

Spokane Documenters

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Council Meeting

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Agency: Spokane Valley City Council

Date: May 21, 2024

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Summary

Summarize the 3 most important outcomes or takeaways from your notes....

- Tourism continues to be of big importance to the Spokane Valley City Council, with \$4.4 million going toward a cross country course.
- The council will be discussing amending the master Speed Limit Schedule for school zones at a future council meeting
- Meetings are categorized differently. (Formal and study session). This is done with no difference in format other than they do not have a prayer or pledge of allegiance during study sessions. This has become a big contention and the pledge during study sessions is now led by Council Member Al Merkel before the meeting is called to order. Merkel continues to be called out by Mayor Pam Haley.

Follow-Up Questions

What are you left wondering? Ask up to 3 of your own follow-up questions...

- When will a sense of normalcy and decorum be restored to the council?
- There was actually “action” taken during a non-action item. (#5) A revision of goals were discussed and edited and then voted on.

Write all notes below the line

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6 pm. Tonight’s meeting was conducted in the “study session” format.

ROLL CALL

The roll call was taken by the city clerk. All council members were in attendance. There were approximately 20 citizens and staff present.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT OPPORTUNITY

Public comments were given by the following individuals. Excerpts and summaries are given:

Barb Howard, Eric Lowe, Michael Dolan and Kim Slinger provided public comments this evening. Their areas of concern included squatters living in motor homes in Valley neighborhoods and rules not being enforced. Also addressed was that some members of the Spokane Valley City Council who sit on the Spokane Transit Authority (STA) board are not representing their constituents, opioid crisis issues, and the prioritization of common-sense spending and utilization of grant money.

ACTION ITEMS

The following action items were posted from the agenda:

1. *Public Hearing: [2024 Budget Amendment](#) - Chelsie Taylor [public comment opportunity]*

City Finance Director Chelsie Taylor, along with Mayor Pam Haley, led a public hearing for amendments to the 2024 budget.

According to the agenda packet: "Since the initial adoption of the 2024 Budget on November 21, 2023, a number of events had transpired in the normal course of operations that necessitated a 2024 Budget amendment."

Besides this public comment opportunity, a first reading of Ordinance #24-010 amending the 2024 Budget would be brought forward this evening and an anticipated second reading will happen on June 4, 2024.

According to the resolution, the budget changes will affect 12 funds and show total revenue increases of \$8.4 million and expenditure increases of \$17.2 million. The largest change is for the Cross Country Course project, which is being funded by a \$4.4 million transfer from the Hotel/Motel Tax – Tourism Facilities Fund.

Public comments were offered by Mike Dolan and Barb Howard. They brought forward concerns about expenditures in regard to police advertising and the amount that was spent in educating the community. Howard had questions about the city's bond rating and wanted a comparison from past councils.

Specific information on the budget can be found [here](#).

2. *First Reading: [Ordinance 24-010: 2024 Budget Amendment](#) – Chelsie Taylor*

This item provided a first reading of Ordinance 24-010. There was no public comment offered due to the earlier action item and public hearing.

It was moved by Council Member Tim Hattenburg and seconded to advance Ordinance #24-010 amending the 2024 Budget to a second reading. According to the agenda packet, “there are adequate funds available to pay for these amendments.”

The motion passed unanimously with all council members voting in the affirmative.

3. *Second Reading: [Ordinance 24-009: Street Vacation - STV-2024-001](#) - Lori Barlow*

City Senior Planner Lori Barlow brought forward an action for a street located at Girard and Lily roads and approval for a street vacation. A street vacation generally means that a city is transferring the right-of-way of a public street or alley to a private property owner, usually when the owner’s property is adjacent to the city property. James Boone, LLC and Avodah, LLC requested the vacation to expand the operation area for an existing landscape materials business.

The ordinance passed unanimously.

4. *Motion Consideration: Potential Grant Opportunity: [Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program \(ATTIP\)](#) - Bill Helbig [public comment opportunity]*

Bill Helbig, the Public Works Director, provided a Power Point presentation on the ATTIP, which is making \$45 million available nationwide “for the planning, design, and construction of safe and connected active transportation networks or spines.”

City staff recommended submitting an application to request planning and design funds for a network project for a Flora Road Trail, which would connect the Appleway Trail to the Centennial Trail and Flora Park and include bridges over Interstate 90 and the Spokane River.

Hattenburg motioned to authorize the City Manager, or designee, to apply to the ATTIP for the Flora Road Trail project, requesting \$2 million for the project’s design. Read the full plan [here](#).

The council members had a lengthy discussion on the pros and cons of the project. It was pointed out that funding for this was just for the project design and not the engineering piece. Council Member Al Merkel also talked about funding that could be better spent at this time on fully funding police vacancies, which has been a topic in the past (though this particular grant would be able to be used for police funding).

In public comments, Eric Lowe spoke in favor of the city applying for the ATTIP grant.

Mike Dolan and Kim Slinger had a dissenting opinion and felt money could be used more effectively.

The motion failed 5-2 with Mayor Pam Haley and council members Merkel, Laura Padden, Rod Higgins, and Jessica Yaeger dissenting.

NON-ACTION ITEMS

The following items were posted on the agenda as non-action items. They are as follows:

5. *Admin Report: [Budget Goals](#) - John Hohman*

The conversation was led by City Manager John Hohman. According to the council packet, after two strategic planning sessions on upcoming budgets earlier this year, the council requested that the 2025/2026 goals be reviewed again to consider adding a goal related to transportation. The council selected the following goals: 1. Increase public safety response to ensure everyone feels safe in Spokane Valley; 2. Expand homeownership opportunities so more local people own homes; 3. Continue economic development efforts to maximize business growth; 4. Maintain a strong financial position; 5. Utilize strategic partnerships to aggressively reduce and prevent Spokane Valley homelessness.

After the discussion, Council Member Ben Wick suggested adding another goal and an edit. He suggested adding “Prioritize infrastructure maintenance and preservation and advance strategic projects through grant awards,” and having that be a second priority in their list. All but one council member agreed with the change, with Merkel dissenting. The current #2 priority was moved to #6.

Wick also suggested adding language at the end of their #3 priority. That language was, “And develop tourism destinations.” Council members unanimously agreed to the change.

6. *Admin Report: [School Zone Speed Limit Revision](#) – Bowdish & 12th – Jeremy Clark*

Jeremy Clark, the City Traffic Engineering Manager, gave a presentation advising that the city staff has coordinated with the staff at Opportunity Elementary school regarding the Bowdish Sidewalk Project, and they identified a desire to relocate the crosswalk from 11th Avenue to 12th Avenue. See the map and more details [here](#).

Council members voted unanimously to bring forward a resolution amending the master Speed Limit Schedule at a future council meeting.

7. *Admin Report: [Homeless Outreach Contract Award](#) – Sarah Farr & Eric Robison*

A PowerPoint presentation was given by Sarah Farr, Accounting and Finance Program Manager; Eric Robison, Homeless and Housing Coordinator; and Josh Pratt, Spokane Valley Police Dept. Homeless Outreach Officer. Find the full presentation [here](#).

According to the agenda packet, the city’s former homeless outreach services provider can no longer provide services, so the city put out a request for proposal. The city received two responses from the Salvation Army, which runs Spokane’s Trent Shelter, and Frontier Behavioral Health.

The homeless task force and city staff recommended a 12-month contract incorporating Frontier Behavioral Health with an alternative budget amount of \$200,419. The contract would run approximately from July 2024 through June 2025. After discussion, council members all agreed that staff bring this item back for consideration and a motion on May 28, 2024.

8. *[Advance Agenda](#) – Mayor Haley*

The following council members provided the following items for consideration to be placed on the advanced agenda. Those items and votes are provided below:

Merkel proposed placing an item on visiting procedures and a process for challenging contracts that do not follow best practice and established standards. Consensus on this item failed 6-1 with Merkel voting in the affirmative.

Council Member Laura Padden requested an administrative report on the effects and storage of lithium batteries. Consensus was unanimous to bring this item forward in the future.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Council members are allowed individualized comments and up to a three-minute presentation. They are as follows:

Merkel – provided comments in reference to how contracts are being handled because some people perceive there are preferences for who is awarded those contracts. Haley rebutted Merkel's comments, stating he was incorrect.

Haley also provided comments on behalf of Hattenburg and clarified comments made by him in reference to the proposed STA development, which is leased by a public business, Casa de Oro. She indicated they are a minority and do not have the authority to change anything along with other mitigating circumstances. Nothing was firm in regard to future development of the property and she advised she would keep the public informed.

CITY MANAGER COMMENTS

Hohman advised the new Veteran's Memorial recognition will be May 24, at Balfour Park across from City Hall at 11 am.

Hohman reported that a new email newsletter will be distributed weekly and is now available. For additional information, go to the City Website to subscribe.

Hohman congratulated Officer Pat Bloomer for being recognized as the Deputy of the Year.

Hohman also advised that the Centennial Trail is now open again (soft opening) and is ahead of the regularly established schedule.

Hohman concluded his comments by advising the public that the Police Survey was completed and results would be forthcoming June 4th. Those results would be available on the City website.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 pm.

If you believe anything in these notes is inaccurate, please email us at documenters@rangemedia.co with "Correction Request" in the subject line.

Instructions

Your notes should be 2-6 single-spaced pages, including 8-10 hyperlinks. You'll do most of your writing during the meeting, but we recommend you spend a total of 30-60 minutes on the “before” and “after” sections described below:

Before

- **Pre-research:** Understand the agency an agenda before you arrive ([Get tips](#))

During

- **Notetaking:** Focus on direct quotes, debate, decisions and details like ordinance numbers, names and titles. Collect all available handouts for reference ([Get tips](#))

After

- **Revision:** Organize and fact-check your raw notes ([Get tips](#))
- **Summary & Follow-up:** Briefly distill meeting highlights and your remaining questions in 1-3 sentences per bullet point ([Get tips](#))