

Town of La Conner
Town Council Meeting
February 8, 2022 – 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, Chamberlain and Wohleb.

Also present: Administrator Thomas, Finance Director DeGoede, Public Works Director Lease, Planner Davolio, WWTP Operator Wynn and LT. Willard of the Sheriff's Department.

This meeting was held 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.

Public Comments:

Barbara Nitis of the Small Business Administration Offices of Disaster Assistance spoke on the available funding for homeowners, renters, non-profit organizations and businesses affected by the recent flooding between November 5, 2021, through December 2, 2021. Filing for funding deadline date is October 5, 2022.

Resident Dan O'Donnell attended the Anacortes Town Council Meeting to address the annual reconciliation. He requested the Town send a letter along with the payment stating this was paid under protest, and requesting a meeting with the Utility Committee.

Consent Agenda:

Approval of Agenda

Approval of the Minutes of January 25, 2022

Accounts Payable:	Checks 24759 – 24797	\$113,364.41
Auto Payments	201771 – Parking Meter Fees	\$35.82
	<u>201772 – CC Process Fees</u>	<u>\$167.00</u>
	Total February 8, 2022 Claims	\$113,567.23

Payroll of February 4, 2022	Checks	5517 - 5525	\$20,043.00
Auto Payments:	DCP	#201768	\$2,241.00
	PERS	#201769	\$8,628.79
	PR Taxes	#201770	\$6,191.44
	<u>Payroll Auto Deposit</u>		<u>\$19,447.25</u>
	Total Payroll		\$56,551.48

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

Chamber Report:

Chamber Director Carter noted the Small Business Association's funding information is also on the Chamber website and she has fliers at the office. She has been advertising for the eighth annual La Conner Daffodil Festival. There will still not be in-person gatherings, but visitors can view the fields. The return of the Ice Cream Social will be on March 17th at Maple Hall. The 2022 Coupon Books are available at the Chamber office and the La Conner Marina. Lastly, the Chamber is actively looking for a new location. There is nothing on Morris Street that fits their space needs or budget.

Revenue and Expenditure Reports:

Mayor Hayes noted last year's sales taxes were historic and it would be unrealistic to expect to match that. The January Revenue Taxes are down from 2021, but probably a fair comparison would be with 2020, which we are slightly ahead of.

Planner's Report:

Planner Davolio provided his annual report. Last year was a record number of permits, and it looks like it will continue into this year.

Public Works:

Public Works Director Lease reported the dock payment boxes were broken into. There will be a Finance Committee meeting tomorrow to discuss other options. Also, paving of the Maple Ballfield Project will be on Thursday. They will be patching Maple Avenue and constructing the roads within the project. Hopefully this should be the last hiccup for traffic and resident concerns.

WWTP:

Councilmember Wohleb shared there will be a meeting Wednesday researching solar panels for the WWTP and looking for funding options.

Sheriff's Department:

LT. Willard, reported the patrol hours for January 2022 were 628 within the zone (320 over the required) and 95 in Town patrolling hours. They are implementing a new trial program, involving all the new hire deputies, to do business patrol in La Conner. They want to get them socialized and learn the area.

Administrator:

Administrator Thomas stated we have moved forward with the Code Enforcement Position. The vehicle has been purchased and he should have the job description for Council review at the next meeting, with the goal of advertising by the end of the month. Also, the Maple Park has a grant opportunity due the first of May. We have to have a plan to submit for the funding, and since we need to provide parking, he has asked Evan Henke to put together a street improvement plan to include parking on Talbott with a hammer head turnaround. The cost will be approximately \$3,000. He is talking with the Parks Commission this week regarding a landscape plan.

Administrator Thomas also discussed the 2021 Tribal reconciliation. This year we have a refund to the Tribe for \$47,000. This is due to the rates we have charged and unspent budgeted projects at the plant due to COVID. We could take a charge of \$115,000 to set in reserve, which would drop our refund to approximately \$19,000. This would also reduce the 2022 rate. There will be a Utility Committee meeting this week to discuss the issue. Also discussed is the probable renegotiation of the contract due to a lot of money both parties will have to put in for the plant upgrades. Mayor Hayes noted one of the reasons renegotiation of the contract has been avoided is the cost involved. In 1997 it cost between \$300,000 to \$400,000 to develop the contract. However, in light of all the upgrades that have to happen in the future, it might make sense.

Mayor's Report:

Mayor Hayes is reviewing the applications for the Planning Commission and the Parks Commission. He should have recommendations by the next Council meeting.

Parks Commission:

Councilmember Wohleb noted the Town Code suggests participation of someone from the school. They are looking into it further.

Communications Committee (ad hoc): Councilmembers Chamberlain and Dole shared there is a draft plan for communication, but they also want to include stakeholders from the community and the school district that have skill sets to help with the plan. Also, they would like to examine different platforms for communication to reach more people.

Mayor Hayes noted it may be time to revisit the language of 2.45.010 of the LMC regarding the Parks Commission. It is a bit confusing. It will be reviewed internally and brought before Council.

Public Works Generator:

Public Works Director Lease explained he had to rent a generator four times during the flooding last month, and one of the times there were none available at a rental facility, forcing him to rent one from a contractor at a higher price. He has been pricing new generators and he found one for \$47,000. It is through State contract at 42% off the lowest price. The Drainage fund can support the purchase. If maintained, it should last at least 25 years. Finance Director DeGoede confirmed the Drainage fund should be fine with this purchase. Council will see a budget amendment at a future meeting.

Agreement – Simply Yards Landscape and Design:

Public Works Director Lease stated they came in as the low bid. They did a great job last year and he recommended Council to approve the Mayor to sign the agreement.

Councilmember Chamberlain moved to approve the Mayor to sign the agreement with Simply Yards Landscape and Design. Motion seconded by Councilmember Wohleb. Motion carried 5/0.

Agreement – Hearing Examiner David Lowell:

Mayor Hayes noted the Hearing Examiner is a third-party review primarily on planning issues. This is an amendment to extend the position. Planner Davolio confirmed David Lowell was very thorough and professional to work with.

Councilmember Chamberlain moved to approve the Mayor to sign the extended Hearing Examiner Agreement with David Lowell. Motion seconded by Councilmember Dole. Motion carried 5/0.

Interlocal Agreement - EDASC:

Administrator Thomas explained all the cities in Skagit County share as a member. The amount is based on population and the Town will pay \$2,165. He recommended Council approval for the Mayor to sign.


Councilmember Taylor moved to approve the Mayor to sign the Interlocal Agreement with EDASC. Motion seconded by Councilmember Wohleb. Motion carried 5/0.

Mayor Roundtable:

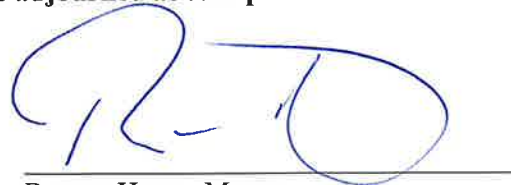
Councilmember Dole discussed the Love La Conner sculpture. It was funded in the Hotel Motel funds for this year and the artist has reduced the cost. He would like to get it started so it will be done in time for the Tulip Festival. Heather from the Chamber is ready to get started as well. Administrator Thomas stated it was discussed by both the Art's and Parks Commissions and as far as he was aware, there was no conclusion. After discussions, Mayor Hayes recommended Council revisit the final design and location for a decision.

Finance Director DeGoede explained we no longer have phone support and maintenance due to Barron Communications closing December 31, 2021. She has been researching other options and will be bringing information to a future meeting.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 7:10 p.m.



Maria DeGoede, Finance Director



Ramon Hayes, Mayor