

League of Women Voters of Tacoma-Pierce Co.

Observer Report Form

Name of Agency: Puyallup City Council _____ Date: November 6, 2018 _____

Observer Reporting: Nancy Dahl _____ Length of Meeting: 3 hrs. 53 min.

Members Present/Absent: All members present (CM Door on remote link) _____

Others Present (i.e., media, public) Public, city staff and student observers _____

Major discussions were as follows:

(1) A last minute amendment to the agenda was made to discuss a possible requirement for non-profit community events (e.g. Farmer’s Market, Meeker Days, Santa Parade) to submit competitive RFP’s to the city in order to obtain LTAC funding and licenses to use city owned facilities – The majority of the citizen comments at this meeting were in regard to this proposal submitted by CM Jacobsen and supported by CM Kastama. The community seemed blindsided by this proposal as Main St. Assoc., with the support of other organizations, has run these events as fundraisers for the community for many years. CM Jacobsen explained that she developed this proposal after reading LTAC proposals that seemed to take advantage of past largesse in the application process and that, combined with growing criticism of the management of these events, made her feel like the city was not doing due diligence in the award of licenses. City staff suggested that if the proposal prevailed, the city would then “own” these events and asked the council to consider if this was what they intended. Many of the comments from the public urged the city to continue a collaborative process and to consider the long commitment of Main St Assoc. to these events and to positive impacts generated by the money raised, which is donated to city projects, has made in the community. A motion to begin the RFP process for year 2020 was postponed until the next meeting due to a need to do more comprehensive work on the consequences of the motion.

(2) Public hearings and 1st reading of 2019 budget ordinances.

- The 1% increase in Property Tax Levy passed 7-0.
- The increases to the budget included council-initiated spending that were not included in the preliminary budget due to inadequacies in how they were processed at the budget retreat, not giving clear signals to staff. These items were voted on at this meeting so they can be included in the 2nd reading of the budget ordinance. These items included \$100,000 for LEAN certification (approved 5-1), \$55,000 for signage (approved 7-0), \$10,000 for study of development of WSU-Barnes Conference Center (approved 7-0), purchase of 2 electric bikes at \$15,000 (approved 4-3) and Council retreat consultant at \$15,000 (approved 5-2).
- An additional discussion occurred around a proposal in the budget to gift funding to the administrator of St. Francis House to subsidize utility costs for low income residents, again arising from inadequate processing at a previous meeting. The motion to clarify this proposal was approved 7-0.
- In light of the RFP discussion that took place earlier in the meeting, the council voted to add back the 2019 funds for Main Street Assoc. by a vote of 5-2 which had been on hold due to the RFP proposal.
- A final proposal by CM Kastama suggested an amendment be made to the budget requiring that each city department should report to the council on 3 key performance measures. This was determined to be an illegal motion and something that undermines an already determined performance criteria for the city manager. CM Farris suggested that a proposal of this magnitude should not be presented during a very busy meeting without following the usual protocol of including it on the agenda. CM Kastama was very aggressive about the rightness and timing of the proposal. CM Swanson revoked his

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second to the motion and complained about the poor performance of the council. At that point CM Jacobsen seconded it to allow the discussion to continue. After some additional discussion, the motion was withdrawn,

- A motion was made to approve the amended budget and approved 7-0.

(3) Public hearing and 1st reading of the annual update of the comprehensive plan – Approved 6-0 (CM Door away)

(4) Resolutions to appoint new members to the Arts Commission and change council appointments to the PSRC were both approved by council on 7-0 votes.

***Public Meetings of interest to League** – i.e., *Were there any public meetings announced that you think League members may be interested in attending and/or becoming involved with the issue?*

Process & Protocol (Observations about participants, conduct, and procedures of the meeting):

This meeting was even messier than usual with two major discussion items being added to the agenda during the time of year when the discussion should have been focused on the budget. There seems to be a contentious relationship between the council and city manager/city staff and a somewhat cavalier attitude about the impact of the council’s decisions regarding how the staff gets it’s work done. I for one, would appreciate it if the council focused on conducting their work with regular order while getting the high priority things accomplished and avoiding tangential items during public meetings. The resulting chaos is even stressful to watch and again the meeting lasted almost 4 hours.