

Town of La Conner
Town Council Meeting
March 22, 2011 – 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, Tracey, Welch, and Wright.
Also present: Administrator Doyle and PW Director Lease

Councilmember Brunisholz moved to excuse the absence of Councilmembers Hubbard. Seconded by Councilmember Tracey. Carried 4-0.

Approval of Agenda:

Councilmember Tracey moved to amend the agenda by switching Unfinished Business with Reports. Seconded by Councilmember Welch. Carried 3-0.

Approval of Minutes:

Councilmember Welch moved to approve the minutes of the February 8, 2011 regular town council meeting. Seconded by Councilmember Brunisholz. Carried 3-0.

Approval of Accounts Payable:

Councilmember Tracey moved to approve checks 10076 through 10116 and 201049 dated March 22, 2011 in the amount of \$80,608.62 as presented. Seconded by Councilmember Welch. Carried 4-0.

Approval of Payroll:

Councilmember Brunisholz moved to approve payroll warrants 2257 through 2262 and 201151 and direct deposits for the payroll period March 1 through March 15, 2011 in the amount of \$23,081.93 as presented. Seconded by Councilmember Welch. Carried 4-0.

Community Comments:

Cindy Verge, Executive Director of the Skagit Valley Tulip Festival, presented the Town with the 2011 Official Tulip Poster by John Ebner.

B.J. Carol, stated the 4th of July is on a Monday and the parade will start at 11 a.m. by the Retirement Inn and go down First Street. The festivities will continue at Pioneer Park with food, games and music. A water element may be added this year.

Janna Gage, Volunteer Director of the Senior Center, handed out a calendar of activities for March 2011, that is indicative of the classes offered for the last nine years. She stated they need a large facility such as Maple Hall to hold all the classes.

Dan O'Donnell, stated the council is on the right track for budgeting money for the ring dike. He stated that \$120,000 in capital improvements were overlooked in the Tribe Fair Share Adjustment. He suggested that the Town enter into negotiations with the City of Anacortes regarding capital reserve.

Administrator's Report: Administrator Doyle stated that the Town has received a request for the Ragnar Relay that runs through the Town every year during the night. They are requesting the use Pioneer Park as

a staging point because it is along their route. Mr. Doyle stated the Town would require flaggers and a light at the intersection for safety purposes.

Councilmember Brunisholz moved to approve opening Pioneer Park during the night for the Ragnar Relay. Seconded by Councilmember Tracey. Carried 3-0.

Administrator Doyle stated that he will have a draft of the WSU contract for the council at the next meeting.

Mr. Doyle stated that a final review of the solar project with a bond accountant revealed some significant concerns regarding the incentives and the obligation of the utility (PSE).

Mayor's Report: reported that the bid amount for the Public Works mobile office was \$34,177.75, which was below the approved amount, but does not include the tax. He stated that the bid for used units were less, but did not include any refurbishment, upgrades or warranty.

Mayor Hayes stated he met with the Port of Skagit regarding \$10,000 in matching funds for advertising the Town, and the Finance Committee recommended approval at their last meeting. He requested approval for the funds and stated council would have oversight and approval of the project. Councilmember Welch said he would like to know what the project is first. Councilmember Tracey stated she would like more support for the Facility Event Coordinator position, but supports promoting the Town.

Councilmember Tracey moved to approve an additional \$10,000 in Hotel Motel funds for advertising to be matched by the Port of Skagit. Seconded by Councilmember Brunisholz. Carried 2-1 with Councilmember Welch voting nay.

Mayor Hayes stated that regarding the Facilities Event Coordinator position, it is the council that sets policy and the duty of the Mayor to administer it and he will do so in a fashion that is responsible.

Council Committee Reports:

Councilmember Brunisholz reported that the Flood Committee met with Al Mesman from Dike District 9 and Bob Hart from Drainage District 12.

Councilmember Welch stated that three quarters of the Town is protected by private dikes. To the north is the bypass channel which drains into the Swinomish Channel. It has been referred to as a dike, but actually was ditch sweepings that came out of the channel, and removed when it became overgrown.

The meeting raised several issues such as, what it would take to put a dike in the open area to provide a measure of protection for the Town. He stated that the most logical place for a breach would be at the river bend dike in Mount Vernon. He said the water would flow down to the Rexville Grocery area and around Pleasant Ridge to the Town. The farmers have a system of ring dikes that would push the water to the northern part of the Town to the bypass and then into Town.

Mayor Hayes stated that we can design and engineer a dike, but it would only be as good as the existing portions that are there.

Councilmember Welch stated that the dikes on the southern and eastern side protect the Town from the Skagit River, Sullivan Slough, and high tides. He requested that a cost benefit analysis and a timeline of the project be available at the next committee meeting for a clear cost of this project.

Administrator Doyle stated there would be permits needed from the Army Corps of Engineers, the tribe, and Skagit County. He stated there would be significant environmental issues.

Councilmember Welch suggested polling the town regarding this issue.

Facilities Committee: Councilmember Tracey clarified her decision regarding the Facility Event Coordinator position. The goal was to find someone with expertise to bring more people to Town during the off season and it was never discussed to reduce staff at Town Hall or displace the Seniors.

Councilmember Welch stated that he and Cindy put in a lot of time during the process of hiring a Facility Event Coordinator position. Their concern was the amount of money the facility was losing and figuring out how to work around the problems, such as reducing rates and the use of credit cards. He hopes the position will be filled quickly.

Mayor Hayes stated that the position does exist and it will be administered in a responsible fashion by the administration. He stated he appreciated the committee's hard work.

Street Committee: Councilmember Welch stated the committee met and reviewed the preliminary plans for 2nd Street. The committee recommended that the residents be notified, more parking spots, and poetry in the sidewalk.

Professional Services Contract – Terre-Source LLC: Administrator Doyle stated this is the third addendum to the Terre-Source contract which was approved in the 2011 budget for \$25,000. He stated Tamara Thomas has been invaluable to marketing and formulation of the compost facility.

Councilmember Welch stated he would like to see a marketing plan for the compost and regular reports. Administrator Doyle stated the reports have been provided every month.

Councilmember Brunisholz moved to approve the contract with Terre-Source LLC. Motion failed for a lack of a second.

2010 Tribe Sewer Rate & Fair Share Adjustment: Administrator Doyle stated the WAB and Utility Committee met and reviewed the Fair Share Adjustment. He stated this is a reconciliation of the 2010 rate. He stated that the sewer treatment plant did not undertake all of the capital projects that were projected in the 2010 budget, thus creating a refund to the tribe. These projects will be done in 2011.

Councilmember Welch moved to approve the 2010 Tribe Sewer Rate & Fair Share Adjustment in the amount of \$23,029.22. Seconded by Councilmember Tracey. Carried 3-0.

Water Supply Agreement – City of Anacortes: Administrator Doyle stated that it has been difficult to negotiate with the City of Anacortes and get additional information. The only part of the La Conner rate that has been increased is the capital component because Anacortes is doing a major overhaul and upgrade of the treatment and pumping facility at the river. Early on in the negotiations, Anacortes indicated the capital costs could go as high as \$11,000 per month, but the capital costs in this contract is \$8,110.67 per month. This is a 26% increase in capital costs and the Town will need to renegotiate our contract with Shelter Bay. He stated that because the Public Works Trust Fund is not functional right now and in 2013 our capital costs may increase again.

Mr. Dan O'Donnell suggested it might be more effective to have Doug Merriman (Oak Harbor), Mark Fredlund (PUD), Helen Balagot (Shell), Bruce Gillett (Tesoro) and the Town Administrator meet with the Anacortes Finance Director Hoglund.

Councilmember Welch moved to table the Water Supply Agreement to the next meeting. Seconded by Councilmember Tracey. Carried 3-0.

Miscellaneous - Mayor/Councilmember Roundtable:

Janna Gage, stated that there are many people in the Town who feel it was not a good time to create the Facility Event Coordination position due to the economic climate. She stated it is the job of Chamber of Commerce not the Town of La Conner to market the Town.

Mayor Hayes stated he will protect the Senior's and wants to move forward on this issue for the benefit of the Town.

There being no further business Mayor Hayes adjourned the regular meeting at 8:00 p.m.

Lorraine Taylor, Town Clerk

Ramon Hayes, Mayor