



City of Olympia

City Hall
601 4th Avenue E
Olympia, WA 98501

Meeting Minutes - Draft City Council

Information: 360-753-8447

Thursday, April 11, 2013

5:30 PM

Room 112

Special Meeting to Conduct Business of the Finance Committee

1. ROLL CALL

Councilmember Hankins joined the meeting for the discussion on public involvement for the budget.

Present: 4 - Mayor Stephen H. Buxbaum, Mayor Pro Tem Nathaniel Jones, Councilmember Jim Cooper and Councilmember Julie Hankins

2. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Buxbaum called the meeting to order.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

3.A 13-0268 Approval of March 14, 2013 Finance Committee Meeting Minutes

The minutes were approved.

4. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

4.A 13-0292 Building Repair and Replacement Fund

The report was received.

4.B 13-0297 Oral Report - Financial Feasibility of Downtown Restrooms

Community and Committee Members have expressed a need for 24-hour access to restrooms in downtown Olympia. Brian Wilson, Code Enforcement officer, told the Committee there are currently 7 public restrooms open from 8:00 to 5:00 in the downtown area. The lack of available restrooms downtown is creating health and safety risks. Mr. Wilson outlined 4 options:

1. Port-a-potties: \$370/month, no lead time, no utility hookup, easy to install but difficult to locate and many health and safety risks.
2. Partnerships with businesses or social service agencies: require on-site management, legal hurdles and no guarantee of continued service.
3. Expand the hours of existing 7 facilities: Requires on-site management, not centrally located and safety issues.
4. Single-stall restroom in high traffic area: Portland paid \$90,000 for the LOO plus \$1200/month maintenance.

Committee Member Jones asked if staff talked to any businesses about helping or do we have a 24 hour gas station. Brian said the current shelters or churches are more likely to be a service provider. He said the City issued an RFP a few years ago to pay for the monthly fee if a business/service agency would allow the port-a-potty on their premises. We did not receive any responses to the RFP. Regarding the gas station, he said you must be a customer and they close at 10:00 p.m.

Police Commander Nelson pointed out it is not just homeless people using the alleys as restrooms. "Let's not forget about our drinkers." There is a high concentration of bars in the downtown. When they close, there are a large number of patrons wandering the streets.

Committee Member Jones said, "there are really three issues: The shelter issue (homelessness), the bar issue and the safety issue. David Hanna, Associate Parks Director, said we have safety issues in broad daylight at some of our restrooms. Chair Buxbaum said we need to identify hot spots and need additional data and solutions. Committee Member Cooper said this issue really crosses the lines of all three of the Council Committees. We need a lead on this issue. No decision was taken on this item.

The report was received.

4.C 13-0250 Review of the 2000 Long Term Financial Strategy (LTFS) process

The Committee did not have time to discuss this item, so it will be continued to the May 9 Finance Committee meeting.

4.D 13-0276 2014 Budget & Public Engagement Plan

Councilmember Hankins joined the Committee meeting to discuss the Coalition of Neighborhood Associations (CNA) involvement in the 2014 budget. Councilmember Hankins and Committee Chair Buxbaum met with CNA members Phil Shulte and Bob Jones to discuss how the City could expand its public involvement process. They suggested we work with the CNA to define the problem and propose solutions. We would use the CNA steering committee as a test group for public engagement. In working with the general public we need an education component and we need to rebuild confidence and trust. Councilmembers Hankins and Chair Buxbaum proposed a joint meeting with the CNA steering committee to review a template for piloting our education and engagement process.

Committee Member Cooper said, "I don't want to put all of our eggs in one basket. CNA is not the only outlet for public input. Who is going to do the education?" Chair Buxbaum said, "The Finance Committee will do the work and I am hoping we can take some nonconventional tools into the neighborhoods. We are not interested in a standalone advisory committee. We are interested in education." Councilmember Hankins said, "We have to get out of the building." Committee Member Jones said he was interested in an interactive process. We need to pose questions in a meaningful way. Committee Member Cooper said he wants a discussion around essential services and he asked how individual Council priorities get into the October 22 document or at least get vetted before the ninth hour of the budget process.

Chair Buxbaum suggested we at least attend the CNA May steering committee meeting. We need to keep talking about this. The Committee agreed to keep this item on the Finance Committee agenda for the rest of the year.

The report was discussed and continued to the May 9 Finance Committee meeting.

9. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.