

## **TOPPENISH CITY COUNCIL**

### **Special Meeting Minutes**

**June 21, 2008**

Council/Staff Planning Session  
Benton Rural Electric Association Meeting Room

### **CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Belton called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

Present: Mayor Loren Belton and Councilmen Al Hubert, Derald Ortloff, Ed Pacheco, William Rogers, Randy Taylor, and Blaine Thorington.

Absent: None.

Staff Present: City Manager William Murphy, Finance Director/City Clerk Linda B. Mead, Building Official/Code Enforcement Officer Fletcher Scaife, Firefighter Dale Northrup, Jr., Parks and Recreation Director James Cole, Police Sergeant Adam Diaz, Public Works Director Lance Hoyt, Interim Public Safety Director Tom Kehm, and Executive Assistant/Deputy City Clerk Heidi Riojas.

### **INTRODUCTIONS**

Mayor Belton was the Facilitator for the meeting and Finance Director/City Clerk Mead was the Gatekeeper to keep the meeting on task. Each person briefly spoke about himself or herself and their various roles in order to become better acquainted with each other. Mayor Belton explained that the group would be brainstorming to decide on three top issues facing the community and ways to take action to handle the problems. Each person contributed an issue for discussion. The group listed nineteen different topics during the first round of discussion, which included educating the public on rates and the budget, community cohesiveness, town image, economic development, gangs, crime, homeless/drunken people, technology, resident pride in property, tribal relations, citizens education, fireworks safety, City entrance/Clean up, meet with legislators locally, increase volunteerism and involvement of community members, overall community apathy, code enforcement, and infrastructure improvement.

### **LUNCH AT 12 NOON**

### **CONSENSUS BUILDING**

The group worked together to combine the nineteen topics to create ten topics. Mayor Belton had each group member vote on three issues, and reduced the list to five topics. By a process of elimination, the group determined that the top three priorities for the City are as follows: 1) Town Image, Resident Pride, Code Enforcement Issues, City Entrance, and Graffiti; 2) Gangs/Crime; and 3) Tribal Relations, City Entrance, and Clean Up.

## **DECISION MAKING**

Mayor Belton had the group brainstorm of ways to tackle the top three priorities facing the community and only had enough time to discuss the first two issues. The following are the ideas to deal with Town Image, Resident Pride, Code Enforcement Issues, City Entrance, and Graffiti: a) hire an assigned code enforcement officer; b) establish internship with Heritage University and/or Yakima Valley Community College; c) graffiti and litter ordinance to enforce; d) workforce – hire 2 seasonal employees to pick up litter, clean up for code enforcement issues, and remove graffiti – utilize youth and trustees; e) create neighborhood watch for watch, clean up, and pride groups; f) create lawn parking ordinance; g) citizen education – talk on KDNA radio/broadcast programs on MVTV/post on website; h) create packets to be issued for new business licenses and building permits for rules and regulations; i) revise nuisance ordinance; j) Garden Club Members select City yard of the year; k) partnerships with all clubs; and l) issue fines for clean up. The following are ideas to deal with Gangs/Crime: a) State funding – legislature – gang ordinance; b) educate citizens to contact legislators for gang funding; c) continue SRO program; d) dispute resolution center – continue with school district involvement; e) gang unit – small town can not afford to take an officer off the street – Federal funding – project Safe Neighborhood; f) continue Gang Task Force involvement with Yakima; g) improve street lighting; h) complaints – create list of complaints for each district for tracking activity; i) residents form a Block Watch Program; and j) assigned officer for Gang Task Force.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 2:00 p.m.

---

LOREN O. BELTON, MAYOR

---

HEIDI RIOJAS, EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT/DEPUTY CITY CLERK