

**City Of Woodland
City Council Meeting Agenda Summary Sheet**

Discussion regarding next steps for hiring a contractor to conduct an efficiency study of the Clerk/Treasurer's Office.

Agenda Item #: (N) Action
For Agenda of: 11/4/2013
Department: Council
Date Submitted: 10/30/2013

Cost of Item: \$0
Amount Budgeted: \$10,000
Unexpended Balance: \$10,000

BARS #:
Description:

Department Supervisor Approval: Councilmember Fredricks

Committee Recommendation:

Agenda Item Supporting Narrative (list attachments, supporting documents):
 November 19, 2012 Council Minutes
 Proposed Scope of Work
 Mayor's Assessment of Clerk/Treasurer's Office Dated June 18, 2013

Summary Statement/Department Recommendation:

On November 19th 2012 the Woodland City Council approved \$10,000 for an efficiency study of the Clerk/Treasurer's Office by a vote of 6-1. During the Council's retreat in January it was requested that all departments be reviewed and to explore the possible use of a contractor to assist in the assessments. A report released in 2011 by a previous contractor who did a city wide organizational assessment stated the following regarding the Clerk/Treasurer's Office:

Interviewees indicated that the department's workloads are uneven among department workers and employee role definition is not clear. These challenges are resulting in low employee morale and perhaps elements of a hostile workplace.

We observed that the clerk/treasurer is generally disorganized and the department lacks sufficient internal procedures. The clerk/treasurer often cited she simply did not have enough time to rectify deficiencies or create proactive initiatives. This may be a symptom of a number of factors including too many duties assigned, excessive time off policies for senior department managers, and disorganization.

In defense of the city clerk/treasurer, it would be too difficult, if not impossible, for anyone assigned all of the city-wide administrative duties and department director titles concurrently to do either job well. There is simply too much responsibility and work for a single position.

On June 18th of this year the Mayor provided his own assessment of the CTO. While his assessment isn't exhaustive it does provide some good information. However, there are additional items that should be addressed which include:

- A thorough review of current job descriptions, salaries and functions of the Clerk/Treasurer's office
- Conduct a thorough review to assess workflow and make recommendations for specific efficiency improvements keeping in mind that one of the goals is to hire a City Administrator in 2015
- The possible need to separate the positions of Clerk/Treasurer into two positions
- A thorough review of the city's Human Resources function

The scope of work could certainly be modified to obtain any additional information that Council is looking for in order to make effective policy decisions and to provide future guidance on budget discussions.

November 19, 2012

The REGULAR Meeting of the Woodland City Council was held on the above date at the Woodland City Hall, Council Chambers, 100 Davidson Avenue, Woodland WA. The meeting was called to order by Mayor Grover Laseke at 7:00 p.m. and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Present: Councilmember John Burke
Councilmember Marilee McCall
Councilmember Susan Humbyrd
Councilmember Benjamin Fredricks
Councilmember Al Swindell
Councilmember Marshall Allen
Councilmember Scott Perry

Absent: None

Also Present: Clerk-Treasurer Mari Ripp
Police Chief Rob Stephenson
City Attorney Bill Eling
Fire Chief Mike Jackson
Community Development Planner Carolyn Johnson
Public Works Director Bart Stepp

CITIZEN COMMUNICATIONS FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

None

CITIZEN COMMUNICATIONS FOR ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

Email from Darlene Johnson dated 11/19/2012 to the Council re: Budget and Fire Dept.

PRESENTATIONS

AWC Certificate of Municipal Leadership was presented to Councilmember John Burke and Councilmember Benjamin Fredricks

PUBLIC HEARING

2013 Final Budget

The hearing was opened at 7:06 p.m. No comments were received. The Public Hearing was closed at 7:07 p.m.

AGENDA APPROVAL

Councilmember Swindell moved to approve the agenda. Councilmember Humbyrd seconded the motion.

Yes: Burke, McCall, Humbyrd, Fredricks, Swindell, Allen, Perry No: None Abstain: None. (7-0)
M/S/C

REPORTS OF CITY OFFICERS (Limited)

- Mayor - CANCELLED -Special meeting / workshop Thursday, November 29, 2012 7:00 p.m. at Community Center re: Facilities and proposed budget; RESET to December 3rd following regular business

Action G) to set workshop on Monday December 3, 2012 re: Police Station / Facilities and related Budget

Councilmember Humbyrd moved to set a workshop on Dec 3rd after the regular meeting business to discuss the Police Station / Facilities and the related budget. Councilmember Allen seconded the motion. Discussion followed.

Yes: Burke, Humbyrd, Fredricks, Swindell, Allen, Perry No: McCall Abstain: None. (6-1)

M/S/C

- Clerk-Treasurer - 2013 Final Budget adoption (FINAL READING) will be on Monday, December 3, 2012
- Gambling License renewal – Woodland VFW

CONSENT ITEMS:

Item C was removed from the Consent Agenda

- A. Approval of claims voucher warrants numbered 44090 through 44148 for the first half of the month of November, 2012 in the amount of \$263,471.59.
- B. Approval of minutes of November 5 and 7, 2012.

Councilmember McCall moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Councilmember Fredricks seconded the motion.

Yes: Burke, McCall, Humbyrd, Fredricks, Swindell, Allen, Perry No: None Abstain: None. (7-0)

M/S/C

ACTION ITEMS:

Action C) Award contract for Lagoon Cleaning to CCS – Pacific Northern

Councilmember McCall moved to authorize Mayor to sign contract with CCS – Pacific Northern for 2012 Lagoon cleaning in the amount of \$47,388 including tax. Councilmember Swindell seconded the motion. Councilmember McCall commented that she is shirt-tail related to one of the bidders on this project and will abstain from voting on this matter. Discussion followed relating to the bids and information.

Councilmember Perry moved to suspend the rules to allow Citizen Comment. (Council Rules 13. To Suspend the Rules it requires a second and a 2/3 vote).

Point of Order by Councilmember Swindell. Mayor Laseke referred to the City Attorney for a ruling. Mayor Laseke denied the Point of Order and requested Councilmember Perry to continue.

Point of Order by Councilmember Fredricks re: Section 8.7 of the Council Rules-that the City Attorney must rule on the Point of Order, not the Mayor. The Mayor referred to Section 3.3 which allows the Chair along with the City Attorney to rule.

Councilmember Perry moved to suspend the rules to allow the public to speak on this Action Item. Councilmember Humbyrd seconded the motion.

Yes: Burke, Humbyrd, Fredricks, Allen, Perry No: Swindell Abstain: McCall. (5-1-1)

M/S/C

Tom Regan, Roto Rooter, resides in Battle Ground, his company submitted the low bid and concurs that they did not submit the document that requires submission of Unemployment Insurance. Mr. Regan pointed out that contract document says the City reserves the right to reject any and all bids and to waive any informalities. He did have the document but failed to provide it. He stated he is experienced in submitting bids. This was his only appeal.

Discussion followed. Attorney Eling commented on this matter and options.

Main Motion:

Move to authorize Mayor to sign contract with CCS – Pacific Northern for 2012 Lagoon cleaning in the amount of \$47,388 including tax.

Yes: None No: Burke, Humbyrd, Fredricks, Swindell, Allen, Perry Abstain: McCall. (0-6-1)

M/S/Failed

Staff asked for direction on the next steps. Mayor Laseke confirmed that this will be put out to bid again.

Action D) Adopt Ordinance No. 1254 – 2013 Property Tax Levy (101%) and Resolution No. 620 – Percentage increase on tax levy (FINAL READING)

Councilmember Swindell moved to adopt Ordinance No. 1254 – 2013 Property Tax Levy (101%) and Resolution No. 620-2013 Property tax levy and % increase (FINAL READING).

Councilmember Fredricks seconded the motion. Discussion followed.

Yes: Burke, McCall, Humbyrd, Fredricks, Swindell, Allen, Perry No: None Abstain: None. (7-0)

M/S/C

Action E) Adopt Ordinance No. 1253 – SEPA and Administrative Appeals (FINAL READING)

Councilmember Humbyrd moved to adopt Ordinance No. 1253-SEPA and Administrative Appeals (FINAL READING). Councilmember Swindell seconded the motion. Discussion followed.

Yes: Burke, McCall, Humbyrd, Fredricks, Swindell, Allen, Perry No: None Abstain: None. (7-0)

M/S/C

The Council moved into a Workshop at 7:42 p.m.

WORKSHOP

1. 2013 Budget

The Council moved back into Regular Session at 9:08 p.m.

Action F) Adopt Ordinance No. 1255 – 2013 Final Budget (FIRST READING)

Councilmember Swindell moved to adopt Ordinance No. 1255 – 2013 Final Budget (FIRST READING). Councilmember Fredricks seconded the motion. Discussion followed.

Amendment:

Councilmember Fredricks to amend the 2013 Final Budget as presented to add \$10,000 in Professional Services (fund from 301 General Reserves to 001 General Fund) for an Efficiency Study in the Clerk-Treasurer Department. Councilmember McCall seconded the motion. Discussion followed.

Yes: Burke, McCall, Humbyrd, Fredricks, Swindell, Allen No: Perry Abstain: None. (6-1)
M/S/C

Main Motion:

Councilmember Swindell moved to adopt Ordinance No. 1255 – 2013 Final Budget (FIRST READING) and include in the budget to add \$10,000 in Professional Services (fund from 301 General Reserves to 001 General Fund) for an Efficiency Study in the Clerk-Treasurer Department.

Yes: McCall, Humbyrd, Fredricks, Swindell, Allen, Perry No: Burke Abstain: None. (6-1)
M/S/C

ADJOURNMENT

Councilmember Burke moved to adjourn the meeting. Councilmember Fredricks seconded the motion.

Yes: Burke, McCall, Humbyrd, Fredricks, Swindell, Allen, Perry No: None Abstain: None. (7-0)
M/S/C

The meeting was adjourned at 9:13 p.m.

Grover B. Laseke, Mayor

Minutes approved: December 3, 2012

Attest:

Mari E. Ripp, Clerk-Treasurer

*These minutes are not a verbatim record of the proceedings.
A recording is available in the office of the Clerk-Treasurer*



Ms. Marilee McCall
Mayor Pro-Tem
City of Woodland
230 Davidson Ave.
Woodland, WA 98674

Dear Ms. McCall,

Thank you for your confidence in the Prothman Company. Per our discussion, please find below the scope of work to be performed regarding the management review of the City of Woodland's Clerk/Treasurer functions.

I. Study Overview

The Clerk/Treasurer's office provides a wide number of services to the City including many duties outside of the traditional clerk/treasurer function. In a management study conducted by Prothman in January of 2011, one of the findings observed that the clerk/treasurer department lacks sufficient internal procedures among other observations. The Clerk/Treasurer indicated that given the number of additional city-wide administrative duties currently assigned to the department, she simply does not have enough time or staff to rectify the cited deficiencies.

II. Study Goals

The City wishes to have an assessment of the Clerk/Treasurer functions reviewing the following three areas:

1. Review current job descriptions and functions of the Clerk's office; including the Clerk/Treasurer and Deputy Clerk/Treasurer positions.
2. Conduct a review of the Clerk/Treasurer's department; assess workflow and make recommendations for efficiency improvements, including a review of the Human Resources function.
3. Develop job descriptions for any newly identified positions (if any) and conduct a salary survey based on comparable positions in comparable cities.

III. Scope of Work

1. Project Planning

- ◆ Review the proposed assessment outline and modify as needed
- ◆ Define project goals
- ◆ Develop a project timeline
- ◆ Define expected deliverables

2. Preparation & Research

- ◆ Obtain and review all documents relevant to the department and the review.
- ◆ Meet individually and/or collectively with the Clerk/Treasurer and Deputy Clerk/Treasurer and others as directed to identify issues, processes, internal and external communications channels and interactions, perceived expectations and challenges, and other issues affecting work performance.
- ◆ Meet with city management and administrative staff for input on issues, concerns, and priorities related to the human resources function within the City of Woodland.

3. Assessment

- ◆ Position description, qualifications and workload review

Explore staffing levels as it relates to workloads, and further explore if the department has the right mix of expertise and number of staff, in other words, do they have the right people doing the right jobs? Do the department staff have the needed skills and experience to do the work and are they appropriately classified and are job duties clearly defined?

◆ **Organization structure**

Conduct a general review of the department's organizational structure to determine if the department is structured appropriately, given present workloads, work flows, and programs.

◆ **General performance and efficiency review**

Review the department's work processes and procedures for performance enhancements and efficiencies.

◆ **Prepare preliminary report of findings and recommendations**

Review with the City and discuss preliminary findings and recommendations.

◆ **Prepare Final Report**

Incorporate any proposed changes to the draft recommendations into a final recommendation document.

IV. Professional Fee

The project is expected to take 50 hours to complete. The fee for this project is \$8,250 (\$165 per hr X 50), plus expenses. Expense items include:

- ◆ Consultant mileage and travel time billed at \$65 per hr
- ◆ Any client-required licenses, fees or taxes

Professional fees are billed in two equal installments; the first at the beginning of the project, the second upon completion of the project. Expenses are billed at the completion of the project.

Cancellation

You have the right to cancel the assessment at any time. Your only obligation would be the fees and expenses incurred prior to cancellation.

Accepted by:

CITY OF WOODLAND

PROTHMAN

Mayor Date

Greg Prothman
President
11/2/11
Date
Greg Prothman



Mayor's Office
230 Davidson Ave
Woodland, WA 98674

June 18, 2013

To: Woodland City Council

From: Mayor Grover Laseke *GL*

RE: City Clerk-Treasurer's Office Assessment – Final Report

INTRODUCTION

The Woodland City Council in 2012 listed as a goal the assessment of all city departments to determine whether operations were efficiently run and if cost savings could be found. The first department to be assessed is the City Clerk-Treasurer's Office (CTO). The assessment was completed through a series of interviews with Clerk-Treasurer Office employees, city department heads, city council members and the public. Also reviewed were job descriptions, office operations and processes. While not an exhaustive study, it does determine if an in-depth assessment is needed.

The main reason for this assessment is the result of the 2011 Prothman Report and perceived problems by the city council with the CTO.

CLERK-TREASURER'S OFFICE OVERVIEW

The Clerk-Treasurer is an officer of the city authorized by WMC 2.10.020 and RCW 35A.12.020. The Clerk-Treasurer is appointed by, and serves at the pleasure of, the mayor with confirmation by the city council. Primary duties include management of the Clerk-Treasurer's Office which involves overseeing all city records, management of the financial and budget functions for the city, coordination of audits, manages the human resources function, and investment of city funds. The Clerk-Treasurer is the

administration liaison with the Finance and Human Resources/Government Committees. The Clerk-Treasurer's Office (CTO) is located at the City Hall Annex at 230 Davidson Ave.

The CTO interacts with every city employee, city council member, all businesses in the city, and just about every citizen within the city on a regular basis. This is a complex office that is involved with all aspects of the Woodland city government and management of the \$14M budget. The 2013 budget for the CTO is \$578,000.

There are 6.5 FTEs who work in the CTO including:

Clerk-Treasurer – *Mari Ripp*

Deputy Clerk Treasurer – *Gina Anderson*

Administrative Clerk IV – Utility Billing – *Shannon Thomas*

Administrative Clerk IV – Payroll/Business Licenses – *Mary Gleason*

Administrative Clerk III – Account/Reception – *Lori Cash*

Administrative Clerk III – Account/Reception – *Shannon Rychel*

Administrative Clerk (I) - Records (part-time) – *vacant / temp*

INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED

Over the course of two months I interviewed all of the employees in the Clerk-Treasurers office, department heads, some city council members, certain city employees, and citizens.

Clerk-Treasurer Office employees said they enjoyed working for the city and with their co-workers. This has not always been the case because certain prior employees seemed to enjoy causing conflict. All of these individuals are now gone and the workplace is a much more enjoyable place. Some felt their work was not appreciated and specifically mentioned utility customers and city council members as the chief culprits. There was also a concern that the workload was increasing without any relief in sight.

The following were the highlights from the employee interviews:

- No performance evaluations
- Lack of supervisor feedback
- Lack of support from the City Council
- Difficult and sometimes abusive citizens
- More training needed
- Heavy workload for the current staff

Department heads interviewed were satisfied with their interaction with the CTO and the service provided. They felt CTO employees were busy and overworked. They mentioned no inter-personal relationship problems and found the employees always willing to help out when asked.

My conversations with some city council members revealed a belief that there were serious problems with the CTO. Some had heard there were many interpersonal conflicts between employees, a lack of supervision, citizen complaints, and lots of dysfunction. Other council members said they felt the CTO was doing a good job. While there was lots of grumbling, specific incidents were difficult to document.

City employee comments about the CTO were mostly positive. Minor concerns were noted but nothing serious.

Most citizens I had contact with over the last year were satisfied with the service they received from the CTO. The biggest complaints had to do with utility bills and complaints that staff was not responsive to their particular problem. Some of these complaints dealt with problems outside the control of the CTO (high rates and water leaks which caused high bills caused emotions to run high). I have monitored interactions with the public at the front counter and found them to be appropriate.

Some business owners and managers were also interviewed but no specific problems were identified. Some concerns were expressed but they were mostly a lack of understanding of the CTO's duties and responsibilities.

FINANCIAL AUDITS

Clerk-Treasurer's Office is responsible for overseeing the audits of the city financial records by the Washington State Auditor's Office. The city has been audited in each of the past eight years and all have been without findings. The auditors I spoke with all had done an assessment of the financial function of the City. When asked about their

thoughts they found the CTO to be doing a good job, the staff was knowledgeable, responsive to requests during audits, and seemed to have a good handle on the financial condition of the city. This is evidenced by the lack of problems in state audits over the last several years. Additionally it should be noted that both Mari Ripp and Gina Anderson have achieved the Professional Finance Officer designation by the Washington Finance Officers Association.

REVIEW OF PROCESSES

During the last year I have carefully monitored the processes used by the CTO. While I did not spend the day watching each employee it was easy to see what is happening through day to day observations and interaction. I found instances where the use of technology could improve how business is conducted.

Some processes could be improved upon. This includes training of another person to handle city council meeting, explore further automation of the bill paying process, correspondence, and events. Suggestions from a Finance Committee is to contract out the payroll function and utility bill payments. There is a need for cross training of personnel so that backup for absent employees is available. All of these improvements need further exploration to determine if there is value to implementation and the time to implement.

PROTHMAN REPORT

In the summer of 2010 the City Council approved a contract with Prothman Company to complete a citywide organizational assessment and to review the CTO and Public Works Department. This was during a period of tremendous friction, distrust, and disagreement between the city council and mayor. Staff was caught in the middle which was a very difficult place to be since they work for the mayor.

The Prothman Report was distributed in February 2011. There were several recommendations for improvements but there was disagreement by Mayor Blum and staff with the report. I have reviewed the report, talked with many people, and employees about it. In my opinion, the Prothman Report is a snapshot of the city in late 2010 and is not reflective of current city operations 2½ years later.

As the new mayor, taking office in January, 2012, I initiated several management processes to get the city back on track. Some of these changes were addressed in the report and others were not. In completing this assessment I have taken the Prothman Report into consideration along with many other factors. My second update to the City Council on the Prothman report will follow in a separate document.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is my finding is that, in general, the Clerk-Treasurer's Office is operating fine and is accomplishing the mission they are charged with by ordinance and state law. In spite of the grumbling about problems within the CTO, but I have been unable to substantiate any major problems.

But there is room for improvement and I recommend that the following steps be taken to improve the CTO:

- Improve training for front line personnel
- Conduct annual performance evaluations
- Each employee cross trained in another job/position
- Additional supervisory training
- Customer service training for all employees
- Review employee assignments to equalize workload
- Improve relationship between the city council and the CTO
- Explore automation of processes within the CTO.

None of the comments received indicated a dysfunctional department that was in trouble. The work is getting done and there is stable leadership in the CTO. It is my belief that a major overhaul of the office is not necessary at this time but a management tune-up will provide the desired outcomes.

I have been meeting with Mari Ripp on a regular basis to put these improvements into place. Results thus far have been encouraging but more time is needed to study and implement the above changes.

Note: The preliminary report was distributed to city council members and the Clerk-Treasurer on May 13, 2013. Not corrections or comments were received so this is the final report.