

CITY OF PERU SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING SEPTEMBER 26, 2024

A special meeting of the Peru City Council was called to order by Mayor Ken Kolowski in the Peru City Council Chambers on Thursday, September 26, 2024, at 6:00 P.M.

City Clerk Dave Bartley called the roll with Aldermen Ballard, Tieman, Payton, Edgcomb, Sapienza, O'Sadnick, Lukosus and Moreno present; Mayor Kolowski present.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Sherry Mayszak, Crystal Loughran Ron Glancy Janet Mayszak, Barb Bryant and Jennifer Ebner all spoke in favor of a community pool.

Roy Jones commented that pool related building costs and ongoing operational costs would be better to give to local charities.

Alderman Payton stated he opposed funding a pool with hotel/motel taxes because those funds are for investing in tourism and providing resources that will attract visitors. Alderman Payton further noted the hotel-motel fund "is not just sitting there" and the funds already are allocated for projects including the walkway over Route 251.

Alderman Payton stated a municipal pool will not attract visitors into the city and later noted Voting 'no' is in the best interests of the city, in his opinion as finance chair.

Alderman Tieman said he had fond memories of Peru's pool – and acknowledged a municipal pool isn't supposed to turn a profit – but nonetheless said a review of neighboring cities with pools showed that building a pool would make Peru pour money down the drain.

Alderman Tieman stated he feels it's important to address the neighboring cities' losses, and how high the losses could be for us.

Alderman Tieman stated construction costs would be high as well, with potential interest rate of 5.25%, a \$6 million pool paid with 10-year bonds translates to an annual payment of almost \$800,000, or \$500,000 a year over 20 years. Alderman Tieman stated the idea of using hotel/motel taxes isn't as simple as it sounds, noting that those funds are committed to other projects and as a taxpayer, I don't like the idea of tying up those funds for 20 years.

Alderman Sapienza warned that restricting hotel/motel tax funds could have "disastrous" consequences for the city economy. Alderman Sapienza stated that hotel/motel taxes are already ticketed for the city's walking path and skating rink as well as the dredging of Baker Lake. Alderman Sapienza stated that restricting hotel/motel funds could eventually lead to drawing down savings which could impact water main, sidewalk, street and curb repairs in your neighborhood.

Alderman Edgcomb stated that he fully supported a referendum, but stated he doesn't believe it can be fully funded by hotel/motel taxes.

Mayor Kolowski defended his 2022 proposal to use hotel/motel taxes, pointing out that the rate was raised from 5% to 7% and that pillow taxes can be increased without city residents feeling any pinch.

Mayor Kolowski urged letting the referendum play out and see what happens. Mayor Kolowski then stated he would be voting yes (to the advisory question).

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PUBLIC COMMENT

Sherry Mayszak, Janet Mayszak, Kevin White, Marsha Gapinski, Gene Wisgowski, Mike Hart, Joanne Shevlin, Avalean Arnold, Jill Bernal, Jennifer Ebner again spoke in favor with Ms. Ebner also noted early voting has begun.

Alderman Moreno noted the 35 summer camp programs held within the city this summer.

CLOSED SESSION

ADJOURNMENT

Alderman Moreno made a motion that the meeting be adjourned. Alderman Edgcomb seconded the motion and motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 7:36 p.m.