

Town of La Conner

Town Council Meeting
May 12, 2020 – 6:00 p.m.

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

Present: Councilmembers Brunisholz, Stokes, Chamberlain and Wohleb.

Also present: Administrator Thomas, Finance Director DeGoede, Public Works Director Lease, and WWTP Operator Wynn.

This meeting was held by a Zoom meeting. Information to join was provided on the published Agenda and the Town Website.

Councilmember Brunisholz moved to excuse Councilmember Leaver. Motion seconded by Councilmember Wohleb. Motion carried 4/0.

Public Comments:

No Public Comments

Consent Agenda:

Approval of Agenda

Approval of the Minutes of April 28, 2020

Accounts Payable:	Checks 23144 - 23191	\$128,576.29
	Electronic Pmts. - 201613 Pk. Mtr. Fees	\$2.07
	201614 DRS Old Age	\$25.00
	201615 CC Util Fees	\$118.60
	Total Accounts Payable	\$128,721.96
Payroll of May 5, 2020	Checks 5198 - 5206	\$20,291.19
	Electronic Pmts. - 201612 PERS/DCP	\$142.64
	201611 Payroll Taxes	\$6,459.04
	<u>Payroll Auto Deposit</u>	<u>\$19,476.24</u>
	Total Payroll	\$46,369.11

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

Revenue and Expenditure Reports:

Mayor Hayes warned these revenues are from two months back. Next month we will start seeing the drop from March.

Councilmember Leaver joined the meeting.

Public Works Report:

Public Works Director Lease has had problems with people throwing the COVID-19 safety signs in the Channel at the Waterfront Park and certain business removing the distance tape and safety signs from the sidewalks. All Councilmembers agreed to keep the reader boards up with the awareness signs.

WWTP Report:

Currently the Town is not charging for the drop off of yard waste except for the contracted loads from the City of Mount Vernon. We are charging for the compost. The WWTP is taking payments per load, but not accepting cash. Administrator Thomas dropped off yard waste at the City of Mount Vernon and they were also not charging for yard waste at this time.

Sheriff's Report:

Councilmember Chamberlain noticed the light grey dots on the location sheet and wanted to know what they represent. Staff will follow up with Sgt. Willard.

Mayor's Report:

Mayor Hayes is ready to return the flashing sign at the entrance of Town. It did make a difference during the high tourism time in April, but the \$1400 monthly rental is too high to maintain much longer. Also the security patrol hired for the evening hours will be canceled as it was over \$5000 last month. There were discussions on the advantage of security cameras. Public Works Director Lease explained they do help but are also limiting. If it is too dark, you really can't see anything, and if they are wearing a mask, a description is basically height, weight and what they are wearing. The Mayor and Chamber Director Carter are working with businesses on pro-active measures to help reduce theft, such as removing items from storefront windows.

Administrator Thomas discussed the options of Citizen Patrols and Neighborhood Block Watch with Sgt. Chad Clark of the County Crime Prevention, who recommended both as effective options. The Citizen Patrol would require a car, so he will check into any upcoming surplus vehicles we may be able to use. However, we still have the issue of training with the COVID-19 restrictions and we need to check our insurance coverage through WCIA. Because we have no one with experience in this, the program would have to be overseen by the County Sheriff and the policies would have to be in conjunction with theirs. Councilmembers discussed concerns of response time to a 911 call, but Mayor Hayes reassured Council the Swinomish Tribal Police is already in place as backup, for calls the Sheriff can't make in a reasonable time.

Skagit Conservation District has started a Countywide Pet Waste campaign. They have signs to encourage people to pick up after their animals and offered some to the Town. Council was in favor of posting the signs throughout the Town. Mayor Hayes will let them know.

The vehicles involved in the homeless camp on Caledonia have left, however Councilmember Wohleb saw another one. She took a picture of a black van and will email it to the Mayor.

Arts Commission:

Councilmember Leaver stated they are now a non-profit and have a business license for future Art's Alive events. The Art's Commission would like to expedite the installment of the new donated sculpture "CC3" to sometime in June. The celebration of the instalment will have to be at a later date due to the restrictions of COVID-19. Finance Director DeGoede noted the costs of the install will be from the Art Fund.

Kirsch Property Listing:

Administrator Thomas explained the listing agreement has expired and Council needs to decide on extending it and if so, what the listing price should be. Mayor Hayes met with the listing agent, who sent out twelve packets to very interested parties, but the cost was just too high with all the work that needs to be done. After discussion, Council decided to lower the selling price to \$249,000. Councilmember Chamberlain asked what plans the interested parties had for the property. Mayor Hayes will talk to the listing agent and follow up.

Resident Linda Talman gave her input on the Town keeping the property as a future investment.

Option to Purchase – Hedlin Property:

Administrator Thomas explained the agreement in the packet shows all the changes their attorney made. He sent his changes back, such as applying interest payments to the purchase price. We would cover all closing and escrow costs. He was hoping he would get a response back to his changes in time for Council, but didn't. We will probably have to have a special meeting to approve the agreement to meet the interest due date.

Also discussed was eliminating locking the Town in on the 25% park allocation, but it is too late to change what has been in the plans for months and we need to maintain good faith with the Hedlins. Another issue if we don't maintain the park plans is we wouldn't qualify for an RCO Grant. Councilmember Stokes noted a parking area

will have to be included in the park plans. He also does not agree with the rush to provide the agreement and interest payment as we are already in a lease agreement through next year.

Mayor Hayes explained planning is reviewing the age requirement. If removed, the development of units would increase from twelve units to eighteen. Administrator Thomas stated the appraisal has been ordered to cover the value today, development potential and the advantages of rezoning.

Fireside Room Lease Agreement – La Conner Chamber:

Administrator Thomas stated the lease will be for \$1.00 a month plus the required leasehold tax charges. The lease will expire December 2021.

Councilmember Stokes moved to approve the Mayor to sign the Lease Agreement between the Town of La Conner and the La Conner Chamber for the use of the Fireside Room. Motion seconded by Councilmember Leaver. Motion carried 5/0.

Chamber Director Heather Carter reported the 2020 events are almost all canceled except for the Brew on the Slough in October. She was able to cancel the SeaTac Airport advertisement in time, which saved approximately \$1500. Her current focus is keeping the website and business updated on daily changes. She is planning to open the Visitor's Center at the Fireside room the first of June and is working on her Plan B Budget.

Mayor/Council Roundtable:

Administrator Thomas contacted Western Fireworks Display, who was contracted to do our 4th of July fireworks display. They agreed to apply the deposit we provided to the 2021 show.

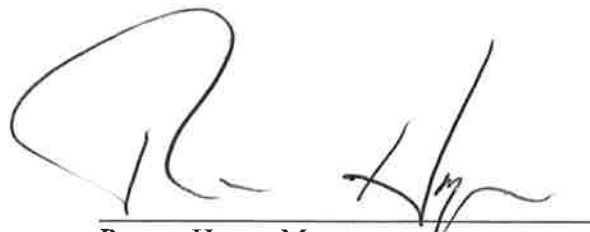
The business owners are very upset with the unfairness of large department stores being able to sell other items such as jewelry and clothes, and the small businesses have been forced to shut down. Councilmember Brunisholz stated in Europe, the large department stores were required to close off areas that were not food related sales. Mayor Hayes stated this has been a nail in the coffin for small business owners.

Another concern among Councilmembers was the Swinomish Tribal members setting off fireworks on the 4th of July attracting people to Town, even though the Town show has been canceled. People are not staying home now, as the Waterfront Park was packed last weekend with no observance of social distancing. The final conclusion was at some time people have to take personal responsibility by staying home, wearing masks and keeping social distance. The Town has limited resources to support compliance, unlike the City of Langley that now requires everyone to wear a mask in public places.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 7:34 p.m.



Maria DeGoede, Finance Director



Ramon Hayes, Mayor