

**Town of La Conner**  
Town Council Meeting  
January 13, 2026 – 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 Hanneman.

Present: Councilmembers Tayler, Carlson, Dole, Chamberlain and Wohleb.

Also present: Administrator Thomas, Finance Director DeGoede, Newly Hired Finance Director Buchanan, Public Works foreman Smith, Planner Eills, Fire Chief/Code Enforcement Officer Reinstra, WWTP Operator Wynn and Sgt. Holmes of the Sheriff's Department.

**Oath of Office:** Finance Director DeGoede swore in Councilmembers Carlson, Dole and Chamberlain for their next four-year terms.

**6:10 Councilmember Chamberlain left the meeting.**

**Public Comments:**

Resident Debbie Aldrich asked how long her street will be blocked off for the Center Street project. She has missed the last three recycle pickups because the trucks didn't have access to her street. PW Foremen Smith explained the contractor is working urgently to get the utility infrastructure done in the right of way, so the fence can be moved back to the worksite. He didn't realize this was an issue, but will reach out to the contractor to see if they can help in anyway. Councilmember Dole offered to help get her recycle can out as well.

Resident Linda Talman requested council appointments and planning code items to be in the beginning part of the agendas.

Branna Wilson, Chair of the Emergency Management Commission reported the local students are working on a 32 page insert for the paper on emergency management planning for different types of emergency events. The Commission is establishing a teen certification program at the high school to encourage annual youth trainings. She also discussed the recent flood, where they were able to test their plans for strengths and weaknesses. Communication was an issue with mixed messages on the State and County levels. The Commission is working on an Action Report detailing what worked and changes needed. To maintain communication during power outages, they are purchasing Starlink.

**Consent Agenda:**

Approval of Agenda

Approval of the Minutes of the December 9, 2025 Council Meeting

**Accounts Payable:**

**December 2025 Closeout:**

|                          |   |                     |
|--------------------------|---|---------------------|
| Checks                   | 28858 - 28905                                       | \$192,442.84        |
| 215,900 Electronic Pmts. | 2018413 – Invoice Cloud<br>2018414 – U.S. Bank Fees | \$187.20<br>\$5.79  |
|                          | <b>Total Accounts Payable</b>                       | <b>\$192,635.83</b> |

**January 13, 2026 Claims:**

|        |                               |                   |
|--------|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| Checks | 28906 – 28919                 | 246,090.00        |
|        | <b>Total Accounts Payable</b> | <b>246,090.00</b> |

**Payroll of January 5 2026:**

|                            |          |             |
|----------------------------|----------|-------------|
| Checks 6216 - 6223         |          | \$2,320.69  |
| <b>Electronic Payments</b> |          |             |
| AWC Benefit Trust          | #2018408 | \$13,555.46 |
| Deferred Comp              | #2018409 | \$3,044.49  |
| PERS Retirement            | #2018410 | \$9,431.40  |

|                             |                      |                    |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| Teamsters Benefit           | #2018411             | \$7,748.00         |
| Auto Payroll Taxes          | #2018412             | \$12,572.01        |
| <u>Payroll Auto Deposit</u> |                      | <u>\$38,685.02</u> |
|                             | <b>Total Payroll</b> | <b>\$87,357.07</b> |

**Councilmember Carlson moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Motion seconded by Councilmember Wohleb. Motion carried 4/0.**

**Chamber Report:**

Chamber Director Hulst reported turnout was going well until the flood. Numbers for December 2025 visitors were 75 from Skagit County, 55 from other counties, 6 from out of state totaling 136 visitors. Additionally, there were 96 tourist questions answered through phone calls and emails, for a total of 236 contacts through the visitors' center. The Love La Conner Facebook page had 215,900 views from December 16<sup>th</sup> to date and 233 new followers were added. Upcoming events are the Birding Festival February 24<sup>th</sup> through the 25<sup>th</sup> leading into the Daffodil Festival in March. The Murder Mystery is scheduled for March 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>, followed by the La Conner Rocks on the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>.

**Revenue and Expenditure Reports:**

Mayor Hanneman noted we were under budget in expenditures for 2025, the sales tax revenues exceeded the 2025 estimates. REET funds were down due to delays in construction and sales that were expected. Hotel Motel taxes met the budget estimates but were lower than 2024, and the investments were down as well. Finance Director DeGoede explained she didn't get the final statements from the banks in time for this meetings report, but will provide an updated investment report at the next meeting.

**Department Head Reports:**

**Fire Department:**

Fire Chief Reinstra reminded everyone of their Annual Chili Chowder Cook Off on January 24<sup>th</sup> at the La Conner Elementary School. All but one restaurant is participating.

**WWTP:**

WWTP Operator Wynn gave a heads up they will be cleaning the sewer lines around Town.

**Administrator's Report:**

Administrator Thomas introduced the new Finance Director Kim Buchanan, who will be shadowing our current Finance Director.

Administrator Thomas also reported they are still picking up after the flood, and will have an after-action report soon. The Closing Audit Meeting was canceled and will be rescheduled in about two weeks.

**Mayor's Report:**

Mayor Hanneman acknowledged the team effort during the flood and how well it went despite the communication issue between the State, County and us. She also discussed the rebranding and the new logo. Information can be found on the website for anyone who wants to submit a logo. Mayor Hannaman read her new year statement to move forward with kindness, lead with respect and to remember our shared commitment to our community is far stronger than our differences.

**Council Committee Reports:**

**Arts Commission:**

There was a Creative District Presentation at the Library. It was well attended with several interested volunteers.

**FCS Utility Rate Study:**

Administrator Thomas discussed the proposed rate study for all our utility future upgrades. The last rate study was in 2014, so we do need an update. Because FCS does our annual sewer tribal rates, they already have information needed for this study. The proposed cost of \$114,200, would put us in a better position for the upcoming projects

that have to be done. Finance Director DeGoede noted this is in the budget, but not for this dollar amount. A budget amendment would probably be needed.

**4<sup>th</sup> of July Fire Works:**

Mayor Hanneman discussed the fireworks show. Western Fireworks has one more opening for a show. It is the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of our Country and she wanted to be sure on Council's decision to move forward or cancel the show. After discussions, Council agreed we should move forward with the firework show because of the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. We did include the expense in the budget.

**Councilmember Dole moved to approve moving forward with plans for the 4<sup>th</sup> of July fireworks show. Motion seconded by Councilmember Carlson. Motion carried 4/0.**

**Mayor Hanneman moved Number 6, Historic Preservation District Code Amendment to Number 1 under New Business.**

**Historic Preservation District Code Amendment - Preliminary Approval:**

Planner Eills recommended the code amendments for the 60-day review. First step was to define the historic period of La Conner of 1875-1915. Second was to create more flexibility without involving a \$1000 Historical Review, by providing selected paint colors. The Planning Commission has reviewed the amendments and recommends the 60-day review with the Department of Commerce.

**Councilmember Wohleb moved to approve the Preliminary Approval of the Historic Preservation District Code Amendment for the 60 Day Review with the Department of Commerce. Motion seconded by Councilmember Dole. Motion carried 4/0.**

**Agreement – Skagit County Sheriff (Policing):**

Administrator Thomas stated 2026 cost will be \$405,856. The actual agreement expires at this end of the year and will be renegotiated for 2027.

**Councilmember Wohleb moved to approve the Mayor to sign the agreement with Skagit County for the 2026 policing costs. Motion seconded by Councilmember Taylor. Motion carried 4/0.**

**Resolution 681 – Appointment to the Planning Commission (Fortygin):**

Mayor Hanneman has appointed Kirill Fortygin to the Planning Commission.

**Councilmember Wohleb moved to approve Resolution 681 appointing Kirill Fortygin to the Planning Commission. Motion seconded by Councilmember Taylor. Motion carried 4/0.**

**Resolution 682 – Reappointments to the Art's Commission (Harington and Stikes):**

Mayor Hanneman reappointed Nicolette Harington and Joanna Stikes to the Art's Commission.

**Councilmember Wohleb moved to approve Resolution 682 reappointing Nicolette Harington and Joanna Stikes to the Art's Commission. Motion seconded by Councilmember Dole. Motion carried 4/0.**

**Council Committees:**

Administrator Thomas discussed the different committees. Some are not really utilized anymore. After Council discussions it was decided to eliminate Long Range Planning, Park & Preservation, keep Finance but remove the Labor. Councilmembers wanted to retain their current positions except Councilmember Carlson would like to be added to the Streets and Safety Committees. Administrator Thomas will provide a resolution reflecting the changes.

**Purchase/Quote Approval – Bud Clary Chevrolet (New Truct):**

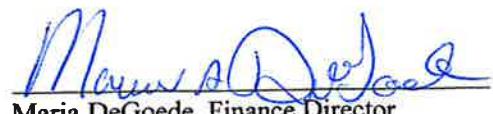
Administrator Thomas explained this purchase is in the budget, Council needs to approve the actual purchase.

**Councilmember Taylor moved to approve the purchase of the truck from Bud Clary Chevrolet. Motion seconded by Councilmember Wohleb. Motion carried 4/0.**

**Mayor Roundtable:**

Discussions included parking limits on First Street and the annexation of the WWTP/Fire Station property.

There being no further business the meeting ended at 7:39 p.m.



Maria DeGoede, Finance Director



Marna Hanneman

Marna Hanneman, Mayor