

TOWN OF WILKESON
Special Meeting for Fire and Emergency Services Levies
July 29, 2013

CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Hogerhuis opened the special meeting at 7 PM

ROLL CALL: Council members I. Galbraith, B. Thawsh and S. Hallin were present. Council member T. Endsley arrived at 7:03. Town Clerk Trisha Summers and Town Attorney Mike Reynolds were also present.

Council member Thawsh motioned to excuse R. Fautenberry. Council member Galbraith seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

MAYOR'S COMMENTS: The Mayor opened the floor with a brief narrative of the history of our current contract. Council has had a few discussions with East Pierce in the last year. East Pierce commissioners would like to renegotiate the contract to raise town's rate to a rate that all East Pierce communities are paying. East Pierce now has notified the town by letter that it will be terminating Wilkeson's Fire and Emergency contract in one year, as of May 1, 2013. Whether the town chooses to stay with East Pierce or develop other avenues, Mayor Hogerhuis has brought the council together to discuss the potential need of more operating funds and the option of a Levy for this fall's ballot. The town residents were also invited to attend by flyer and mailings.

COMMENT FROM CHIEF THORSON, EAST PIERCE FD-East Pierce FD isn't looking to "cut and run" from Wilkeson. They are just looking to get the same amount of money to operate in Wilkeson as everyone else in the district pays. East Pierce pays \$13,000 out of pocket to operate the Wilkeson Fire Station. They terminated the contract because they wanted to renegotiate it. They can continue to provide services to Wilkeson for \$2.00 per \$1,000.00/assessed value. East Pierce is currently recruiting volunteers for Wilkeson, which they will need whether they choose to stay with East Pierce or go with Buckley/Carbonado.

COMMENT FROM CHIEF PREDMORE, BUCKLEY FD-The current levy of \$0.25 per \$1,000.00 of assessed value brings in just shy of \$7,000.00. Buckley FD would not be able to help Wilkeson run a fire department with that amount of money. Wilkeson has got to increase their levy to afford fire services, period.

CITIZENS PRESENT/COMMENTS:

- Bill Summers-(Wilkeson Resident)
Why isn't the 20-year contract being fulfilled? Would Wilkeson be manned full-time? Chief Thorson replied that the contract can be terminated by either party with one year's notice. East Pierce gave Wilkeson notice as of May 1, 2013. Chief Thorson replied that the station will not be manned full time because there isn't enough-calls to warrant that.
- Jack Schmidt-(Wilkeson Resident/volunteer Fire Fighter at Carbonado) The community needs to make informed, intelligent decision. Volunteer retention is extremely poor. The community needs to decide if they want to volunteer or pay for services.
- Wally Snover-(Carbonado Resident, Volunteer for Carbonado FD) Carbonado has been having a hard time getting volunteers but they are out there, there are people who will volunteer.

- Shon & Billi Kuykendall-(Wilkeson Resident) Maybe we need to think about going back to the volunteer fire department the way we used to. We need to find out what it would cost to go with Carbonado.
- Bambi Thawsh-(Wilkeson Resident) Would love to see it but it takes lots of time and money to run a volunteer fire department.
- Bob & Bonnie Walker (Wilkeson Residents) No comment
- Skeek Gonzales (Wilkeson Resident)
- Karen Osgoodby (Wilkeson Resident)
- Jerroll Holyan (Wilkeson Resident)

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Motion to approve Ordinance 2013.04, Providing for the submission to the voters a proposition authorizing the Town to replace the existing emergency medical services program levy of \$0.25 per \$1,000.00 of assessed value with a levy at the rate of \$0.50 per \$1,000.00 of assessed value. Council member Hallin motion to approve Ordinance 2013.04 and Council member Thawsh seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

2. Motion to approve Ordinance 2013.05, Relating to regular property taxes; Providing for the submission providing for the qualified electors of the town at the election to be held on November 5, 2013, of a proposition authorizing the town to levy regular property taxes in excess of the limitations of Chapter 84.55 RCW; setting forth the text of the ballot proposal; directing the proper town officials to take necessary actions; and providing for properly related matters. Council member Thawsh motioned to approve Ordinance 2013.05 and Council member Endsley seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

MAYOR'S COMMENTS: The mayor thanked both Chief Thorson and Chief Predmore for attending and for supplying valuable information that the community and council needs to make an important and informed decision for the future of the town's fire services. She reiterated the fact that the vote will now be up to the community in the November 5th elections. The town discuss the future of fire services in the near future through a facts sheet mailing and possible public meeting. Public involvement is crucial so everyone talk to your neighbors and spread the word about this very important decision. Mayor asked the audience if there is interest for both a " for" and "against" committee whjo can make a statement for the ballot. Deadline is August 5th. If you are interested, please see our town clerk for more details.

ADJOURNMENT: Council member Thawsh motioned to adjourn the meeting at 6:44 PM. Council member Galbraith seconded. Motion passed unanimously.