

**City of Puyallup
City Council Study Session
May 13, 2014**

(These minutes are not verbatim. The meeting was recorded, and copies of the recording are retained for a period of six years from the date of the meeting and are available upon request.)

COUNCILMEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Knutsen, Deputy Mayor Hopkins, Councilmember Palmer, Councilmember Shadko, Councilmember Swanson, Councilmember Vermillion

Mayor Knutsen recognized the absence of Councilmember Door as excused.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Council Action: A motion was made by Councilmember Vermillion, second by Deputy Mayor Hopkins, to approve the agenda. The motion passed 6-0.

Proposed future Justice Center

Property and Facilities Manager Deke Jones gave an update on the state of the current public safety building with regard to its condition and maintenance needs. He identified costs and discussed necessary repairs to the Police Department facility as follows: HVAC system (\$35,000); a new roof (\$270,000) or roof repairs (\$35,000); and new carpeting (\$40,000). He further discussed a recent remodel of the records area, where staff was able to make better use of the space (\$6,000).

Mr. Jones recalled past discussion about the use of forfeiture and seizure funds to build a perimeter fence with remotely controlled gates. He explained that bids were sought for a security fence and estimates came in at \$85,000; however, staff found some less expensive options and lowered that cost to about \$65,000. Staff also revisited the idea of a security card reader system, which would cost an additional \$20,000.

Mr. Jones also spoke to space needs, pointing out that the current facility is at full capacity. He reported that the Mt. Rainier Federal Credit Union has asked if the Police Department is interested to lease space owned by it, for minimal rent, with the city responsible for any tenant improvements. He anticipated adding IT connectivity along with some door and window security features would cost \$5,000 and said the credit union has agreed to allow some parking space for the traffic officers' motorcycles. He further noted that Central Pierce Fire and Rescue is expected to eventually relocate its downtown station, which would free up an additional 6,000 square feet of space for police operations.

In regards to a new justice center, Mr. Jones said siting is dependent upon cost which will be determined by the council as a policy issue. Explaining that his review of property, costs and feasibility was based upon the prior Helix Report, he said consideration must be given to facility size, design, location, funding options and if a facility would house the jail, police, the municipal court or a combination of departments. He further reviewed size and pricing per square foot for the old Lowe's and Lumbermen's sites. City Manager Bill McDonald recalled prior discussion to

have the justice center as part of the downtown Civic Center and noted that concerns regarding siting a facility on South Hill out of the lahar area may have changed that idea.

Councilmember Vermillion questioned if the Benaroya property was considered, noting that one building is virtually empty and the relatively isolated site offers good security. Saying a satellite station could be situated downtown, he felt the Lowe's site to be too expensive to consider purchasing.

Deputy Mayor Hopkins advised that consideration be given to jail size, if the city will remain in the jail business and whether it will maintain a separate court or combine all public safety-related services within a justice center. He judged the assumptions contained in the Helix report as not well thought-out and encouraged continued discussion of these issues in the interest of giving staff direction.

Councilmember Swanson spoke to court locations having easy access to transit and questioned the need to have a centrally-located police department headquarters in the downtown. He agreed that council must decide if the city will continue to provide jail services, referred to how relocating police headquarters would impact officers, and urged that the cost of operating a full-service justice center be taken into consideration.

Chief Jeter agreed that relocating police headquarters to South Hill would require a satellite office downtown to ensure easy access for valley citizens. He added that a centrally-located police station decreases prisoner transport time, and thus keeps more officers available for response.

Councilmember Palmer referred to the substantial cost of constructing and operating a jail and agreed with the need to understand all available options, especially those which might entail putting a bond issue before the voters.

In response to a question, Mr. Jones said based upon square footage needs, the cost to build a justice center would be approximately \$19 million. The jail would be approximately one-third of that cost.

Mayor Knutsen opposed abandoning the downtown police headquarters and said future traffic impacts to officer response times must be considered. He identified the downtown post office as a possible location for the police in the future, envisioning that the building could be expanded after the side streets were vacated, the two properties combined, and the existing public safety building then replaced with parking.

Councilmember Shadko said moving the police department to South Hill would not constitute abandoning the downtown, especially if a satellite office remained. She inquired as to the value of the current site and pointed out that if the police department moved, the current building could be demolished and the property made available for future economic development.

Deputy Mayor Hopkins concurred that maintaining a downtown presence was vital, referred to property the city owns on South Hill and emphasized the need to conduct further research on these questions. He agreed that the city must also take into consideration the rapidly changing jail

industry and if the option of having holding cells instead of full-service jails is viable. Pointing out that if the city chooses to pursue a voter-approved bond, all expenses would need to be justified to the public, he concluded that the cost to build a court facility would be much greater than continuing to lease the current space.

In regards to the value of the police department property, Mr. Jones shared that the adjacent property is currently listed at \$45 per square foot, or \$1.2 million for the corner lot.

Further discussion centered on the need to more carefully consider the 6320 financing option; downsizing the Helix study as far as jail size and further considering the functions that would be included in a new justice center; addressing the short-term maintenance and space issues of the current police department facility; assessing transportation impacts and costs for the police, courts and jail; and keeping in mind the desire to have officers spend more of their time patrolling rather than transporting prisoners to alternate jails.

Councilmember Swanson noted that the findings from the state's *Regional Jail Capacity Study*, due in November, may essentially put cities out of the jail business. In regards to contracting out services, he pointed out that many facilities anticipate raising their rates and believed that Puyallup would be better off operating its own jail for as long as it is able to do so.

Deputy Mayor Hopkins was not opposed to purchasing the property adjacent to the police department at the right price, but did not support overpaying for it. He anticipated that voters may be more receptive to approving a new bond once the library is paid off.

Mayor Knutsen likened the jail issue to South Sound 911 and voiced a need for some kind of guarantee that any new jail facility would not be closed or taken over due to the results of the state's *Jail Capacity Study*.

Roles of the Council and the city manager with respect to employees

City Manager Bill McDonald recalled bringing personnel-related issues to the council for its review and approval that should have been handled administratively. He wished to revisit and clarify the roles of the city council and the city manager, noted the amount of work needed to update the organizational development framework, and said his actions may have caused the city council to micromanage some functions of the city manager.

City Attorney Kevin Yamamoto noted that the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) governs the authority of the city council and the city manager in regards to employees. He summarized the city council's authority to create departments, offices and employees; determine and define their function, power and duties; and fix the compensation and working conditions of city officers and employees. Mr. Yamamoto further summarized the city manager's authority to make recommendations to the council regarding departments, offices and staff along with the powers and duties of each department or office; supervise the administrative affairs of the city; and to appoint and remove department heads, officers and employees.

After comparing the authority of the council and the city manager with respect to personnel issues, Mr. Yamamoto explained that according to state law, the council is prohibited from directing the appointment or removal of any employee other than the city manager. Further, the council is obligated to deal with administrative services solely through the city manager and is not allowed to issue orders to any subordinate of the city manager. State law does allow discussion with the city manager of issues which pertain to specific city employees.

Mr. Yamamoto also noted the city manager's authority to transfer monies between funds, subject to regulations set by the council. He pointed out that any council-directed fund reductions require a supermajority vote, as the budget is council's commitment to how tax dollars will be spent. Although the salary schedule is a part of the annual budget, he explained that state law permits the adoption of a separate salary ordinance, which would allow council to make changes more easily. He discussed the following options for consideration: adoption of a portfolio of employment positions; use of a salary ordinance; and whether to impose regulations which would govern the city manager's authority to transfer monies between funds.

Mr. McDonald referred to his bringing job descriptions to council which were more detailed than necessary and agreed it would be useful to have a portfolio of staff positions. He voiced his intent to advance simpler proposals which define positions in a general way, expressed his belief that employees desire to envision a career path within the organization, and spoke of his efforts to keep the council informed.

In response to a question, Mr. Yamamoto advised that council's communications with staff be clearly framed as suggestions, with staff aware that "no" is an acceptable answer. Mr. McDonald encouraged communication between council and staff in order to facilitate the gathering of information and pointed out that all contact is reported to him.

Councilmember Vermillion agreed that the city's assemblage of positions should be streamlined and promotional opportunities be made available; however, he did not support creating excessive levels or steps within categories or job titles. He concurred that the city manager should have a certain amount of flexibility to move funds, appreciated being notified when this was done, and did not think it necessary for council to approve each adjustment.

In response to a question, Mr. Yamamoto explained that job functions change over time. Since any new position must be approved by council, the establishment of a portfolio of essential positions would make it easier to determine whether a new position was being created or an existing position was simply being changed.

Deputy Mayor Hopkins appreciated the city manager's openness, but preferred not to micro-manage. He supported the portfolio suggestion along with a salary ordinance. He also concurred with Councilmember Vermillion in regards to the moving of funds, with council being notified but allowing the city manager the freedom to move funds as necessary.

Councilmember Swanson questioned the necessity of having a portfolio which might contain substantially more job descriptions than actual employees and advised that positions and their titles be based on the work done rather than on longevity. He voiced support for a salary ordinance and

perhaps for a quasi-portfolio of positions, as these could simplify and make the budget process more transparent. He believed it would be a good practice to establish guidelines for fund transfers authorized by the city manager and suggested limiting transfers longer than 90 days for a set amount of dollars.

Mayor Knutsen believed city employees to be well-paid with good benefits and listed several ways in which employees are able to advance. He was concerned that creating empty positions would hurt morale and could lead to favoritism. Emphasizing that an individual being considered for promotion should never be named in paperwork provided to council as this does not allow the council to be unbiased in its decision-making, he added that whether to promote a certain individual is up to the city manager. He preferred reducing the number of classifications rather than expanding them and noted that most positions evolve over time, change being a natural part of the work force.

Councilmember Palmer was willing to consider a portfolio but was unsure how it would simplify the issue.

Councilmember Swanson noted an upcoming District 3 neighborhood safety meeting scheduled for Tuesday May 20th at the Northwest Christian School. He asked that the May 20th agenda be adjusted to allow councilmembers an opportunity to attend the meeting.

Mr. McDonald acknowledged his request and agreed to keep the agenda manageable.

ADJOURNED: 8:07 p.m.