

CLARKSTON CITY COUNCIL MINUTES
January 23, 2017

ROLL CALL: Skate Pierce, Terry Beadles, Brian Kolstad, Monika Beauchamp, Blackmon, John Murray; Belinda Campbell was excused on a motion by BEADLES/BLACKMON.

STAFF: Chief Cooper, Chief Hastings, Clerk Storey, City Attorney Richardson

AGENDA CHANGES: There will not be an executive session.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Minutes of the January 9, 2017, Regular Meeting were approved as corrected.

COMMUNICATIONS:

A. From the Public:

Kelly Jackson, 1045 Liberty Drive.

B. From Mayor:

Mayor Lawrence said this Thursday will be the beginning of the legislative phone calls at 7:30 at the Port office. She invited councilmembers to attend if they can.

From Staff: City Attorney Richardson reported that the agreement for access to run fiber across Southway Bridge is nearing completion. He expects to have a final agreement ready for council in the near future.

Richardson commented that the ULP filed by the fire union is progressing. A hearing is expected in June or July with a decision in October or November. There will be costs involved as the City works through the process.

Richardson said a public records request was filed with the fire department for records related to the fire department staffing options. It is an expansive request and will result in additional expense to the City to gather the requested information.

Chief Cooper said both automatic aid agreements are now in place with City of Lewiston and Asotin County Fire District. He said he really appreciates the cooperation.

Clerk Storey said this is her last council meeting as City Clerk. She thanked the council for the opportunity to work with them and said in her 24 years in this job she has never found it to be boring.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance: Councilmember Beadles reported the bills were reviewed and approved for payment. Total expenditures for the December 31, 2016 open period of \$177,200.03 and for January 23, 2017 of \$178,898.46. MOTION BY BEADLES/KOLSTAD to approve the bills as read. Motion carried.

Public Safety: Councilmember Beadles reported on the January 17 meeting. Chief Cooper reported that an Unfair Labor Practice complaint has been filed by the fire union. The fire union has submitted a public records request for all records pertaining to the discussion of contracting services with City of Lewiston. The fire union is meeting with the City to discuss concerns they have with the Employee handbook.

A letter was received from the Lewiston fire union saying they are not seeking a contract for services with Clarkston.

A model reenactment of the fire call log for Nov. 1 was presented.

A list of costs that might be included with the preliminary estimate from the City of Lewiston was presented. The town hall meeting that has been discussed in relation to fire staffing options is going to be moved back to February 22. Chief Cooper is still looking for a suitable venue.

Chief Hastings presented the quote for a new patrol vehicle. It will be on the agenda for approval.

Chief Hastings will be hiring a new records clerk for the department.

The department will be working with the school district on a program that addresses sexting and harassment.

Public Works: Councilmember Pierce reported on the January 17 meeting. Committee discussed potential plans for Vernon Park. Campbell suggested applying for lodging tax money to make improvements to the park to encourage tourism. Committee also discussed Councilmember Beadle's suggestion of a memorial splash fountain.

Committee is interested in looking at using TBD funds for traffic calming devices. Riverview, 8th St. between Libby and Fleshman Way and Hwy 129/5th St. just south of Highland are locations being considered.

There was brief discussion of aesthetic improvements to Diagonal St.

Admin Committee: Councilmember Blackmon said committee met this evening and discussed the business license fee proposal. They also discussed extending the license requirements to businesses such as Uber, Air BnB and rental properties. Councilmember Kolstad said they are looking at ways to encourage new businesses to register. The committee will continue discussion before making a recommendation.

Community Development: No meeting.

Outside Organizations:

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

A. Confirm Appointment of Clerk/Treasurer

Motion by KOLSTAD/BEADLES to confirm the appointment of Steve Austin as Clerk/Treasurer. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS:

A. Discussion of Fire Department Options

Chief Cooper commented that this effort began in the summer with several possible options. The fire chiefs met and returned with the four most viable options. They included maintaining the department with 10 personnel, maintaining the department with 12 personnel, contracting with City of Lewiston and annexing into the Fire District.

Two weeks ago an informational meeting was held with Chief Cooper reporting on the two options of maintaining the existing department, Chief Myklebust reporting on the preliminary cost of contracting with Lewiston and Chief Hardin reporting on what would be involved in annexing into the fire district.

Councilmember Murray confirmed with Chief Hardin that there is no estimated cost to the City for annexing. That is because the taxpayer takes on the burden through property taxes. Chief Hardin said currently the Fire District levy is \$.72 per thousand and \$.50 per thousand for the EMS levy. He asked if there would be a savings to the Clarkston residents. Hardin said there would not be significant savings since the two district levies would raise about the same amount as the current City EMS levy which is about \$1.33 per thousand.

Murray asked Chief Myklebust to define a couple of acronyms in his report. ESCI is a firm that was hired about seven years ago to do a study of EMS services in the valley. Myklebust said Lewiston is dispatched by the Lewiston police department.

Councilmember Beadles asked Chief Myklebust to address consolidations in the state of Idaho. Myklebust said there are numerous larger communities that are in the process of looking at collaboration. They would become the largest fire agency in the state if that comes to fruition. The cities involved are Caldwell, Nampa, Meridian, Middleton and Star. They are in the beginning stages starting with training and also looking at not needing as many chiefs.

Chief Hardin said it is fairly common in Washington for smaller communities to annex into fire districts. He said that Pomeroy has annexed into Garfield County Fire District and Dayton is now part of Columbia County Fire District. Consolidations are also happening in the larger metropolitan areas both by annexing into fire district or by forming fire authorities.

Councilmember Beauchamp confirmed that fire protection in the district is all volunteer while EMS services are contracted with City of Lewiston. She asked if at some point the District were to want to increase services with a career fire staff at some point, how the cap on property tax at \$2.00 would

impact funding. Chief Hardin said the voters could approve a levy lid lift to go above the current levy. Anything above the \$2.00 cap would require an excess levy. She also confirmed that it would take a vote of the City residents to annex and the District residents to accept the City. If either vote failed, the annexation would not take place.

Councilmember Blackmon asked if we annexed, would the current EMS levy go away. Chief Hardin said it would probably go away. A district cannot segment out a section of the district to tax at a different rate. He asked Chief Myklebust about employment opportunities for Clarkston's existing firefighters. Chief Myklebust the Clarkston firefighters are great employees and well trained and Lewiston would be open to hiring them. He said there are some collective labor issues with the unions that would need to be resolved. He said the only thing that could be an issue is the requirement to pass an NFPA 1582 medical physical. Clarkston firefighters would also have to be certified as Idaho EMT's.

Councilmember Pierce asked Chief Myklebust what they do for water rescue. He said they have the ability with their swift water and ice rescue, but there is a system already in place with Asotin County for water rescue. He would not want to duplicate services. Partnerships are a more effective use of personnel. Pierce asked about staffing a second call. Myklebust said it would depend on where the call is and which station is closest and available. The engine company could cover a second call so they could respond immediately and then a crew would be recalled to cover the station.

Councilmember Murray asked the difference between a volunteer service and career department. Chief Myklebust said Lewiston does not have any volunteers. All staff is full time, career. But they do have reserves and would be interested in adding Clarkston's reserves to Lewiston staff.

Chief Cooper talked about a combination department using reserves and volunteers along with career staff. Volunteers and reserves are used to supplement staffing as needed. Clarkston currently has 16 volunteers.

Chief Hardin said his department is all volunteer. They train just like career firefighters. His station has three divisions, fire, EMS and water rescue. A volunteer can work in one division or all three. He said volunteers are on call all the time. The District has 42 volunteers. A lot of them are shift workers, so coverage is good. The biggest difference is that volunteer firefighters have to respond to the station, get their gear and then go out to the fire. He said the initial response time to a fire is a little slower than if you have career firefighters in the station. Murray asked what opportunity a Clarkston firefighter would have if there was annexation. Hardin said he would be happy to have them as volunteers. Chief Cooper said the hope would be that if the City annexed the six additional positions that would probably be added to cover Clarkston could be filled with Clarkston firefighters. That would potentially leave four without employment.

Pierce asked about the retirement system for volunteers. Chief Hardin explained the state has a separate system for volunteer retirement. It would currently pay about \$300 per month for a volunteer with 25 years of service. Chief Cooper said that career firefighters are in the LEOFF II retirement system, and reserves are in the PERS system.

Beauchamp asked if the City's EMS levy would continue if the City contracted with Lewiston. Chief Myklebust said that would be up to the City to determine how they would pay for the service. Beauchamp asked how transport fees would be applied. Chief Myklebust said that transport fees would be collected by the City of Lewiston and would be deducted from the total cost of the service. Myklebust said about 85% of the users in Asotin County are Medicare or Medicaid, 9% are private insured and the rest are uninsured. He said that Washington numbers for insurance are actually a little better because does not have expanded Medicaid with the Affordable Care Act.

Chief Cooper said Clarkston has about 60% Medicare and 19% are Medicaid, 4% are private pay with no insurance and the rest are private insurance. Cooper pointed out that about 30% of the calls are assist with no transport.

Mayor Lawrence asked Chief Hardin how many vehicles respond to a call. Hardin said a low level call where maybe someone has fallen, a volunteer vehicle would go out so the paramedics are available for emergency calls. She asked about the boundaries of the district. He said it does not cover the entire county, but the covers the main residential areas. There is also Blue Mountain Fire District that covers part of the rural area of the county.

Councilmember Kolstad said people in Clarkston are worried about whether a service will be able to provide the lifesaving service they need when they need it. He asked what kind of assurance there is that any of these options will provide needed services. Chief Myklebust said in his 25 years the

department has never not responded to a call and no one has died because the ambulance did not come. They have performance measures and he would expect that if they contracted with Clarkston, those performance measures would apply. In the seven years that Lewiston has contracted with Asotin County, they have always been able to provide the needed service. The depth of employees available, the partnerships with other agencies and the added employees if Clarkston contracted would improve the depth of coverage. He said he is currently writing a grant application for additional staffing for the East Orchards. He said they do prioritize calls. A routine transfer might have to wait a few minutes for resources. Chief Hardin said the volunteer service works the same. They backfill as units go out. Mutual aid also helps.

Beauchamp said she is concerned with fire response with a volunteer only department. Would the response time increase. Chief Hardin said he requires that fire crews live within a certain response time to the station. He said there is a 2 to 4 minutes delay time compared to having a crew in the station. She asked if that level of service is adequate. He said a fire will double on the average of every minute so time is critical. He said the number of fires nationally is being reduced by better building methods, early alert systems, etc. He said they usually leave the station with 4 to 6, so they can do more than a 2 or 3 person response. She asked how the district would fund a career department. Hardin said an excess levy would be an option.

Pierce asked how many structure fires there were in Clarkston in 2016. Chief Cooper said he doesn't have those numbers yet, but there were 9 in 2015. There were 1,922 EMS calls in 2015. There were 230 total fire responses, which includes chimney fires, smoke alarms, grass fires, etc.

Councilmember Beadles said he is very impressed with the three chiefs and the amount of work they have taken on to provide this information. Chief Myklebust offered councilmembers the opportunity to come ride with a Lewiston crew or to tour the station.

Councilmember Blackmon asked about equipment purchases if we contracted with Lewiston. Chief Myklebust said that would be part of negotiating a contract.

Councilmember Murray asked Chief Myklebust what the trend of cost increases are. Myklebust said the operating cost has actually decreased, partly due to controlling overtime.

B. Approve Purchase of Patrol Vehicle

Chief Hastings said the police department is budgeted for a patrol vehicle. The cost on the state bid is \$32,804. This will be another of the utility vehicles which are better suited to the job. MOTION BY KOLSTAD/BEADLES to approve the purchase of the patrol vehicle. Motion carried.

C. Discussion of Business License Fee Increase

Councilmember Kolstad suggested this go back to committee for more discussion. He said committee is looking to increase fees but they are also looking at ways to encourage new businesses to register. Licensing of rental owners is an area that needs research and a recommendation.

COUNCIL COMMENTS:

Councilmember Beauchamp said she was impressed with all the information presented by the three fire chiefs.

Councilmember Beadles said if the City could become a Well City, we see significant savings in health insurance premiums.

ADJOURNMENT:

Meeting adjourned at 8:28 p.m.

Vickie Storey, City Clerk

Monika Lawrence, Mayor

Total Fund Expenditures, 12/31/16	Ck # 63179-63245	\$177,200.03
Total Fund Expenditures, 1/23/17	Ck #63178, 63264-63307	\$45,268.09
Payroll, 1/15/17	Ck # 63081-63119	\$133,630.37