

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

POLICE/PUBLIC SAFETY FACILITY FUNDING OPTIONS – Continued from 2/20/18

A. 6:00 PM OPENING – ROLL CALL

Mayor Mike Reuter opened the continued workshop. 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, Clerk/Treasurer Coni McMaster, and Police Chief Ralph Herrera. City Attorney Sam Satterfield was also present. Members of the public present are listed on the sign-in sheet.

B. Overview of Agenda

Mayor Reuter informed those present that first Staff will make the full presentation with no questions during the presentation. Questions will be taken and answered after the Council has heard and commented on the presentation. Please sign in. Paper & Pencils are available for notes. He also noted that workshops are for providing detailed information to the Council for their consideration. No decisions are finalized at a workshop.

C. Presentation – Funding Options (see attached for details)

City Clerk/Treasurer Coni McMaster, City Administrator Adam Smee, Police Chief Ralph Herrera, and City Attorney Sam Satterfield presented an overview of the sites looked at for placement of the police facility, why Maruhn Park was the final choice, the needs of a fully functioning police facility, how property purchasing differs for the City from the general public, what kinds of funding are available including increases to utility taxes, reallocation of general funds from Streets, Library or reserves, B&O tax, property tax levies, and forming a Public Facilities District, and how the City borrows money and pays that debt. Citizen Jim Bain, a local design architect, explained to the audience how the monument and other amenities at Maruhn Park could be relocated to the top of the hill and provide a more pedestrian friendly park overlooking the new station and the Columbia River. At the end of the presentation, staff made recommendations for the Council to consider which were to use the public safety sales tax of .001%, implementation of an additional 5% utility tax on water, sewer and garbage, and reallocate a portion of the current street funding from the general fund. This would provide approximately \$225,000 that would cover the debt service over 20 years to build the new facility. To continue to keep streets maintained into the future staff recommends the increase of the Transportation Benefit District vehicle tab fee from \$20 to \$40 to offset the reallocation of funds. They were not recommending establishing a B&O tax, re-issuing a proposition to the voters, nor establishing a Public Facilities District at this time. It will now be up to the Council to provide direction to the staff as to how to proceed.

D. Council Questions & Comments

Councilmember Rosemary Siipola explained her purpose in proposing the General Fund Capital Facilities Plan is to address the City's need for a funding stream for its own facilities which includes the Police Department, the Library, City Hall, and the Community Building. She believes it would

have been better if the Council had had more time to study the Police needs, but after the flood the issue became one of urgent need. The former facility was only temporary, placed on leased property under a conditional permit, so the City should have planned sooner for its replacement. The current plan is cost efficient, and grows with the City. The City will be able to draw more business with a professional department and officers. Downtown properties under private ownership are on the tax roles and provide city revenues. The proposal is the first step in building a revenue stream to meet the needs of the City's facilities now and into the future. The Police facility will be the first non-utility facility the City has ever constructed. Its always been rehabilitating old buildings. This is all about the future and recruiting and maintaining a dedicated police force.

Councilmember Mary Putka thanked the audience for their patience during the long presentation. She thanked the staff for all their work. Ms. Putka stated that if other Councilmember didn't have any further comments she would like to go the questions from the public.

E. Public Comments - Questions & Answers

Mayor Reuter noted that there would be no decision made tonight and additional comments can be made at the March Council meetings.

Sara Hutchinson, of 549 N. 5th made several comments and asked several questions. She provided information on what the recent actions at the state level will cost the average citizen and noted the City would now be adding another \$200 annually. She asked about adding additional sales taxes each year and was informed that wouldn't be possible except for the Public Facilities District which would be a timely process. She asked why we don't contract with the County to handle public records requests and to confirm warrants. Chief Herrera explained that the County does confirm warrants after hours for us at no charge, but we do handle it all at other times. He also noted that not every suspect is brought to the station. Ms. Hutchinson asked if the upper area for the Park would be enlarged as it doesn't appear there would be much space and there would be no parking areas. Mr. Bain stated he believed there was around 30 feet and it could be made accessible. It was asked who would pay for those improvements. Administrator Smee explained the City is looking to use forced labor and park funds the City has accumulated. Ms. Hutchinson asked why nothing had been done at the Community Building to improve those conditions. Administrator Smee answered that at this time it had not been included in the current budget, but that estimates for two had been received with price tags of \$12000 and \$24,000. Spending these funds would not be recouped nor provide great benefit to the City. Ms. Hutchinson asked why not house all the City functions – Finance, Library and Police, in one location, to which is was responded, that while it would be desirable, the City doesn't have a large enough space to do so. She asked what happens to the 20% reserve at the end of the year and would it be used to help pay down the debt. Paying down debt is good fiscal management and the City has done so in the past for utility debt. She asked if the City is collecting impact fees from all the ongoing development. Administrator Smee explained that Cowlitz County is not required to and has not opted to plan under growth management, so we cannot impose impact fees. This does make it more affordable to develop here and draws more developers to the area.

Mel Kamerath, 460 S. 10th Street, noted she understands the City not wanting to take private property, but it would be a small amount if the City were to take one of the dilapidated buildings in the downtown off the tax role. It would be a better option than taking a beautiful park function. As a taxpayer, she would be willing to pay more taxes even. Ms. Kamerath asked if the City would still be using the County jail and it was explained that the City cannot house prisoners for long periods of

time.

Mike VanderHois, 140 Ashland Court, noted that the location would have no place to stage during the building process, no delivery area, and there would be impacts to local traffic.

Louis Hendricks, 153 Greystone, stated that he received a \$300 increase to his Social Security and it looks like is all being taken away for taxes. He is losing money living here. They are burdening the taxpayers. He added that he has heard the other sites are not useable, but hasn't seen any numbers associated that back that up.

Tina Day Connelly, 5351 Meeker Drive, admonished the Council that they need to be listening to their constituents. The current plan will tax the poorest in the community with those on fixed income and just above the poverty levels. They need to think about what they are doing and how it is dividing the community. She is sad and disappointed in the Council and the staff. The citizens voted and the Council needs to hear that. She knows the Police need a facility, just not under this plan. She stated they shouldn't force it on the public, but hear them and find something that makes sense. The public doesn't feel like they are being heard and treated like they don't know what they want.

Someone in the audience noted that Woodland had built a much larger station for only \$3.1 million a few years ago and it wasn't in the downtown area. Kalama's doesn't need to be there either. It was noted that we could have a beautiful downtown if the City would do something about the trashy buildings, but they do nothing. There are other options available. Someone also noted that they had heard from Councilmember Siipola, but hadn't heard much discussion from the rest of the Council.

Jennifer Berg, 113 Summit Drive, noted that she would like to see a side by side comparison of the different sites. She also asked how it could be legal for the Council to ignore the vote of the people. It was explained that the vote was for a property tax bond to pay for the station. The Council is now considering councilmanic revenues source that they can pass which is a legal option. It was noted from the audience that it might be legal, but it wasn't right. It is dividing the City. Councilmember Siipola voiced her belief that once completed the facility will reflect the value to the community.

Heidi Olsen, Holly Boulevard, thanked the Chief for his work and noted they do need a better facility. She asked why the City needs more officers as according to what she found, Kalama is already at double the state average for officers. Chief Herrera responded that according to the national average of 2.2 officers per 1000 of population the department is staffed accurately for a community that is rural in nature. There was discussion regarding the holding cells and advantages of being to question suspects in the police station versus the jail. Ms. Olsen noted that the satellite building has a sinkhole which is endangering the street, so she doesn't see how the City can't get a fair deal. She asked if the facility would go away in the future as she wouldn't want to pay for it again. It was noted that the design was such as to last for 20 plus years. Administrator Smeed and City Attorney Satterfield explained that nuisance abatement and condemnation are very costly and time consuming. It takes civil action to get anything done legally. If the City has to take action and do work on any site they can lien the property to recoup the costs spent, but there are chances the City will never collect. Administrator Smeed informed the public that the City had a commercial appraisal on the satellite building done which cost about \$4000. The costs are the reasons we don't do full appraisals on all the sites as each one would require different appraisal needs and costs could be the tens of thousands of dollars. That's why we don't have cost comparisons to show.

Mathew Merz asked that if this is an emergency operations center and will serve all of the Kalama zip code which is 7000 people why should only 2500 citizens pay for it. He wanted to know why we can't just keep the "folksy" police station as we have had in the past. Chief Herrera responded that we have to meet the current requirements of the law enforcement profession. The more professional an organization is will help to avoid liability concerns and expensive litigation. Mr. Merz asked how many times the City has been sued in the past. While he didn't have those statistics, Chief Herrera noted that just because something hasn't happened doesn't mean the City shouldn't make improvement to ensure it doesn't. Mr. Merz continued that he doesn't think we need the proposed station, and not in downtown as in the future they will need be in the neighborhoods at the north and south ends of Kalama. Kalama doesn't need an emergency center. Administrator Smee explained that after floods, fires and the potential for issues from oil trains, I-5, the local chemical plant and other industries, the Community will be best served by being able to address such emergencies. While the Fire District provides the services out at Todd Road, having redundancy in services is best practice for preparing for emergencies. It was also noted that just because the past stations were substandard, doesn't mean the City shouldn't provide a fully functioning facility. The City will be looking at grant funding opportunities. They have already applied for \$500,000 from the state capital budget, but the chances for approval during this cycle are slim. They will apply again and look for other opportunities as well. If the City tries to rely solely on federal or state funding they will be waiting a long time. Administrator Smee and Councilmember Siipola both acknowledged that in hindsight, with the old facility being temporary under a conditional use permit, the City should have started planning for its replacement sooner, back in 2014 even, but they hadn't, and the flood of December 2015 forced the issue to an immediate need.

Wendy Conradi stated she had attended several meetings and it appears the City is right where they were when the proposition was voted down. The proposal is not what the community wants. She is disappointed. She asked about the Public Works buildings which are old and what studies have been done. She asked about why not get a temporary location for now and work to find another option. Having all the facilities located in one location should be considered as it would reduce costs for maintenance, utilities and overhead. Administrator Smee explained that the Public Works Shop site was considered, but it would be cost prohibitive to develop and be able to provide both functions on that site due to the site's size, sloped access and drainage issues. The Shop itself is funded by the utility funds and not the general fund. He added that it would be ideal to do a complex and could provide some efficiencies. Several years back this was discussed and believed to be a good future plan. However, there isn't a current site available that would accommodate such a facility. Back then the Remax building was also considered. There was more discussion about the urgency of the need and providing a temporary location while other sites are considered.

Mac Epperson asked when the project is put out to bid, if some of the items will be listed as alternates, so the City could cut costs if needed. He also asked about the City forming a stormwater utility. Clerk/Treasurer McMaster stated the City has contracted with the engineers for completing a stormwater study and forming a utility which has been budgeted for 2018. Administrator Smee stated they could do alternates within the bid.

Diane Keen of 885 Taylor Road, noted that the park area was owned by the State as part of I-5 and is close to the on-ramp and overpass. She asked if WSDOT had been notified to address impacts to traffic. She doesn't feel that the police accessing in that area would be safe. She also asked what would happen if the State wanted to expand I-5, would they come and take the property.

Councilmember Siipola explained that having been a regional transportation planner for 25 years and working with the State, this area is considered rural and does not have any impacts that would require expansion or widening of the freeway. She also noted that former Chief Gibson thought the location was ideal for accessing both the north and south areas of the City, which now covers a 5-mile stretch from Exit 27 to Exit 32.

Sara Hutchinson, stated that the workshop was to address all funding options, but she hadn't heard anything presented about grant funding. The City will always look for grant funding options, but these are not guaranteed revenue sources. Ms. Hutchinson also suggested approaching the Port of Kalama and other local industries about contributing to the funding.

Louis Hendricks stated he had seen signs at the tractor place on Meeker, so why wouldn't that work. Administrator Smee noted that even brokers have called the City trying to find out about this as it appears there are ownership issues because it may have gone through a federal bankruptcy court process.

John Flynn, Taylor Road, asked about the environmental concerns with the tractor site, and the old gas station site downtown and who is responsible for the cleanup. Administrator Smee explained that Department of Ecology will pursue the owner of the property at any time, but that will always be the current owner, so it doesn't revert back to the original owner if sold. Costs for abatement or remediation are high. He added that he, the staff and Council are just as frustrated with the condition of many buildings downtown, but it is not easy to force owners to take responsibility. It is also costly for the litigation and cleanup, as well as difficult to recoup any of the cleanup costs.

There was some discussion regarding why the Council feels the urgency to act now, and it was explained that there are windows for construction during the year and currently costs are on the rise as well as interest rates. With all the recent school bond activity in this region, contractors are going to be getting busy, so will be less available, as well as making the project costlier.

F. Adjournment

Mayor Reuter adjourned the meeting at 9:04 pm, thanking everyone for coming. There is no recording of this meeting.