



CITY OF RIDGEFIELD, WASHINGTON

City Council MEETING MINUTES

November 3, 2022

Regular Meeting - 6:30 PM

GENERAL SESSION CALL TO ORDER - 6:30 PM

FLAG SALUTE

ROLL CALL

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Ron Onslow	Councilor	Present	
Lee Wells	Councilor	Present	
Jen Lindsay	Mayor	Present	
Rob Aichele	Councilor	Present	
Judy Chipman	Councilor	Present	
Rachel Coker	Councilor	Present	
Matt Cole	Councilor	Present	

LATE CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

PROCLAMATION

Make a Difference Month

PUBLIC COMMENT

Comments received during public testimony can be heard on the City's website under
<<https://ridgefieldwa.us/government/city-council-meeting-audio-files/>>

CONSENT AGENDA - MOTION TO APPROVE AS PRESENTED.

RESULT:	ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Rob Aichele, Councilor
SECONDER:	Lee Wells, Councilor
AYES:	Onslow, Wells, Lindsay, Aichele, Chipman, Coker, Cole

1. Approval of Claims And/Or Payroll

2. Approval of Minutes from October 27, 2022 Meeting

PRESENTATION

Salary Commission Update - Shaun Ford, Chair

2. 2023 Proposed Budget

PUBLIC HEARING/BUSINESS

1. Public Hearing on 2023 Property Tax Levy and Revenues

The 2023 revenue budget totals \$80,928,140, including \$16.2 million in internal transfers for capital projects, \$1.4 million for debt service and \$1 million in internal transfers to support both street and storm water operations. \$15.5 million in new grant funds, and \$17.9 million in a new debt issuance. In comparison the 2022 amended revenue budget was \$62,057,020, with \$19.4 million associated with internal transfers from existing funds. The overall net increase in the proposed revenue budget when compared to the 2022 amended budget is approximately \$18.9 million, a 30.4% increase.

Mayor Lindsay Opened Public Hearing: 7:14PM

No testimony received.

Mayor Lindsay Closed Public Hearing: 7:14PM

BUSINESS

1. First Reading of Ordinance No. 1380 – 2023 Property Tax Levy - Kirk Johnson, Finance Director

The 2023 budget includes a statutory maximum 1% increase in the current property tax levy exclusive of additional revenue resulting from new construction, improvements to property, any increase in the value of state assessed property, and annexations that have occurred, and including any refunds made. The 2022 regular levy amount was \$1,924,096. The statutory 1% increase would raise the property tax levy \$19,241. In addition to the 1% increase, the Clark County Assessor's office has preliminary estimates showing the City assessed value for new construction will add approximately \$342.4 million to the City's assessed values, adding approximately \$248,119 in property tax revenue. The Department of Revenue is still in the process of valuing state assessed utilities. These numbers should be available shortly. The value for the 2022 tax roll for state assessed utilities was \$18.3 million. To date the estimated 2023 taxable assessed values for Ridgefield is \$3,360,318,388. The Assessor must certify the assessed values by November 14, 2022. The City must hold a revenue hearing and certify a property tax levy to the County by November 30, 2022. The City's current forecast for the 2023 property tax levy is \$2,220,000, an increase of \$280,000 from the amended 2022 budget. The estimate is for the City of Ridgefield levy amount to be 64.9 cents per \$1,000 assessed value a decrease of 7.5 cents from the 2022 levy amount. The 2023 General Fund operating expense budget has increased 15.9% over the 2022 operating expense budget to account for contractual and inflationary increases and an increase in 6 full time positions. Current inflation has been over 8% in 2022. Adoption of the 1% property tax levy increase does not match current inflation, but the increase is needed to maintain a balanced budget.

First reading conducted.

2. First Reading of Ordinance No. 1381 - 2023 Water Utility Rate Code Amendment - Kirk Johnson, Finance Director

City staff use a rate model created by a periodic rate analysis as required by the City's Budget Policy. The rate analysis analyzes expenses and revenues for the next 10 years for the Water Utility. Factors included assumptions for inflationary cost escalators, labor agreements, capital facility plans and growth assumptions. City staff update the model annually to determine proper rates to maintain the water system. As a result of the update to the rate model, it was determined that rates for 2023 should increase at a minimum inflationary rate of 3%.

First reading conducted.

3. First Reading of Ordinance No. 1382 - 2023 Storm Water Utility Rate Code Amendment - Kirk Johnson, Finance Director

Ordinance No. 1382 provides an amendment in the rate structure and a step toward generating the necessary revenue to assist in funding the Storm Water Utility. The City will be required to provide additional storm water treatment measures due to the population growth and NPDES permit requirements in 2024. As a result staff have been proactively increasing maintenance to the storm water treatment system to be able to meet the new requirements of the future permit. Expenses have significantly increased over the past few years and the city use a rate model to forecast revenue requirements to meet the operating and capital expense needs of the utility. The current model calls for a minimum inflationary increase of 3% annually. Inflation has exceeded that amount this past year and is expected to continue at an elevated rate through 2023. Staff will update the rate model with an outside consultant who specializes in rate studies. The work is expected to begin in the first quarter of 2023 and the outcomes presented to council in the second quarter of 2023. The 2023 proposed budget includes a \$200,000 transfer from the General Fund to supplement the storm water operations in 2023. Staff continue to identify potential grant opportunities and/or low-cost loans to help fund the capital projects. In addition to these funding sources staff are recommending the storm water rate be increased \$0.70 per bi-monthly billing or 3% to meet the upcoming obligations.

First reading conducted.

4. Motion - Approval of Consent Decree with Department of Ecology

The City of Ridgefield has demonstrated an interest in assisting with the remediation of properties in the City that have been contaminated through the release of toxic chemicals. In 2014, the City and Ridgefield School District partnered with the Department of Ecology for an Integrated Planning Grant (IPG) to identify those areas of the City which would benefit from remediation and redevelopment. In 2016, the IPG study conducted by Maul Foster Alongi identified three downtown Ridgefield properties (Bus Barn, Wertz/Weeks, and Park Laundry) which showed likelihood of contamination and remediation potential. Specific for the Consent Decree before City Council on 11/3/22, the Park Laundry site (The Site) showed an underground area impacted by chemicals released through dry cleaning operations. The Site is approximately twenty-two acres in size due to groundwater impacts within the City. Because private parties are highly unlikely/unable to independently pay for the costs to clean up The Site, which hinders future development of the entire downtown, the City and the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) have been in the process of negotiating a Consent Decree (CD) that would require the City to conduct the remedial action described in the Cleanup Action Plan (CAP) attached to the CD. In exchange, the City would receive what is called "contribution protection" against claims that could otherwise be brought by Ecology or third parties for costs associated with the release of hazardous substances addressed by the remediation. Moreover, a CD is a statutory prerequisite for the City to receive Remedial Action Grant (RAG) funding for the remediation work. By entering into the CD, the City will be qualified to receive 90% grant funding for the remediation work. Ecology has already set aside \$915,000 for this project, and the City has also applied for additional grant funding for the 2023 - 2025 budget cycle. The process for a CD is that once the City Council approves it in principle, Ecology will publish it and the CAP for public comment. Ecology will then respond to comments and finalize the CD and CAP. Once the parties have a finalized CD, it is signed by the parties, and filed with Clark County Superior Court as it will need to be signed by a judge or court commissioner to be valid. In other words, it is a stipulated order between the City and Ecology that is signed by the Court. This particular CD varies from Ecology's standard language in that it is not effective until the City takes ownership of the Park Laundry Property. If the City does not acquire the Park Laundry Property within six months of entry of the CD, then either the CD will be null and void or the parties could negotiate additional time. If the City never acquires the Park Laundry Property, it will not be bound by the terms of the CD. Ownership of the Park Laundry Property is an important condition precedent for the City so that it will own "clean" property after investing 10% of

the remediation costs as its grant match. The City is working with the Personal Representative of the Estate of the owner of the Park Laundry Property to accomplish a transfer of the Property to the City via quit claim deed. If those negotiations are unsuccessful, the City could utilize condemnation to obtain title to the Park Laundry Property. Once the CD is effective, the City will be obligated to conduct the work described in the CAP. The CAP here describes a remedy that consists of limited excavation of impacted soil, in place groundwater treatment through injections, institutional controls in the form of a restrictive covenant limiting the use of groundwater, and ongoing groundwater monitoring to ensure the effectiveness of the remedy.

City Council conducted discussion.

MOTION: MOVED TO APPROVE THE CONSENT DECREE WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY.

RESULT:	ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Rob Aichele, Councilor
SECONDER:	Ron Onslow, Councilor
AYES:	Onslow, Wells, Lindsay, Aichele, Chipman, Coker, Cole

5. Motion - Approval of Memorandum of Understanding with Lumen

CenturyLink contacted the City to discuss a project in the downtown area which would provide service enhancements for approximately 600 Ridgefield households. In order to do the work in a way that is not cost prohibitive, Century Link would need an aerial build that includes wrapping or overlashng of CenturyLink’s fiber optic cable to existing Century Link copper lines currently on poles. There may also be a need to replace existing poles or install a limited number of new poles. City Ordinance generally makes it unlawful for any public utility, including CenturyLink, to erect new poles in the City. The City also interprets section 14.56.030 of the City Ordinances to prohibit new lines being placed on existing utility poles. Undergrounding of utilities on poles in the downtown area of Ridgefield is not currently funded in the Capital Facilities Plan. For the project to proceed, a MOU is necessary between the parties to navigate the gap between what is financially feasible to provide additional service and the City code requiring undergrounding in order to provide more stable communications infrastructure. The MOU would allow CenturyLink to proceed with the project as defined above and in specific exhibits attached to the agreement. In exchange, when the City is ready to underground downtown utilities and remove poles, CenturyLink would participate financially in the work to the extent necessary to remove and bury their lines.

City Council discussion.

MOTION: MOVED TO APPROVE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH LUMEN.

RESULT:	ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Rachel Coker, Councilor
SECONDER:	Judy Chipman, Councilor
AYES:	Onslow, Wells, Lindsay, Aichele, Chipman, Coker, Cole

PUBLIC COMMENT

None received.

COUNCIL/PRESIDING OFFICER/STAFF REPORTS

Council

Council Member Onslow - Additional work completed at Onslow Park.

Council Member Coker - Invite to Chamber Coffee Connection event and Chamber Wine Down Wednesdays event.

Mayor Pro Tem Aichele - Lions Club Christmas Tree sale prep.

Council Member Chipman - Helped out at Neighbors Helping Neighbors.

Council Member Coker - Attended Union Ridge readathon, tree planting event at Horns Corner.

Mayor

Attended Union Ridge readathon, trick or trunk, City tour with Rep. Orcutt.

Executive Session - Pursuant to RCW 42.30.140(4)(a) - Collective bargaining sessions with employee organizations, including contract negotiations, grievance meetings, and discussions relating to the interpretation or application of a labor agreement.

8:06PM - Mayor Lindsay announced that City Council would enter into executive session to discuss collective bargaining sessions with employee organizations, including contract negotiations, grievance meetings, and discussions relating to the interpretation or application of a labor agreement pursuant to RCW 42.30.140(4)(a) until 8:30PM, no action would be taken.

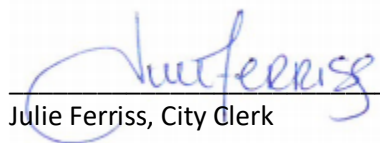
Attendees: Mayor, City Council, City Manager Steve Stuart, Deputy City Manager Lee Kottnerus.

8:27PM - City Manager Steve Stuart announced that City Council will continue the executive session until 8:40PM.

8:39PM - City Manager Steve Stuart announced that City Council will continue the executive session until 8:45PM.

8:45PM - Mayor reconvened the meeting and adjourned.

ADJOURN - [8:45 PM](#)


Julie Ferriss, City Clerk
Jennifer Lindsay, Mayor