

**CITY OF KALAMA
CITY COUNCIL
SEPTEMBER 30, 2009**

2010 BUDGET WORKSHOP

Mayor Pete Poulsen opened the workshop of the Kalama City Council at 6:00 pm. Councilmembers present were Chuck Hutchinson, Don Purvis, and Bud Gish. Councilmembers Dominic Ciancibelli and Adam Smee were absent. City staff present were Director of Public Works Carl McCrary, Assistant Public Works Director Kelly Rasmussen, Police Chief Bruce Hall, Sgt. Steve Parker, Librarian Louise Thomas and Clerk/Treasurer Coni McMaster. Members in the audience are listed on the sign in sheet.

Kalama Library

Librarian Louise Thomas presented an information packet to the Council stating that the Library is “More Than Books.” Today’s libraries are so different from libraries of the past. They are much more technologically oriented. Soon libraries will have ebooks in addition to printed materials. Ms. Thomas explained that the library is only open 5 hours 6 days a week and staffed with part-time employees. Over 3000 people use the computers per year. An average of 849 books are checked out per month. The use of the library services are continually growing. As the Director of the library, Ms. Thomas only works 79 hours a month to operate the library. Each staff person operates the library alone and is faced with constant interruptions while trying to complete their work. The current staffing needs to be increased. The library is only about 1.5% of the overall City budget and they receive a very good value for that funding.

Ms. Thomas is requesting that the library’s budget be restored to its past level which would increase the budget by \$13,000. This would include having additional staff hours and a book budget of \$6000. She would also like to see the staff wage levels increased so that it takes into account the education of the staff as well. Ms. Thomas added that she has applied for a broadband grant for new computers as well as funding from the Gates foundation which would provide greater technological services to the community.

There was some discussion of FOLK – Friends of the Library at Kalama – and how they help the library with items that are beyond the current budget. Also discussed were the ebooks and if they would replace print materials. Ms. Thomas did not think this would be the case. Mayor Poulsen stated that he appreciates all that Louise does for the Library, assuring her that he and the Council know the value of the library. He thanked her for the presentation.

Kalama Public Works

Director of Public Works Carl McCrary presented a letter and information to the Council. This provided a detailed overview of what the Public Works Department does and its importance to the community. Kalama has very a large water system with numerous facilities. Most entities have only 1 or 2 reservoirs and a water plant while the

City has the plant, plus 11 reservoirs and numerous pump stations. The included maps showed the areas within the system that are in need of upgrading. The system is very well maintained by the current staff and he could easily put 3 more people to work. Mr. McCrary noted that he operates on what he calls the “weak-link” theory. Look for the weakest point and fix it before it becomes a major problem. He also looks at what future regulations will be coming and prepares ahead for the City to meet them. The current staff in Public Works does a phenomenal job. They do everything from meter reads and locates to replacing water and sewer lines. They have a lot of technical knowledge which helps to save the City money on contract services. The benefits of retaining the employees is great in that some of what they do is not written but in their collective memories. Over the years Mr. McCrary has worked at getting many of the improvements grant funded as well as having developers make improvements.

Mr. McCrary noted the items that he would like to see addressed and most of the “weak links” are in the areas outside the City limits. This includes the Lower Green Mountain Reservoir and booster stations. For Kalama, improvements are made one at a time and then keep moving forward. These facilities then also age that way. He hopes the Council will continue to find ways to fund the system for maintenance and build the reserves for the future improvements. His concerns lie with the safety and well-being of the customers on the system. While the rates may need to be increased, it is necessary to continue to build up the reserves to cover future needs.

Police Department

Police Chief Bruce Hall presented information on where the department is today and its goals for the future. He first thanked the Mayor and Council for their support. He continued that the current staff works very hard and deals with many people and organizations. The police are a kind of safety net for a lot of different issues. Chief Hall reviewed the staffing level which is five officers, including himself and the Sergeant , and a part-time clerk. This is less than what the department had in 1999 and they now provide 24 hour coverage. Some of the areas that are suffering are customer service at the front desk, timely reports and meeting all the legal reporting requirements. The department has several grants for this year and next which include the E-ticket and live-scan grants which should provide some improvements to efficiency in the department. ‘

Chief Hall noted that he would like to work on providing more training for the staff and a vehicle replacement plan. Sgt. Steve Parker provided a review of a recent arrest that was made of three individuals in possession of burglary tools and car stereos. Chief Hall gave a brief overview of his duties including his attendance at the court to track cases.

Chief Hall asked for some direction from the City Council. He knows that the budget often dictates what level of service can be provided. There is not enough time to do everything and the department has to prioritize the calls and responses. There was some discussion regarding having a cadet program. Chief Hall explained while he likes the idea of having a program, the reality of the time it takes to operate it and the liability issues related to it, make it something the City cannot currently do. Chief Hall presented several options for the Council to consider to address his staffing and equipment needs over the

next year. One item that was discussed was the evidence software and getting away from a totally manual system of tracking the evidence.

Administration & Finance

Clerk/Treasurer Coni McMaster provided information on all the activities that are provided through the City Hall offices. This is the “heart of the City” and where many citizens come for contact on many issues. Many of the activities in the other departments are related to the services provided by the Finance staff. The utility department is a direct link to Public Works. The Building department provides building permits and inspections and deals with planning issues. The Clerk administers all the grant and project fundings as well as the City’s budget and annual reports. All the bills and payroll are processed through the Finance Department. The staff answers or researches questions from the public plus directs tourists where to eat or how to get to where they are going. During emergencies the staff has been known to make citizen notifications, read meters or even fill sandbags. The Community Building is overseen by the Clerk’s office but its success goes to Bobbi Grey as caretaker. Hers is a very difficult job where she is basically on call 7 days a week. She has only received cost of living raises and is clearly underpaid for this work.

Ms. McMaster provided a large varied list of needs for the department. For 2010 she is requesting a laptop and new monitor for the Mayor under small tools. She will need to replace at least 3 computers with only 500mg of ram for larger machines with at least 2gig of ram to operate the new software. The City will also need new meter reading devices to operate with the new software. The City Hall building is in need of work which includes the roof and shell which are being worked on currently. The interior is also in need of updating as it hasn’t been painted for at least 10 years. The carpet and flooring were replaced after the flood of ’96 are definitely showing their age.

Mayor Poulsen stated the he and the Council recognize that a lot of work is put out by the City staff in all departments. With a staff of less than 20, the citizens need to realize what all services the City provides. They all work for the City’s best interests. It was noted that all wish the public would be more involved and come to meetings. The citizens really need to know what is happening. This led to some discussion of I-1033 and the effects it will have. Services will be lost if it passes in November. It will be very difficult to develop a budget until that decision is made. The impacts on water and sewer will not be great but Public Works will feel the results in street funding. Mayor Poulsen stated that when he looks at the budget he sees people and not just money. It was noted that the City has 20 empty business spots in downtown. The lack of interest in what is happening is difficult for all to understand.

Mayor Poulsen adjourned the meeting at 8:40 pm. These minutes are not verbatim. A copy of the tape can be made available for listening.

Pete Poulsen - Mayor

Coni McMaster - Clerk/Treasurer