

**CITY OF PROSSER, WASHINGTON**  
**601 7<sup>TH</sup> STREET**  
**CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS**  
**CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING**  
**TUESDAY, OCTOBER 30, 2012**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Warden called the Special Meeting of the Prosser City Council to order at 7:02 p.m.

Mayor Warden reported both Council Member Everett and Council Member Rainer were running late and would like to recess the meeting until they arrived.

At 7:03 p.m. Mayor Warden recessed the Special City Council Meeting.

At 7:19 p.m. Mayor Warden reconvened the Special City Council Meeting.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**ROLL CALL**

Council Members Elder, Everett, Taylor, Troemel, Hamilton, and Becken were present. Council Member Rainer had not yet arrived.

Also present were Interim City Administrator Koch, City Clerk Shaw, Finance Manager Yost, Interim Police Chief Markus, City Planner Zetz, Building Official Morrow and City Attorney Saxton.

**MAYOR AND COUNCIL REPORTS AND COMMENTS**

Council Member Becken reported that this year's attendance and overall numbers were low for the Prosser Farmer's Market.

Mayor Warden reminded Council that Friday, November 2, 2012 was Interim City Administrator Koch's farewell luncheon at 11:00 a.m. in the Council Chambers at City Hall.

**DISCUSSION ITEMS**

**DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING A CONDITIONAL OFFER FOR THE POSITION OF POLICE CHIEF FOR THE CITY OF PROSSER**

Mayor Warden provided a briefing regarding the status of the Police Chief recruitment efforts.

Interim City Administrator Koch provided a memo to Council regarding a potential conditional offer of employment for the candidate that participated in the October 26, 2012 Police Chief interviews. This person would like to remain anonymous as he has not yet made his employer aware of his search efforts. It is staff's recommendation to authorize the Mayor on behalf of the City, to make an offer of employment to this individual similar to the terms of the draft Conditional Offer of Employment letter presented to Council. Second, staff is recommending Council give Mayor the authority to negotiate within the 2013 proposed salary range since it is expected the candidate will start sometime after January 1, 2013.

There was discussion regarding the terms outlined in the letter including the proposed salary range, vacation bank and moving expenses.

A motion was made by Council Member Hamilton, seconded by Council Member Taylor to authorize the Mayor to negotiate an offer similar to the terms of the proposed letter. Motion passed 6 YES, 0 NO, 1 ABSENT (Rainer).

A motion was made by Council Member Taylor, seconded by Council Member Troemel to give the Mayor the authority to negotiate within the 2013 proposed salary range of \$84,261 to \$99,133 annually. Motion passed 5 YES, 1 NO (Becken), 1 ABSENT (Rainer).

Council Members Hamilton and Everett stated it was their preference for Mayor to begin negotiations at the bottom of the salary range \$84,261, as an initial offer.

*[Clerk's Note: Council Member Rainer arrived at 7:38 p.m.]*

**DISCUSSION AND PROVIDE DIRECTION OR TAKE POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING ALL POSSIBLE STAFFING SCENARIOS, JOB DESCRIPTIONS, ADDITIONAL APPOINTIVE OFFICES, HIRING CONTRACT PERSONNEL AND ALL OTHER OPTIONS THAT THE CITY COUNCIL MAY DESIRE TO DISCUSS REGARDING THE RESIGNATION OF THE INTERIM CITY ADMINISTRATOR AND HOW TO EFFECTIVELY MANAGE THE CITY THROUGH THE MAYOR ON EITHER A FULL-TIME OR PART-TIME BASIS**

Mayor Warden read an email the City received from Susan Barbus in regards to endorsement of Paul Warden in Administrator position.

Council Member Taylor stated the City of Prosser is a strong Mayor form of government and as such, Mayor Warden has the ability and the right according to Washington State Law to run the City as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) today. The conversation Council needs to have is whether or not he should be compensated for those services. Additionally Council Member Taylor stated according to the package staff put together, this would be a cost savings for the City, Mayor is a good fit already and it would provide stability and continuity.

Council Member Troemel inquired whether or not the City had received written resignation from Interim City Administrator Koch. Mayor Warden confirmed yes, he had received her letter.

Council Member Becken stated while yes, the Mayor is the CEO of the City, he felt without a City Administrator the City would not have sufficient checks and balances in place. Additionally, once the benefits were worked into the equation, there would not be a substantial cost savings that the City could recognize.

Interim City Administrator Koch stated there would be approximately \$55,000 per year in savings from not hiring a City Administrator.

Council Member Hamilton stated it was his opinion to possibly build the Reserve Fund back to ten percent. He agreed with Council Member Becken that while the Mayor has the right to run the City as the CEO he did not feel that it was the right thing to do by the tax payers. Furthermore, it would be his preference to operate like the City of West Richland whose Mayor is compensated at \$600.00 per month. Mayor Warden could run the City and begin the search for a City Administrator.

Interim City Administrator Koch reminded Council of the three vacant positions currently on the Leadership Team; a City Administrator, Police Chief and a Finance Director. If Mayor Warden could step in and run the City without having to add another recruitment job, it would lend tremendous stability to the City and staff. Staff is currently reviewing recruitment proposals for a Finance Director in addition to moving closer to filling the Police Chief position. Due to the ongoing projects the City is in the middle of, it would be next to impossible for staff to absorb another recruitment job. If Council directed staff to hire a professional recruitment firm at this level, it could cost the City upwards of \$30,000 - \$40,000.

Council Member Taylor stated it was not Council's desire to leave the staff "leaderless."

Council Member Everett stated the City is in this position because of lack of action and something needs to be done immediately or the City is going to be in a really tough position. Cost savings can be recognized and the discussion to be had is what to do in both the short and long term. He too agreed with Council Member Taylor's statement to leave the staff feeling "uneasy" and felt what the City needs is professional City Administrator. Additionally it is his opinion that an Interim Finance Director needs to be secured for internal control purposes.

Mayor Warden said he is in favor of bringing in an Interim Finance Director until the City can fill that position full time. Mayor also agreed that the City needs a professional City Administrator and it was his intent to begin the recruitment efforts in the last six months of his term in the event that a City Administrator could take over the City at the beginning of 2016.

Council Member Elder said Mayor Warden is a good fit, there would be little to no transition time, he has the experience and established relationship with staff already and felt the City needed to compensate him a living wage.

Council Member Rainer said none of the scenarios were perfect and felt bringing in an Interim City Administrator was not a good plan for the City. Mayor Warden has been a part of all of the projects and would be easy to get up to speed. Having Mayor step in and run the City was really the best option.

Council Member Troemel stated he reviewed all the options and wants to do what is best for staff and the community. He prefers the sunset clause in the ordinance that would have Mayor's compensation return to its current level at the end of his term December 31, 2015.

Discussion continued regarding all of the available options presented to Council including what level should Mayor's compensation be increased to.

**COUNCIL ACTION**

**ORDINANCE 12-2798 INCREASING THE MAYOR'S SALARY IN AN AMOUNT TO BE DETERMINED AT COUNCIL'S DISCRETION**

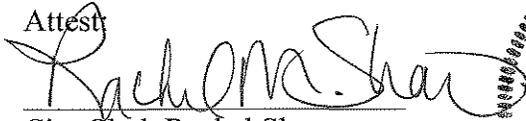
A motion was made by Council Member Everett, seconded by Council Member Taylor to adopt Ordinance 12-2798 increasing the Mayor's salary to \$64,200 annually. Motion passed 5 YES, 2 NO (Hamilton, Becken), 0 ABSENT.

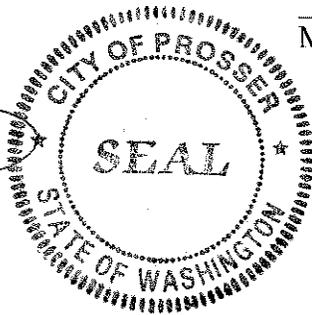
Council directed staff to prepare an ordinance that would eliminate the City Administrator position with a sunset clause that would reestablish to position January 1, 2016. Staff will bring the ordinance back at a future City Council meeting for consideration.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the City Council at this time, the Special Meeting of the Prosser City Council was adjourned at 8:59 p.m.

Attest

  
City Clerk Rachel Shaw



  
Mayor Paul Warden