

MINUTES

Walla Walla Joint Community Development Agency Board (WWJCDAB) meeting

December 20, 2010 - Walla Walla County Public Health and Legislative Building

Board members present: Jim Barrow, Greg Tompkins, and Bill Clemens.

Others present in the audience:

Tom Glover, Director, Walla Walla Joint Community Development Agency
Barbara Clark, Mayor, City of Walla Walla
Jesse Nolte, Deputy Prosecuting Attorney, Walla Walla County
Nabiel Shawa, City Manager, City of Walla Walla
Tim Donaldson, City Attorney, City of Walla Walla
Preston Fredrickson, Assistant City Attorney, City of Walla Walla
Tim McCarty, Support Services Director, City of Walla Walla
Dominick Elia, City Councilmember, City of Walla Walla
Shane Laib, City Councilmember, City of Walla Walla
Jennifer Seekamp, Human Resource Manager, City of Walla Walla
Shelley Clarke, City of Walla Walla Development Services
Matt Perkins, City of Walla Walla Development Services
Dave Collette, City of Walla Walla Development Services
Andy Porter, Union-Bulletin
Alpha O'Laughlin, Union representative, Local 1191-WC
Karen Martin, County Auditor
Susan Dombrosky, County Chief Financial Officer
Lauri Jackson, County Community Development Department
R. L. McFarland

_____ (female)

The special meeting portion was called to order at 3:00 p.m. by Chair Clemens. Roll call was held with Board members Barrow, Tompkins and Clemens present. Quorum established.

The agenda for the special meeting was to discuss and possibly make decisions regarding the operations of the joint agency. Mr. Clemens called for comments, reiterating that the purpose of the meeting was to allow discussion. Mr. Barrow said he was encouraged by the attendance at today's meeting, and was looking forward to moving ahead. Mr. Tompkins reserved comment.

Public Comment:

Ms. O'Laughlin explained she was present to support city and county employees, and had met with Bruce Schroeder, the city's outside labor counsel, but as there were so many unknowns, that meeting was, in her estimation, not very productive. She does feel that regardless of employment, the unions have the right to follow employees, and she will be asking for more meetings on wages, insurance, etc. There was no other public comment.

Minutes

Mr. Barrow moved to approve the minutes of the last meeting; Mr. Tompkins seconded; motion approved.

Old Business:

Employee benefits. Mr. Glover reported that this item is still being worked on; however, benefits will be with WCIF (WA Counties Insurance Fund). Three plans are being reviewed for offering, and it appears this will be within budget. He's working on the WCIF application form now, and mentioned that the board had approved an \$800 cap on insurance benefits. Some discussion on what this will cover.

Agency Budget:

Mr. Glover provided a copy of the updated draft budget, and reviewed it. He is proposing two other positions: one building inspector, and a part-time code enforcement officer that the city will pay for to catch the city's backlog up. No benefits will be paid for the part-time position. Discussion on Unemployment costs, as Mr. Tompkins determined the agency was not self-insured for that. Mr. Barrow thought the city and county would have a pool to pay from, as the agency would not in the early stages. Regarding financial/fiscal services, there was discussion on how the terms of the governing intergovernmental agreement reflect that the county will cover those costs while the city was to provide facilities space on an "in-kind" basis. It was determined that the county will not be able to provide those services as originally thought. Mrs. Martin advised that the county could only provide a limited amount of such support, and the agency position would be much like outside districts are set up now, paying from a list provided by the agency, with someone else producing a spreadsheet, etc. Mr. Tompkins felt it would be better to use one provider for these services. Mr. Glover said that had been covered in the RFQ (a copy of which was provided), and that the intent was for that selected vendor to provide complete payroll services. Mrs. Martin felt that would be a good option; otherwise, another option would be to purchase a system to use such as QuickBooks, but then that would require another staff person.

Discussion ensued among the board members regarding whether the current agreement would need to be modified, and if cash amounts would be determined for each item (accounting services that were to be provided by the county, and a rental fee for the facilities space to be provided by the city) or the two items be considered on a "quid pro quo" basis. On the county side, the agency has been allowed to open accounts through the county treasurer's auspices, rather than going through a competitive process. There was further review of services that would be or are provided by the county treasurer - Mr. McCarty indicated that intent was the agency deposit with the treasurer, and then monthly the treasurer cuts a check to each agency. Mr. Donaldson expressed his request that whatever decision is made, it be reflected in some way for historical purposes.

Further discussion on salaries as that cost relates to the budget. Some will be slightly higher and some lower. Mr. Tompkins repeated a concern previously expressed, that he was questioning how the agency could start up on January 10 without knowing what would be paid out to employees, and he also wondered what would be the impact of union negotiations. Mr. Clemens reported on his meeting with Mr. Schroeder and Ms. O'Laughlin, where his understanding was that the employees would make the decision on unionizing, not the agency. Once they are hired and the salaries are set, they would have an opportunity to sign with the union. Mr. Glover agreed, and said further every effort was made that salaries were comparable based on experience.

Ms. O'Laughlin said that her opinion was the union's position was different than Mr. Schroeder's, but the meeting ended on the basis that there was a need to see if the joint agency would move forward. She is interested in continuing negotiations. Mr. Barrow's understanding was that a union may not be the agency's position, but the employees'; Ms. O'Laughlin said possibly there may need to be an interpretation by PERC based on positions offered (not person). Mr. Glover said that offers of employment will be made based on the salaries identified. If employees unionize, the budget could be affected. Mr. Barrow felt that the salaries were properly determined with HR input; Mr. Tompkins asked Mr. Glover if he felt comfortable with the salaries, and Mr. Glover responded that he did. Mr. Clemens asked if the information was determined based on current union positions; Mr. Glover said yes. He then reviewed further information from his memo on the budget. Mr. Clemens had a question regarding the cost for printing and binding, which was only on the city side. Mrs. Clark from that department responded that as she recalled it was mostly for the large number of Comprehensive Plan copies done last year; otherwise included are costs for inspection cards and correction notices, which are much less costly items.

Mr. Clemens also commented on the retention of seven vehicles in the budget, rather than the original six. Mr. Glover responded that there will be 13 employees, many of whose duties require them to be outside of the office. Mr. Clemens asked about the city's principal planner position; Mr. Tompkins said that would be a wash, as the city has an offset of \$117,000.

There are some first-year costs that will drop out of the budget in the second year of the agency's existence, Mr. Glover pointed out.

Mr. Clemens then asked if board members were comfortable with the budget, or how far off it was. Mr. Tompkins was okay with it as presented, with a question on changes, saying he didn't want surprises for something such as incentive pay that was currently not in the budget. Mr. Donaldson said the discussion was that that would have to be added to the agreement. Mr. Barrow said that what is in the budget has to be agreed upon by the two entities, so nothing could be added to the budget; changes would have to come to the board. Mr. Tompkins again expressed his position that both the city and county representatives would have to remember that the board runs the agency, and that the board would make the decisions and give direction to the agency director on any changes. He also expressed concern regarding the sufficiency of the budget if employees unionize. Mr. Barrow responded that the budget cannot be exceeded without approval, and that staff modifications would have to come to the agency board, then in turn to the city and county.

Once again Mr. Clemens asked if the board members were comfortable with the budget, as he felt it was important to get everything on the table now and have all questions answered or addressed.

Mr. Barrow moved to approve the draft budget as submitted, and to have that budget then presented to the city and county for approval, pursuant to the intergovernmental agreement. Mr. Tompkins seconded. Discussion. Mr. Donaldson said he could not speak for the city council, but he didn't see anything insurmountable resulting from the various board discussions, maybe just tweaks needed, but it is a starting point. Mr. Tompkins asked Mayor Clark if she saw anything that might be of concern to the city council or if she felt things could be worked out. She felt things could be worked out, and that the budget seemed in line. Mr. Tompkins wanted to have everything included in the budget, so asked about the costs for financial services and facilities use, and if those would be subject to the formula in the agreement or "quid pro quo". Mr. Nolte basically agreed with Mr. Donaldson, that things could be worked out. Mr. Elia felt the costs should either be in or out. Mr. Tompkins had a concern that costs could change on either side, and no longer be truly quid pro quo, so his feeling was to put the costs in.

Mr. Barrow then offered a friendly amendment to his motion to adopt the budget, to reflect a cost of \$20,280 under Facilities and \$20,000 for Financial Services be inserted into the budget. Mr. Tompkins seconded for discussion. Mr. McCarty said the figure in question would not increase for 2011 for Facilities rent.

Mr. Barrow further amended his motion to move that the budget be adjusted to add in the Facilities rental and have it be part of the cost share between the city and county. Motion approved.

Finances, financial oversight, and responsibilities:

Consensus was that this information has been covered in other discussions.

Draft internal policies:

Mr. Glover provided a copy of the draft internal policies (Operating Principles and Procedures of the Walla Walla Joint Community Development Agency), and a cover memo, which he reviewed for those present.

Mr. Barrow asked about the fiscal coordinator mentioned on page 6, and asked if this was the county treasurer. Mr. Glover said this would be the firm or person selected from the RFQ process. Mr. Donaldson said he had tried to compare this document to the board bylaws, and felt that possibly some of the flexibility built into the bylaws might have been lost, but he didn't have real issues with some use of terminology that was different from that in the intergovernmental agreement. He wanted to be sure that there was understanding on the paychecks could be prepared and disbursed prior to board approval, so the payroll doesn't have to wait for board approval, as employees are paid on the last working day of the month and the agency board meets the first Monday of the month. Perhaps this could be a potential amendment after the agency becomes operational, so as to be consistent and not to hold things up now, as other things may need changing after operations begin. Mr. Nolte agreed that corrections can be made later.

Mr. Barrow moved to approve the draft policies (Operating Principles and Procedures of the Walla Walla Joint Community Development Agency); Mr. Tompkins seconded. Motion approved.

Review of updated list of tasks performed by the agency:

Mr. Glover indicated that the information has mostly been updated, and that he will provide the list at the next meeting.

New Business:

Employment agreement with director Glover. Mr. Donaldson advised that he and Mr. Glover had not been able to discuss this. County is to take action on the appointment of Mr. Glover tomorrow. Item to be continued on the agenda.

Mr. Tompkins asked about a start date for the agency, and said he felt if it was to be January 10, his preference was that people not be shut out of doing business between January 3 and 10. Mr. Glover said that the office will be closed as staff will be in mandatory training and getting everything moved in and operational. Inspections will be scheduled, but permits will not be processed, pending the need for all-staff training on this. Mr. McCarty said the city expected to do business during the transition. Mr. Barrow asked if agency would open on January 3 with staff; yes, per Mr. Glover. Then time would be spent setting up and testing systems and getting processes in place. There will not be computer support for permit processing January 3-5, but inspections can be scheduled. In responses to questions on the system to be used, Mr. Glover said at first two systems will be used, the city's and the county's, and staff will have to be cross-trained on both, with the work expected to be done on both systems the first year.

Mr. Glover was asked by Mr. Tompkins if he felt the agency could be up and running, and if it was the best thing to do. Mr. Glover responded that this format - city and county joining - has not been done before; other mergers have been, just not this one. There are two sets of codes and processes. Expectation on both sides is that this has been done to best serve the citizens. Although some people have said the work load is doubling while the number of employees to serve has been reduced, he wants this to work and staff is committed as well to making this work. As to whether it is the right thing to do, that's a political question, and not his call. Mr. Tompkins said Walla Walla has a history of doing unique things and he has the utmost faith in Mr. Glover and his ability to see this agency succeed and be efficient. He acknowledged he has had a lot of questions, but it was to try to get all the information possible to take the best care of citizens and employees. Mr. Clemens added that PacifiCorp has to work with different agencies and tariffs, etc., and he knows things can be done and feels this is a great opportunity for growth as well as a challenge. Mr. Barrow echoed his faith in Mr. Glover, and thought he could speak for other councilmembers that they were enthusiastic about this, although it will be hard work. He felt there would be a lot of interest in this joint agency format, which could lead to emulation.

Mr. Clemens said the budget is adopted and interviews have been held; is the January 3 date still doable? Mr. Glover said yes. A schedule has been put together, and although offers had been held pending the recent discussions on the agency future, everything is ready to go if the city and county are ready to move ahead. He didn't feel the timeline had been delayed. No formal action had been taken regarding a January 3 start date, Mr. Clemens mentioned.

Mr. Barrow moved, subject to the commissioners' decision tomorrow, to instruct staff to start business on January 3 (2011). Mr. Tompkins seconded. Discussion ensued. If both city and county adopt the budget, and the county does not terminate the agreement, it could move ahead, Mr. Donaldson said. Mr. Tompkins asked if verbal offers could be made to prospective employees, in particular those who were or had been city or county employees, so that they would know sooner than waiting for the mail; Mr. Glover was already planning to make such telephone calls and follow-up with letters. Mr. Elia said both entities have 14 days from the time the budget is presented to terminate; the county has this topic on their agenda tomorrow (Tuesday) and the city has set a special meeting for Wednesday. Mr. Donaldson promised that he would present something at the city council meeting that would take care of loose ends. Motion was then approved.

Director's update:

Most of the update items have been covered already.

The next meeting will be December 27, 2010 at the regular time of 4:00 p.m. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 4:45 p.m.

APPROVED December 27, 2010



Bill Clemens, Chair