

Town of La Conner
Town Council Meeting
February 14, 2023 – 6:00 p.m.

The meeting of the La Conner Town Council was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Mayor Ramon Hayes.

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

Also present: Administrator Thomas, Finance Director DeGoede, Public Works Director Lease, Planner Davolio, Fire Chief/Code Enforcement Officer Reinstra, WWTP Operator Wynn and Sgt. Montgomery of the Sheriff's Dept.

This was a hybrid meeting held in person and 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 Jim Matthews suggested using the funds collected from In Lieu of Parking Fees, to purchase property for parking near Center Street.

Consent Agenda:

Approval of Agenda

Approval of the Minutes of the January 24, 2023 Council Meeting.

Accounts Payable:

Checks 25756 - 25807	\$117,980.84
Electronic Payments: #2018081 – Invoice Cloud	\$151.40
#2018082 – US Bank Fees	\$54.34
Total	\$118,186.58

Payroll of February 3, 2023	Checks	5675 - 5681	\$3,732.77
Electronic Payments:	#2018075	AWC Benefit Trust	\$14,004.22
	#2018076	Deferred Comp	\$2,241.00
	#2018077	PERS Retirement	\$10,300.48
	#2018078	Teamsters Benefit	\$6,972.80
	#2018079	Payroll Taxes	\$7,737.24
		<u>Payroll Auto Deposit</u>	<u>\$23,623.26</u>
		Total Payroll	\$68,611.77

Councilmember Taylor noted the date on the Agenda for the minutes to be approved should be January 24, 2023.

Councilmember Chamberlain moved to approve the Consent Agenda to include the January 24, 2023 Minutes. Motion seconded by Councilmember Taylor. Motion carried 5/0.

Department Head Reports:

Revenue and Expenditure Reports:

Mayor Hayes noted the January Sales Tax came in higher than the previous year, but Hotel Motel is down.

Administrator's Report:

Discussions included the new Legislature Bills, such as limitation on parking spaces jurisdictions can require for housing developments and parking limitations around public transit. This is the year for regulatory reform and streamlining the permit processes. There is also a bill from the Governor's Office allocating funds for construction of affordable housing.

Public Works has been working on removing the abandon and sinking boats. One has been removed and is ready to be demolished. Two others still need to be removed from the Channel and one an owner claimed and moved. Most of the boats are derelict and invoicing owners for reimbursement is usually unsuccessful.

Public Works:

Public Works Director Lease updated Council on the Salmon Slide repairs. The contractor he spoke with is busy with another project into March. He is interested in the project, but nothing has been set yet.

Planner's Report:

Planner Davolio gave an update on the recent Land Use Permits submitted. The Lime Dock Building has requested a change of use to residential for the second floor, Snap Dragon Hill has started applying for their building permits and the Historical Museum requested adding a car port for a new vehicle they purchased. He also noted last week's open house Planning Commission meeting went well and reminded everyone there will be a joint Council and Planning Commission meeting on February 28, 2023.

Fire Department/Code Enforcement:

Fire Chief Reinstra shared the Sheriff and the State Patrol used the La Conner Fire Department for their Trainings. He also addressed the letter in the La Conner Weekly News regarding the Fire Boat. He wanted to be sure everyone knew he has been working very closely with the Mayor and Administrator on moving forward with the purchase of the boat. It may seem like it is taking a long time, but they are being very frugal as there are a lot of other needs in the future and they want to do it right. He and the rest of the Fire Department appreciate all the support, but he wanted it clear the Town works really well in procuring all their needs.

Mayor Hayes stated he and Administrator Thomas met with the Port regarding the purchase of the new fire boat quite some time ago. They recognize it as a mutual interest as both the Town and Port are vulnerable. Also, Administrator Thomas is actively working on grants. The letter in the La Conner Weekly News did not have accurate information.

WWTP:

Administrator Thomas stated he did get an email from Department of Ecology regarding the grant for the Wastewater Treatment Plant Analysis. We should have an answer by the end of this month or early March.

Mayor's Report:

Mayor Hayes stated he, Administrator Thomas and Councilmember Dole will be lobbying in Olympia tomorrow on flood issues. We don't have a plan yet, but we are applying for a Comprehensive Flood Plan grant in March, for up to \$300,000 with a 25% match. The intention is to let our legislatures know we are working on a strategic plan and we will be back in a year or two advocating for funds. Another issue they will address the legislature on is changing the language for the new sales tax increase, specifically for additional police officers. In order for the Town and other jurisdictions contracting for policing services to benefit, the language needs to be modified to police services.

Councilmember Wohleb will be participating with the Skagit Valley Clean Energy Cooperative in a presentation to SCOG promoting Solarize Skagit. The goal is to get the information on the websites of all the County jurisdictions.

Council Committee Reports:

Arts Commission:

Councilmember Taylor reported they are brainstorming on increasing arts in the school, primarily for the K-5 grades. Ideas are mentorship and fundraisers for art supplies and field trips.

Emergency Management Commission:

Councilmember Dole noted an ad will be in the La Conner Weekly News to fill the positions on the Emergency Management Commission. The application has been posted on the Town Website with a due date of February 28th.

Communication Ad Hoc Committee:

Councilmember Chamberlain encouraged people to sign up for Notify Me on the Town website. Also, a draft of the Communication Plan will be posted on the Town website for public input.

Parks Commission:

Councilmember Wohleb shared Ajah has started the permitting for the Waterfront Park Pavilion.

Center Street Project:

Administrator Thomas stated we have received the final decision from the Hearing Examiner and it has been sent out to the parties of interest.

Jenson Property:

No updates, however the Mayor did discuss the Channel Cove Community and the five new homes that are currently being built.

Ordinance 1224 – Fire and Park Impact Fees:

Planner Davolio noted this will be a two-step process. The Ordinance establishes the new Fire and Park Impact Fees in our Unified Development Code and the following resolution sets the fees.

Councilmember Wohleb moved to approve Ordinance 1224 adopting the Fire and Park Impact fees in our Unified Development Code. Motion seconded by Councilmember Chamberlain. Motion carried 5/0.

Resolution 618 Fire and Park Impact Fees:

Councilmember Wohleb moved to approve Resolution 618 setting the Fire and Park Impact Fees. Motion seconded by Councilmember Dole. Motion carried 5/0.

Agreement – CLS Contracting:

Administrator Thomas explained this agreement is for the completion of the Fire Hall sleeper rooms. Not to exceed \$2,660.57.

Councilmember Chamberlain moved to approve the Mayor to sign the Agreement with CLS Contracting for the completion of the Fire Department sleeper rooms. Motion seconded by Councilmember Wohleb. Motion carried 5/0.

DE Agreement – Snap Dragon Flats Infrastructure Improvements:

Public Works Director Lease explained this Agreement only relates to the infrastructure. This has nothing to do with a short plat, designs or building plans. There was further discussion on the stability of the Hill and liability falling on the GEO Engineer if any future issues occur.

Councilmember Dole moved to approve the Infrastructure Improvement DE Agreement with Snap Dragon Flats. Motion seconded by Councilmember Wohleb. Motion carried 5/0.

Surplus of the 1994 Chevy Truck and the 1988 Backhoe:

Public Works Director Lease explained this is more of a formality. He is asking for a consensus of the Council to move forward with the surplus of the truck and backhoe.

It was the consensus of the Council to surplus the 1994 Chevy and the 1988 Backhoe.

Mayor Roundtable:

Councilmember Wohleb spoke on behalf of the Parks Commission's requesting beautification of the Town and planting street trees. There were trees removed and they would like to see them replaced. It was determined the Park Commission would work with Public Works on the placing of trees. Administrator Thomas stated if the Town plants the trees in the right of way, they will not be the Town's trees; they will belong to the adjacent property.

Councilmember Dole expressed his concerns of the Morris and Maple intersection. He witnessed two near accidents and would like to see a flashing sign to alert drivers oncoming traffic has the right of way. Public Works Director Lease stated he could change the sign, but cautioned on liability. There should be consistency throughout the Town. It was recommended to remove the last Chamber banner for better visibility.

Councilmember Carlson recommended hiring a grant writer for the Fire Department. It was suggested to find a grant writer to be paid through the grant if it is awarded. Mayor Hayes stated the Upper Skagit Tribe offered their grant writer services for flood related grants; maybe we could reach out to them for the Fire Boat.

There being no further business the meeting ended at 7:06 p.m.



Maria DeGoede, Finance Director



Ramon Hayes, Mayor