

The City of Columbia City

In Columbia County on the Columbia River



**CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP SESSION
FEBRUARY 12, 2010 - 2:00 P.M.
CITY HALL, 1840 SECOND STREET
COLUMBIA CITY, OR 97018**

Present:

Mayor Cheryl A. Young
Councilor Sally Ann Marson
Councilor Bob Schmor
Councilor Josh Fromm
Councilor Gary Hudson
Micah Rogers, Public Works Superintendent
Mike McGlothlin, Chief of Police
Leahnette Rivers, City Administrator/Recorder

The City Council met with staff to discuss City service levels, review financial projections, review the proposed 2010 Needs and Issues Inventory, establish priorities, and set goals and objectives for 2010. Staff explained that declining revenues and increasing expenses are creating a situation requiring the implementation of immediate cost-cutting measures to preserve the City's financial stability. The Council reviewed a list of cost-cutting recommendations prepared by staff, including a 14% reduction in paid staff hours. In addition, staff explained that financial projections beyond June 30, 2011 indicate that significant service level reductions may be required unless additional funding is secured.

The Council also discussed the City's need to bring the storm water system into compliance with DEQ regulations. Staff noted that the City has no available revenue source for storm water maintenance.

The Council reviewed graphs comparing City property tax rates and tax collections per capita throughout Columbia City. With the exception of Prescott (population 60) the information showed that Columbia City's tax rate is significantly lower than other cities within the County, and Columbia City's tax collections per capita is significantly lower than the amount collected by other cities within the County. In general, Council

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Members were very surprised by the differences in the tax rates and the amount of taxes collected by other cities in comparison to Columbia City, and inspired by the level of service the City has provided over the years with the limited amount of resources that were available.

Council Members identified police protection and street and storm water maintenance as critical services that are seriously under funded. Some Council Members suggested the City should prepare to place a 3-year operating levy on the ballot for voter consideration during the November election for police protection services, and move forward with establishing a storm water utility fee as soon as possible. Staff noted that once the DEQ regulations are met, the City's storm water maintenance costs should be fairly low, and suggested it might be better to include those maintenance services in the 3-year levy instead of an ongoing utility fee. Some Council Members agreed that the operating levy should be tied to police and streets, including storm water. It was the consensus of the Council that this subject be discussed further at the next meeting to provide time for additional thought.

The Council reviewed 2009-10 Policy Goals and Objectives and shared ideas for the development of 2010-11 Policy Goals and Objectives with staff.

Meeting adjourned 4:00 p.m.