

Town of La Conner
Town Council Meeting
August 11, 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, Leaver, Stokes, Chamberlain and Wohleb.

Also present: Administrator Thomas, Finance Director DeGoede, Public Works Director Lease, Planner Manville 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.

Public Comments:

Resident Galina Free of 414 N. Third Street is concerned of the speeding on North Third Street. She has a documented average speed of 38 miles per hour. Council discussions included a speed hump like the one by the Waterfront Park, relocate stop signs and more policing. Public Works Director Lease explained North Third Street was designed to accommodate the widths of boats going and coming to the Port. He could put in speed humps but he estimated the cost of \$1,500 per temp/permanent hump. Administrator Thomas stated speed humps damage fire trucks, so we would have to talk to the Fire Chief. The issue of relocating stop signs is it would require a year-long study on street requirements. More policing has been successful in the past, but as soon as people know they are out of Town, they go back to speeding. Reader Boards have helped in the past as well. Mrs. Free will provide her speeding report to Planner Manville.

Consent Agenda:

Approval of Agenda

Approval of the Minutes of July 28, 2020

Accounts Payable:	Checks:	23369 - 23403	\$295,526.43
	Electronic Pmts:	201636 – Parking Mtr. Fees	\$82.85
		201637 – Util. Pmt. Fees	\$122.20
		Total Accounts Payable	\$295,731.48
Payroll of August 5, 2020	Checks	5243 - 5253	\$20,311.25
	Voided Checks	5247, 5248	
		201633 - Auto DCP	\$2,291.00
		201634 - Auto PERS	\$10,769.05
		201635 – Auto PR Taxes	\$6,387.73
		Payroll Auto Deposit	\$19,114.93
		Total Payroll	\$58,873.96

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

Chamber Report:

Chamber Director Carter shared King 5 News was in town to interview the Mayor and businesses on the effects of COVID-19. Chamber is taking it day by day concentrating on social media to keep visitors engaged and supporting the local businesses by updated business hours and locations. She is also running a People's Choice Award for people to nominate their favorite businesses under different categories. She will be announcing the winners in September.

July 1, 2020 was the start of the Chamber membership dues and has 55% renewal to date. To encourage memberships, she has offered percentage discounts and payment plans. The Chamber financially relies on the membership dues. She encouraged everyone to check out the Facebook Page for information on volunteering to cleanup Gilkey Square and the collection of used clothing. Also, she will be hosting a class to teach how to utilize social media, such as Facebook and Instagram.

Revenue and Expenditure Reports:

Mayor Hayes stated our shortfalls from last year are just under \$30,000 in Hotel Motel Taxes and just over \$40,000 in Sales Taxes. Finance Director DeGoede explained the General Fund Revenues look good to date due to the sale of the Kirsch Property. She also noted Public Works Director was doing really well in keeping expenditures down.

Planning:

Planner Manville stated she is only six permits from last year at this time. It has been really busy. The Snap Dragon Hill project has selected a contractor with the pre-application meeting tomorrow with plans to start the construction for utilities the first week of September.

Public Works Report:

Public Works Director Lease was pleased with the revenues from moorage. The floats have been highly used. He is hoping to start up the launch fees again. It will be about \$1,500 for repairs to the collection box that was damaged last year. Councilmember Stokes suggested having a cam monitor on a tall pole.

Sewer:

WWTP Operator Wynn explained the Reuse Water System upgrade will provide water to wash down the plant at no cost, rather than using the Town's water.

Council Committee Reports:

Utility Committee: Councilmember Brunisholz and Wohleb attended a meeting to discuss a payment plan for utility accounts in arrears from the COVID-19 pandemic. Customers with delinquent accounts have been referred to the Salvation Army who has paid several accounts in full. Currently there are twelve accounts in arrears, two commercial and the remainder ten are residential. It is the recommendation of the Committee to offer a payment plan of one year. The customer will sign an agreement to pay a percentage of the past due balance along with the current billing. Although the Governor's order on utilities didn't include commercial accounts, it is also the recommendation to offer this to the commercial accounts as well as residential.

Arts Commission:

Councilmember Leaver reported the new sculpture has been installed at the top of the Benton Street Stairs. Also, the Bob Patterson Mural has been approved by all Arts Commission members except one. It was featured at the Museum of Art in Town and at the Skagit Valley Hospital for five years. The 24 x 18 painting was done in 2006 as a replica of the Town's waterfront and took over 600 hours to complete. The family wanted to give it to the Town. The suggested location for it is in Maple Hall in front of the balcony.

Agreement – Brown & Caldwell Professional Services (amended):

WWTP Operator Wynn explained the amended costs are to cover the additional requirements from the Department of Ecology.

Councilmember Stokes moved to approve the Mayor to sign the amended Brown and Caldwell Professional Services Agreement. Motion seconded by Councilmember Wohleb. Motion carried 5/0.

Ordinance 1188 – 2020 Budget Amendment:

Finance Director DeGoede explained this was to increase the General Fund for the sale of the Kirsch Property and the interest paid towards the purchase of the Hedlin property.

Councilmember Stokes moved to approve Ordinance 1188, the 2020 Budget Amendment. Motion seconded by Councilmember Wohleb. Motion carried 5/0.

Ordinance 1189 – Adopting Provisions of the WA State Model Traffic Control Ordinance:

Administrator Thomas explained he was contacted by a merchant requesting a relocation of a loading zone. He found most of our traffic codes were eliminated when we contracted with the Skagit County Sheriff. Currently, what we do have is it identifies the location of the loading zones. By adopting this, it would give us the ability to negotiate the Sheriff's contract for enforcement of traffic provisions and civil infractions, but it would mean more cost. Currently they do not enforce our codes.

Councilmember Stokes moved to approve Ordinance 1189, Adopting Provisions of the WA State Model Traffic Control Ordinance. Motion seconded by Councilmember Chamberlain. Motion carried 5/0.

Mayor/Council Roundtable:

Administrator Thomas has had discussions with the Sheriff's Office on the upcoming contract negotiation, and what the Town will do in 2021. The proposal is to extend the agreement for another year with a 3% increase, which is the deputy's union contract increase. The cost to the Town for 2021 would be \$331,097.

Currently we have no code enforcement, and the Sheriff does not enforce our municipal code, such as abandoned vehicles. They would be willing to do it, but at an additional cost. Another item to negotiate would be enhanced traffic enforcement. This would also be at an additional cost for an increase of hours and possibly another deputy.

Council agreed there is a gap in services for code enforcement of nuisances and concerns of past response time. They requested cost and service scenarios. Administrator Thomas will follow up with the information requested.

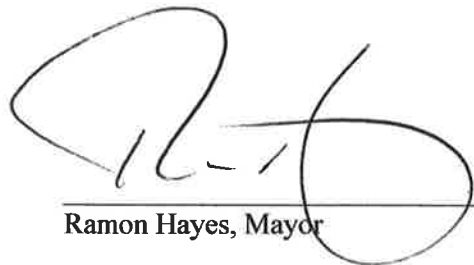
The appraisal for the dike easements will be in the next packet for discussion after Administrator Thomas has a chance to review it.

Mayor Hayes thanked Council for their steady hand and commitment in looking out for the best of the community.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 7:02 p.m.



Maria DeGoede, Finance Director



Ramon Hayes, Mayor