

**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF TACOMA-PIERCE COUNTY
OBSERVER REPORT**

CITY OF TACOMA CITY COUNCIL MEETING AUGUST 27, 2020

Video meeting

LWVTPC Observer: Lydia Zepeda

[Click here for materials for meeting](#)

PRESENT: Victoria Woodards, Chris Beale, Keith Blocker, John Hines, Lillian Hunter, Robert Thoms, Catherine Ushka, Kristina Walker

ABSENT: Conor McCarthy

CALLED TO ORDER: 5:04 pm

ITEMS FILED IN THE OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK:

Minutes of the Economic Development Committee, September 22, 2020.

CONSENT AGENDA - approved unanimously

Minutes of the City Council study session, July 28, 2020.

Minutes of the City Council study session, August 4, 2020.

Minutes of the City Council study session, August 11, 2020.

Minutes of the Committee of the Whole special meeting, October 13, 2020.

RES40678 a resolution setting Thursday, December 3, 2020, at 1:30 p.m., as the date for a hearing by the Hearing Examiner on the request to vacate a portion of East “K” Street, and alley, between East 26th Street and East Wiley Avenue, west of East “L” Street, for business development and expansion.

PROCLAMATIONS

Recognition of South Sound 911 for handling wildfire emergencies.

PUBLIC COMMENT on RES 40679

No written comments for public comments

REGULAR AGENDA

Motion 20-0752 to authorize the City’s settlement of \$52,500 for all claims against the City in the matter of June Sellers-Stubbs v. City of Tacoma, Pierce County Superior Court Cause No. 20-2-05292-8, relating to an injury sustained while at the Tacoma Dome. Approved unanimously.

RES 40679, appointing Logan Cornwell to the Mayor’s Youth Commission. Will fill one of two vacancies on the Youth Commission. Approved unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARINGS AND APPEALS

20-0685 Public hearing on the proposed Ad Valorem and Emergency Medical Services tax levies for 2021. NO SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS POSTED ON WEBSITE.

2021 property tax levies, there are five levies, 4 will be discussed in November. The Implicit Price Deflator, was below 1% so cannot increase levy by more than 0.6% unless declare substantial need this biennium. Given budget shortfall, City Manager recommends doing so and a 1% increase over higher regular levy for Ad Valorem (Rate 2.12 per \$1000 in assessed value) and EMS levy 1% increase over the highest regular levy. City makes up only 20% of property taxes, another 37% goes to schools and 22% goes to State of Washington.

No public comment by audience on this, 17 written comments, not read.

Proposed biennial operating budget 2021-22 - BUDGET NOT POSTED ON MEETING WEBSITE
Process of budget development: 2020 community survey; 2025 strategic plan; priority workshop with Council; then COVID-19 hit; program analysis and racial equity analysis. Proposed budget was presented beginning of October by City Manager.

Nov 17 and Nov 24 are the first and second reading of the budget.

6 Priorities: health, access, livable wages, health, affordable housing, belief and trust
Community feedback - homelessness is major issue, affordable housing, housing shortage, alternative policing, reduced funding for policing, funding for social and health needs, improved access to jobs, and increased accountability by City Council and Tacoma police.

Total budget is \$3.67 billion, TPU is largest portion, General fund is only 14%

General fund: \$40 million gap due to COVID-19 from reduced sales tax

City manager identified \$27 million in reductions (redirections of fire services, reduced additional TPD hiring (25 positions), reductions in library, reduction in deferred maintenance, reductions in municipal court services, reduced innovative grants, extend senior center closures in response to COVID-19.

Additional funding for - TPD body cameras, community safety, staff for office of equity and human rights.

Goals:

Maintain essential services for police, fire, and streets, garbage, recycling, water and power, library services, human rights, housing and shelter services.

Adapt public services to meet CDC requirements for COVID-19.

Add funds to housing relief and shelter and neighborhood plans.

Capital Facilities Program - BUDGET NOT POSTED ON MEETING WEBSITE

Lays out capital expenditures for next 6 years. Adds 42 new projects, mostly utility and some transportation projects. Sets budget for beyond 2 years, from real estate excise tax. 78% for transportation projects

Public comments from audience:

Abbey: Speaking on behalf of union representing libraries, the union was not part of budget discussion. Use of library has gone up during pandemic. From an equity lens, service demand is up and we have developed new methods of providing services. We are the lowest paid city employees, we were forced to take 12-week furloughs and our cuts are larger than any of the other cuts in city services.

Naomi: Advocates for mental health care and social services to reduce crime. City is over policing and Council should reduce budget of police.

Holly: The library is cut while the police is not. The library helps children services. Speaker is a DV survivor; calling the police for DV does not help. We need mental health and social services, not police. Librarians are being cut while the killer of Manny Ellis is being paid.

Tanya: Speaks against budget cuts to library of over \$2 million to library while giving an additional \$2 million to police for raises. Libraries are access to resources, courses, to forming community.

Janelle: Question about budget page 141; it says \$5million in cuts to TPD, but comparing this budget with last year shows the "cut" is actually \$3 million, where is other \$2 million? Also the budget does not indicate information on weapons. How much of budget is allocated to weapons? Why is more money

going to police for the HOT team? This \$2 million is equivalent to cuts in library and the amount spent for shelters. Mayor responds that she will not answer questions in the public forum.

Dee: The City has a declaration about Transformational Change. The City needs to put its money where its mouth is. Speaker is a public defender and states that we can better serve our community better by providing housing and services rather than using police. Asks the Council to look at budget and live up to your declaration.

Jolynn: has been an employee at library for 14 years. During that time, there have been two library closures and cuts to staff that the library has not come back from. The community supports the library and ranks it higher than any other city service, yet the library is asked to take more cuts. Asks the Council to join the community in supporting the library.

Jonathan: asks the Council to defund the police by 50%. The council has ignored community requests and made only token cuts to the police that are insulting and support continued white supremacy and oppression of people of color. Body cams do not reduce violence by police, they just cost money. Having fewer police is a good thing. Asks that the city spend the money on worthwhile things and quit paying murderers with badges.

Nolan: Supports libraries; has good memories growing up going to libraries with my family. We saw our friends there. I learned there. We need to support libraries. The police are overfunded already,

Brick: Cut the police budget and reallocate to the library and other community services. The library provides services to families and access to services for the homelessness. The police do not.

Devan: Defund the police. There have been countless protests, petitions, letters, speakers requesting this. This budget is not what anti-racism looks like. We need to fund mental health services.

Teresa: Family loves the Tacoma library. The staff is friendly and helpful and provide educational events. We understand you need to have a balanced budget, but my son has something to say: we do want to see the Tacoma libraries weakened.

Deb: Opposes library funding cuts. I can attest to past cuts hurting the libraries. The killers of Manny Ellis need to be removed.

Senco: Please fund neighborhood councils that foster community.

Katie: As a Tacoma resident and teacher, affirms the negative impact of this budget. The cuts to the library are huge and will affect staff and services and cuts to police are tiny and will not result in layoffs or affect services. We cannot wait another two years and lose library services in the meantime.

Melissa: Defunding the police is possible. The libraries are much more significant to the community than the police. It has been 7 months and the killers of Manny Ellis are still on pay. The library does not need to be cut.

Morgan: Do not defund libraries; the Council should give them more money and should defund the police.

Public hearing for Capital Budget 2021-2 and Capital Facilities program 2020-2026

No public comment

REPORTS BY THE CITY MANAGER

Set up warming shelter, Eastside Community center, served 26 people.

COMMENTS AND COMMITTEE REPORTS OF THE CITY COUNCIL

Thoms report on Economic Dev street cafes to extend deadline beyond Dec 31
Applications for core coordinating Heal the Heart for antiracism

Motion to excuse McCarthy - adopted unanimously.

Transportation Board meeting to follow this meeting.

MEETING ADJOURNED at 6:15.

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PUBLIC HEARING ON THE TRANSPORTATION BENEFIT DISTRICT BUDGET - NO BUDGET MATERIALS POSTED ON MEETING WEBSITE.

Called to order at 6:15pm

Councilmembers Present: same
Councilmembers Absent: same

Consent Agenda: adopted unanimously

Regular Agenda: none

Public comment for Transportation Benefit District 2021-22 spending plan: None

Transportation Budget presented calls for paving streets
The entire non-motorized budget is for curb cuts
Money can be used for sidewalks, but no plans to do so.

A council member registered his opposition to bike lanes and sidewalks, and support of spending only on paving.

No written comments.

Motion to excuse McCarthy - adopted unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 6:44pm

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PUBLIC HEARING - VIRTUAL FORUM

Called to order 6:54pm

Councilmembers Present: same
Councilmembers Absent: same

6 written comments not read.

- 1 public debt service
- 3 public utility
- 1 tide flats
- 1 soccer complex

Audience public comments:

Dee: Black Lives Matter. Asked for a resolution from Council to the State to enact an independent investigation for any police death. Asks for officers to be fired for killing Manny Ellise. Asks to defund police. Asks for the police officer who killed Benny Branch to be fired and charged.

Janelle: Housing first works, sweeps are inhumane. Thanks for setting up warming shelter. It was funded 100% by community donations. We need low barriers to services for the homeless. We need to allow them to bring their belongings.

Devan: The City has made some resolutions on antiracism, the City needs to make demands for to State for investigations and needs to fire killer cops. Move cops off the HOT team.

Les: Asks for no fossil fuels expansions at the port. Arrest the cops and punish the cops who are murderers. Councilman Thoms disrespected climate change activists last week. Implores the Council to do better, especially Thoms. The Council has failed the community.

Alexa: A teacher on classroom duty since early morning. You can do better. It looks like you took money from the libraries and gave it to the police. That you are defunding education (libraries) at a time like this, it is embarrassing.

Jamie and Randy: We want to know what is the city's relationship with the port about the LNG? We need a forum about the tideflats to explain to the people of Tacoma what are the relationships.

Woodards response to the comments: we cannot arrest or convict anyone, the Prosecutor needs to do it. There are lots of places we can adjust the budget later, we can amend the budget later, but we need to have to a balanced budget, so we need to pass this budget. We have already sent a letter to the governor requesting an independent investigation.

Adjourned at 7:13pm