

Town of La Conner

Town Council Meeting
May 25, 2021 – 6:00 p.m.

The meeting of the La Conner Town Council was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Mayor Pro Tem Chamberlain
Present: Councilmembers Brunisholz, Leaver, Stokes and Wohleb.

Also present: Administrator Thomas, Finance Director DeGoede, Public Works Director Lease and Planner Davolio.

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:

Resident Dan O'Donnell attended the WAB Meeting earlier in the day and was very disappointed the Sewer Department has had no I&I in 2020 or 2021 thus far.

Administrator Thomas, stated according to the Town engineer, at least 50% of pipes are side sewer connections on private property, which is where half of the water is expected to come from. This is consistent with documentation from the EPA that says the majority of leaks are going to be side sewers, which would not be a part of the Town repairs. We have approximately \$60,000 budgeted for I&I but the first step of the process is to have the lines videoed to identify what needs to be repaired or replaced.

Administrator Thomas also discussed the significant investment of approximately ten million for the sewer plant upgrades in the next five to ten years.

Consent Agenda:

Approval of Agenda

Approval of the Minutes of May 11, 2021

Accounts Payable:	Checks 24117 - 24148	\$148,819.65
	Electronic Pmts. – 201706 Excise Tax	\$6,842.02
	Total Accounts Payable	\$155,661.67
Payroll of May 20, 2021	Checks 5390 - 5395	\$2,069.90
	Payroll Auto Tax Payment #201698	\$6,558.77
	<u>Payroll Auto Deposit</u>	<u>\$18,806.88</u>
	Total Payroll	\$27,435.55

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

Administrator's Report:

Administrator Thomas discussed upcoming events. The 4th of July will take place with a parade and fireworks display, but no picnic at Pioneer Park or bands at the Port. There will be music in Gilkey Square starting towards the end of the summer and the La Conner Classic Car and Boat Show will happen.

Also, with the COVID-19 restrictions easing up, Administrator Thomas has been exploring options for in-person meetings. Currently under the Governor's orders, the default is remote meetings. We can meet in person as long as we can provide remote access as well. We don't have the technology in place to offer the meetings both in person and by Zoom, and due to high demand for setup; we won't be able to have it in place until sometime in July. Until then, remote is the default until we can offer both.

For the Town employees that can show proof they have been vaccinated, they will not be required to wear a mask or social distance. Unvaccinated employees still have to continue to observe the restrictions.

Committee Meetings:

WAB:

Councilmember Brunisholz attended the WAB meeting. Discussions were on I&I, but also new requirements for the plant from the Department of Ecology. Some of the requirements will be by the end of the year, so our plant will not be in compliance at that time, resulting in possible fines. He is also concerned on the sea level rise in the next fifty years and the position of the sewer plant. The Town's septage receivables have increased due to the lapse of competitors' contracts.

Arts Committee:

Councilmember Leaver reported the Arts Commission did vote in favor of the wall art piece and the placement in the Butterfly Garden at the Garden Club.

First on First in June will provide a map of all the participating restaurants and what they will be offering. There will also be buskers in Town.

Streets Committee:

Councilmembers Stokes and Chamberlain met to discuss options for traffic control in Town.

- 1) Mini Roundabout – involves the relocation of a water main. Because of the cost, it was recommended by Public Works Director Lease to wait until Phase II of the waterline upgrades. It is also not a hazard as it is currently.
- 2) Delivery Truck Route – Washington Street is the main arterial and should be posted as a truck route. Other streets, such as Whatcom would be closed to heavy trucks. However, to do this, the shrubs and hedges at the corner of Washington and Whatcom would need to be cut back or removed.
- 3) Speed Bumps – are not recommended due to the negative feedback received.
- 4) Reader Boards –on Maple and Third Street are recommended with heavier poles for possible installation of cameras in the future. Also, to have the capability of variations to maintain drivers' attention. The average cost of the reader boards is \$2,500 each, not counting the poles.
- 5) Sheriff Decoy Car – utilized at problem areas throughout Town is recommended.

Parks Commission:

Councilmember Wohleb reported the Parks Commission approved the wall art piece and the placement in the Butterfly Garden at the Garden Club. There is a reserve of \$12,000 for the Waterfront Park Pavilion. After they receive updated costs, a budget amendment will be needed to cover the remaining balance.

The citizen's committee for the Maple Park has targeted a survey on what uses citizens want for the park. It will go out sometime in October.

Administrator Thomas explained both the Arts Commission and the Parks Commission recommended to accept the wall art donated by Jean Wharton and has also recommended the placement of the wall in the Butterfly Garden at the Garden Club. Now we need Council approval.

Councilmember Leaver moved to approve the recommendations from the Arts and Parks Commissions to accept the wall art and the installment of it in the Butterfly Garden at the Garden Club. Motion seconded by Councilmember Wohleb. Motion carried 5/0.

Public Hearing – Application for the 2021 CDBG Grant Funding:

Administrator Thomas explained this is a block grant based on income level for economic benefit. If the Town is granted the funds, it could be used for the planning of the development of the Moore Clark property, with the goal to put together a subdivision plan for the redevelopment of that site, to create jobs and businesses. It would require environmental studies, SEPA, NEPA if it is required, as well as looking at shoreline and transportation issues, as we have been looking at extending First Street South.

Mayor Pro Tem Chamberlain opened the Public Hearing at 6:38 p.m.

Resident Sandy Stokes is in favor of plans to clean up the property. It is an iconic building and hoped to keep the foot print. She also is in favor of affordable housing.

Resident Dan O'Donnell is for public use and feels that Town Hall is not earthquake safe and should be moved next to Maple Hall but must allow some space for affordable housing. He also suggested engaging the tribes in building a casino at the Moore Clark site.

Resident Amy McFeely discussed the importance of enough time to meet and discuss the impact on the neighborhood, how we address the problems we already have with policing and traffic control, and the small-town vision. She also would like to see more walkability such as extending the Boardwalk to the Waterfront Park.

Planner Davolio explained this would be a very lengthy process that will include hiring a consultant to develop a plan, surveys, public meetings, public hearings and ultimately the sub-area plan would be recommended to the Town's Comprehensive Plan in 2022 or 2023. Everyone will have a voice in the process. He estimated it would be a minimum two-year process to maximize public engagement. Administrator Thomas stated we would ask for the maximum grant amount of \$30,000 and there would be a match requirement.

Councilmember Stokes noted we needed to identify the area and once we have a physical plan, we have a better chance for other grants to pay for the majority of projects.


Mayor Pro Tem Chamberlain closed the Public Hearing at 6:55 p.m.

Councilmember Stokes requested the next Agenda include the traffic control devices. It has been discussed for years and it is time we start the process.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 6:56 p.m.



Maria DeGoede, Finance Director



Ramon Hayes, Mayor