

**Town of La Conner**  
Town Council Meeting  
September 22, 2020 – 6:00 p.m.

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The meeting of the La Conner Town Council was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Mayor Hayes.  
Present: Councilmembers Brunisholz, Leaver, Stokes, Chamberlain and Wohleb.  
Also present: Administrator Thomas and Finance Director DeGoede and Public Works Director Lease.

**This meeting was held electronically on Zoom. Information to join was posted at Town Hall, the published Agenda in the La Conner Weekly News and on the Town website.**

**Public Comments:**

Resident Joan Cross discussed concerns of climate change and the need of Bill HR763, a Bill to enact a carbon pricing policy. She requested Council’s endorsement by resolution, to be passed on to our House of Representatives. Residents Dorothy Downes and Terry Nelson also spoke in support of Bill HR763.

It was the consensus of the Council to pass a resolution endorsing HR763 at the next Council meeting.

Mark Hulst, owner of Skagit Cellars in La Conner, requested Council to reallocate Hotel Motel funds of \$8,500 to the La Conner Live Concert series for 2021.

**Consent Agenda:**

Approval of Agenda  
Approval of the Minutes of August 25, 2020  
Approval of the Minutes of September 8, 2020

Accounts Payable:	Checks 23478 - 23505	\$71,793.93
	<u>Electronic Pmts. – 201645 Excise Tax</u>	<u>\$7,658.04</u>
	<b>Total Accounts Payable</b>	<b>\$79,451.97</b>
Payroll of September 20, 2020	Checks 5269 - 5274	\$1,763.83
	Payroll Auto Tax Payment #201646	\$6,156.20
	<u>Payroll Auto Deposit</u>	<u>\$17,866.11</u>
	<b>Total Payroll</b>	<b>\$25,786.14</b>

**Councilmember Leaver moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Motion seconded by Councilmember Wohleb. Motion carried 5/0.**

**Mayor’s Report:**

Mayor Hayes shared we are moving forward with the County with the lighting of the bridge. Both the Port and the County want to participate in funding. The County already has with engineering.

Administrator Thomas has not had a response from the owners of the property the Town needs to purchase for the Dike. If there is no answer by Friday, he will send another letter on Public Safety.

Mayor Hayes stated there was over \$180,000 in requests for the 2021 Hotel Motel funds with a budgeted allocation of \$115,000. \$20,000 from the Town’s CARES Act Grant will be setup by EDASC for distribution of funds to local businesses and organizations that bring people to Town. The Mayor encouraged the Hotel Motel applicants to apply for the CARES Grant due to the short falls in the 2021 allocations.

**Council Committee Reports:**

**Economic Development:** Councilmember Leaver reported the next “First on First” extended hours shopping will be on Friday the 2<sup>nd</sup> of October. Administrator Thomas expressed his concern it is expanding and moving more towards an event with music and vendors in the park. It is very discerning that he would be required to process permits for types of activities that are in violation of the law. We don’t want to discourage this, but he asked “First

on First” not grow until we graduate into another phase that he can process permits legally. Administrator Thomas is asking for direction from Council on this and the other events coming up, such as the Halloween Parade and the Annual Boat Parade.

The Health Department has restricted all trick or treating, but there is a possibility of decorating the Town for a drive through parade. The Boat Parade is ok, but we will need to have volunteers out monitoring people watching for compliance of the Governor’s mandate of 6” Social Distancing and the wearing of masks.

Resident Rick Dole helps in the organization of “First on First”, and is unsure on how to deal with the people that just show up and start playing music. Mayor Hayes instructed not to invite them. We can’t encourage or endorse it if it happens. The Mayor also expressed his appreciation of the efforts of those organizing “First on First,” but we need to be mindful of the COVID mandates and focus on the main emphasis of shopping.

**Parks Commission:**

Councilmember Wohleb reported on the Parks Commission Meeting. They are organizing the funding and replanting of the tulips through local service organizations.

**Agreement – EDASC (CARES Act Grant):**

Administrator Thomas explained this agreement includes the additional funds awarded to the Town. We allocated \$20,000 for local businesses and have asked EDASC to put together the application and do the review process. The focus on the criteria ranking will be placed on attracting tourists and certain infrastructure, such as outdoor heaters and tents for businesses. EDASC will also publish the notice for applying and contact businesses in La Conner that have not received any funding during the COVID pandemic.

**Councilmember Chamberlain moved to approve the Mayor to sign the agreement between the Town of La Conner and EDASC for implementing and review of the CARES ACT Grant. Motion seconded by Councilmember Leaver. Motion carried 5/0.**

**Agreement – Washington State Dept. of Commerce (CARES Act Grant):**

We did not receive the agreement in time for this meeting, but should have it before the next Council meeting.

**Councilmember Leaver moved to table the Agreement between the Washington State Department of Commerce and the Town of La Conner for the CARES ACT funding. Motion seconded by Councilmember Wohleb. Motion carried 5/0.**

**2021 Budget – Public Works:**

Public Works Director Lease presented his 2021 Budget for Parks, Facilities, Streets, Water and Drainage. There are no scheduled projects for the year in efforts to scale back expenditures. There were discussions on the traffic and speeding control. The Traffic Plan Analysis results of the speeding issues would be resolved by the Sheriff’s presence and would not require speed bumps and other deterrents. Councilmember Stokes would still like to purchase six flashing speed signs over time if we find an opportunity.

**2021 Hotel Motel Allocations:**

Due to shortfall of the Hotel Motel funds in 2020, funds had to be scaled back for the new year allocation with a total of \$115,872. The Finance Committee, the Mayor and Administrator reviewed the applications and recommend as follows:

La Conner Chamber	\$47,500
Skagit Valley Tulip Festival	\$1,000
Skagit County Historical Museum	\$1,000
Museum of Northwest Arts	\$1,000
Public Restrooms	\$51,000
La Conner Interactive History Experience	\$1,500
La Conner Advertising	\$12,000
Audit/Advertising	\$250
<b>Total Allocation</b>	<b>\$115,250</b>

Mayor Hayes suggested an additional outlet for funding to organizations and events that bring tourism to the Town, by applying for the Town’s CARES ACT funding through EDASC. For example, the La Conner Chamber and events such as the Guitar Festival and La Conner Live would qualify. EDASC’s recommendations will be reviewed by Council for approval. An advantage to this is the funds would be given upfront, rather than waiting for Hotel Motel funds to be distributed next fall. However, if an organization has already received funds from another grant, they will not be eligible to apply for this one.

**Councilmember Stokes moved to approve the 2021 Hotel Motel distribution as presented. Motion seconded by Councilmember Leaver. Motion carried 5/0.**

Heather Carter, Director of the La Conner Chamber, and Jo Wolfe, Director of the Skagit County Historical Museum, questioned the costs of the public restrooms and how it qualifies for Hotel Motel funds. Public Works Director Lease supported his costs for supplies, utilities and maintenance. Finance Director DeGoede also explained the restrooms are a needed facility that is utilized by the visitors that come to La Conner. The costs of the facilities have to be supported by invoices provided by Public Works just as everyone else.

**Agreement – ESO:**

Finance Director DeGoede noted this is a program the Fire Department now requires.

**Councilmember Stokes moved to approve the Mayor to sign the ESO Agreement. Motion seconded by Councilmember Chamberlain. Motion carried 5/0.**

**There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 7:11 p.m.**

  
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Maria DeGoede, Finance Director

  
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Ramon Hayes, Mayor