

## *Town of La Conner*

Town Council Special Meeting  
September 24, 2019, 5:00 p.m.  
Lower Maple Center  
104 Commercial Street

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Mayor Pro Tem Brunisholz called the Special Meeting of the La Conner Town Council to order at 5:00 p.m.

Present: Councilmembers Stokes, Chamberlain and Wohleb.

Also Present: Administrator Thomas and Finance Director DeGoede

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Councilmember Stokes moved to excuse Councilmember Leaver. Motion seconded by Councilmember Wohleb. Motion carried 4/0.

Finance Director DeGoede stated the issues that will be discussed involve the General Fund. Both the policing contract for the Sheriff and the Teamsters agreements are up this year. Also, the Town currently does not have code enforcement.

Administrator Thomas reviewed the memo he distributed regarding the Sheriff's contract. In 2010, the contract included police presence, foot patrol, patrols in residential neighborhoods, traffic control and an officer on duty all the time for quick responses to 911 calls. Our current agreement was modeled after the Concrete agreement, which decreased the policing presence and the cost.

Recently there have been discussions with the Port and the La Conner School District to get their views and needs. The Port has security issues and would like more emphasis on patrol. They currently have a private security company. The School District is interested in having an officer presence similar to a resource officer, but discussions were left unclear on how often the need was. They also need traffic control for the start and end of the school day. Currently they are paying the Sheriff for voluntary overtime on a four hour basis as needed. Most of the schools are doing this and the Sheriff is talking about a County wide program to cover this need, by dedicating resource officers to the schools. However, for the Town of La Conner, combining resources with the School and possibly the Port for an officer makes sense. The estimated annual cost for a Sheriff is \$130,000 to \$150,000.

First the Sheriff has to be open to even entertain a partnership and combined resources. Administrator Thomas has met with them, and wanted to discuss this with Council before the next meeting, with the intent to put some numbers on the table. The goal is to have a full time officer dedicated to the Town of La Conner, paid by the School, the Port and the Town, to do foot patrol and other duties needed.

Another viewpoint is the policing we have now is fine, the complaints are primarily due to code enforcement issues not being enforced. The only issue of complaint from the policing is traffic control. Possibly we could include in our agreement to pay for occasional overtime traffic control as needed. However, Sgt. Willard did dedicate his traffic control officers to the problem areas recently, which was a great help.

Administrator Thomas explained there are two categories for fire code enforcement. We are currently using the services of the County Fire Marshal for new construction or construction review, to included

sprinkler systems and fire control systems. They charge us and we pass the fee through to the project applicant. He does not recommend we change this as it usually requires an engineer. The Town does its own zoning inspections such as setbacks.

The second category of fire code enforcement is maintenance inspections. This involves an annual inspection of commercial businesses for such things as range hoods in restaurants and exits. This is something our Fire Department would like to focus more on and currently we don't have a program for doing it. It would also benefit the Fire Department in their pre-fire planning. One idea is to combine the Fire Department maintenance inspection duties with the zoning inspections as a part time position paid by the Town. The salary for a full time building inspector or combined position is approximately \$4,500 to \$6,000 a month, but the Town does not have enough work to require a full time position. It is difficult to recruit for these positions as they are in demand.

For 2019, the Town budgeted a little over \$28,000 for code enforcement to include animal control. We currently do not have a code enforcement officer or a vehicle.


Administrator Thomas stated these are not proposals from the Mayor or himself. These are issues we need to consider and talk about. There were discussions on combining the duties for a full time position and the difficulties of finding someone with all the skills and qualifications to do it. Another suggestion was hiring two part time positions for code enforcement.

Councilmember Leaver joined the meeting at 5:48 p.m.

Administrator Thomas' intent is it to continue to meet with the Sheriff, the School District and the Port and report back to Council.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 5:52 p.m.

  
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Maria DeGoede, Finance Director

  
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Ramon Hayes, Mayor