

**GRANDVIEW CITY COUNCIL
COMMITTEE-OF-THE-WHOLE MEETING MINUTES
OCTOBER 9, 2018**

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Norm Childress called the Committee-of-the-Whole meeting to order at 6:00 p.m., in the Council Chambers at City Hall.

2. ROLL CALL

Present were: Mayor Childress and Councilmembers Gay Brewer, Dennis McDonald, Bill Moore and Javier Rodriguez.

Councilmember Gloria Mendoza arrived at 6:05 p.m.

Councilmember Mike Everett arrived at 6:10 p.m.

Councilmember Joan Souders arrived at 6:10 p.m.

Staff present were: City Administrator/Public Works Director Cus Arteaga, City Treasurer Matt Cordray, Fire Chief Pat Mason, Police Chief Kal Fuller and City Clerk Anita Palacios.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT – None

4. NEW BUSINESS

A. Ambulance Service Report

Fire Chief Mason explained that in March 2018, the City was approached by the City's current primary ambulance provider, Prosser Hospital Ambulance (PHA), concerning the fact they were losing money. PHA advised that last year the ambulance service created a financial deficit of over \$600,000 and they were on track for the same to happen this year. PHA advised they would not be able to continue to operate this way and were looking into options to offset some or all the deficit. After exploring different options, PHA approached the City concerning contracting ambulance services for a fee. Council tasked staff with exploring options to ensure the citizens of Grandview had access to quality ambulance services in a cost-effective way for the foreseeable future. Council also indicated they would like this service provided under some type of long term contract and/or agreement.

Currently, there were two local ambulance services in the area willing to provide ambulance services to the citizens of Grandview. One of these providers was PHA. PHA was an EMS only provider and provided ambulance service to the area for approximately 18 years as the primary response agency. The other provider was Sunnyside Fire Department (SSFD). SSFD was a combination fire department and EMS provider and provided ambulance service to the area for approximately 24 years as the secondary response agency.

In an effort to provide quality ambulance service to the community in a cost-effective way, staff approached both agencies to determine what each could offer the City and at what cost. As staff researched working with both agencies, it became apparent there were additional benefits the City could take advantage of by partnering fire department to fire department. Those same

benefits were limited by partnering fire department to EMS only agency. One significant possibility of working with SSFD was an offer from Astria Sunnyside Hospital (Astria) to financially support SSFD up to \$215,000 per year for up to five years to offset the cost of providing the service to the Grandview/Mabton area with the indication the financial support would be re-evaluated and could possibly continue after five years.

With this information, both agencies presented a proposal to the Mayor and Council. SSFD proposed providing ambulance service to the City for \$126,023 per year. For now, this included a staffed ambulance in Grandview during the day and, since sleeping quarters were not available, SSFD would return to Sunnyside and respond from there during the night. PHA proposed providing ambulance service to the City 24 hours a day for \$185,294 per year. In addition to the \$185,294, the City would need to provide PHA with facilities for the ambulance crew to use and sleep in the City with additional amenities.

After discussing and evaluating both proposals, Tyler Platt from PHA advised Council the two proposals were not comparing apples-to-apples since SSFD's proposal was not a 24 hour per day plan. Council then directed staff to provide additional information to ensure both agencies were being evaluated equally and a draft agreement for the services.

A questionnaire was provided to both agencies regarding their abilities and was summarized below:

<u>QUESTION</u>	<u>PHA</u>	<u>SSFD</u>
Ambulances available with on duty staff?	2	3 (at night), 4 (daytime)
Scheduled on duty staff?	4	6 – 9
Annual cost to Grandview:		
12 Hour Shift?	\$115,449 (2017 Call #'s)	\$126,000
24 Hour Shift?	\$185,295	\$126,000
Ambulance personnel provide assistance to GFD during downtime?	Yes	Yes
Some areas ambulance personnel could assist with:		
Cleaning around station and bays?	Yes	Yes
Wash and wax apparatus, vehicles?	Yes	Yes
Conduct hands-on practical EMS & Fire training?	Yes	Yes
Respond as firefighters through auto aid agreement?	No	Yes
Perform company level inspections?	Yes	Yes

<u>QUESTION</u>	<u>PHA</u>	<u>SSFD</u>
Perform apparatus checks?	No	Yes
Assist with public education?	Yes	Yes
Assist with hydrant inspections and testing?	Yes	Yes
Assist with developing, preparing and implementing training classes?	Yes	Yes
Will partnering with your agency positively impact our Insurance Rating?	Unknown	Yes – for both cities
Can we combine fire suppression and EMS training?	Yes	Yes
Can you share equipment with the City of Grandview?	No	Yes
What types of equip?		Automatic Aid with Fire Suppression, Vertical Rope Rescue, Confined Space & Trench Rescue, Credentialed Fire Marshal's, Air/Rehab Support Unit
Able to jointly purchase fire equipment?	No	Yes with Council approval
Able to participate in construction of new fire station?	No	Yes with Council approval
Able to apply for Yakima County SIED Program loan/grant funds?	Researching	Yes
Able to participate in grant opportunities with the City of Grandview?	Unknown	Yes

As identified above in an effort to compare apples-to-apples, PHA indicated they could be of more assistance to the City in several areas listed than they had been in the past. SSFD indicated they could assist in all of the listed areas. As staff explored the ambulance provider question, it was apparent there were more benefits in a fire department to fire department partnership than a fire department to EMS agency partnership.

Grandview would be selecting an ambulance service provider that would be the primary ambulance service 24 hours per day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Since Grandview did not currently have sleeping quarters located at the station, discussion included how many hours the provider would spend at the Grandview Fire Department. Both providers would return to their

home facility at night for their rest period, but that same agency would still respond from that location at night if there was a 911 call in Grandview. Currently, PHA was at the Grandview Fire Department approximately 8 to 9 hours during the day and then returned to the Prosser location during the rest of the time.

In addition, the agency selected would be the City's primary ambulance agency. Just like fire departments, no ambulance agency would have the resources to handle every call. The other ambulance agency not chosen to be the City's primary ambulance service, at their discretion, would be the City's back-up (secondary) agency. If the primary agency's ambulances were all busy, then the secondary agency would be requested. This was how it worked now with PHA being the primary agency and SSFD being the secondary agency.

It would be beneficial to consider having living/sleeping quarters available at the Grandview Fire Department to lessen the call out burden on the volunteer firefighters and to allow volunteers to sign up for shifts at the station rather than being on call at home. This would potentially increase participation by the volunteers, shorten response times, allow the City to reach out farther from Grandview for potential volunteers, and extend the time frame to provide Fire Department services with volunteers. It would allow the City to have the ambulance provider located in the City 24 hours a day rather than 12 hours. For now, both ambulance agencies would provide ambulance coverage in the City for 12 hours a day and then return to their home station at night. This was due to a lack of available rest facilities at the City's Fire Department. For either one of the agencies to stay in Grandview for the entire 24 hour period, the City would need to provide these facilities. The proposals from both agencies do not include providing these facilities.

SSFD indicated a 12 hour shift in Grandview and the other 12 hours from the Sunnyside facility would cost \$126,023 per year. If SSFD was able to stay in Grandview for the entire 24 hour shift, the cost would remain at \$126,023 per year. One of the reasons SSFD indicated they would be able to provide the service for this cost was because of Astria. Astria indicated if SSFD ambulance picked up this service area, Astria would commit supporting SSFD up to an additional \$215,000 to help offset costs. Astria committed to maintaining this level of support for five years and would review the possible need for further assistance at that time. SSFD provided ambulance service to their citizens for over 20 years in a financially stable way.

PHA indicated a 12 hour shift in Grandview and the other 12 hours from the Prosser facility would cost \$115,449 per year based on 2017 call volume statistics. If PHA was able to stay in Grandview for the entire 24 hour shift, the cost would be \$185,295 per year. Concern was expressed with PHA's history of operating the ambulance service without a financially stable funding source. This was evident back in 2008/2009 when PHA shared their financial shortfall at that time. Subsequently, the City paid approximately \$100,000 to offset the loss and PHA still closed their Grandview facility. Earlier this year, it became evident again when Mr. Platt shared that PHA had a loss last year of over \$600,000 and were on track for that to happen again this year. This discussion was the catalyst for the City needing to pay for ambulance service. If the City contracted with PHA for ambulance service in the amount of \$115,000 to \$120,000 per year, this still would not account for approximately \$500,000 of their annual deficit. How would PHA cover their deficit while at the same time making an ambulance more available to Grandview. In addition, if PHA cannot find a way to cover their deficit, then what assurances does the City have that PHA would be financially able to continue providing ambulance service for the long term.

Another point to consider was Fire Chief Mason requested for several years an additional FTE for the Fire Department. He wanted to ensure Council understood there was still a need for an additional firefighter. If the City contracted with PHA, he did not feel that would alleviate his need for an additional FTE. He would be coming to Council during the 2019 budget presentations requesting an additional FTE in 2019. This FTE request would amount to an increase in the Fire Department's budget of approximately \$80,000 to \$100,000. If the City contracted with SSFD, he felt the need to hire an additional FTE could be postponed for the next 2 to 4 years. SSFD would have available to the City through auto aid agreements employees that could assist the City in all areas with all types of emergencies.

In discussions with Robert Ferrell of the Washington Survey and Rating Bureau (WSRB), Mr. Ferrell indicated WSRB had no past experience of rating a jurisdiction that partnered with an EMS only agency. He indicated WSRB would consider any potential benefits when the City was next evaluated. He explained that their past experience was evaluating fire departments that partnered with neighboring fire departments. While some areas could benefit the City as long as were being done correctly by either agency, areas including fire training and actual structural firefighting would benefit the rating of the City when provided by another fire department.

From a long-term perspective, partnering with SSFD could provide cost saving opportunities to the taxpayers of both cities. The first was Astria helping with \$215,000 of funding for the Sunnyside Fire Department. This alone was a potential \$1,075,000 savings to the taxpayers of Sunnyside and Grandview. In the future, both cities could consider such things as adding fire stations, replacing aerial trucks, purchasing fire engines, etc. The City currently partners with Yakima County Fire District #5 on the fire station, a fire engine and the rescue truck. This could enable the citizens of Grandview to save over \$500,000 in initial investment in addition to reducing the maintenance expenses in half. The ability to partner in the future with SSFD on a joint fire station, aerial ladder truck and fire engine could have the potential to save the citizens of Grandview over \$1,000,000 in initial purchasing. Joint purchasing could give the City the same benefits from the WSRB as if the City were purchasing these items at a considerably higher cost. It could also enhance the City's ability of attaining grants because it would benefit two communities instead of just one.

Currently, the City was using PHA as the primary ambulance provider and SSFD as the secondary ambulance provider for those times that none of the PHA units were available. In 2017, SSFD responded to PHA's primary response area 50 times for 911 calls because PHA was not available. In the last 12 months, SSFD responded to PHA's primary response area 58 times for 911 calls. This was a 15% increase over 2017. It was his understanding this was due to PHA taking on more inter-facility transfers (IFT's) to help offset the financial loss. How was PHA going to improve their financial loss by taking on more IFT's while at the same time making an ambulance more available for 911 calls in Grandview? He believed PHA would either continue to be financially unstable or be less available to respond to 911 calls. Either one would create a bad situation for providing a long-term stable ambulance service for the City.

Based on the information provided, Fire Chief Mason recommended the City partner with SSFD to provide primary ambulance services. As long as PHA was available and willing, PHA would be utilized as the secondary ambulance service when SSFD was not available.

Discussion took place.

On motion by Councilmember Souders, second by Councilmember Rodriguez, the C.O.W. agreed to move the Sunnyside Fire Department's ambulance service proposal to the October 22, 2018 special Council meeting for formal acceptance and directed staff to prepare a draft interlocal agreement with the City of Sunnyside for consideration at a future C.O.W. meeting.

Councilmember Brewer abstained from the vote as his spouse was currently the Chair of the Astria Sunnyside Hospital Board of Directors.

5. RECESS & RECONVENE OF C.O.W. MEETING

On motion by Councilmember Everett, second by Councilmember Moore, the Council recessed the Committee-of-the-Whole meeting at 7:00 p.m., to reconvene following the regular Council meeting.

On motion by Councilmember Everett, second by Councilmember Rodriguez, the Council reconvened the Committee-of-the-Whole meeting to discuss the following items at 7:50 p.m.

B. Resolution declaring certain City property from the Public Works Department as surplus and authorizing disposal by public auction, sale or trade

City Administrator Arteaga explained that the Public Works Department has the following vehicles which were no longer needed for the conduct of City business and were being recommended for surplus:

- 1999 Chevrolet C1 Pickup, VIN #1GCEC14V1XE234217 (PK #432)
- 2005 Ford Explorer, VIN #1FMZU72K15ZA59785 (PW #396)
- 2007 Chevrolet C1 Pickup, VIN #1GCEC14C27Z542259 (PW #307)
- 2007 Chevrolet C1 Pickup, VIN #1GCEC14C57Z542269 (PW #204)

Discussion took place.

On motion by Councilmember Everett, second by Councilmember Mendoza, the C.O.W. moved a resolution declaring certain City property from the Public Works Department as surplus and authorizing disposal by public auction, sale or trade for consideration at the October 22, 2018 special Council meeting.

C. Resolution declaring Police firearms/parts as surplus and authorizing destruction of the firearms/parts

Police Chief Fuller explained that in 2007, the Police Department obtained the following three gun parts from a private firearms dealer: Olympic Arms CAR/AR Serial No. K1047; Eastside MFG AR 15 auto sear Serial No. ES-010; and Eastside MFG UZI bolt Serial No. UB-50. These parts have never been used and were now of no value to the Police Department. The parts were registered with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF). The Police Department has no use for these three gun parts. Each one of these parts were from different firearms. These parts all, in some way, would allow a firearm to be operated as fully automatic. Because of this, the parts were registered with the ATF just as if they were firearms.

Each part was tracked by the ATF and cannot be transferred/sold/given away without permission of the ATF. The value of any of these parts was limited and was less than the time that would be involved in attempting to sell/trade/donate. He requested that the parts in question be approved for destruction in accordance with the ATF's rules and regulations.

Discussion took place.

On motion by Councilmember Moore, second by Councilmember Souders, the C.O.W. moved a resolution declaring Police firearms/parts as surplus and authorizing destruction of the firearms/parts for consideration at the October 22, 2018 special Council meeting.

D. Resolution declaring Police firearms as surplus and authorizing the trade of the firearms to a federal firearms licensed dealer

Police Chief Fuller explained that in 2001, the Police Department purchased five (5) H&K UMP firearms Serial Nos. 163-002392, 163-002609, 163-002394, 163-002610 and 163-002393 for \$996 each. The firearms were used from 2002 until about 2015 and were retired from service. The Police Department has no use for these weapons that have exceeded their service lifespan. Since the weapons were considered a "machine gun" (due to firing two shot bursts) there was now a limited used market for such weapons. A firearms and ammunition dealer was located who would take the obsolete firearms on trade for new rifles and ammunition.

Discussion took place.

On motion by Councilmember Everett, second by Councilmember Rodriguez, the C.O.W. moved a resolution declaring Police firearms as surplus and authorizing the trade of the firearms to a federal firearms licensed dealer for consideration at the October 22, 2018 special Council meeting.

Councilmember Brewer voted in opposition.

7. **OTHER BUSINESS** – None

8. **ADJOURNMENT**

The C.O.W. meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Mayor Norm Childress

Anita Palacios, City Clerk