DISCUSSION OF SPOKANE CITY BUDGET

Lin McGinn has arranged for a lively discussion on Spokane’s City Budget by inviting Chief Financial Officer, Gavin Cooley, and Director of the Budget, Crystal Marchand, to our General Meeting, January 9. The information below, from the City’s website, is a primer for understanding the challenges to making decisions that will affect the health and well-being of our community this next year.

2018 Fiscal Guidance
For the second consecutive year, the City was not faced with cuts to staff or programs during the budget cycle, reversing a trend that spanned more than a decade. Continued diligence in budgeting and an increased focus on jobs and economic growth are significant reasons for the reversal and has the city in an even better position as we progress through 2017. For 2018, we anticipate another year of sustainable moderate growth.

Our ability to make new investments is limited by the significant commitment made to existing investments and now depends entirely on the growth of the local economy. During the 2016 budget process we committed to creating a strategic plan and a set of tools to help spur business growth, and that work is under way. There are a number of factors to consider as we work through the 2018 budget process:

- **Revenue Growth** – For the purpose of developing the 2018 General Fund budget we assume revenue growth of 3%. This is right in line with our long-range revenue forecast.
- **Median Household Income** – Following up on a significant increase in MHI in 2014 (11%), MHI in the city increased by 1.5% in 2015 to $44,350. Although that is the highest MHI has been in at least 10 years, it remains below our United Way ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) goal of $54,000. We remain among the lowest in both categories in Spokane County. Our focus on affordability of government remains and all budget decisions must consider citizens ability to pay.
- **Investment in Our Employees** – Working in partnership with our labor groups we have kept the growth in labor costs in line with revenue projections. The 2018 budget will include approximately $5 million in contractually obligated pay increases (cost of living increases (COLA) and longevity step increases) as well as budgeted increases in benefits costs of about $4 million.
- **1% to Public Safety Capital + Matching Funds** – We remain committed to contributing the 1% property tax growth of about $400,000 as well as the $400,000 match from the General Fund to purchasing vehicles and equipment for public safety. City Council adopted Resolution 2014-0081.
on July 14, 2014 to support this ongoing investment. The set aside for capital does limit the City’s ability to make new investment in other areas. At this point we are halfway to our goal of having a sustainable funding source. We have committed the 1% increase for four consecutive years and will achieve this goal by continuing to commit the 1% increases from 2018 – 2021. At that point in time, the City will have approximately $6.5 million annually dedicated for this purpose and will no longer need to commit future property tax increase for this purpose.

- Investment in Public Safety Operations – Anticipated expiration of the federal SAFER grant that allowed expansion of fire service to southwest Spokane as well as extension of the ARU program has us planning for increases in both operating and capital expense for Fire. We also remain committed to sustaining funding for the additional 35 police officers (25 funded in 2014 and 10 in 2015) and will make targeted investments in key U.S. Department of Justice recommendations related to use of force. The 2018 budget includes another 10 police officer positions to continue our commitment of greater police presence in our community.

- Unfunded Capital – We continue to look for solutions to the shortfall in our $735 million 6-year capital budget, which currently stands at about $29 million of projects that are unfunded and have no identified funding source.

- Reserves – The City Council approved Resolution 2015-0059, which established a formal plan allowing us to shift positive General Fund variances into the General Fund Contingency Reserves. Shifting the 2017 net positive cash variance into the Contingency Reserve would increase the level of funding to about 8.5%, just short of our 10% goal.

- 2.9% Utility Rate Cap – We are committed to supporting the Utility rate cap set by City Council at 2.9%. The City’s long-range revenue growth as well as public works capital projects will be tied to that rate in 2018 and in future budgets.

- Impact of State & Federal Policy – We anticipate that federal policy changes may have regulatory impacts related to the Affordable Care Act and changes to EPA regulations/rules that could have a negative financial impact on the City budget.

- Spokane Employee Retirement System – City employees depend on SERS for their retirement and it is a priority to improve the financial sustainability of SERS for currently retired employees and for future retirees. We continue to work with our employee labor groups to ensure the sustainability of this program now and into the future.
2018 GENERAL FUND ESTIMATES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2017 Adopted Budget GF Revenue</td>
<td>181,638,522</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018 Preliminary Budget GF Revenue</td>
<td>189,736,463</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Available for new or increased expenses</td>
<td>8,097,941</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018 Proposed GF Expense changes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contractually Obligated</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wages and Benefits</td>
<td>5,690,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact of Prior Year Wage Adjustments</td>
<td>450,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior Year COPS Grant – 2018 Impact</td>
<td>200,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Positions (SBO 2017)</td>
<td>115,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Contractually Obligated</td>
<td>6,455,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Available/(Shortfall)</td>
<td>1,642,941</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Joint Priorities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 New Police Officer Positions</td>
<td>750,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New COPS Grant</td>
<td>(382,200)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24/7 Shelter</td>
<td>250,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Joint Priorities</td>
<td>618,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Available/(Shortfall)</td>
<td>(504,059)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
VOTER REGISTRATION

2017 has been a banner year for voter registration services delivered by League members in the Spokane area. From January to mid-December, we registered 385 new citizens at 28 Naturalization Ceremonies. In April, we began registering voters one day a week at the Spokane Downtown Library. By December, we had registered 85 voters at that venue. This winter, we were asked to register new voters at Community Court held at the downtown library. Partnering with the Spokane Library, we participated in National Disability Voter Registration Week in July and National Voter Registration Day in September.

Twelve faithful members generously gave 265 hours of their time this year to register over 400 new voters. Volunteers included Mary Lou Johnson, Judy Krueger, Susan Hales, Susan Gray, Suzi Johns, Sally Phillips, Cathy Nemmert, Linda Milsow, Mary Hughes, Babs Velategui, Rich Velategui, and Bev Austin.

Congratulations to the League of Women Voters of the Spokane Area for a job well done in making democracy work for everyone.

UPDATE: Mayor David Condon will veto the campaign finance law passed, without Mike Fagan’s support, by the City Council, Dec. 18. It faced opposition from the Spokane Republican Party and the Spokane Homebuilders Association although they did not testify at the Council meeting. The League of Women Voters of the Spokane Area spoke in favor of the ordinance. Mayor Condon thinks the issue should be left to the State and that it would not withstand a constitutional challenge. The council could override the veto with five votes.

Thank you for attending the Council meeting on Dec. 18: Mary Lou Johnson, Suzi Hokonson, Suzi Johns, Lin McGinn, Judith Gammon, Beth Pellicciotti and friends.
These are students from Beth McGibbon’s AP Capstone History class at Rodgers High School. They attended a talk by Tom Ashbrook on September 22, 2017 thanks to contributions from a variety of individuals, including League members. From Ms. McGibbon: The AP Capstone class works best if student have a mentor who can guide each student's research and writing process. Last year my students did not have mentors and consequently, their writing lacked appropriate revision. Do you know of a group of adults such as members of the League of Women's Voters who would be willing to mentor my students and be an audience member for student presentations?

Contact: BethM@spokaneschools.org

Thank You for Your Membership Renewals and Donations

The Board wishes to thank all of the members who have renewed their membership or joined the League this fall. We appreciate your continued support. We would like to give a special thanks to those members who support our work through donations to Spokane’s account with the LWV of Washington Education Fund or to our local League through Sustaining ($110) and Benefactor ($150) membership levels and direct donations. Thank you to the following members who have made donations this fiscal year:

Education Fund
Ron & Ann Bailor
Linda Milsow
Ann Murphy in Memory of Ann & Charles Wood and Grace Rawlings

Local League
Pam Behring
Jan Carrington
Marianne Connelly
Molly Hannan
Lunell Haught
Mary Hughes
Carol McVicker
Linda Milsow
Ann Murphy
Cathy Nemmert
Alice Stolz
Jean Wells

New Members

Please join us in welcoming the following members who have joined the LWV of Spokane this fall:

Beth Pellicciotti
Janet Wingenroth

Charles was born in Carney's Point, New Jersey. Ann was born in London, England.

Ann received a BA from the University of Colorado Boulder in 1940, and a Bachelor of Library Science from the University of Denver in 1941. Charles graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1941.

They met when Charles was stationed at the Great Lakes Naval Training Center in Illinois, and married August 22, 1942.

Their Navy years took them from Illinois to Rhode Island, California, Kansas, and New Jersey. Upon retirement from the Navy, Charles began a second career as an Episcopal priest in Washington State. He served as vicar of mission churches in Colville and Republic, then spent many years on the staff of the Diocese of Spokane.

Among their many volunteer activities, they supported the League of Women Voters and helped establish Spokane Public Radio KPBX.

They devoted most of their lives to efforts against racism and in support of the gay and lesbian communities. In the 1930s, Ann led a successful sit in at the campus hangout to allow admittance for a visiting African student. In the 1980s they joined the Spokane Chapter of Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, and helped found Integrity, an LGBTQ advocacy group of the Episcopal Church. In 1992, Charles was the first clergy member to testify in front of Congress in support of allowing gays and lesbians to serve in the military.

While living in Colville, they built a log cabin near Kettle Falls. The cabin became their treasured getaway. They happily shared it with a wide circle of friends and family. It was the scene of many family holidays, boisterous work parties, and retreats.

Charlie and Ann shared a love of travel and adventure. To celebrate their 80th birthdays, they took a 100-day Semester at Sea cruise from Nassau, Bahamas to Seattle, Washington. It included stops and field trips in Cuba, Brazil, South Africa, Kenya, Malaysia, Vietnam, China, and Japan.

They are survived by four daughters, Pamela Darling of Cleveland, Ohio; Cynthia Anthony of Tacoma, Washington; Deborah McNeil of Seattle, Washington; Nora Mena of Lacey, Washington; and many grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

A joint funeral for Ann and Charlie will be held at St. John's Cathedral in Spokane September 16, 2017 from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. To honor their lives, the family suggests donations to any of the many progressive causes they supported, particularly PFLAG, KBTC, the League of Women Voters, Planned Parenthood and the ACLU.

Photo in Head-line: Bev Austin is with Mary Ellen McCafree at the October General Meeting when she educated us about the process of redistricting after the 2020 U.S. Census. Mary Ellen is the author of Politics of the Possible.
Thank you, AVISTA, for printing the LWV Spokane “TRY’s” - They Represent You!

Dues are based on membership categories as follows:

$75 Individual   $105 Household
$110 Sustaining   $150 Benefactor
$37.50 Student

For a $35 Scholarship application, call Jan Carrington at 509 844-1795.

Calendar

January 9: City Budget, 11am, 2404 N. Howard
17: Board Mtg,
17: Board Mtg

February 13: Civics Education, 11am, 2004 N. Howard
21: Board Mtg

March 13: Criminal Justice Reform/Ombudsman Issue, 11am, 2404 N. Howard
21: Board Mtg

April 10: Water Resources, 11am, 2404 N. Howard
18: Board Mtg

May: Annual

Would you be interested in working on any of the topics for our General Meetings this year? Or hosting one of the meetings? If so, please call Pam Behring at 509-534-2223.

Pam Behring, President/Voter Editor; Jan Carrington, Treasurer; Sally Phillips, Secretary; Mary Hughes, Web Page; Lin McGinn, Membership; Bev Austin, Voter Service and, off-board, Linda Milsow, Facebook.

Book review by Susan Gray

DEMOPOLIS: Democracy before Liberalism in Theory and Practice, Josiah Ober

Josiah Ober, a professor of Classics, Political Science and Philosophy at Stanford was inspired by the 2016 election to write this book, but unlike other books in the past year trying to explain the unexpected outcome, this one is different, an examination of the intrinsic value of democracy itself, apart from the liberalism with which it has been intertwined in recent decades.
Profound and existential challenges confront the world’s liberal democracies in the first decades of the twentieth century. He worries that if liberal democracy’s institutions lack the resources to take on the political, economic, environmental and other important issues of our time, and if “liberal democracy” is the only way democracy is talked about or thought about, enough citizens, in looking for an alternative to failed liberal institution, might seek a non-democratic alternative of the tyranny of an autocrat or ruling elite.

But, Ober points out, liberalism and democracy are not one and the same. Democracy, which preceded liberalism by centuries, is a political theory that citizens can successfully govern themselves in the absence of a ruler or ruling elite. An extensive system of social cooperation is necessary for such a system to thrive, supported within a framework of enforceable rules for making important decisions on difficult matters where there is much disagreement. Liberalism is an ethical theory concerned with matters democracy does not address but is not antithetical to, such as personal autonomy, human rights or distributive justice. Though ethical and political theories can be tightly intertwined, they are not, necessarily or causally, related.

So if enough citizens believe that liberal institutions have failed but have no desire to be ruled by an autocrat or ruling elite, and if they agree there is an inherent value in collective self-government, they can opt for a “non-liberal democracy,” collective self-government without the liberal trappings. Such an alternative to “liberal democracy,” though not ideal to a self-confessed liberal such as Ober, would be, he believes, far better than any non-democratic alternative.

Absent its liberal moral theories, what does a non-liberal democracy have to offer? Ober points to the various desirable conditions of existence promoted by and intrinsic to democracy itself, independent of liberalism or any other ethical theory, and consisting of both “material goods” and “democratic goods.” Material goods refer to prosperity (adequate food, shelter and health) and security from external and internal threats to life and property. Historically, democracies have done comparatively well providing these, despite the “command and control” advantages autocrats enjoy.

“Democratic goods,” include the free exercise of human capacities (what make us human—sociability, rationality and communication, only fully realized in a democracy); other familiar concepts like “human flourishing,” political liberty and political equality; and, most intriguingly, “civic dignity.” By “civic dignity” Ober means “the condition of being socially accepted as fully worthy of political participation and thereby immune from the disabilities of civic humiliation and infantilization” (by “infantilization” he means the presumption that one is incapable of judging and pursuing one’s own interests). Civic dignity is a counterweight to majoritarian impulses on the right (e.g. right-wing libertarians who would maximize personal freedom at the expense of disenfranchising weaker citizens) and the left (e.g. left-wing egalitarians who would define “social justice” as confiscating citizens’ personal property.) He considers civic dignity a “fundamental condition of democracy that…tends to be obscured within mainstream liberal political theory.”

Central to democracy is citizen participation which involves costs to its citizens (taxes, time and effort that could be expended on other things). Ober argues that these costs are not onerous, are outweighed by democracy’s intrinsic values, and are, in fact, also benefits—citizens participate using reason to communicate their views to fellow citizens and this process is subjectively experienced as good; and it provides its citizens with tools
(procedural mechanism and behavior habits) to respond to the challenges of the changing world in which they live.

Civic education is key to impressing upon those citizens who have never experienced anything but democracy what they would give up under autocratic rule—intrinsic values to themselves from living in a democracy; why our democratic institutions were set up as they are; and why citizens must participate in a democracy to keep it going. Those who rationally accept and are motivated by these arguments will understand that it is in their interests, individually and collectively, and will actively choose to participate.

Demopolis (the title of the book comes from a thought experiment Ober uses to illustrate what a basic democracy looks like) is a thought-provoking book that looks at current political events through a surprising lens. It is well-written, not easy to paraphrase and requires a good deal of concentration. All in all, worth the effort.
Yes, I want to join/renew membership in LWV/ Spokane Area
Name: ______________________________________________________
Address:_________________________  City:____________________  Zip:___________
Phone: H ___________________________ W ______________________
Email ___________________________ Fax__________________________
I would like to receive the newsletter by ___ mail or ___ email (check one.)
Please make check payable & mail to: LWVSA 2404 N. Howard St., Spokane WA 99205 and
indicate amount enclosed:___________
Pay by Credit Card through Pay Pal at www.lwvspokane.org/join.html