MINUTES

CITY OF STEVENSON SPECIAL JOINT COUNCIL MEETING WITH SKAMANIA COUNTY FIRE DISTRICT NO. 2

January 21, 2020 6:00 PM, City Hall

1. CALL TO ORDER: Mayor to called the meeting to order at 6:06 pm.

PRESENT

Councilmembers Amy Weissfeld, Annie McHale, and Robert Muth.

City Staff in attendance: City Administrator Leana Kinley, Community Development Director Ben Shumaker

FD 2 members: Rob Farris, Chief (via telephone); Tom Delzio, Commissioner

2. FIRE HALL PROJECT:

a) Direction on Path Forward: A brief update on information gathered since the last meeting was provided by City Administrator Kinley. The cost to build using a Public-Private Partnership (P3) was determined to be too much for either agency to bear in addition to navigating the challenging political optics of a P3 arrangement in our community.

A discussion over a revised layout, alternative building sites and ideas on other types of lease-back models took place. The topic of other financing models arose and agreement was that a bond or voter-approved tax levy would be needed to successfully fund the construction of the new fire hall.

Initiating a public relations campaign to educate and inform local voters regarding the need to approve a bond to help pay for the new fire hall was discussed at length. Chief Farris stressed the importance of creating an easy to understand message that included the project costs, the work done to reduce costs, and the improved services to be provided. Having the public appreciate the fire department is a good steward of tax money is important in gaining their trust. The current levy for FD2 is .85/\$1,000. Raising an additional .55/\$1,000 was recognized as a significant challenge. Chief Farris pointed out the other projects voters will be asked to fund in the next few years, including a school bond and wastewater treatment facility.

Mayor Anderson shared information on a consultant he met at the recent IACC convention. The consultant, a former fire chief in rural Stevens County, successfully passed a bond measure and built two fire halls. Mayor Anderson noted the need for the fire department to be the primary agency in the bond campaign, and to make the main

message be about replacing the deteriorating fire hall. He stated the local committees had reached their peak, but more work was needed with the fire department as lead. Conducting tours and open houses, attending safety fairs, hosting Chamber events, holding community workshops and getting the public involved in selecting a design were viewed as positive methods for generating public buy-in.

Chief Farris praised the recent efforts of the Skamania County EMS at getting a levy passed and suggested looking to them for advice and ideas. When to put the ballot to the voters was then debated. The fall election of 2020 was viewed as too busy and crowded. February or April 2021 was seen as better times to hold a local election. A decision to explore contracting with a consultant to guide the development of the bond campaign was made, and Administrator Kinley will develop an RFQ for consultant services. Chief Farris will put the topic on the February agenda at the Fire District meeting.

Questions were raised about changing the building location to a different site. Next steps include getting updated schematics and building plans. Councilmember Weissfeld asked if a 'ballpark' cost estimate could be arrived at by using the new drawings. Chief Farris asked to have the land committee meet again to review alternative sites.

Councilmember McHale asked about timelines. Administrator Kinley reminded everyone of the other projects taking place in the City. Getting final building designs and plans for electrical and mechanical systems would take a while. She anticipated going out to bid in December of 2021, with construction taking place in 2022. She advised using the time to promote the project would be beneficial. Using local media to highlight FD 2's service to the community was suggested. A planned building burn at the Lodge was seen as a good opportunity to get photos into the paper. She reiterated the importance of relaying the message the FD has determined the necessity for the project because the current building has significant deficiencies. Showing how cost savings were achieved was also highlighted.

3. ADJOURNMENT - Mayor Anderson adjourned the meeting at 7:30pm.		
Approved X	; Approved with revisions	
		2/20/2020
Vame	Date	
Minutes by Labarra	Dan	

Minutes by Johanna Roe