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CITY OF SEDRO-WOOLLEY  
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Regular Meeting of the City Council  
November 8, 2000 – 7:00 P.M. – Senior Center

The Meeting was called to order at 7:00 P.M.

Pledge of Allegiance

Moment of Silence – Kent Peters

Mayor Dillon called for a moment of silence in honor of City Employee Kent Peters who passed away November 1, 2000.

ROLL CALL

Present: Mayor Dillon, Councilmembers Meamber, Miller, Storrs, Lemley, Warner, Grandy (Late) and Silves. Staff Members: City Attorney Hayden, City Supervisor Stendal, Engineer Barnet, Planner Rivera, Police Chief Cooper and Fire Chief Klinger.

Consent Calendar

- Minutes from Previous Meeting
- Finance
- Claim Vouchers #41534 to #41634 for \$70,834.46 (Voided Warrant #41540)
- Payroll Warrants #25681 to #25771 for \$102,261.47

Councilmember Miller moved to accept the consent calendar. Seconded by Councilmember Storrs. Motion carried.

### Proclamation – Family Week

Mayor Dillon read a proclamation declaring November 19 – 25, 2000 as Family Week in the City of Sedro-Woolley.

### Presentation – Good Samaritan Award

Councilmembers Lemley and Silves presented the first Community Good Samaritan Awards to Debbie Grotzke, Sandra Dykstra, Teresa Thompson and Police Officer Mark Wallis for their role in coming to the life saving aid of James Wenrick. Councilmember Lemley also acknowledge the role of Mr. Levi Sorrell, and requested anyone who knows of his whereabouts to contact City Hall so he can receive his award.

### Items from the Audience

Harold Beitler – 1017 Wicker Road, requested the City place a bench at the Cemetery in memory of Kent Peters, former Cemetery Sexton.

Glenn Allen – 316 Talcott St., representing the upcoming Historical Home Tour December 9, 2000. Allen stated the tour will be of 12 homes along Talcott and Ferry Streets with the benefits going to the museum. Allen requested a street closure on Talcott Street between 4<sup>th</sup> Street and 5<sup>th</sup> Street from 5:30 to 10:00 p.m. on December 9, 2000.

Councilmember Grandy arrived at this time.

## **PUBLIC HEARINGS**

### Setting 2001 Property Tax Levy

Attorney Hayden addressed the unknown impacts of the passage of I722. Hayden stated it would require three things, the City would be required to refund taxes increased during the second half of 1999, it requires the City to limit it's assessments and levy's to 102% of 1999 assessed value and it requires the City to aggregate its banked levy capacity. Hayden stated there are some constitutional issues with I-722 and the result is uncertain as to what effect it will have on the City. Hayden recommended policy decisions be made now, setting the levy based on what is to be done for the City, knowing that changes may need to be made at a later date.

Supervisor Stendal presented background on the proposed property tax ordinance. Stendal discussed the effects of I695 on the City's budget, the current expense budget, sales tax revenues, city staffing and priorities, the proposed budget and recommended a tax levy of \$2.88 per thousand dollars of assessed valuation per household. Stendal also reviewed how property taxes work and the "banking" of unused taxes.

Mayor Dillon opened the public hearing at 7:38 P.M.

Mayor Dillon read a letter received into the record from John and Dottie Piazza of Parkside Special Care Center objecting to the proposed increase in property tax.

Vern Sims – 116 W. Ferry Street, stated he did not have any objection to the tax levy. Sims did question the effects of I-722 and the City's contingency plan for paying it off.

Supervisor Stendal stated the City is taking the position that it's an unknown and if the Council picks up the "banked" property tax that part will be upheld. If it isn't then a budget amendment would be requested with some budget cuts at that time.

Ron Forshier – 1315 Railroad Ave., expressed concern of increasing taxes and the whole package of increases from all agencies. Forshier recommended revisiting privatizing of sanitation services.

Denise Nicholson – 30170 Hwy 20, Library Board Chair stated while the Police and Fire Departments are essential services to the City, she believes Library services to be extremely important as well. Nicholson requested consideration of the same services for the Library with no increases.

Rhonda Huggins – 709 Central Place, addressed the impact of I-695 at her place of employment, Skagit Transit, who lost 50% of their revenues. Huggins stated she believes the City needs to look at laying off employees or to look at other alternatives besides increasing taxes.

Todd Olson – 821 Talcott Street, city employee with the Fire Department addressed the lack of current manpower. Olson encouraged the Council increase the taxes to continue the minimum services currently offered. Olson also addressed the growth of the City and keeping up with growth.

Bill Stendal -- former Mayor of Sedro-Woolley stated the Council has always been conservative in increasing taxes and has not taken the full amount for many years, as it was the philosophy to save for a rainy day. Stendal stated that he believes the rainy day has arrived. He addressed the growth of the City and quality of life and encouraged Council to do the right thing and pass the recommended tax levy.

Wayne Estes – 419 Jameson Street, requested the Council take a hard look at the cuts necessary now, because in 6 months Council may be faced with harder cuts.

Rich Ruhl – 617 Central Street, Principal of Central Grade School, addressed safety in schools and the importance of the Code Enforcement Officer in removing dogs that come onto the playgrounds. Ruhl questioned the status of the D.A.R.E Program within the current budget.

Supervisor Stendal stated as proposed the D.A.R.E. Program is intact although if the tax increase is not passed that is one program slated to be cut.

Ruhl spoke on the importance and benefits of the D.A.R.E Program and the involvement of the youth in a positive manner with the police officers. Ruhl endorsed that the program should remain a high priority.

Al Armstrong – 700 Brickyard Blvd., business owner in downtown Sedro-Woolley, stated he has been in business for 40 years and has not seen many changes. He believes the Council needs to promote Sedro-Woolley and promote to get big businesses into Sedro-Woolley for a higher tax base. He believes this would solve a lot of the problems without increasing taxes.

Doug Wood – 939 Alderwood Lane, Police Lieutenant for the City, spoke on the accomplishments of the Police Department being the hardest working and being a committed staff. Wood stated the call load per officer is above every other city in the county. He believes the loss of the Code Enforcement Officer to be a quality of life change for the citizens of Sedro-Woolley. Wood stated with the loss of the Code Enforcement it would remove part of an officer as well because they would be having to care of business that the enforcement officer normally handles. Wood encouraged Council support the tax increase.

Susan Bishop – 402 Talcott Street, spoke in support of the tax increase. Bishop stated she has relied on the Police Department and has always received quick and professional response. She stated she supports the tax increase to maintain the services we have and feels the City should be looking at additional Police and Fire personnel.

Mike Dills – 1005 Jameson Street, spoke in agreement with Armstrong's comments regarding bringing businesses into the City.

Mike Anderson – 2079 Hwy 20, reminded the Council that they are representing the whole community and believes most citizens are not aware of the potential tax increase. Anderson questioned why the financial problems were not addressed at an earlier date. As a former Councilmember he did not recall voting to “bank” unused tax. Anderson recommended tightening of the belt and cutting back if necessary and if I-722 is reversed then raise taxes or find money from the state. If upheld, do the right thing and take the issue to the voters.

David Everson – 916 Marie Place, believes this to be a result of I-695. He stated most citizens have been impacted negatively or positively, most positively in the savings from car tab. He stated citizens need to put things in perspective. Nobody's taking any more from them than what they've gained. They're just asking for some of it back.

Glenn Allen – 316 Talcott Street, spoke in opposition of a tax increase over 20%.

Melissa Dougher – 937 Alderwood Lane, stated she is willing to pay an increase in order to maintain the services now available. Dougher stated she is a relative newcomer to Sedro-Woolley but has come to love the city. She also stated she works for the Police Department and that the job of the Code Enforcement Officer does free her up to handle more human related problems. She feels the Code Enforcement Officer position is vital to city services.

Don Davis – 1201 Nelson Street, spoke in high regards for the Police and Fire Department but commented on needed improvements within the Street Department. Davis also questioned grant writing for federal funds and stated he believes services are what is needed in the City.

Mike Janicki – 810 Talcott St., spoke on the history of lack of funding and the community involvement in getting things done. Janicki cautioned the Council on cutting the core and the effect it would have on families and kids returning to raise their families. He believes the sacrifices to be with the older citizens, in having to pay for what our children will benefit from. Janicki envisions growth for the City with an increased tax base. He stated Council needs to decide if they are going to go forward for the community and have things in place for when the big markets come in, or are we going to play catch up forever.

Julie Anderson – 2079 Hwy 20, addressed the tax revolt going on across the City, State and Nation. She stated the Council is going to have to start cutting somewhere. She would agree to a 3% increase but believes a 25% increase is to high.

Harold Beitler – 1017 Wicker Road, addressed the impact of a tax increase to those people on fixed incomes. Beitler stated he believes the City has been driving Cadallics for to long and needs to live within their budget. They need to take a look at where the money is going and where to cut. Beitler also addressed the impacts of the increase on new businesses. He recommended a 3-4% increase along with fine tuning the budget.

Max Alaways – stated “when the law begins this tyranny has to end”.

John Milholland – business owner in Sedro-Woolley, encouraged thinking ahead instead of crisis thinking. He stated he almost didn’t get his business in Sedro-Woolley due to the traffic impact fees. Council needs to stop and think where we get our revenue taxes. It’s from businesses coming in, creating taxes and creating people who move here because of the businesses here or because they work in the City.

Hank Geary – 221 State Street, long time business owner. Recalled a thriving business community and sees it deteriorating. Geary stated Council needs to look seriously at what can be done to bring business back. He believes that will take care of the tax problems.

Tony Splane – 714 Sapp Road, spoke against the proposed increase because of the impact on the retired community. He believes there’s a way to live within a budget.

James Hawkings – 1211 State Street, questioned some of the line items within the preliminary budget and believes there are items that could be cut before staff.

Spud Walley -- 810 Warner, stated I-695 did not do the municipalities any favors. He state he has reviewed the budget and it’s pretty bare bones. He believes any cuts made in personnel would seriously affect the quality of life in Sedro-Woolley. He commented crime is down even though understaffed and believes every department in the City is understaffed, but the job gets done. He congratulated the Mayor and Council for continuing their efforts. Walley also addressed tax increases in previous years and spoke on the benefits to the community and the

effects of any staff layoffs due to budget cuts. He encouraged the Council consider a tax increase of 18% in order to maintain the quality of life in Sedro-Woolley.

Daniel Graber – 905 Talcott Street, questioned the number of homes within the city limits that would be paying property taxes. He stated according to the County Assessors office the average home value in Sedro-Woolley is \$140,000 and according to his calculations there would need to be approximately 2000 homes in order to meet deficit. Graber questioned total budget figures and the possibility of swinging funds from one department to the other. Graber did not believe that the total requested increase was necessary to meet the budget and addressed the lack of incentives to bring franchise businesses into the City.

David Pierce – 308 Puget, city employee, spoke in support of the tax increase. Pierce commented that nobody wants to pay more but here are the time where we have to pay more. He stated Council needs to think what is best for the community, not what's best for the individual.

Bob Tweede – 965 Summer Meadows Court, stated everything is going up and everyone needs to live within their means. He cited the lack of compromises and would like to see some compromises made.

Ardell McCombs – 814 Haines, city employee, addressed a previous comment regarding grant writers. McCombs stated a few years ago the City had a permit tech position working with the Planning and Engineering Department who was writing grants but that position is no longer there. The City also had a full time engineer, that is not there either. He believes that if the 6% tax increases were taken in past years, the City wouldn't be asking for such a high increase. The City is growing and it needs to be funded somehow.

Greer Drummond – downtown Sedro-Woolley, who represents Valley Hardware and Oliver & Hammer Clothes Shop, believes the Council should take a look at the main street and the number of business just barely hanging on. He stated when taxes are raised it also raises the rent or lease cost which factors into attracting new businesses.

Brenda Snyder – 607 Reed Street, used to have a business here 9 years ago. She stated she does not see any improvement in the downtown retail district. She requested Council hold another meeting on this topic in order for more public notification. Snyder stated she firmly believes that Sedro-Woolley is going to die and become a bedroom community only. She stated retail needs to be emphasized and the City need to find things for children to do as well.

Vern Sims – questioned a recent contract for blacktopping of Ferry Street a recent purchase of a paver. He questioned if it was more cost efficient to rent paving equipment for the few times that it would be needed.

Supervisor Stendal addressed Sims questions.

Tony Splane – questioned why government agencies feel the property owner is a bottomless pit of money. Why are they always picked on.

Attorney Hayden commented that Washington State is a property tax based system, some states have income tax, some have higher sales tax or other applicable taxes. A large portion of the City's budget is property tax based.

John Worline – 787 State Route 9, city employee, addressed the Council with his belief that the value of the requested increase is worth the money to have streets to drive on, a Fire Department to respond to calls and a Library to enjoy books in.

Mike Anderson – questioned if the Council had looked at raising the real estate excise tax like Burlington and Mount Vernon.

Supervisor Stendal stated it had been explored but those funds can only be used for certain capital improvements, not the general operating budget.

Dick Shoop – 608 Ferry Street, spoke on the whole tax package that all agencies are trying to raise and believes that a strong look needs to be taken at the issue and 25% is way out of line.

Harold Beitler – 1017 Wicker Road, requested a special meeting be held to give time to gather more information from those persons that the Council represents.

Hank Geary – quoted a story of Everett Dirksen.

Mayor Dillon closed the public hearing at 9:00 P.M.

Following the public hearing, Council and Staff engaged in lengthy discussions that included equipment and capital outlay items, code enforcement officer duties, used versus new vehicle purchases, and percentages of a tax increase,

Mayor Dillon reminded Council that the issue before them is to set the property tax level. Any budget cuts and/or budget revisions would take place at a later session.

Mayor Dillon addressed the Council with a compromised percentage of 12% which would maintain present staff levels and most of the operations currently offered. Dillon stated she believes this amount would be a workable figure and allow the City to keep all staff intact.

Further discussion ensued with Supervisor Stendal requesting Council entertain a motion as proposed by staff to raise property taxes as set forth in the proposed ordinance.

Councilmember Storrs moved to accept Ordinance #1388-00 An Ordinance of the City of Sedro-Woolley Approving An Increase In The Regular Property Tax Levy In Addition To Any Amount Resulting From The Addition Of New Construction and Improvements. Seconded by Councilmember Grandy.

Councilmember Storrs cautioned the Council that now is the time to step up and make a tough decision. He stated that sometimes we have to make amends for the past. In the process of holding the line in the past we set ourselves up for disaster. If we continue to follow that same

pattern we will have a disaster. Storrs stated he is aware of what's happening in the downtown area but believes some of the problems are self inflicted. He said it is Council's responsibility to either decide that we are going to go forward with a crippled city or will go forward with a city that the people can expect services from. If we don't do it this year, we'll have to do it next year or the year following and we may not have an option then.

Mayor Dillon restated the motion and called for a roll call vote.

Roll Call Vote: Councilmember Meamber – No, Miller – No, Storrs – Yes, Lemley – No, Warner – No, Grandy – Yes, Silves – No. Motion denied 5-2.

Supervisor Stendal requested Council entertain a motion for a tax levy increase of 18%.

Councilmember Silves moved to approve Ordinance #1388-00 An Ordinance of the City of Sedro-Woolley Approving An Increase In The Regular Property Tax Levy, In Addition To Any Amount Resulting From The Addition Of New Construction and Improvement In The Amount of \$1,096,220 (18%). Seconded by Councilmember Storrs.

Roll Call Vote: Councilmember Meamber – No, Miller – No, Storrs – Yes, Lemley – Yes, Warner – Yes, Grandy – Yes and Silves – Yes. Motion carried 5-2.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

NONE

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### City Code Adoption

Attorney Hayden reviewed the recent review of City Code books by Book Publishing Company of Seattle. They have recently compiled, edited and published a codification of the permanent and general ordinances of the City of Sedro-Woolley. Hayden recommended passage of the proposed ordinance as a housekeeping matter.

Councilmember Storrs moved to approve Ordinance #1389-00, An Ordinance of the City of Sedro-Woolley, Washington Adopting the Sedro-Woolley Municipal Code. Seconded by Councilmember Miller.

Roll Call Vote: Councilmember Meamber – Yes, Miller – Yes, Storrs – Yes, Lemley – Yes, Warner – Yes, Grandy – Yes, Silves – Yes. Motion carried.

### Street Closure Request

Councilmember Miller moved to authorize the closing of Talcott Street between 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Street on December 9, 2000. Seconded by Councilmember Lemley. Motion carried.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS AND REPORTS FROM OFFICERS**

Councilmember Storrs – addressed parking issues in the downtown area. Storrs expressed concern of parking being occupied by business workers for long lengths of time. Storrs also noted a street light in front of Countryside Chevrolet that lacks a light on the pole.

Mayor Dillon stated these issues will be looked into.

Councilmember Miller – questioned the status of the manhole cover on Highway 20 in the westbound lane at Reed Street with the concrete collar breaking away.

Sewer Foreman Dale Velasquez stated that the manhole was done as part of a DOT's project and he has been trying to get a hold of the state to fix but has not had any success.

Councilmember Meamber – requested on behalf of himself and Councilmember Storrs that a 35 MPH speed limit sign be placed in the vicinity of Janicki Fields. Both felt there is too long of a gap between the existing 35 MPH sign and the 50 MPH sign and reflects a safety concern.

Both the above items were been referred to Engineer Barnet.

Engineer Barnet – addressed the Council on some stormwater issues that will be forthcoming as a result of a revision of the Puget Sound Water Quality Manual. Barnet reviewed some of the impacts that if adopted would affect the City.

Councilmember Meamber questioned the status of Brickyard Creek. Barnet stated it is still considered a salmon stream by the Department of Fisheries.

Planner Rivera – presented an update on the tree planting along Ferry Street. Rivera stated the planting has been funded by a grant through the Department of Natural Resources. She stated the grant was for a total of 24 trees. Staff has decided to expand the number of trees and will plant a total of 53 trees, five of the trees being donated by Stu Metcalfe. The City has been working with Arborist, Jim Barbarionas. The tree planting will take place on December 2, 2000 and volunteers will be recruited. Rivera encouraged Councilmember participation with the planting.

Fire Chief Klinger – announced a practice burn to be held on November 12, 2000 at 300 Gibson Street. The burn will begin at 8:00 A.M.

Councilmember Lemley – announced a Veterans Day Assembly to be held at Cascade Middle School on November 9, 2000 at 10:00 A.M. The promoters are requesting City dignitaries to attend.

City Attorney Hayden – spoke on I-722 and the unknown effects.

Councilmember Grandy – complimented Chief Cooper, City Engineer Barnet and the Street Department for the signs at the end of Jameson.

Councilmember Lemley moved to adjourn. Seconded by Councilmember Warner.

The meeting adjourned at 10:00 P.M.

ATTEST:

APPROVED:

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