

Town of La Conner
Town Council Meeting
January 24, 2023 – 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 Taylor, Carlson, Dole and Chamberlain.

Also present: Administrator Thomas, Finance Director DeGoede, Public Works Director Lease, Planner Davolio and Fire Chief/Code Enforcement Officer Reinstra.

This was a hybrid meeting held in person and electronically on Zoom. Information to join was posted at Town Hall, the published Agenda, in the La Conner Weekly News, and on the Town Website.

Councilmember Dole Moved to excuse Councilmember Wohleb. Motion seconded by Councilmember Taylor. Motion carried 4/0.

Public Comments:

Resident Stuart Welch requested a review of the current Town Policies on sidewalks. His project on Caledonia Street would require a 400-foot sidewalk with a five-foot planter strip; estimated cost of at least \$100,000. He also feels some of the sidewalks do not meet ADA requirements and are a liability to the Town. In regards to the recent flood, Mr. Welch suggested the Fire Department look into what materials are stored in the Moore Clark buildings, as the flood waters ran through the buildings and into his neighborhood.

Resident Jim Matthews discussed an item that was brought up at the Communication Forum. The newspaper boxes in front of the Post Office are old and unappealing. Some are not being used anymore. Administrator Thomas explained we could contact the owners of the ones not being used for removal and regulate the conditions of the boxes, but legally, under the First Amendment Rights, newspapers have the right to place their materials on public right-of-way. He will look into it. Mr. Matthews also shared ten percent of the Town's population lives in the La Conner Retirement Inn and Harbor Villa.

Resident Linda Talman referred to a correction needed in the Uniform Development Code revisions, under the Port Industrial section, on agricultural setback requirements. Also, she wanted clarity on what diversity means for the Flood Commission members, she suggested grant opportunities coming up from SCOG for biking, walking and carbon reduction, and wanted to know what will be done with the information from the Communication Forum.

Ajah Eills, the new Planning Assistant, introduced herself to Council.

Presentations:

Solarize Skagit – Skagit Valley Clean Energy Cooperative:

Councilmember Chamberlain introduced Greg Whiting of Skagit Valley Clean Energy Cooperative and Ben Silesky of Olympia Community Solar to discuss the advantages of a community solar purchasing program. Online registration will begin the end of February. It was the consensus of the Council to add the Town Logo in support of the Skagit Solarize Initiative, provide citizens of La Conner information through the website and in utility bills and become a member of the Skagit Valley Clean Air Cooperative by paying the \$100 fee.

La Conner Fire Department – Fire Boat Update:

Assistant Fire Chief Avery updated Council on the status of selecting a new fireboat. A local company in Sedro Woolley has designed one with the specifications of the Fire Department that could be built by the end of this year. Other companies have a wait of several years with higher costs. Discussions included seeking grants, the additional costs of \$30,000 to \$40,000 to obtain a bond, possible requirements of a bidding process, payments made with the Fire Special Use Tax that is in reserve for future fire apparatus and other local entity contributions. The final cost of the fireboat is estimated between \$450,000 to \$475,000. They intend to surplus the current fireboat for approximately \$10,000 to \$20,000 and plan most training in house to save money. The Port offered to not charge for the slip and possibly pay for half the maintenance costs. Mayor Hayes stated we can't guarantee the timeline of this year, but staff will start looking for funding. Assistant Fire Chief Avery will provide a list of all the boat costs and interested contributors.

Councilmember Carlson temporarily left the meeting.

Consent Agenda:

Approval of Agenda

Approval of the Minutes of the January 10, 2023, Council Meeting

Accounts Payable:	Checks 25722 - 25755	\$136,704.96
	Voided Check - 25668	
	<u>Electronic Pmts. – 2018074 Excises Tax</u>	<u>\$6,963.85</u>
	Total Accounts Payable	\$143,668.81
Payroll of January 20, 2023:	Checks 5669 - 5674	\$3,158.91
	Payroll Auto Tax Payment #2018073	\$7,544.74
	<u>Payroll Auto Deposit</u>	<u>\$22,096.97</u>
	Total Payroll	\$32,800.62

Councilmember Chamberlain moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Motion seconded by Councilmember Dole. Motion carried 3/0.

Mayors Report:

Mayor Hayes discussed the upcoming three critical areas for the Town to address in the next three to seven years, flooding, Wastewater Treatment Plant and our water lines. Just one of these is an enormous task.

Council Committees:

Communication Committee:

Councilmember Dole and Chamberlin reported the meeting on Saturday went well. The focus was a communication plan primarily on health and safety.

Center Street Project:

Administrator Thomas is waiting for the Hearing Examiner's Decision.

Jenson Property:

Mayor Hayes reiterated the location by Channel Cove would be a good fit for affordable housing options, but no decision has been made and ultimately it will be open for citizen involvement.

Councilmember Carlson rejoined the meeting.

2023 Tribal Rates:

Administrator Thomas explained the Town Engineer, Evan Henke, calculated the 2023 rates at 0.4706 per 100 gallons of wastewater.

Councilmember Dole moved to approve the 2023 Tribal Rate of 0.4706. Motion seconded by Councilmember Taylor. Motion carried 4/0

Ordinance 1221 – Emergency Management Commission:

Administrator Thomas explained he found we had a civil defense ordinance from 1956 that was out of date and not used anymore. He used that as a model for this ordinance that addresses the Town's emergency operations in the first section. The second section establishes the Emergency Management Commission to cover a number of emergencies the Town should prepare for, such as flooding, earthquakes and fire.

Councilmember Dole moved to approve Ordinance 1221 with the typo corrections. Motion seconded by Councilmember Carlson. Motion carried 4/0.

Ordinance 1222 – Uniform Development Code Amendment:

Planner Davolio noted it came back from the 60-day review with no comments. However, he will correct the wording of the agricultural setback in the Port Industrial section.

Councilmember Dole moved to approve Ordinance 1222 amending the Uniform Development Code with the correction discussed. Motion seconded by Councilmember Taylor. Motion carried 4/0.

Capital Improvement Plan & Fire and Park Impact Fees:

Planner Davolio requested tabling the Ordinance on updating the Capital Improvement plan and the Resolution for Fire and Park Impact Fees for changes.

Councilmember Chamberlain moved to table the Ordinance for updating the Capital Improvement Plan and the Resolution for Fire and Park Impact Fees. Motion seconded by Councilmember Carlson. Motion carried 4/0.

Ordinance 1223 – Correction to Ordinance 1220 for the 2023 Utility Rates:

Finance Director DeGoede noted there were corrections on the rate schedule.

Councilmember Taylor moved to approve Ordinance 1223, to correct Ordinance 1220, the 2023 Utility Rates. Motion seconded by Councilmember Dole. Motion carried 4/0.

Resolution 617 – Maple Hall Policy (extended time for the Fireman’s Ball):

Councilmember Carlson moved to approve Resolution 617 updating the Maple Hall Policy to extend the time of use for the annual Fireman’s Ball. Motion seconded by Councilmember Chamberlain. Motion carried 4/0.

Agreement – Waterfront Survey with David Evans & Associates:

Public Works Director Lease explained this survey will be for the Town’s entire waterfront. It will identify the low and high areas along the waterfront for temporary and permanent flood control measures. It will not include the dike or Sullivan’s Slough. The agreement would include Options 1, 2 and 3 at a cost of \$20,500.

Councilmember Chamberlain moved to approve the Mayor to sign the agreement with David Evans & Associates for the survey of the Town waterfront. Motion seconded by Councilmember Dole. Motion carried 4/0.

Mayor Roundtable:

Discussions included the Town’s sidewalk regulations, and clarification that all information, including Attorney Brinklin’s briefing, was sent to the attorney the Town hired for an unbiased comprehensive decision on the Center Street issue.

There being no further business the meeting ended at 7:40 p.m.



Maria DeGoede, Finance Director



Ramon Hayes, Mayor