

**Town of La Conner**

Town Council Meeting  
July 14, 2020 – 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 Brunisholz, Leaver, Stokes, Chamberlain and Wohleb.

Also present: Administrator Thomas, Finance Director DeGoede, Public Works Director Lease, Planner Manville, WWTP Operator Wynn and Sgt. Willard of the Sheriff's Department.

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

**Public Comments:**

**No Public Comment**

**Mayor Hayes removed the Hedlin Property Appraisal under Unfinished Business. It will be on the next Agenda.**

**Consent Agenda:**

Approval of Agenda

Approval of the Minutes of June 23, 2020

Accounts Payable:	Checks:	23294 - 23338	\$104,466.18
	Electronic Pmts:	201628 – Parking Mtr. Fees	\$24.21
		201629 – Util. Pmt. Fees	\$136.40
		201630 – Leasehold Tax	\$1,253.18
	<b>Total Accounts Payable</b>		<b>\$105,879.97</b>
Payroll of July 3, 2020	Checks 5228 - 5236		\$20,264.94
	Electronic Pmts. – 201625 – Payroll Taxes		\$6,996.99
		201626 - DCP	\$2,291.00
		201627 – PERS	\$10,680.24
	<u>Payroll Auto Deposit</u>		<u>\$21,808.77</u>
	<b>Total Payroll</b>		<b>\$62,041.94</b>

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

**Revenue and Expenditure Reports:**

Mayor Hayes noted the sales tax is lower but could have been worse; the Hotel Motel Taxes dropped significantly again.

Finance Director DeGoede discussed the Opus Bank CD. The CD matured June 29<sup>th</sup>. After verifying rates of other entities, and approval from the Finance Committee, it was decided to leave it with Opus Bank for the rollover. However, when the bank manager setup the rollover it was denied by Pacific Premiere Bank who recently bought out Opus Bank. They are not purchasing public funded CDs. Heritage Bank in Anacortes has offered a rate of .30, which has been approved by the Finance Committee. The bank manager will be picking up the check on Friday. Council will see a check in the next claims for \$150,000 made out to the Town of La Conner for the purchase of the CD.

**Planning:**

It was noted there has been a lot of activity.

**Public Works Report:**

The Maple Hall elevator upgrades are scheduled for the week of August 10<sup>th</sup>.

**Sheriff's Department:**

Sgt. Willard apologized for his absence. He was assigned to the COVID testing site at the Skagit Valley College. He is training a replacement and will be working in Town again soon. His deputies have been very active in Town responses and monitoring speed with the radar gun during his absence.

**Mayor Hayes stated the sale of the Kirsch Property was finalized.**

**Council Committee Reports:**

Parks: Councilmember Wohleb stated there was a Zoom Parks Committee Meeting. Discussions focused on the new park plans for the Hedlin property.

**DE Agreement – Harbor Mountain Development (Snapdragon Hill Right of Way for Utilities):**

Public Works Director Lease explained this is all reimbursable and recommended Council to approve the Mayor to sign the DE Agreement with Harbor Mountain Development for the Snapdragon Hill Right of Way.

**Councilmember Stokes moved to approve the Mayor to sign the DE Agreement with Harbor Mountain Development for the Utility Right of Way of Snapdragon Hill. Motion seconded by Councilmember Leaver. Motion carried 5/0.**

**Agreement – Shelter Bay Biosolids Disposal:**

Administrator Thomas noted this is similar to the Friday Harbor agreement and has been discussed in past meetings.

**Councilmember Stokes moved to approve the Mayor to sign the Shelter Bay Biosolids Disposal Agreement. Motion seconded by Councilmember Wohleb. Motion carried 5/0.**

**Flood Control:**

Councilmember Brunisholz expressed his concerns for the planning of the dike. It is a low probability but a very high impact event that he feels will affect us more economically than COVID. Administrator Thomas is expecting the appraisal by the end of the month. Once received, he can start negotiations for the purchase of the land needed to complete the dike. In 2018, CHS Engineers estimated the cost for the purchase of land in 2020 at \$14,000. He feels it will be more due to compensation for permanent crop loss. Mayor Hayes noted we are on track with this year's budget, which included the appraisal and the negotiation for the land.

**Waterfront Park Phase III Recommendation/C. Johnson Contract:**

Public Works Director Lease stated the cost for the shoreline restoration is higher than anticipated. We budgeted \$150,000 and it is now estimated at \$205,000. The project has been delayed due to ecology permitting requirements for a fish habitat. To make up for the additional cost, Finance Director DeGoede suggested adding \$12,000 more to the REET 1 transfer to Parks, reduce the \$50,000 budgeted transfer from the General Fund to the Flood Fund to \$26,000 leaving the remainder \$24,000 to Parks, and utilizing the Waterfront Park reserve by \$24,000. She is not doing the project or Flood transfers until around October, so she will watch how the Park Fund and the project costs progresses and will know more then, how much will be needed. At that time, she will bring a budget amendment before Council. Mayor Hayes stated this is a critical project that needs to be completed. It was the consensus of the Council to plan funding for the \$60,000 shortfall as suggested.

**Councilmember Wohleb moved to approve the Mayor to sign the agreement with C. Johnson for the Phase III Waterfront Park Project. Motion seconded by Councilmember Chamberlain. Motion carried 5/0.**

**Shop La Conner Marketing:**

Mayor Hayes discussed the costs for the Facebook ad. Due to the COVID restrictions, Council agreed to a three month Facebook ad to promote all the La Conner businesses at an approximate cost of \$3,000. He is now asking

for \$3,000 to continue the ad for an additional three months. The stats from March through June included 406,293 reached, 161,921 watched the ad, 9,808 website visits, 612 Facebook shares. He is encouraging businesses to beef-up online sales for a benefit of both online and in Town shopping. Councilmember Brunisholz is against Facebook as a matter of principal but does support advertising for the Town businesses. Council questioned if the businesses noticed an increase of sales from the website and if all the businesses were included. All businesses have been included on the ad, but not all have a web presence. He is looking into possibly setting up training through Chamber for those interested in a stronger web presence.

**Councilmember Stokes moved to approve the additional funding of \$3,000 for another three month ad on Facebook. Motion seconded by Councilmember Wohleb. Motion carried 4/1 with Councilmember Brunisholz voting nay.**

**Ordinance 1187 – Affordable Housing Sales Tax Credit:**

Administrator Thomas explained last year Council passed a resolution authorizing the local sales and use tax for affordable housing. This ordinance is to adopt the authorized local sales tax, and rather than pooling with the County, directing the funds to the Town of La Conner to be held in a reserve account. The Town's allocation will not be enough to fund affordable housing units, but could help with other supportive things, such as utility bills. He is on the Board of Home Trust of Skagit who manages Channel Cove in La Conner. Their tenants are having difficulty paying their utility bills.

**Councilmember Wohleb moved to approve Ordinance 1187 for Affordable Housing Sales Tax Credit. Motion seconded by Councilmember Brunisholz. Motion carried 5/0.**

**Mayor/Council Roundtable:**

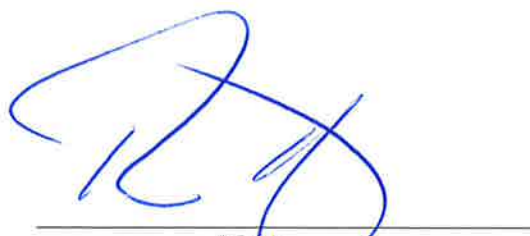
Mayor Hayes stated people have been wearing their masks, so he doesn't feel the Town needs to purchase masks for the business owners to give to customers that don't have one. He also shared there are at least eight businesses that will not be opening.

Councilmember Leaver suggested eliminating the expenses of the Fourth of July fireworks show next year. The Swinomish Tribal members set off quite a display this year and it didn't cost the Town anything. Councilmember Stokes feels an organized display benefits the Town and we need to guarantee a show. This year it was canceled, but smaller groups and families did come to watch what was set off across the Channel.

Councilmembers were encouraged to send pictures of themselves wearing masks for the website. There is no deadline date; they will be posted as they come in.

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

  
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Maria DeGoede, Finance Director

  
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Ramon Hayes, Mayor