

DATES OF INTEREST:

- August 10
Regular City Council Meeting 6 p.m.
- August 10
Budget Hearing 6 p.m.
- August 28
Candidate Filing Period Opens

A public hearing, pursuant to Idaho Code 50-1002, will be held for consideration of the proposed budget for the fiscal year from October 1, 2017 to September 30, 2018. The hearing will be held at Plummer City Hall, Plummer, Idaho at 6:00 p.m. on August 10, 2017. All interested parties are invited to appear and show cause, if any, why such budget should or should not be adopted. Citizens have the right to provide written or oral comments concerning the entire City budget. Copies of the proposed City budget in detail are available at City Hall during regular office hours (9:00 am to 5:00 pm, weekdays). Anyone desiring accommodations for disabilities related to the budget documents or to the budget hearing, please contact the ADA Coordinator, Sara Gauthier at 686-1641 at least 48 hours prior to the public hearing. The proposed fiscal year 2017-2018 budget is shown below as FY18 proposed expenditures and revenues.

Fund	Actual FY16 Expenditures	Current FY17 Expenditures	Proposed FY18 Expenditures
General Fund	\$355,310.10	\$303,477.15	\$437,733.00
Electric	\$2,947,457.28	\$1,797,456.11	\$3,507,992.00
Water	\$155,217.74	\$101,441.52	\$235,570.00
Sewer	\$231,562.50	\$578,773.00	\$581,240.00
Garbage	\$86,844.06	\$94,268.91	\$120,000.00
Total	<u>\$3,776,391.68</u>	<u>\$2,875,416.69</u>	<u>\$4,882,535.00</u>

Fund	Actual FY16 Revenues	Current FY17 Revenues	Proposed FY18 Revenues
General Fund	\$563,645.92	\$395,283.53	\$437,733.00
Electric	\$2,834,547.48	\$2,012,173.00	\$3,507,992.00
Water	\$125,757.12	\$214,610.57	\$235,570.00
Sewer	\$467,003.40	\$693,941.48	\$581,240.00
Garbage	\$106,537.01	\$96,583.51	\$120,000.00
Total	\$4,097,490.93	<u>\$3,412,592.09</u>	<u>\$4,882,535.00</u>

Plummer City News is published by the City of Plummer and provided to customers free of charge. An electronic version is available upon request. Any comments about this publication can be addressed to Sara Gauthier City Clerk at P.O. Box B, Plummer, Idaho 83851 or (208) 686-1641 or by e-mail at Sara@cityofplummer.org

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City Council Election

There are two City Council seats up for election this November. They are four year terms. The Candidate filing period is August 28th through September 8th at 5:00p.m. For more information please contact the City Clerk-Treasurer at 208-686-1641 Monday through Friday 9a.m.-5p.m.

Library News

There will be an open house to celebrate Benewah County Library District's 50 years of service on TUESDAY AUG. 15th from 3 - 6 pm. at the Plummer Library. There will be some great door prizes, tasty refreshments, live music and a historical display.

Back to school time is just around the corner. You can help improve your children's reading level by encouraging them to read during the summer. The library has a good selection of kids books to choose from.

Monday-Wednesday: 10a.m. to 6 p.m.
 Thursday: 2p.m.-6p.m.
 Friday & Sunday: Closed
 Saturday: 10a.m.-2p.m.

Message from the Mayor

As you may or not have known, we had been in negotiations with the tribe to install an equalization basin next to our sewer plant to mitigate our effluent violations. Due to Executive Session law (Idaho Code § 74-206) I couldn't tell you the back-story until it was decided upon, and it finally was in July's meeting. I don't agree with or like keeping things "secret" from you, but the law is the law.

Anyway...

It would be a tribal facility on tribal property, and we would lease it. It will go where the old sewer lagoons were. This so we can catch the overflow and process it at the capacity that the sewer plant can handle. There was some reluctance by city council to do this citing the lease expense, the fact that the city had already paid once to have the old lagoons filled in when the sewer plant was constructed, and its location. Basically "ownership." Mountain Water Works, Andy, our city attorney, me, and the tribe looked at the best way to handle as much effluent as we possibly could over about a year of talks. The city could only apply for so much from the Army Corps of Engineers as no other funding was available, but the tribe could add an additional \$600,000 in a partner aspect of a combined project. We looked at putting it on city property (the rock quarry behind the sewer plant) but the expense of doing so would not accommodate a large enough reservoir for the sewage, so the tribe proposed the EQ basin on their property, where, as I mentioned, there were sewer lagoons before. So we began talks and we spent our project share on the underground and manhole project in the streets last fall. But there was a snag on the tribal part when the city council wouldn't agree to the lease of \$6,000 per year or the location and ownership.

The council, except one, finally voted to approve the lease on the contingency we asked for a lower price on the lease and a greater time before renewal. The agreement as written was for \$6,000 yearly renewed every 5 years. Andy and I asked the tribal council, they said the agreement was fair and reasonable, and that they would review it with us in 6 months to a year to see if we could reduce it. So we made the effort and asked, they said no, and I signed it and delivered it.

It is not an ideal situation, but it gives us time to plan to seek funding and find a better place or solution for the sewer plant. If the EQ basin removes or even reduces our violations and helps remove the moratorium then we will have added revenue. The risk is that it won't be big enough to lift the moratorium. We will see when it is completed, and how much \$600,000 can build. The St. Maries Gazette incorrectly reported it would lift the moratorium. We just won't know until it is built.

Another issue with the city council was that we trade approximately 100 connections in the form of capitalization fees to the tribe for their project and the lease. If it lifts the moratorium, then minus the lease and cap fees, those 100 connections would bring in \$93,000 per year in needed revenue for improvements.

So it was a trade off. We had two viable options.

One, to do nothing, with no funding available, and I even looked at private charitable foundations and trusts for potential funding, could be catastrophic to the community.

As it stood, we had, up until January 1 st, approximately 3017 violations recorded with EPA. And we were still violating. The maximum penalties for these violations are \$37,500 per violation, then another \$16,000 per violation administrative penalty. That equates to \$113.2 MILLION and \$48.3 MILLION respectively. Keep in mind this is the maximum, and I'm not saying we would get fined the maximum, but it is there and has to be considered. That is a total of \$161.6 MILLION in fines. Add \$26 million that was hanging over our heads in a lawsuit by Kootenai Environmental Alliance for the violations (which the agreement and project mitigate) and you have \$187.5 million dollars. Add in the violations we accrued from January 1st through the end of the rains in June, which is another 181 days/violations for another \$6.8 million and \$2.9 million administrative penalties respectively for another \$9.7 million bringing us up to a grand total of \$197.2 MILLION in fines, fees, and penalties. Divide that by 575 accounts and each household in Plummer would be on the hook for \$342,770.00! Divide that further by 360 months (30 years) and it's \$952.14 dollars a month added penalty to their sewer bill for thirty years! This is going on an example used so many times where it is espoused that the national debt places \$60 thousand odd dollars on the backs of each tax payer. Same kind of thing in this example. And I'm not saying we would get the maximum, but it HAS to be considered when trying to decide the best move for the city and its residents. It's part of the compromising principle of problem solving. The maximum threat to you, the resident, had to be considered since there is the potential for that kind of an outcome if we did nothing.

Two, take the tribe's offer and have an EQ basin to use, lease it, and sign an agreement to pay a fine to EPA of \$2,500.00. The worst-case scenario in doing this we might have to add 87 cents to the sewer bill for a while to pay the lease. Maybe not, we'll have to see once it's online. But we get breathing room to find additional solutions and avenues to improve the sewer plant issue. Which would you choose?

I'm going to tell you right now, one councilman opposed everything down the line and offered no alternative ideas or solutions. Another opposed to the very end but then voted for it saying, "I'll probably get run out of town!" Why, I would have to ask, would you get "run out of town" for saving your constituents from a potential \$952 dollars a month debt for one of maybe 87 cents? IF WE HAVE TO. But I don't think we are going to have to, because we are finding that there are revenue options available to take that lease fee load. Plus if the project opens up more connections capacity, that revenue will pay for the lease and more. I would rather face that gamble than the for sure thing of getting the crap fined out of us which would ultimately crush the city. Again, which would you choose?

On the 19th of July we received our "Commitment Letter" from USDA for the electric project(s). This means that the loan is guaranteed and we are good to go to and we will see movement on phase one as soon as we humanly can get it going. We have some money already budgeted and also in our FY 18 budget once that gets approved on August 10th. Engineering work has already started and we should see some construction before the winter hits us.

Finally, we are going to have a community review in partnership with Idaho Rural Partnerships this next September. Slated for the 19th, 20th, and 21st. We need community members to be on focus groups as part of our "home teams" to work with the "visiting teams" from IRP. The areas of focus for the review are economic development, infrastructure, and community design & identity. We had a small "kick off" meeting last Monday (July the 17th), with roughly a dozen people in attendance. Some were tribal, from tribal departments, local businesses and the community at large. From that initial meeting we also heard concerns about housing, civic & community involvement. From that, depending on input from you, civic life/community involvement could be exchanged for community design & identity.

We will have "home teams" attached to each focus area, with a "team leader" for each. Ideally, since we are in a unique situation here on the reservation, I feel it would be beneficial if we had shared team leaders, or "co-leaders" for each group. One tribal/department representation, and the other community at large representation. That's not to say it couldn't be local business, entrepreneurship, church or faith based, or any other scenario. Just that we have community members participating.

Example...

Economic Development:

Team co-leaders (a tribal and a community at large member)
4, 5, 6, or however many want to be on that area of focus.

Infrastructure:

Team leaders (a tribal and a community at large member)
4, 5, 6, or however many want to be on that area of focus.

Community design & identity:

Team leaders (a tribal and a community at large member)
4, 5, 6, or however many want to be on that area of focus.

The visiting team may, with input from you, add a 4th area of focus for civic life/community involvement. Jon Barrett, the ED of Idaho Rural Partnerships, the entity that does the reviews, suggests that a good goal to start would be 2 co-leaders for each team with 3 or so team members. I think we could do better than that.

IRP would like to have a conference call with team leaders on Thursdays from 9 to 11 am Pacific time (they are in Mountain time) if possible, but we can work that out to your schedules or suggestions. But it is important that everyone, team leaders and members, as many as possible, get in on the calls.

If interested, please respond to me via email at mayor.cityofplummer@gmail.com
and also to Jon Barrett at jon.barrett@irp.idaho.gov

There will be more to come as we move through August, so if you have questions give me a holler at the email above. You can see what the Review is all about at http://irp.idaho.gov/home/community_review/