

***Town of La Conner***  
Town Council Meeting  
October 11, 2022 – 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, Dole, Chamberlain and Wohleb.

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

**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.**

**Councilmember Wohleb moved to excuse Councilmember Carlson. Motion seconded by Councilmember Dole. Motion carried 4/0.**

**Public Comments:**

Resident Kathy Shiner requested an investigation on the parking allocations involving 315 Morris Street and 306 Center Street.

Resident Linda Talman discussed the parking spaces involving the Fire House Brewery on Morris. In her estimate, they are short on spaces and wanted to know why they were allowed to cover their parking with beer gardens.

Jim Matthews commented on the tiny houses and the parking. There should be one parking space per home.

Resident Gary Nelson is concerned there will be a conflict with parking between the Fire Hall Brewery and Pioneer Market parking lot, as well as the neighbors.

**Consent Agenda:**

Approval of Agenda

Approval of the Minutes of September 27, 2022

Accounts Payable:	Checks 25413 – 25455	\$123,128.58
Auto Payments:	2018042 – US Bank Processing Fees	\$410.61
	<u>2018043 – Invoice Cloud Processing Fees</u>	<u>\$146.60</u>
	<b>Total Claims</b>	<b>\$123,685.79</b>

Payroll of October 5, 2022	Checks	5624 - 5629	\$2,704.34
	AWC Benefit Trust	#2018037	\$12,893.46
Auto Payments:	DCP	#2018038	\$2,241.00
	PERS	#2018039	\$8,926.46
	Teamsters Benefit	#2018040	\$6,688.00
	PR Taxes	#2018041	\$8,060.53
	<u>Payroll Auto Deposit</u>		<u>\$26,593.44</u>
	<b>Total Payroll</b>		<b>\$68,107.23</b>

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

**Chamber Report:**

La Conner Chamber Board President Christine Jennings introduced the new Chamber Director Mark Hulst. Mr. Hulst has been busy working on the Chamber's financial policies, volunteer staffing and reaching out to businesses to extend hours for events. The next event coming up is Lady's Night and he is planning a Chamber open house.

**Revenue and Expenditure Reports:**

Mayor Hayes noted the Sales Taxes are over 100%, Hotel Motel taxes are about the same, the REET Taxes are at 200% and the Fire Truck Taxes are at 110% from what was budgeted. There were discussions on the extra sales taxes coming in and upcoming capital projects, but also acknowledging inflation.

**Department Reports:**

**Administrator's Report:**

Administrator Thomas noted we are scheduling interviews for the new Assistant Planner position and we have just hired the part-time Office Assistant for the front desk. Also, we got a notice from Skagit County Health Department. They are creating a map of all registered defib devices. He registered ours in Maple Hall. There were also discussions on Fentanyl overdoses and the availability of Naloxone.

**Planner:**

Planner Davolio stated he has provided the hours he has spent on the Port and other projects to the Council as requested by Councilmember Carlson. He also included time spent on other projects as a reference.

**Public Works:**

Public Works has installed the art piece "The Visionary" at the bottom of the Benton Street Stairs on First Street. Mayor Hayes thanked Marilyn Thostenson for her donation, and in turn, she recognized the efforts of Public Works.

Public Works Director Lease stated the fire alarm monitoring panel in Maple Hall needs to be replaced. It is the original one from when the building was built. He also discussed the Salmon Slide. It can be completely removed for \$2,500 or rebuilt for \$30,000, which will be decided for the next year's budget.

**WWTP:**

Councilmember Wohleb asked for the status of the feasibility study. Administrator Thomas explained we were notified by Department of Ecology we will be awarded the grant, but they were understaffed and not sure of when it would be distributed. We received another notice stating they have hired someone to take on that specific duty. Once we receive the grant funds, we can move forward with the study.

**Sheriff's Department:**

Sgt. Montgomery is focusing on increased patrolling on Maple Avenue to deter speeders. He will also research the signage Councilmember Chamberlain saw in Tacoma, "Show Some Love. Check Your Speed".

**Council Committee Reports:**

**Ad-Hoc Communication Committee:**

Councilmember Chamberlain reported they had the debriefing with the facilitators on all the information collected from the forum. They will create a summary of the information and that will be presented to Council and Town Administration. Plans are for future topic-oriented forum.

**Facility Committee:**

Councilmember Chamberlain noted there was a Facility meeting to discuss the increased cost of cleaning the Town's facilities. There will be more information at a later date.

**Center Street Project:**

Administrator Thomas noted there are no updates. He is currently waiting on the Hearing Examiner's schedule.

**Land Acquisition – Jenson Property:**

Administrator Thomas stated this is waiting on a closing date, which he expects to be the end of this month. There was discussion on having a survey for the citizens input on what they want for the property.

**2023 Budget Discussions:**

Finance Director DeGoede opened with items she changed per Council request at the last meeting and items that needed decisions.

Changes made to the Budget per Council request at the last meeting were as follows:

- Fire Hall Roof for \$180,000 added to the General Fund Expenditures funded by the \$100,000 Cell Tower Bonus. Still need to decide on what will fund the remainder \$80,000.
- Increased staff wages to 7.3%

- Change the Business License revenue split from 75% General/25% Streets, to 70% General and 30% Streets.

No changes were requested by Council.

Items needing confirmation for the 2023 Budget:

- The addition of \$2,000 to the General Fund for a new server – in the budget.
- \$7,500 funding in the Park Fund for the La Conner After School Program – In the budget.
- Should the Fire Hall heat/AC be added to the budget, funded by the Coronavirus Grant

Council was in agreement to fund the new server and the La Conner After School Program. Council also agreed to include the Fire Hall heat/ac funded by the Coronavirus Grant, with the understanding the Fire Hall generator did not qualify for the Coronavirus Grant.

Other budget discussions:

- Traffic Calming Devices - Public Works Director Lease stated there are no funds available for the speed devices priced at up to \$4,500 each, but he could reallocate the \$30,000 for asphaltting to pay for it. If they are budgeted, Council would have to decide what locations to put them. He does not want to put them in the arterial: it would be on the local roads only.
- The Sculpture for Gilkey Square – Finance Director DeGoede stated in March it was decided to ask for approval from the Swinomish Tribe to include tribal graphics on the sculpture and to have the plans on the website for the public to view. The Tribe has approved the graphics and the plans have been on the website. Administrator Thomas explained there have been discussions with the Chamber as the acting host of the project, but no agreement has been made. There are a lot of issues surrounding the topic. Further discussions involved the public controversy involving the sculpture, the redesign of the sculpture and the need for something people see when entering Town that says La Conner. It was decided to discuss it further at the next meeting.
- Administrator Thomas is concerned on the viability of the Skagit Beach water line. We have already done the survey and now he feels it is necessary to move forward with a study in 2023, on how to pay the 3.2 million dollar project. He is looking at a means of contributions partially paid by residents that are served by the waterline and the Town would make up the difference. He does not have the amount of the study at this time, but would like to have funds set aside for the 2023 Budget. We are paying a lot on the constant waterline repairs.

It was decided to have a Special Meeting on October 25<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 p.m. for Budget Discussions.

Resident Marilyn Thostenson spoke in favor of the speed control devices as she has had cars drive in her yard. She stressed we don't need any more signs; we need a device to slow them down.

**Ordinance No. 1215 – Amending Section 7.05.060 (Noise):**

Administrator Thomas explained this will change the time to 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. on the weekdays and 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. on the weekends. There was discussion on Public Works morning duties, but this does not apply to them. It is for construction on residential property.

**Councilmember Chamberlain moved to approve Ordinance 1215 amending Section 7.05.060 of the La Conner Municipal Code. Motion seconded by Councilmember Dole. Motion carried 4/0.**

**Agreement – C. Johnson WWTP Paving:**

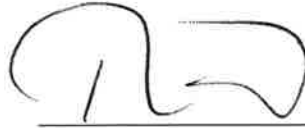
Public Works Director Lease stated the reinforced concrete paving was needed as the large trucks had destroyed the asphalt at the WWTP.

**Councilmember Chamberlain moved to approve the Mayor to sign the agreement with C. Johnson Construction for the paving of the Wastewater Treatment Plant. Motion seconded by Councilmember Wohleb. Motion carried 4/0.**

**There being no further business the meeting ended at 7:05 p.m.**



Maria DeGoede, Finance Director



Ramon Hayes, Mayor