

**City of Puyallup  
City Council Study Session  
February 11, 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 Door, Councilmember Palmer, Councilmember Shadko, Councilmember Swanson, Councilmember Vermillion

**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 7-0.

**Special Event Policy Questions**

Management Analyst Melanie Harding reviewed that last year, Council updated the City's regulations pertaining to special events. Subsequently, the process for reviewing, considering and approving applications was changed to allow a more thorough analysis of safety and other impacts and to improve communication between involved staff and with applicants. Ms. Harding explained that five items relating to this process now require Council direction, as follows:

1. Should certain community events be considered "City-sponsored?"
2. Should private events be allowed to use City property without a charge?
3. Are there City properties where alcohol use should be permitted during special events?
4. Should amplified music for private special events be prohibited, regulated, or permitted?
5. Should the Puyallup Municipal Code be amended to allow a process for applications to be submitted less than 90 days in advance?

Mayor Knutsen said absent any complaints, he did not see any reason to change current practice. He noted that the traditional City-sponsored events are both popular with the community and supported by businesses.

Councilmember Swanson agreed and said these events pay for themselves in terms of sales tax revenues; however, he did not want to be limited to sponsoring only traditional events and therefore suggested that criteria be developed for new events. He added that not every special event can be planned for 90 days in advance (for example, the City of Seattle's recent parade honoring the Seahawks).

Bill McDonald, City Manager, reported that other jurisdictions budget for community events. He favored identifying actual costs and being transparent about the resources that are expended for such events.

Councilmember Vermillion echoed the mayor and Councilmember Swanson and said while he was receptive to considering new events, these should be approved by Council. His preference was that any City-sponsored event should serve the community as a whole in the same way that the Daffodil Festival and Meeker Days do.

Councilmember Palmer concurred that some of these events are part of the fabric of Puyallup's shared community life and should be supported, although it might be appropriate to recoup some of the costs associated with them.

Councilmember Swanson suggested that large annual events can be addressed during the budget process, perhaps as part of the community grant allocations. A secondary process could be created for one-time events that would be brought to Council as needed.

Mayor Knutsen considered allowing the use of City-owned property in the form of a vacant lot, street or building to be different than allocating funds. He viewed the attracting of visitors to Puyallup as positive, noting it helps strengthen local businesses.

Councilmember Vermillion agreed that the list of events showing which ones are currently City-sponsored should not be changed.

Councilmember Swanson said any City-sponsored event should be open to the public, not for-profit, and charge no entry fee.

Deputy Mayor Hopkins said the question is what process should be followed for a potential new City-sponsored event; for example, if the Ruston Relay sought City sponsorship. Because staff would not have authority to approve a City sponsorship, he suggested adopting a process for such requests that involved either the full Council or a committee.

Mayor Knutsen pointed to the distinction between administrative and legislative authority and said if a new event sought sponsorship by the City, the Council should be notified and given the opportunity to consider the request.

Councilmember Palmer supported identifying in the budget the amount of funds spent on event sponsorships; having a set of criteria for sponsoring events; and ensuring communication between the administration and Council regarding potential new event sponsorships.

Councilmember Swanson agreed with the mayor for events in 2014 and said any changes could be made in the 2015 budget process to quantify the value of the City's contribution to sponsored events.

Councilmember Door supported continuing to sponsor "heritage" events as has been done in the past. She suggested that Council could give staff direction by declaring a limit on the amount of sponsorship it is willing to provide to any one event.

Regarding the second question involving the use by private events of City-owned property without a charge, Mayor Knutsen advised, and Councilmembers concurred, that such requests should be handled as they have been in the interest of not negatively impacting any events.

Ms. Harding referred to the question of whether alcohol use should be permitted on any City properties during special events, and if so, which properties.

Responding to Councilmember Swanson, City Attorney Kevin Yamamoto confirmed that in such cases, the City would require a fairly extensive license agreement which would generally protect it from any liability. The applicant would be responsible for providing insurance and obtaining an appropriate license from the Washington State Liquor Control Board.

Councilmember Swanson supported allowing wine tasting events such as the one sought last year by the PMSA for the Wednesday evening "Sunset Market," but was concerned that events allowing alcohol be limited as to size or otherwise controlled to deter negative impacts. Councilmember Palmer agreed that alcohol use should be permitted, with some limitations. Saying he knew of no serious problems related to alcohol being served at Meeker Days, Deputy Mayor Hopkins supported allowing this for events such as wine tastings or public functions hosted by the library.

Councilmember Vermillion was not in favor of expanding alcohol use for all events, noting he had been disappointed to see a beer garden at the Fair's car show. Although he considered a wine tasting appropriate as it consists of sampling rather than consuming large amounts, he was concerned about not increasing potential access to minors, the role of private servers, and the city's reputation.

Mayor Knutsen did not support allowing alcohol to be served in city parks or the council chambers at City Hall, although he felt this would be acceptable at the City Hall plaza, in the Pavilion, or in a closed-off street adjacent to a park.

Councilmember Swanson offered a solution to prohibit alcohol in the parks, but allow it in certain pre-designated locations outside of main park areas. Councilmembers Shadko and Door agreed with this suggestion.

Ms. Harding questioned Council's direction on prohibiting, regulating or permitting amplified music for private special events, noting examples of previous events where this was allowed and asking what criteria should be used if amplified sound is to be permitted.

Mr. Yamamoto emphasized that any criteria must focus on time, manner and place and not on the content of the amplified sound.

Deputy Mayor Hopkins believed the proposed criteria for allowing or disallowing amplified sounds to be good and suggested that it incorporate the advice from the city attorney. Mayor Knutsen spoke of the need to be aware of the direction the speakers face as this can make a significant difference as far as impacts.

On the question of whether the Puyallup Municipal Code should be amended to allow a process for applications to be submitted less than 90 days in advance, Deputy Mayor Hopkins felt the \$80 application fee to be extremely low and said the cost of staff review for each application was probably closer to \$1,000. He advised that the City not accept applications submitted less than 30 days prior to the planned event.

Councilmember Swanson disagreed, saying the City should not entirely eliminate the opportunity to submit an application less than 30 days before an event as a function may reasonably be determined to have not been foreseeable, or may be very small in scale.

Mayor Knutsen was comfortable that staff could discern whether or not enough time existed to accommodate an event, even if the application was submitted on short notice. He added that organizers must pay for barricades and other services in addition to the application fee.

### **False Alarm Permit Ordinance**

Chief of Police Bryan Jeter explained the proposal to update Puyallup's Municipal Code relating to privately-owned and –operated alarm systems in the interest of reducing the number of false alarms. He reported that over the past four years, the Police Department has responded to 4,765 alarms, approximately 98% of which have been false. Noting that each call dispatches two officers for 30 to 40 minutes, on average, he was concerned that responding to false alarms may hinder or diminish the availability of police services to the general public. He further believed that reducing the number of false alarm responses could better allocate scarce public safety and law enforcement resources to higher priority tasks.

The chief reviewed that under the proposed changes, alarm system owners would be subject to an annual \$25 registration fee. A selected third-party contractor would manage the alarm program, collecting the registration fees as well as fines issued for false alarms. The proposal is to impose a fine for every false alarm, with an option to waive the first fee if the owner of the alarm system successfully completes an online course aimed at educating users on the correct operation of their systems and the importance of preventing false alarms.

Chief Jeter shared that other jurisdictions which have adopted similar false alarm regulations have experienced substantial reductions in the number of false alarms. He listed key elements in a successful false alarm reduction program, including education for new alarm users, enhanced call verification, and outsourcing the management of the false alarm program. He noted that an additional component could be suspension of police response after the fourth false alarm.

The chief concluded that, if this program is implemented, he would request that the revenue from all fines and fees be used to fund the position of Crime Prevention Coordinator at full-time from its current part-time level.

Responding to Councilmember Swanson, Chief Jeter said the alarm monitoring company could provide the City with reports as needed or requested. Councilmember Swanson believed it would be fair to allow one false alarm per year without charge as in some cases, the PD cannot be sure that an apparent false alarm was, in fact, false, despite the lack of evidence of attempted break-in.

Councilmember Shadko inquired if suspending response after four false alarms would expose the City to any liability. City Attorney Yamamoto replied that it would not, as the police provide services to the public at large and not specifically to any one person or call for service.

In response to Councilmember Vermillion, Chief Jeter said the vendor would manage the registration and billing of accounts, including the issuance of fines and collection of fees. It is not yet known how much this service would cost. The chief confirmed that an appeal process would be available for those who wished to contest a fine or a suspension of police response.

Deputy Mayor Hopkins emphasized the importance of education and adequately informing alarm system owners about the changes. He supported allowing one free false alarm per year, noting that many businesses experience staff turnover which could inadvertently result in a false alarm.

Councilmember Palmer said the program was well-designed and he favored moving forward with it.

Responding to a question, Chief Jeter explained that approximately 60% of false alarms are first-time occurrences, and about 70% are attributable to user error.

Ron Haner, representing Alarm Center, Inc., commented on his extensive work with various jurisdictions on false alarm ordinances, saying that most jurisdictions charge the owner of a system for every false alarm, even the first one. In response to Councilmember Vermillion, Mr. Haner said the online course that possibly could be taken in lieu of paying a first-time fine would be provided by the third-party vendor and consist of generic information applicable to all systems.

### **Public Affairs Officer Position**

Mr. McDonald proposed increasing the current half-time public affairs position to a full-time public affairs officer/community relations coordinator. He reminded Council of the creation of a management analyst position and of Melanie Harding's transition into the new position, effective at the beginning of this year. He believed that, partly due to the savings realized by the changes made last year to the emergency management department, he could fund both positions within the existing budget.

Mr. McDonald explained this request was essentially a workload capacity issue. He discussed the importance of having sufficient manpower to manage public information, including on the website and through various media sources, along with being able to address citizen concerns. He pointed out the City's past lack of management analyst capabilities that resulted in the creation of the new position and identified a list of proposed projects for this position. He spoke to constituent concerns shared by councilmembers, noted that the public affairs officer would assume the lead in addressing many of these, and said both positions would support Council.

Mayor Knutsen voiced concern with the appearance of the City hiring staff to assist others. He did not consider the City to be fully financially recovered from the effects of the recession, and

he opposed hiring additional personnel in City Hall. He expressed concern with the recent utility rate increases and the possible hiring of new non-public works staff. He encouraged careful consideration before committing to this action and suggested that some of the work could be spread amongst other departments.

Deputy Mayor Hopkins emphasized that the additional funding needed would come from the General Fund. He concurred with the mayor's concern regarding potential budget creep, noting his appreciation for the good financial progress made last year when the City was able to realize Tier 2 and Tier 3 funds while paying down interfund loans. He expressed reluctance with the request yet understood the need.

Councilmember Swanson recalled the work last year done by the management analyst team, which resulted in substantial savings to the budget of the parks department. He saw an opportunity to continue with other such evaluations and said if the new management analyst position pays for itself, it would be a net benefit to the City; however, he wondered if some of the identified potential projects might distract from work that would comprise most of this position's benefit.

Councilmember Palmer felt the potential list of projects to be important and believed that the duties of the management analyst should be broader than just budget savings. In regards to the budget impact of the public affairs position, he asked how it will be funded beyond this year.

**Council Action:** At 8:29 p.m., a motion was made by Councilmember Swanson, second by Deputy Mayor Hopkins to extend the meeting to 9:00 p.m. The motion passed 7-0.

Mr. McDonald replied that this position would come back before Council for evaluation during the 2015 budget process, and he anticipated being able to demonstrate its value at that time. He explained that the potential project list for the management analyst reflects topics and ideas identified by staff and said that Council may opt to add items to the list from its retreat. He advised that not all of the items will be addressed and stated that Council will be involved in deciding and prioritizing the projects.

Responding to Councilmember Palmer, Mr. McDonald confirmed the viability of having the public affairs/community relations coordinator perform website maintenance and manage the City's social media accounts, in addition to other duties. He expected that the budget savings in the emergency management division would continue.

Councilmember Vermillion believed that some of the tasks on the project list appeared to be the responsibility of other departments. He said if this request was approved, it was his preference that the police department be brought up to full staff before any additional non-police staff are hired.

Mayor Knutsen commented that a change to full-time status from part-time would involve not just additional salary but increased benefit costs, as well. He suggested cutting a full-time position from another department to half-time in order to accommodate this request.

In response to questions, Mr. McDonald verified that this item will be brought back to Council in the form of a budget adjustment and that a more detailed job description for each position will be made available at that time.

### **CITIZEN COMMENTS**

Ms. Michelle McGill supported allowing the use of alcohol in certain facilities and said the proposed wine sales at PMSA's Sunset Market were intended to be in support of small wineries. As an alternative, the Main Street Association worked with Anthem Coffee to host wine tastings on those nights. In regards to special events with amplified noise, she acknowledged an issue from last year regarding two live bands in fairly close proximity.

Ms. Shelly Schlumpf was encouraged by Council's comments regarding special events, and by efforts to find a balance between the interests of residents and downtown businesses. She voiced the importance of retaining certain community events which help keep the downtown vital and noted her support for Main Street's efforts as its events attract visitors. She asked that the City take into consideration the host organization's mission when considering special event regulations.

Mr. Richard Pasquier, race director of the Rainier to Ruston Ultra Marathon and Relay, stated that the changes to the City's special events regulations last year created many problems and increased the cost of routing the race through Puyallup from \$4,000 to \$12,000. Explaining that the organization's goal is to create a trail system from Mt. Rainier to Puget Sound using private and grant monies and funds raised during non-profit events, he asked that Council show its support of non-profit organizations by keeping associated costs as low as possible.

**ADJOURNMENT** – 8:43 p.m.