

**City of Kittitas
Council Meeting Minutes
November 25, 2008**

Mayor Arington called the meeting of the Kittitas City Council to order at 7:00 p.m., November 25, 2008. Councilmembers present: Turpin, Gilmour, Camarata, Gay, and Alford.

Staff present was Clerk/Treasurer Robin Newcomb, Police Chief Mike Studer, and Fire Captain Richard Hink Jr.

Mayor Arington led those assembled in the Flag Salute.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Councilmember Turpin would like several amendments made to these minutes. Councilmember Gay suggested we review the tape. Councilmember Gay moved to continue the minutes to the next meeting. Councilmember Gilmour seconded the motion. The motion passed 5 yes and 0 no.

Councilmember Turpin would like these minutes amended also. Councilmember Gay moved to approve the minutes from the November 20, 2008, workshop/special meeting and Councilmember Alvord seconded the motion. The motion passed 4 yes and Councilmember Turpin voted no. See addendum attached to minutes.

ADDITIONS TO AGENDA

None

REPORT OF OFFICERS AND SPECIAL GUESTS

Gray & Osborne – Mike Meskimen explained the 3 different schedules of the Caribou Creek Bridge Project. Councilmember Camarata moved to approve Caribou Creek Bridge Pay Estimate #8 to MRM Construction in the amount of \$95,878.73 and Councilmember Turpin seconded the motion. The motion passed 5 yes and 0 no.

Mike also explained last spring the city applied for 5 grants from TIB and was selected for the improvement of the main street sidewalks with a 92% grant. The city's match is \$18,000 of which \$3,000 a local business has offered to donate. Also, 100% grant for the Operating Engineers street improvement was granted with 0% match.

Nancy Morter explained there is still approximately \$10,000 of grant money on the WWTP project available. Dave Dunnell with USDA RD will have to approve any purchases made with this money.

She also explained the Public Works Trust Fund has low interest loan funds for water/sewer improvements.

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Treasurer Report – See handout. Councilmember Turpin had questions on deposits in the water/sewer fund and if they could receive the prior monthly financial reports earlier. Clerk/Treasurer Newcomb explained our budget is adopted by fund so the only audit requirement is that each fund doesn't overspend what was budgeted. Individual lines in the budget are a tool for the city to use each year when constructing the budget. Regarding the report he was looking at, it is for the month of October and isn't available until the bank reconciliation and review is done.

Delinquent Report – See handout

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Public Hearing 2009 Preliminary Budget – The public hearing was opened for discussion at 7:35. Some discussion was as follows.

- Tina Morefield – Her concern is with the 3% raises.
- Tiny Allphin – His concern is with the 3% raises and believes any fund balance will be spent on these raises.
- Brenda Allemand, 111 Railroad Ave, Kittitas– Her concern is with the 3% raises.

Councilmember Gay explained the majority of our employees are in a union and the 3% raise is in the contract. He feels that the non-union employees should be treated the same as the union employees. Councilmember Turpin explained he doesn't agree with the raises but explained the city would face a lawsuit with the union if we didn't honor the contract. He believes we should not give the non-union employees raises. Tina Allphin would like a copy of the union contract. Tiny Allphin explained he doesn't understand how we signed into a 3 year contract and hopes we won't get into this same budget crunch again. The public hearing was closed at 7:58 p.m. Councilmember Alvord suggested we compare the impact of the two non-union raises to the 15% utility tax.

Public Hearing/Ordinance 08-023 – 15% Utility Tax – The public hearing was opened for discussion at 8:03 p.m. Some discussion is as follows.

END OF TAPE 1 SIDE 1

- Gayetta Hink, 206 Railroad Ave, Kittitas – She thinks the 15% utility tax, 6% water/sewer rate increase, dog and business license increase is too much for the residents.
- Dan Menth, 102 1st Ave, Kittitas – He would like a summary of the 30% rate increase and thinks we will have 3 times more delinquent accounts if this is imposed.
- Karen Gustafson, 1107 Tony Circle, Ellensburg – She stated her income is not going up this much to cover this increase.
- Brenda Allemand, 111 Railroad Ave, Kittitas – She is concerned with the 15% utility

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tax and 6% water/sewer rate increase. She believes this town is in danger of becoming a ghost town.

--Tina Morefield, 305 N Lewis, Kittitas – She explained the total 21% is a lot of money.

--Tom Rosser, 1114 Jennie Circle, Ellensburg – He doesn't understand why our water/sewer rates are twice what they are in Ellensburg.

--Larry Baker, 1114 Tony Circle, Ellensburg – He is not comfortable with the 21% combined utility/water sewer rate increase. He says the City of Kent is not charging the rates we are paying here.

Councilmember Gay explained the 6% water/sewer increase still will not cover the cost to operate the WWTP. With the 15% utility tax the new monthly billing would be approximately \$78 for a \$14.10 increase per month for the average single family residence.

Dan Menth explained there will be a lot more people that can't afford this increase.

Karen Gustafson would like to know how she is going to increase her income.

Brenda Allemand – She still doesn't understand how it isn't a 30% increase and not a 15% increase. She explained when she lived in Ellensburg she paid \$35 at the most for water/sewer.

Mayor Arington explained the Council has no intent of charging more than 15% for the water/sewer utility tax.

Tina Morefield – She wanted to clarify with the utility tax and water/sewer rate increase that the total increase is 21%. She thinks it is a bad idea for raises to be given in 2009.

Councilmember Gilmour – He thought there would be another 2% increase in March of 2009 but Council explained this isn't the case.

Tina Morefield – She would like Council to consider not increasing rates each year at these rates.

Mayor Arington – explained there is a sunset clause stating for fiscal year 2011 this will be revisited.

Councilmember Camarata – explained in 2011 when it is revisited the hope is to reduce this.

Tom Rosser – Mayor Arington explained the reason the rates are so high is because our operating costs are higher than the rate increases we have had in the past.

Councilmember Gay explained the larger cities have more revenue so they don't have to charge as much for water/sewer rates. There are small cities that do charge larger rates.

Councilmember Gay explained the 6% water/sewer rate increase is for the water/sewer fund. The 15% utility tax is for the general fund.

The public hearing was closed at 8:34 p.m. Councilmember Alvord explained she doesn't like to see the raises vs. the proposed rate increases. She also explained funds/departments have made significant cuts already to their budgets. Councilmember Gilmour explained everyone involved in the city has gotten the city in trouble.

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Councilmember Turpin explained the original budget included a 20% utility tax and that a 15% utility tax is the easy way out. He also would like to see section 2 changed in the proposed utility tax. Councilmember Camarata also believes section 2 of this ordinance should be revised. Councilmember Alvord explained she would like to see the 2009 additional prisoner care costs taken from the 3/10's fund rather than current expense fund. Councilmember Gay has concern with using the 3/10's fund for this additional prisoner care cost. Councilmember Turpin moved to table this ordinance and Councilmember Gilmour seconded it. The motion passed 5 yes and 0 no. It was agreed upon by Council to decrease the utility tax ordinance to 13% and use the 3/10's fund for the increase in the prisoner care agreement.

Public Hearing/Ordinance 08-025 – 6% Water/Sewer Rate Increase – The public hearing was opened for discussion at 8:50. Some discussion was as follows.

--Maxine Steele, 111 N Lewis, Kittitas – She explained four employees were laid off and how are they expected to pay this increase in rates.

--Tina Morefield, 305 N Lewis, Kittitas – She explained the 13% is better than the 15%.

--Connie Rosser, 1114 Jennie Circle, Ellensburg – Will there be anything in place to help the retired people and low income people with this raise. She also would like to know if they can drill a well in their back yard.

--Police Chief Mike Studer – Would like to not take his raise.

--Jessica Gleason, 506 Spokane, Kittitas – She explained she has watched Council cut this budget and the services will be reduced. She would like the city residents to understand that the Council is working hard on this.

Mayor Arington -- explained there are reduced rates for senior citizens. Councilmember Gay will look into assistance to help these low income/senior citizens with these rate increases.

Connie Rosser – explained they can't drink their water because of the chlorine level.

END OF TAPE 1 SIDE 2

Tiny Allphin explained there is help for the low income citizens. The public hearing was closed at 9:05 and turned to Council for action. Councilmember Turpin explained he thinks we are not in a position to raise the water/sewer rates 6%. Mayor Arington explained we will operate at a loss without this. Councilmember Turpin explained he has issues with the budget. Councilmember Gay explained this increase is to help the city survive and that we need more revenue. Councilmember Camarata thinks we need to have this increase. Councilmember Turpin moved to table this ordinance and Councilmember Gilmour seconded this motion. Motion failed. Councilmember Alvord moved to approve this ordinance and Councilmember Camarata seconded the motion. The motion passed 3 yes and Councilmember Turpin and Councilmember Gilmour voting no.

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NEW BUSINESS

Public Hearing/Ordinance 08-024 – Amend Business License Fees – The public hearing was opened for discussion at 9:16 p.m. Some discussion was as follows.

--Tiny Allphin – He wonders if notices could be mailed out. Clerk/Treasurer Newcomb explained notices are mailed out at the beginning of every year.

The public hearing was closed at 9:22 and was opened for Council discussion. Councilmember Gay would like to see a percentage increase rather than a flat fee. Councilmember Gilmour moved to approve this ordinance and Councilmember Camarata seconded the motion. The motion passed 5 yes and 0 no.

Public Hearing/Ordinance 08-027 – Amend Dog License Fees -- The public hearing was opened for discussion at 9:26 p.m. Some discussion was as follows.

--Tina Morefield, 305 N Lewis, Kittitas – She would like to know where the increased fee is going and why there isn't a place to take the animals.

--Tiny Allphin – There are more cats in this town than dogs.

--Karen Gustafson – She has dog issues in her neighborhood and wonders why people like her are obeying the law and others are not.

Chief Studer -- explained there are legality issues with him going into back yards.

--Rick Hink, 306 Railroad Ave, Kittitas – He doesn't believe the amount budgeted for dog licenses is correct.

Councilmember Alvord explained we could stop licensing dogs as an option. She explained Public Works Lead Bosch gave her a listing of all the dogs in the city and is willing to send out a notice to all dog owners that do not have licensed dogs.

Councilmember Turpin explained that the increase in the fire chief salary was offset with the increase in business licenses and dog licenses.

Councilmember Gilmour explained it would be great for Councilmember Alvord to send these notices out.

Councilmember Gay explained the \$2,135 budget for dog licenses should be close.

The public hearing was closed. Councilmember Turpin moved to approve this ordinance and Councilmember Gilmour seconded the motion. The motion passed 5 yes and 0 no.

APPROVAL OF PAYMENT

Approval of November Bills – Councilmember Gilmour wondered why we had to pay Wray Irrigation for winterizing irrigation. Checks #12877 to #12900 and #771029 for \$93,217.03 were moved to be approved by Councilmember Gilmour and seconded by

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Councilmember Turpin. The motion passed 5 yes and 0 no.

MAYORS REPORT

Interlocal Agreement – Kittitas County Sheriff’s Office Extra Coverage with 3/10’s monies

Our attorney advised us that the county is responsible by RCW to patrol cities that cannot afford to cover themselves.

Interlocal Agreement – Jail Services – 2 options

1. Fixed Fee \$19,100 annually
2. Pay as we go

Interlocal Agreement with County on Court Services – Mayor Arington explained our attorney is ironing out some issues with the county taking over the city court. December 2nd will be a county public hearing on this.

Employee Complaint – Mayor explained if Council has questions on this, to come to him in the office.

Personnel Policy – The codification of the personnel policy was repealed but not the policy itself which was adopted by Resolution.

Municipal Code – If Councilmembers need a copy of the municipal code, they need to contact the mayor. It also is available online.

Health Coverage – This was adopted by a resolution.

Employee Salaries – RCW requires salaries to be adopted in the budget.

Sales Tax Revenue – The city received \$58,000 approximately in November for sales tax. Mayor Arington explained he believes we should roll this into the 2009 beginning balance. He also explained the TIB sidewalk grant match might be able to use some of these funds.

Kittitas County Public Works – The mayor wrote a letter supporting a grant they are applying for.

