

Town of La Conner
Town Council Meeting
November 24, 2009 – 5:30 p.m.

The meeting of the La Conner Town Council was called to order at 5:30 p.m.

Present: Mayor Hayes, Councilmembers Brunisholz, Hubbard, Johnson, O'Donnell, and Wright.

Also present: Administrator Doyle, Finance Director Taylor, PW Director Lease, and Attorney Brad Furlong

Since the General Election had just been certified, Town Attorney Brad Furlong administered the Oath of Office to Councilmember Brunisholz who was filling an unexpired term.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: Mayor Hayes stated at 5:35 p.m. that the council would go into Executive Session for approximately 30 minutes regarding potential litigation.

At 6:00 p.m. Mayor Hayes reconvened the regular meeting and Town Attorney Brad Furlong stated no action had been taken during the Executive Session.

Approval of Agenda:

Councilmember Hubbard moved to approve the agenda. Seconded by Councilmember Johnson. Carried 5-0.

Approval of Minutes:

Councilmember Johnson moved to approve the minutes of the November 10, 2009 regular town council meeting. Seconded by Councilmember Hubbard. Carried 5-0.

Approval of Accounts Payable:

Councilmember Hubbard moved to approve checks 8068 through 8100, 200949 and 200950 dated November 24, 2009 in the amount of \$51,632.83 as presented. Seconded by Councilmember Wright. Carried 4-1. Councilmember O'Donnell opposed.

Approval of Payroll:

Councilmember Johnson moved to approve payroll warrants 1728 through 1733 and direct deposits for the payroll period November 1 through November 15, 2009 in the amount of \$21,818.56 as presented. Seconded by Councilmember Brunisholz. Carried 5-0.

Community Comments: Time was given for members of the audience to address the council regarding issues that are not on the agenda.

Joy Lewis, 609 Tillinghast Drive, stated she did not feel the council should receive health insurance benefits and that they need to be fiscally responsible. She stated she felt the meeting stipend was too low.

Administrator Report:

- Mr. Doyle stated that he met with Skagit County to implement standard GIS mapping for survey and positioning of lots, streets, right-of-ways, and overlays for elevations and critical areas.
- Mr. Doyle has also been participating with the Swinomish Climate Change Action Group and they have produced a report that is on the Town's website.
- He stated he has been working with the contractor on the Solar Project at the WWTP. The contractor has done an analysis of the site and will get a preliminary project implementation and fall protection for the installation crew before the end of the year. Public Works will be working on the project to offset some of the costs.
- Mr. Doyle stated that he, Brian Lease, and Evan Henke met with the Anacortes Public Works Department regarding the pumping station facility at River Bend. They will be doing an analysis of the capital project and how it relates to La Conner and the distribution of costs.
- He stated the Shelter Bay Agreement has been reviewed by the Utility Committee and Shelter Bay, and he will be getting back to Shelter Bay next week.

Mayor's Report: Mayor Hayes stated he met with the 4th and 5th graders at the elementary school and spoke on the election process.

Council Committee Reports: There were no reports.

PUBLIC HEARING – 2010 Budget: Mayor Hayes opened the public hearing at 6:16 p.m. There were no public comments and the hearing was closed at 6:16 p.m.

Donna Cushing, 611 Tillinghast Drive, inquired about communicating with the council about issues that arise during the course of a council meeting. She stated there is only a community comment period at the beginning of the meeting, and inquired if there could be an additional comment period at the end of the meeting.

Ms. Cushing stated that the Waterfront Café was providing free Thanksgiving dinners to anyone and felt it should be recognized by the council. Councilmember Hubbard recommended that a note of thanks be sent. Mayor Hayes agreed to send a note of thanks.

Councilmember Brunisholz moved to add an additional community comment period at the end of council meetings. Seconded by Councilmember Hubbard. Carried 5-0.

Mayor Hayes passed out a page with his budget proposals to council.

- He stated that he will forgo his stipend for 2010. If he can balance Fund 001 in 2011, he will ask for the stipend to be reinstated.
- Mayor Hayes stated that he felt council should contribute \$270 per month toward their medical, dental, and vision benefits.
- Mayor Hayes requested that the bond payment in Fund 206 for Maple Center should be paid out of Fund 001.

Councilmember Wright stated that when Tony Morefield was a councilmember, all of the Hotel Motel taxes for 5-6 years went into a fund to build Maple Center. Later it was decided to build Maple Center by selling bonds and use 50% of the Hotel Motel taxes to fund the bond payment. He stated that Maple Center was built as a Performing Arts Center and a valid use of Hotel Motel funds.

Councilmember O'Donnell stated that the profits of \$210,000 from the sale of the police station were to go toward the building of Maple Center, but the money was used elsewhere.

Mayor Hayes stated that the surplus money transferred from Fund 412 into Fund 001 was for a safety net in 2009. He stated that beginning fund balance in Fund 001 is higher than normal.

Administrator Doyle stated that staff has been researching for a legal use of the compost funds. One option is imposing a tax on the gross revenues of the utility and it will not affect the resident's rates. He will continue to research the issue. It was agreed that an analysis of the composting facility revenues needs to be done to find balance within the two funds.

Councilmember Wright reviewed the history of the council stipend and medical, dental, and vision benefits. The council stipend has increased from \$15 in 1980 to \$25 per meeting presently. Councilmember Johnson stated she would like to eliminate the benefits and increase the stipends for councilmembers.

Councilmember O'Donnell moved to eliminate medical, dental, and vision benefits for councilmembers in the budget year 2010. Seconded by Councilmember Brunisholz. Carried 3-2. Councilmembers Hubbard and Wright opposed.

Discussion followed on paying councilmembers for all committee meetings, comparing compensation to other cities in Skagit County, and staff reduction in La Conner as in other cities and Skagit County.

Councilmember O'Donnell moved to keep 2009 staff levels and salaries the same for 2010. Seconded by Councilmember Brunisholz. Carried 3-2. Councilmembers Hubbard and Wright opposed.

Councilmember Brunisholz moved to eliminate the Mayor's stipend and benefits for 2010 with the exception of vision at the Mayor's recommendation. Seconded by Councilmember Johnson. Carried 4-1. Councilmember Wright opposed.

Councilmember Hubbard moved to pay the 1997 GO Bonds for Fund 206 out of Fund 001 in the amount of \$38,579. Seconded by Councilmember Wright. Carried 5-0.

Councilmember Wright stated that the Town needs to set up a better rate schedule because the facility revenues do not cover the cost of maintaining the facility. He stated the council needs to review requests for waiving of fees on the facilities for community events. Discussion followed on facility fees for residents versus non-residents.

Mayor Hayes called for a five minute break at 7:23 p.m.

Councilmember Wright moved to approve the following expenditures out of Fund 123 for 2010: Chamber of Commerce - \$55,000; Audit fees - \$350; Tulip Festival - \$3,000; Historical Museum - \$1,000; Museum of NW Art - \$1,000; Quilt Museum - \$1,500; Advertising - \$10,000; and the 2003 LTGO Bond payment of \$14,515. Seconded by Councilmember O'Donnell. Carried 5-0.

The Port of Skagit will be partnering with the Town and contributing an additional \$10,000 for an advertising commercial of La Conner.

Flood Control: Councilmember O'Donnell stated that the committee will be staying with Skagit County as the organizing, funding and managing entity. He also stated the County will use property taxes and not sales tax to fund flood control.

Project Acceptance – 2009 Maple Avenue Resurfacing:

Councilmember Wright moved to approve the Final Acceptance on the Maple Avenue Resurfacing. Seconded by Councilmember Hubbard. Carried 5-0.

2009 WWTP Improvements – Change Order #2: Administrator Doyle stated that the engineer was requesting a change order for the WWTP Improvements to include modifying sludge holding tank 1 and modify the UV grating and bypass. He stated that change order #1 was a credit and not necessary to bring to the Utilities Committee and Council.

Councilmember O'Donnell requested that change order #1 be presented to the council at the December 8th meeting. He requested staff to review the WWTP Improvements regarding the washdown station and the digester.

Councilmember O'Donnell moved to approve Change Order #2 for the 2009 WWTP Improvements. Seconded by Councilmember Hubbard. Carried 5-0.

Biosolids Contract – Alderwood Water & Sewer District:

Councilmember Johnson moved to table the contract with Alderwood Water & Sewer District to the December 8th meeting to include the Town Attorney's recommendations. Seconded by Councilmember Hubbard. Carried 5-0.

Parks Commission Appointments – Bo Miller & Linda Seales: Mayor Hayes stated he supports reappointment of Bo Miller and Linda Seales to the Parks Commission.

Councilmember Wright moved to approve the Mayor's appointments to the Parks Commission. Seconded by Councilmember Hubbard. Carried 5-0.

Miscellaneous:

Mayor/Council Roundtable – Councilmember O'Donnell stated there were errors on the wage and benefit spreadsheet. He stated it was premature to budget money for relocation of the Public Works Department in 2010 to expand the sewer composting.

Councilmember O'Donnell moved to increase the budget to \$30,000 and include two tasks – evaluation of plant management and the economic feasibility of expanding the composting operation. Seconded by Councilmember Brunisholz. Carried 4-1. Councilmember Wright opposed.

Community Comments:

Marci Plank, Director of the Chamber of Commerce, thanked the council for the increased funding for the Chamber in 2010.

Rick Ward, 519 Talbott Street, stated that La Conner is a tourist town and appreciated the Town's support of the Chamber.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 7:47 p.m.

Lorraine Taylor, Town Clerk

Ramon Hayes, Mayor