

City of Mabton, Washington  
**City Council**  
**Study Session Minutes**  
Tuesday, September 22, 2015

**Call to Order**

Mayor Mario Martinez called the meeting to order 6:00 p.m.

The following were:

Present: Mayor Mario Martinez and Council persons Oping Hutson,  
Arturo Delafuente, Mark Gourneau, Sophia Sotelo and Vera Zavala

Also Present: Police Chief Cas Cedillo, City Administrator Walt Bratton, City Attorney, James Carmody

Absent: None

**OLD BUSINESS:**

A. Revised Personnel Policy Manual –

Mr. Bratton opened up the discussion on this agenda item elaborating that this item was handed out at the last study session for city council members to review and provide their input. He has not received any input yet. He requested that if any of the council members or the Mayor has any input to contact him directly. Staff will be aligning this updated Personnel Policy Manual with the next Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) with the goal of having them both passed by the city council by Resolution in December 2015.

B. Financial Policy (updates) –

The Mayor discussed this item. This policy was disseminated at the last study session two weeks ago for city council members to provide their input. The Mayor brought up a couple of needed revisions to the city's financial policy and asked for input. The City Council supported the Mayor's requested updates to the policy. Staff was asked to bring this policy back to the next city council meeting for approval by Resolution of this revised Financial Policy for the City of Mabton.

C. Draft of the City of Mabton Parks and Cemetery Comprehensive Plan –

Mr. Bratton opened up the discussion stating that this Plan was requested by the Governing Body at the Saturday, August 29, 2015 Governing Body Budget Workshop/Staff Retreat. Mr. Bratton stated that this is the first ever City of Mabton - Parks and Cemetery Comprehensive Plan and requested input from the City Council on the draft document. The goal is to have it approved by the city council by Resolution by the end of the 2015 FY. This plan is needed for the city to apply for and obtain grants, loans and supplemental funding for both the parks system and cemetery.

D. Cemetery Headstones Policy –

Mr. Bratton handed out the draft cemetery policy for headstones. This was a Mayor's directive from the previous study session to come back to the city council with a draft policy for their review. The City Council provided input and staff made some wordsmith revisions to the draft policy. Staff will administer the new Cemetery Headstones Policy once the city council's input has been added to it.

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

#### **A. Initiating a City of Mabton Beautification Recognition Program in 2016 –**

Mr. Bratton opened up this discussion item elaborating on the idea of starting this program in Mabton during the 6-month growing season (May through October, 2016) to recognize residents in the community that place value, effort, and time into keeping up their yards/residences. This program is already implemented in neighboring lower valley cities/towns. The City council liked the idea and requested that staff bring it back to them as an update in spring 2016 prior to implementing it. The City Council during future study sessions will vote on the resident of the month award in 2016.

#### **B. Changing from gallons to cubic feet for the Rate Structure for water, sewer, etc. by Amending the current City Ordinance –**

The Mayor discussed the need to make this revision to this city ordinance. He said he will work with staff to make this revision and bring it back to the next city council meeting for review and approval by the Governing Body. The revision needs to be made so staff can invoice and tabulate monthly rates within the parameters of the VISION software billing system for financials/utility billing.

### **VISITOR'S COMMENTS:**

There was one citizen that had comments regarding complaints about their water bill.

- Salomon Torres, 311 North 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue

Mr. Torres (in Spanish) went on to express personal concern over his current water bill. He stated that his monthly bill is anywhere between \$180-200. He questions the validity of the billing and also stated that no "Public Works" employee was reading his meter.

Mr. Torres stated that his yard and grass is "brown and dry". He stated that he "hardly uses water" and has already fixed all his piping on his property. He stated that only 2 people live at his residence and doesn't understand why he is being billed so much.

NOTE: Councilwoman Sophia Sotelo and Councilman De La Fuente assisted with linguistics in relaying what Mr. Torres was saying and questioning.

Mr. Torres was informed by council that his water meter would be checked and asked him to meet with City over his billing, for a review and to assure that his billing was appropriate and accurate.

Mr. Torres agreed.

Before commencing, there were two other female adult citizens, sitting in the audience that appeared to have attended to express concern over the water billing. However, neither stepped forward or stated their names. In open forum, they did state their addresses in Spanish.

### **ONGOING ISSUES:**

None

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

None

The meeting was adjourned by the Mayor at 6:46 pm

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Walt Bratton, City Administrator

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Mario Martinez, Mayor