

City of Tekoa
PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES re: BURN PILE
Thursday, August 4, 2022

I. CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Roy Schulz called the meeting to order at 6:11 P.M. Council members present at the meeting were Dave Tysz and Pete Martin. Clerk/Treasurer Eliza Evans-Teague was present, as well as additional attendees: Doug Palmer, Jennifer Olson, Mary and Jerry Heitt.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Mayor Roy Schulz led the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE:

Jennifer Olson: wants to keep the burn pile open. She thinks it does more good than harm, though perhaps we could find a different place with some monitoring. There was some discussion about the location. She also inquired about the council making decisions about closing the pile temporarily or permanently. Mayor Schulz addressed her question.

Doug Palmer: sees the pile as a “plus” for the community. He doesn’t want to see it moved for the convenience factor that helps to keep the community cleaned up. He sees moving it to an inconvenient location as influencing people’s decisions to keep their properties in good condition. Doug volunteered to mind the burn pile if the city should decide to have it supervised.

Mary Heitt: the convenience of the burn pile enables them to keep their property up. Mary asked if any person who is not in favor of the burn pile has offered a viable alternative. The response was there have been no proposals at this time. Mary also inquired if other communities burn. Dave answered her question citing various examples about communities in the region.

Mayor Schulz: brought up that the fire department is getting enough phone calls re: the burn pile that they are having issues. He proposed the idea of charging a fee and having specific times that the pile is open with an attendant. Fees would help to cover the inevitable expenses. Doug Palmer agreed that it would be good to have some funds for backhoe tires, etc.

Carol Sturman: sent a letter expressing her opinion that the burn pile is a great good for the city which avoids having all the individual fires that the community would otherwise have.

Dave Tysz: commented that the current location has the best advantage for wind. The proposed cemetery location would channel the wind directly downtown. Dave also proposed a method of burning that would help with not burning green materials. Overall, he observed that the town has cleaned up quite a bit with the addition of the burn pile, so, barring wind storms, etc., the burn pile is not as big as it used to be. The issues with the pile can be addressed so that there are fewer or no issues with the fire department. Dave

suggested that at some time the city employees will have to take the job over and we could perhaps charge a small surcharge to cover the cost of city employees managing the burn pile. Dave Tysz suggested we use the alert system to let people know the actual dates of burning.

Pete Martin: offered that the current location seems to be the best option as it has a wind path that mostly works for carrying the smoke away. If the city goes back to individual burning, it leads to illegal dumping and unpredictable smoke issues. Pete pointed out that expectations would help people to see the alternative. He suggested that we could work with having a contact person between Whitcom and the burn pile so that on the occasion that 911 is called, Whitcom has the ability to confirm the status of the burn pile. Pete also suggested using the community board to post the days we are burning.

Eliza Evans-Teague: suggested trying to burn on more of a schedule, such as the first week of the month during the season we burn.

Proposals and observations will be presented to regular meeting of the Tekoa City Council.

IX. ADJOURNMENT: Mayor Roy Schulz closed the meeting at 7:12 P.M.

APPROVED:

Roy Schulz - Mayor

ATTEST:

Eliza M. Evans-Teague– Clerk/Treasurer