

**Fife City Hall**

**FIFE CITY COUNCIL  
STUDY SESSION  
MEETING MINUTES**

**Council Chambers**

**March 20, 2012**

**7:00 p.m.**

**CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL**

Mayor Pro Tem Hull called the Fife City Council Study Session to order at 7:00 pm.

**Present:** Mayor Cerqui, Mayor Pro Tem Hull, Councilmembers Curtis, Godwin, Hulcey and Wolfrom.

**Absent:** Councilmember Dukes-Gethers was excused.

**Staff Present:** City Manager Zabell, City Attorney Combs, Finance Director DeGroot, Public Works Director Blount, Community Development Director Osaki, Parks, Recreation and Community Services Director Reuter, Chief of Police Blackburn, Executive Assistant Edwards and City Clerk Etgen.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Councilmember Godwin led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**ANIMAL SERVICES CONTRACT**

Chief Blackburn reported on the existing code pertaining to animal control, most of which was adopted in 1979, and presented a proposal from Pierce County to contract for animal control. Currently the City has an animal housing contract with the Pierce County Humane Society with a per-animal deposit fee of \$91. If residents take animals to the shelter, the City is notified and charged. Lakewood Police Department charges \$250 for calls during regular hours to handle dangerous animal complaints. Fife Police Officers are required to sometimes standby for three hours until Lakewood personnel arrive on the scene.

The Chief stated his officers have had no formal training, limited animal control skills and only stick poles for controlling the animals. Animal violations under the City's code currently are all misdemeanors. Most Pierce County animal violations are civil infractions. Staff is in need of policies and Council direction for the handling of dangerous and potentially dangerous dogs.

Chief Blackburn reported the City of Tacoma has expressed an interest in providing services to the City and there are other entities who provide the services. He requested direction on licensing and whether enforcement would be complaint driven, and to which service provider. Last year the Police Department handled 51 animal calls with approximately 46 animals impounded.

Councilmember Godwin agreed the infractions needed to be of a civil nature rather than misdemeanor, and stated he was opposed to licensing and leash laws.

City Manager Zabell remarked that citizens of Fife are paying for animal control now even without a licensing fee, based on the fees the City is paying to Lakewood and the Humane Society.

City Attorney Combs said in order to obtain the dangerous dog enforcement, Pierce County requires a full contract in the amount of \$35,865.80 per year (\$3.89 per resident), with the amount being pro-rated if the City signs a contract this year. Currently dangerous dog charges go through the City's Hearing Examiner and the City is responsible for costs associated with the process. If the City contracts with the County, they would require licensing, leash laws and adoption of their animal control regulations. If animals are not picked up within 48 hours the animal would be available for adoption.

Council asked staff to work on the dangerous dog section of the Code and to look into animal control alternatives.

### **INITIATIVE 1183 -- LIQUOR PRIVATIZATION LAW – ZONING ISSUES**

City Attorney Combs updated Council about the status of the law pertaining to liquor privatization. Stores that do not meet the current requirements pertaining to size can be grandfathered in. There are City and State regulations pertaining to zoning for establishments selling liquor near schools and parks.

Council requested the Planning Commission review the current City ordinances pertaining to zoning regulations for establishment selling liquor near parks and come back to Council with recommendations in order to not impede the possibility of a grocery store coming to Fife.

### **FIFE TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS**

Public Works Director Blount presented an update to Council regarding 2012 transportation projects. This presentation was also made to the Regional Access and Mobility Partnership meeting on March 7<sup>th</sup>.

Key issues he reported on included:

- 59th Avenue East completion and ribbon cutting
- 70th Avenue East bid, award, and construction
- Port of Tacoma Road wetlands mitigation permitting and construction, and project funding efforts
- City Transportation Plan Update

Councilmember Godwin expressed his desire to make sure staff is in contact with the Port of Tacoma to ensure their plans are coordinated with the City's.

### **ON-LINE UTILITY BILLING & PAYMENTS**

Finance Director DeGroot reported:

- In an effort to address consumer demand for internet-based utility billing and payments services, Finance staff has made inquiries to its accounting and banking vendors. The proposed enhancement would be provided by Springbrook and its delivery partner, Merchant Transact, on a secure hosted web-site and integrate those payments directly into the Springbrook accounting/billing software. Finance staff will be able to leverage this investment to provide service to more customers with no increase in staff, and over the long-term be able to re-program staff time saved through this capacity upgrade to higher level finance work.
- Customer billing and payment enhancements through the internet include: Utility bill presentment; account details including consumption and services provided, date range of services, billing adjustments, bill date, due date, payments made, etc.; utility provider

benefits include quicker cash flow, real-time information, reduced bill printing and mailing costs, reduced staff time spent answering phone calls for customer information; customer driven viewing of billing and payment details, and creating single or recurring online payments including selection of credit/debit card or checking account.

- The overall cost of the service would be in the range of \$20,000 based upon a 20% customer participation rate. This estimate assumes that all of these payments (that add up to 20%) will be made using credit/debit cards. It assumes that the City would opt-in for the utility discounted credit card fee in lieu of paying the retail rate and passing on a convenience fee to the customer. Credit/debit cards are more expensive to process than ACH debits from checking accounts. The City would promote the use of ACH debit over time. The processing cost would be shared by the City's three utilities only. Our cost of a credit/debit card transaction would be in the range of \$3.50 each, while an ACH debit would cost less than \$2.00.
- The fiscal impact would be \$20,000 annually assuming 20% participation using credit/debit cards, and would be allocated among the Water, Sewer and Storm Drainage utility funds.
- Finance staff is working to combine owner-occupied bills; currently two bills are sent to those locations with storm drainage bills. Individuals would be able to make one-time payments.

Councilmember Curtis suggested staff research the possibility of setting up a kiosk in the front lobby of City Hall for residents to make on-line payments if they do not have internet service.

### **REVIEW OF UPCOMING COUNCIL MEETING AGENDAS**

City Manager Zabell reviewed upcoming agenda items with Council and reminded them of the June 19<sup>th</sup> through 22<sup>nd</sup> Association of Washington Cities Annual Conference. He encouraged councilmembers to communicate with State legislators about the proposed loss of revenue sharing of liquor excise tax in the current budget.

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

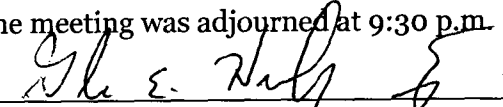
Councilmember Hulcey moved to go into executive session to discuss pending litigation with no action to be taken, and to adjourn immediately afterwards. Mayor Cerqui seconded the motion and motion carried unanimously.

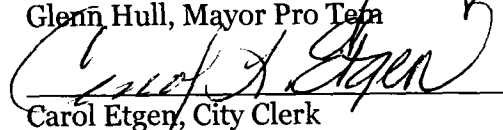
Council went into executive session at 8:53 p.m. with City Manager Zabell and City Attorney Combs for the purpose of discussing pending litigation per RCW 42.30.110 (1)(i).

Council came out of executive session at 9:30 p.m. with no action taken.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

  
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Glenn Hull, Mayor Pro Tem

  
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Carol Etgen, City Clerk