

**Town of La Conner**  
Town Council Meeting  
September 26, 2023 – 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 Taylor, Carlson, Dole, Chamberlain and Wohleb.

Also present: Administrator Thomas and Finance Director DeGoede, Public Works Director Lease, Planner Davolio and Fire Chief/Code Enforcement Officer Reinstra.

**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 Debbie Aldrich stated the fencing around 306 Center Street is blocking a lot of parking spaces. Public Works Director Lease explained he approved the permit for the fencing on the right-of-way for the project.

Business owner Erin Parker asked if anything could be done with branches someone cut down and left by her business on Road Street. Public Works Director Lease and Code Enforcement Officer Reinstra are working on it.

Planner Davolio announced there will be a joint Planning Commission/Council meeting on October 17<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. at the Garden Club. The purpose of the joint meeting is for public input on short-term rentals. Also, on October 19<sup>th</sup> he has scheduled a bus trip to Langley for the Planning Commission and interested members of the Council to see options on affordable and low-income housing, as well as a tiny home village. There will be a sign-up sheet, and any remaining seats are open for the public to attend.

Mayor Hayes explained the Town actually does not have a definition of short-term rental. However, currently the La Conner Municipal Code does not allow rentals 30 days or less in the residential district.

**Consent Agenda:**

Approval of Agenda

Approval of the Minutes of the September 12, 2023 Council Meeting.

Accounts Payable:	Checks	26413 - 26449	\$119,160.68
	Voided Checks	24735 & 25310	
	Electronic Pmts.	<u>2018149 Excise Tax</u>	<u>\$10,782.53</u>
		<b>Total Accounts Payable</b>	<b>\$129,943.21</b>
Payroll of September 20, 2023:	Checks 5778 - 5784		3,518.09
	Payroll Auto Tax Payment #2018148		\$7,645.13
	<u>Payroll Auto Deposit</u>		<u>\$22,714.89</u>
	<b>Total Payroll</b>		<b>33,878.11</b>

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

**Mayor's Report:**

Mayor Hayes shared there will be a meeting with representatives of the school on October 16<sup>th</sup>. The Mayor, Administrator Thomas and Councilmembers Chamberlain and Dole will attend.

**Council Committee Reports:**

**Emergency Management Commission:**

Councilmember Dole reported they are now in the process of obtaining agreements from property owners for the placement of the ecology blocks and sandbags, as well as working on identifying people needing assistance in an emergency. Also, the Port and Swinomish Tribe are interested in contributing to the Tidal Gauge.

**Parks:**

Councilmember Wohleb stated the Waterfront Park Pavilion has been delayed for four years with increasing costs. The Parks Commission is now looking at different affordable options. The plan for the Fish Slide repairs is John Doyle and Ollie Iverson will seal it first and then Maggie Wilder will repaint it. Also, the Chamber has included the cost of replacing the trees on Morris Street in a grant.

**Parking Solutions for First Street:**

Mayor Hayes discussed implementing paid parking by an app for First Street. He has used it many times in other cities and asked if Council would be interested in more information. Council agreed to further discussions.

**Resident Julie Jones** suggested free parking for businesses in the graveled lot at the South end of Town, behind Maple Hall. It was explained the parking lot is private property.

**Ordinance 1230 – News Rack Regulations:**

Administrator Thomas noted this was reviewed at the last meeting with requested changes. He has revised the Ordinance accordingly.

**Councilmember Wohleb moved to approve Ordinance 1230 for News Rack Regulations. Motion seconded by Councilmember Taylor. Motion carried 5/0.**

**Strategic Plan.:**

Administrator Thomas explained the Strategic Plan was tabled at the last meeting for full Council approval.

**Councilmember Chamberlain moved to adopt the Strategic Plan for 2024 through 2028. Motion seconded by Councilmember Dole. Motion carried 5/0.**

**Comprehensive Plan Amendment Request for Fee Relief (La Conner Library).:**

Administrator Thomas explained the Library has requested to be identified in the Comprehensive Plan as an essential public facility for additional grant opportunities. Because this will take little to no staff time, the Planning Commission recommends waving the fee of \$1,455.

**Councilmember Chamberlain moved to approve the Planning Commission’s recommendation of waiving the La Conner Library’s application fee of \$1,455, for their Comprehensive Plan Amendment request. Motion seconded by Councilmember Wohleb. Motion carried 5/0.**

**2024 Hotel Motel Distribution Recommendations by the Finance Committee:**

After discussions and adding an additional funding of \$10,866 for the Maple Hall elevator maintenance, Council approved the following 2024 Hotel Motel Distributions in the amount of \$342,111:

La Conner Chamber	\$90,000	Maple Hall Upgrades	\$132,866
Skagit Valley Tulip Festival	\$3,000	La Conner Live	\$10,000
Skagit Co. Historical Museum	\$1,500	Skagit Artists Together	\$1,000
Museum of NW Art	\$8,250	Lincoln Theater	\$1,000
La Conner Art’s Foundation	\$8,000	Skagit Community Band	\$1,900
Public Restrooms/Landscape	\$63,995	Advertising/Wages	\$20,600

**Councilmember Dole moved to approve the 2024 Hotel Motel Distributions with the additional funding for the Maple Hall elevator maintenance. Motion seconded by Councilmember Taylor. Motion carried 5/0.**

**WWTP Bid Recommendation – Asphalt Project:**

Public Works Director Lease explained this is a critical project that needs to be done before the weather changes. The asphalt has deteriorated creating a swamp during the rainy season, making it difficult to get back to the compost area. He did review the two bids, both are qualified contractors, but recommends the lowest bid from Highland Pavement Maintenance in the amount of \$58,074.29.

**Councilmember Wohleb moved to approve Highland Pavement Maintenance Bid of \$58,074.29. Motion seconded by Councilmember Carlson. Motion carried 5/0.**

**Mayor Roundtable:**

Councilmember Wohleb asked if anyone was interested in becoming a member of the AWC Board, if so, let her know. Mayor Boudreau from Mount Vernon is looking for a replacement for her position.

Finance Director DeGoede offered to register Councilmembers for the upcoming AWC Elected Officials Essentials Workshop on December 9, 2023. Registration starts October 12, 2023.

As discussed at the Special Meeting, it was the consensus of the Council to move forward with forming the Transportation District to initiate the .01 tax for 2024.

Councilmember Taylor stated the new La Conner Library Dedication will be on October 14<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 p.m.

**There being no further business the meeting ended at 6:50 p.m.**



Maria DeGoede, Finance Director



Ramon Hayes, Mayor