were some problems during the recent hard rains which has led to the cleaning of the system earlier than usual in the season. They have also discovered some are broken or out of alignment which could be a part of the problem. Mayor Reuter noted that hopefully the recent jetting of the system and cleaning should make a difference. Mayor Reuter agreed to discuss the formation of a work group with the business owners with the staff and look in to the possibility. Ms. Jenkins asked where Kelly spent the funds for the project he did. It was from Streets Fund 101. Ms. Dolph stated the stormwater is absolutely a priority and the community has to face up to it. It is unfortunate timing with the large school project and other tax funded projects. It was asked how future development will add to the issue. Developers have to build the additional infrastructure to connect to the system, which then becomes a city facility. The City has to maintain it into the future. This is why there are connection fees. Business owner Kevin Bluhm asked if we have backup pumps available or can we rent some to be prepared. Director Rasmussen answered that the City does have contact with the local rental companies for pumps if needed. The other side is that you still have to have somewhere to pump the water too. It was noted that there may be a need for a pump station downtown to help. This is where the comprehensive plan will help with the survey, mapping and modeling to advise the City on what will help. The City will do our due diligence and hopefully the recent work will have addressed some of the immediate issues. Councilmember Rosemary Siipola asked that the business come back to testify at the Stormwater public hearings as to the need for the City to do this. They agreed and asked to be notified when the hearing would be. It will be in November and will be published as all meetings are.

#### **d. Streets**

Street projects proposed are the Elm Street Overlay – Frontage to Fourth and the West Frontage Overlay - Elm to Kingwood and grants from TIB have been applied for. The decisions are made in November, so at that time, if the grant funding is approved these will move forward. The Meeker Drive Stabilization Study will continue into 2019. Transportation Benefit District funds will be used to pave Birch Street to Military in 2019. The project to install lights at the underpass on Elm Street is proposed, but is not funded.

#### **e. Sewer**

Funding for the sewer and water projects come from connection fees and a portion of the rate increases that have been implemented over the last few years. Sewer projects are based on the recommendations included in the draft Wastewater System Plan that will hopefully be completed by the end of the year. It does require Department of Ecology approval which may extend the timeline. The projects are upgrades to aging equipment at the Wastewater Treatment Plant and replacing failing sewer lines if needed. The design for improvements to the Meeker Drive Pump Station is also included as this needs to be done in conjunction with the Spencer Creek Business Park development. It is hoped that the Port will contribute to the costs. Councilmember Rosemary Siipola noted that at the Port meeting they had included \$75,000 for the pump station which is half the projected cost. The Port had also included \$100,000 for a study on a regional sewer plan in 2020. City Administrator Adam Smee noted that he and Director of Public Works Kelly Rasmussen had met with the Port to begin this discussion. The current plant is at half its projected life and it is time to be considering whether to expand or upgrade in the future or look at a regional option. The current location is not ideal in the middle of a recreational area. The City will need to be figuring out what we need to do in the next 5 years. It is time to begin the process in order to meet growth needs. He believes it may be a better idea to do a regional plant but it will be a long discussion and need to include state agencies to move forward.

#### **f. Water**

The Robb Road – Tidewater Waterline has been held up with litigation and will probably continue into 2019. The City has committed design funds to the Old Pacific Highway Waterline and Cloverdale Pump Station projects, so will move for construction in 2019. Proposed is the design of the new Green Mountain Reservoir to begin 2019 as it is on the Department of Health’s list of failing facilities. Video Inspection of the reservoir is a necessary maintenance item that is done every few years. Public Works also proposes the purchase of new service truck.

That covers all of the draft capital projects. Staff recognizes that the Council has a desire to move forward with economic development plan recommendations and will be looking at what can be done and for funding opportunities. A traffic study of the East Frontage Road and Elm-First Street proposed revision and a plan for redesigning Toteff Park are two areas of focus.

Mayor Reuter adjourned the meeting at 8:18 p.m. These minutes are not verbatim. A copy of the recording for this meeting is available for review upon request.

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**Mike Reuter - Mayor**

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**Coni McMaster - Clerk/Treasurer**