

City of Medical Lake
Special Council Meeting
S. 124 Lefevre Street, 6:30 P.M.
December 2, 2010

Mayor Higgins called the Special Council Meeting to order at 5:02 p.m.

Council present: Brenda Redell Jeff King Shirley Maike
 John Paikuli Howard Jorgenson A. J. Burton
 Art Kulibert

Council Absent: None.

Staff present: Cindy McMullen Pam McBroom Doug Ross Jeff Estes

Others present: Cheney Free Press Reporter Ryan Lancaster, 3 visitors.

STAFF REPORT:

2011 Budget Discussions – Fire Department

City Administrator Ross opened discussion on the agenda item for the evening. He explained that the meeting is for discussion on \$62,400 additional money in EMS Department 2011 budget for possible premium pay for volunteers in the fire department. Statistics on call volume have been prepared by Ross (information was from the dispatch reports provided by the Spokane Fire Dispatch Center in Spokane) and given to council as well as a proposal from Chief Estes pertaining to premium/stipend pay for daytime duty by volunteers. Council was asked to discuss the proposal and ask questions as needed. This will be a roundtable discussion.

The proposal is for 2 individuals (fire volunteers) to work week days (Monday thru Friday). Shifts would be 8 – 12 hours and pay would be \$10 - \$15 per hour. This proposal has been brought before council because there have been some issues within the department getting coverage for some shifts and some calls are not being responded to by the department.

There was much discussion amongst the council members and staff. Some areas of concern were:

- How will this proposal take care of calls that are missed that are not during the hours proposed.
- Would this be a solution to the issue because it is a lot of money to appropriate if it doesn't solve the problem.
- Would the schedule be rotated among all eligible firefighters or just officers.
- Can any assurances be made that shifts will be covered.
- What would be expectations/goals that would need to be met.
- Would two people still be required to respond to each call. If someone is qualified to work this shift duty - why can't one person respond to a call.
- It was noted that the city is considered a "first responder" by Spokane County.
- Current Fire Department SOG's were discussed.
- What will premium pay produce.

- What about dropping current stipend and proposed premium pay and coming up with a proposal for a points system or stipend that relates to pay for volunteers that respond to either EMS calls or fire calls.
- How much time is spent recruiting new members – more members, more coverage.
- It was also noted that this proposal is just a “pilot program” to see if it would in fact alleviate the current issues.

City Attorney McMullen explained that she is researching the proposed premium pay request because it appears that this could change that status of “volunteer” to be considered a part time employee. That would not work with the guidelines the city now operates the department under. It is not the city’s intent to change from a volunteer fire department status. Council will be forwarded more information as it is received by McMullen.

After discussions, Mayor Higgins thanked council and staff for their input and dedication to coming up with a solution to resolve what is perceived as a problem with missed calls. More information is needed and requested. At this time it has been determined that the dollar amount in the proposed 2011 budget for stipend/premium pay will remain in the budget but the exact method for its use/expenditure will need worked out. If the final decision does not match up to the dollar amount proposed (if it is less than the \$62,400) – the difference will be moved into the 2011 Ending Cash Balance.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

None.

ADJOURNMENT:

Mayor Higgins adjourned the meeting at 6:45 p.m.

Mayor Higgins

City Clerk / Finance Director