



# 2019-2020 CITY BUDGET

Last April, the City Council approved a staff recommendation that the City adopt a 2-year, or biennial, budget and approval process, as opposed to the long-standing practice of preparing, reviewing and adopting a new budget for each year. As a result, the new budget for the City will cover Pasco’s financial plans for both 2019 and 2020.

The biennial budget process, which has been authorized for Washington cities since 1985, is designed to support long term financial and strategic planning while reducing the amount of staff time necessary to prepare, present and publish a new budget annually. Many expenditures are ongoing in nature (i.e. personnel), and typically require only minimal adjustment on a year-to-year basis, therefore the biennial process is more efficient. Major adjustments, which are fewer in number, can be made as part of the mid-biennium review, which will be advertised for the public and conducted in the same manner as the budget adoption process. The mid-biennium review is required by State law for those cities which have opted for the biennial budget process.

The 2019 – 2020 budget is closely aligned with City Council goals, which are also set for a two-year period. City staff anticipates additional time will be available to better

manage the performance and effectiveness of City programs and better align operations with organizational goals and obligations with the time and effort that would normally be spent on preparation for annual budgets.

The budget document includes a budget message prepared by Dave Zabell, City Manager, as an overview of the City’s financial condition and outlook including financial trends, challenges and opportunities. Detailed financial data and analysis is provided to show proposed revenue and expenditure levels for both 2019 and 2020. Departmental budgets include organizational charts and a summary of proposed expenditures for each year. A comparison with actual expenses for 2016 and 2017 is also included as well as 2018 year-to-date expenses, to assist in tracking trends.

The budget document also includes proposed expenditures and resources for capital projects during the 2019-2024 period. Projects are identified in the general categories of: Facilities, Fire/Ambulance, Parks and Recreation, Transportation and Utilities, including irrigation, water, sewer, stormwater, and the City’s process water reuse facility.

The City’s biennial budget document is located in the City’s website at [pasco-wa.gov/budget](http://pasco-wa.gov/budget). The City Council is expected to approve the 2019 – 2020 budget on December 3.



# City Fire Protection Rating Jumps Up

The City of Pasco’s Fire Protection Rating jumped two spots which could save local building owners money on insurance premiums starting in February.

The Washington Surveying and Rating Bureau (WSRB) evaluates all Washington communities for their fire protection/suppression capability using a schedule approved by the Washington State Office of the Insurance Commissioner. WSRB assigns each community a Protection Class of 1 through 10, where 1 indicates exemplary fire protection capabilities, and 10 indicates the capabilities, if any, are insufficient for insurance credit. The lower the number, the better a community’s ability to prevent and respond to fires.

The City’s rating improved dramatically from a “5” to “3” – only 48 out of the 677 communities evaluated in the state have a “3” rating. Just five communities have a “2” rating and no community in the state has a “1” rating.

This lower rating should lower fire insurance premiums for structures throughout the City – but how much will depend on the home/building, insurance carrier, claim history, and various other factors. Home and building owners will need to check with their insurance carrier on what savings they may see after the new rating is effective on February 1, 2019.

“This rating improvement is due to a lot of hard work from various City departments, most notably Fire, Water, and Inspection Services,” said Pasco Fire Chief Bob Gear. City Manager Dave Zabell said that “The City Council’s deliberate strategy to set high goals for public safety and the willingness to support staff to achieve those goals, including staffing of the new Station 84T on Road 48, has paid off with this rating improvement.”

This progress in Pasco’s public safety joins other important positive developments in recent years, including the City’s recent rating as third most “safe” larger city in Washington State, with the local crime rate decreasing by more than 80% over the last 30 years.

More information on the WSRB rating process can be found at: [wsrb.com/protection-class-overview](http://wsrb.com/protection-class-overview).



# Regional Fire Training Facility Completed

The Pasco Fire Department, along with its regional fire agency partners, recently completed the construction of a new modular live-burning training facility located near the Fire Department’s main office on Ainsworth Avenue.

The 40-foot tall tower was constructed by an Everett based company that converts Conex (shipping) containers into modular training towers. The project will be the site of both live-burning (in accordance with Washington State Department of Ecology regulations) and non-burning training procedures.

The cost of the facility was largely covered by a grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s (FEMA) Assistance to Firefighters Grant.



MEET YOUR CITY  
COUNCILMEMBERS:

## Matt Watkins



Mayor Matt Watkins was elected to the Pasco City Council in 2004, and was elected as Mayor by the Council in 2010. He holds a Bachelor of Arts in social science from Washington State University and currently works as a software engineer for Lucas Engineering in Richland. His term on the City Council expires on December 31, 2019.

One set of Mayor Watkins’ grandparents homesteaded in Eltopia during the early years of the Columbia Basin Irrigation Project, while another set owned a laundry in downtown Pasco a few years after World War II. His father continued to farm asparagus and his mother managed the Port of Kennewick.

Matt graduated Kennewick High in 1986 and chose to make Pasco his home in 1995 in similar measure because of the diversity of the community, reasonably priced homes, and proximity to quality tacos.

Matt is an avid long-distance and adventure motorcycle rider, having toured the U.S. and Canada extensively, and has finished the 11 day long “Iron Butt Rally” three different times.

You can contact Mayor Watkins at [watkinscouncil@pasco-wa.gov](mailto:watkinscouncil@pasco-wa.gov) or call (509) 545-3404.

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