

Town of La Conner
Town Council Meeting
April 12, 2011 – 6:00 p.m.

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

Present: Mayor Hayes, Councilmembers Brunisholz, Hubbard, Tracey, Welch, and Wright.

Also present: Administrator Doyle, PW Director Lease, Finance Director Taylor, Fire Chief Taylor, Sewer Operators Kelly Wynn and Kevin Wynn.

Approval of Agenda:

Councilmember Wright moved to amend the agenda by moving the Skagit Tourism Bureau to the Mayor's Report. Seconded by Councilmember Hubbard. Carried 5-0.

Approval of Minutes:

Councilmember Welch moved to approve the minutes of the March 22, 2011 regular town council meeting. Seconded by Councilmember Tracey. Carried 4-0. Councilmember Hubbard abstained.

Approval of Accounts Payable:

Councilmember Hubbard moved to approve checks 10018 through 10198 in the amount of \$152,511.04 as presented. Seconded by Councilmember Tracey. Carried 5-0.

Approval of Payroll:

Councilmember Brunisholz moved to approve payroll checks 2263 through 2273, 201052 and direct deposits in the amount of \$39,258.91 as presented. Seconded by Councilmember Wright. Carried 5-0.

Community Comments:

Jim Lewis, 609 Tillinghast, stated the smell from the compost is getting worse and recommends putting the expansion of the compost facility on hold.

Dan O'Donnell, 328 N Third, stated he feels the contract with WSU is premature and recommends putting the study on hold.

Tom Hill, 705 S First Street, supported the formation of a Skagit County Tourism Bureau which will be dedicated to promoting tourism in a cohesive manner.

Gil Gilmor, Director of the La Conner Food Bank, reported that they are serving 40 families in the area, and giving out approximately 1,000 pounds of food per week. They have started the Backpack Program for children in Kindergarten through second grade. Approximately 20 children take home a back pack with food in it on Fridays.

Erin McGill, stated that they have started a mobile food service program for 13 residents who are unable to come to the food bank. She stated they are starting a summer produce garden on June 1 in cooperation with Mount Vernon. They need a new larger location for the food bank, and it was agreed to meet and discuss using the Garden Club as a new location.

Chamber Report: Marci Plank stated that a new organization, WA Tourism Alliance, will be replacing the WA State Tourism which will end in June. It will be run by volunteers and be self sustaining. She stated the Tulip Parade was a success with 30 entries.

Revenue/Expenditure Report: Mayor Hayes stated Hotel/Motel and sales tax receipts were up, but interest earnings were dismal. It was agreed to continue looking for banks that will take public CD's.

Department Head Reports:

- **Planner:** There were no questions on the report included in the council packet.
- **Finance:** There were no questions on the report included in the council packet.
- **Public Works:** There were no questions on the report included in the council packet.
- **Water & Wastewater:** Operator Wynn stated the compost plant has had excellent sales in the last week and odor complaints are at a minimum.
- **Fire Department:** There were no questions on the report included in the council packet.
- **Sheriff's Department:** There were no questions on the report included in the council packet.

Mayor's Report: Mayor Hayes introduced Carl Molesworth, Port of Skagit, and Ken Saunderson, Saunderson Marketing Group. He stated that the Port and La Conner have been working together for common goals in moving La Conner forward, and the Port felt it was important to hire someone to coordinate all marketing activities.

Mr. Ken Saunderson stated that in the next 45 days he will be talking with people to determine the impact that can be made outside of Skagit County, develop an action plan, determine public and private resources, and measurable goals.

Mayor Hayes stated that he has advertised for the marketing position and made adjustments to the website for Maple Hall. The external bookings feature on the website is not finalized yet.

Skagit Tourism Bureau: Don Wick, EDASC, stated that the money from the County Tourism Fund is being used to set up the Tourism Bureau, and EDASC will be the fiscal agency. The Skagit Tourism Bureau will impose a \$2.00 per room per day charge on lodging facilities with 40 rooms or more. The anticipated revenues will be approximately \$400,000 per year. The Department of Revenue will collect the money and return it to the County. There is only one hotel that qualifies in La Conner, the La Conner Country Inn.

Terica Taylor, Skagit Tourism Coordinator provided information to the Council and stated that in a month they will come back for approval for an interlocal agreement with Skagit County. Because La Conner has only one hotel, they will only have one vote on the board and one ex-officio person.

Rick Thompson, La Conner Country Inn, stated he strongly supports the Skagit Tourism Bureau because it will be promoting conventions and business meetings. The Inn has spent over \$140,000 attempting to market their facilities and the Town with some success, and emphasized the importance of targeted marketing strategies beyond sporting events that would benefit La Conner.

Council Committee Reports: There were no committee reports.

Flood Control: It was discussed to set up a meeting.

Building Lease Agreement – Port of Skagit & Town of La Conner: Administrator Doyle stated that the Port has agreed to amend the agreement to do a transactional assessment of the site for hazardous materials. He stated the commencement date has been changed to July 1, 2011. Administrator Doyle stated the Port has expanded the footprint of the lease.

PW Director Lease stated that the mobile office will be completed by the end of May, and it can be moved in before July 1, 2011.

Councilmember Brunisholz moved to approve the Building Lease Agreement with the Port of Skagit & Town of La Conner. Seconded by Councilmember Wright. Carried 4-1. Councilmember Welch voted nay.

Interagency Agreement – WSU & Town of La Conner: Administrator Doyle stated that through discussions with the agricultural community it was determined that the Town needed to enlist the services of the WSU Extension to identify and resolve issues.

Dr. Stephen Jones, WSU Director of Research, Mount Vernon, stated that the research center serves at the pleasure of the agricultural community to strive and strengthen the economical and environmental aspects of agriculture in the region. Dr. Jones corrected some earlier misstatements by Dan O'Donnell regarding research and communications with the Puyallup WSU Extension Service. He stated the need to capture the nitrogen nutrients in biosolids and get it back out on the farm lands. He stated WSU would not enter into research that the growers did not want or put into jeopardy the perceptions or realities for the agricultural community. He stated the three main elements of fertilizer are nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium.

Dr. Jones stated they have selected a local student, Caitlin Price, a PhD candidate who has been working with the Snohomish Conservation District and has a master's degree in composting.

Dr. Jones stated that the possibly of only having 25 – 50 years of phosphorus left on the planet to mine, and it is a big issue in regards to the depletion of the soil. A goal of this project is to be self sufficient and to cycle phosphorus through the project and keep it locally. He stated a rural sociologist will poll the community regarding concerns and reach a good solution so the product is acceptable.

Councilmember Wright moved to approve the Interagency Agreement between the WSU and the Town of La Conner. Seconded by Councilmember Hubbard. Carried 4-1. Councilmember Welch voted nay.

Mayor/Council Roundtable:

Web Site Development Proposal – How It Works: Administrator Doyle stated that there were several aspects of the website that were cumbersome to maintain, and this was their proposal to accommodate the problems. He stated the Town would prefer going out for a Request for Proposal for a new website that would have the ability to be modified in house.

City of Anacortes Water Rates: Administrator Doyle stated that this was just informational that they have adopted the water rates even though the rates have not been set for the third year. Administrator Doyle stated he expected to have an agreement for water rates with Shelter Bay for the next meeting.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Lorraine Taylor, Town Clerk

Ramon Hayes, Mayor