



Finance Committee

Discussion of Options for Public Input to the Budget Process

Agenda Date: 1/10/2013
Agenda Item Number: 4.A
File Number: 12-0817

Type: discussion **Version:** 1 **Status:** Filed

Title

Discussion of Options for Public Input to the Budget Process

Recommended Action

Committee Recommendation:

Being developed.

City Manager's Recommendation:

Review the past opportunities and discuss how staff and the Council can provide more opportunities for the public to understand and comment on the City's operating budget.

Report

Issue:

How can the budget committee and the Council provide more options for the public to be involved in the budget process?

Staff Contact:

Steve Hall, City Manager, 360.753.8447

Jane Kirkemo, Administrative Services Director, 360.753.8499

Presenter(s):

Steve Hall, City Manager

Jane Kirkemo, Administrative Services Director

Background and Analysis:

Over the last decade, staff and the City Council have used various options to provide opportunities for the community to become knowledgeable about the City budget as well as participate in the process.

1. We began with an 18-month process to develop the Long Term Financial Strategy (LTFS). This included multiple public meetings, newspaper articles, surveys and Council meetings.
2. The City has used Elway Research to hold focus groups with citizens, businesses and our advisory committees.

3. We have used several public forums with a pulse pad technology to allow citizens see how their responses compare with other citizens.
4. We created an on-line budget calculator.
5. With the assistance of TCTV, we produced several television shows as well as interviews with the Finance Committee.
6. We have used open houses and public meetings at a variety of locations (including a 10th grade civics class).
7. We are using a constrained priority to allow citizens to define core services.

For the 2013 budget

1. Staff and the Council began the year with a series of study sessions talking about various aspects of the budget.
2. We had an ad hoc budget committee that met with the Council in June.
3. The Finance Committee has discussed aspects of the budget at every committee meeting this year.
4. The Council discussed revenue options and chose to ask the voters for support for the increase in sales tax.
5. Staff has met with the West Olympia Business Association (WOBA).
6. Staff has met with service clubs.
7. We have worked with the Planning Commission, Arts Commission, Utility Advisory Committee in addition to meetings with employees and labor management.
8. The Council has held two public hearings
9. Staff and the Council have worked with the Coalition of Neighborhood Associations.

Tonight's meeting is an opportunity for us to discuss ways for both the staff and Council to be more involved in the 2014 budget process.

Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):

The Coalition of Neighborhood Associations (CNA) would like to meet with the City prior to budget adoption in order to have a better understanding of the City's budget.

Options:

1. Discuss alternatives for public participation in the 2014 operating budget

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Financial Impact:
N/A