

Town of La Conner
Town Council Meeting
September 28, 2021 – 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 Leaver, Stokes and Chamberlain.

Also present: Administrator Thomas, Finance Director DeGoede, Public Works Director Lease, Assistant Fire Chief Avery and Sgt. Willard of the Sheriff's Department.

This was a Hybrid Meeting, In-person and by Zoom. Also, offered Phone Conference as an additional option for public access due to technical difficulties.

Councilmember Stokes moved to excuse Councilmember Wohleb. Motion seconded by Councilmember Leaver. Motion carried 3/0.

Public Comments:

Resident Zack Johns would like to build on a parcel in the area of Whatcom and Washington Streets, but needs the drainage issue resolved. His parcel, along with three others, flood every year. He is requesting the 2022 budget include a catch basin, which, with his drainage plans, would resolve the flooding issue. Mayor Hayes will discuss the issue internally and try to find a solution.

Resident Jim Matthews questioned the Town's plans for the costs of the upgrades to the Sewer Plant. Mayor Hayes stated we have begun the process with the \$100,000 engineering report budgeted for 2022. Once we receive the report, we will know more of what the required upgrades will be. Also, because we are in process of preparing for the upgrades, we wouldn't be subject to penalties. Another element to factor in is the Swinomish Tribe will be contributing to the costs as they are planning to build 500 homes, which will greatly impact the sewer plant.

Consent Agenda:

Approval of Agenda

Approval of the Minutes for September 14, 2021 and the Special Meeting Minutes of September 14, 2021.

Accounts Payable:	Checks 24432- 24466	\$337,482.05
	<u>Electronic Pmts. – 201736 Excise Tax</u>	<u>\$8,926.37</u>
	Total Accounts Payable	\$346,408.42
Payroll of September 20, 2021	Checks 5451 - 5456	\$1,737.92
	Payroll Auto Tax Payment #201735	\$5,729.88
	<u>Payroll Auto Deposit</u>	<u>\$17,411.64</u>
	Total Payroll	\$24,879.44

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

Administrator's Report:

Administrator Thomas noted the Fire Department will be presenting their budget. Also, for Halloween there will likely be the annual parade and a Zoom story time.

Mayor's Report:

Mayor Hayes discussed social media and how it perpetuates mistrust with inaccurate information. He encouraged citizens to come to Council meetings for accurate information. Also, he and Councilmembers are available to answer questions.

Committee Reports:

Art's Committee – Councilmember Leaver noted the planning of Art's Alive is in process. First on First is ramping down now with a possible public arts project.

Councilmember Stokes reported on the Watershed Meeting and the work to increase the salmon population. He recommended checking out their website for more information.

Budget 2022 Discussions:

Councilmembers Stokes and Leaver requested a Finance Committee meeting to discuss adding the purchase of a code enforcement vehicle in the 2022 Budget. Finance Director DeGoede will follow up.

Councilmember Chamberlain discussed the need for a communication liaison to be a communication channel to the public, by summarizing information for the website. Mayor Hayes agrees but also depends on the local paper and suggested the public get involved, go to a Council Meeting and volunteer at the Chamber. Citizens have a responsibility to educate themselves on what is truly going on with accurate information. Councilmember Stokes would like the public to reach out to the Councilmembers for information and questions. Administrator Thomas stated we probably couldn't afford a position dedicated as a communication liaison, but what we lack is a communication plan for an effective way to communicate to the public. He will look into options for further discussions.

2022 Hotel Motel Distribution:

Councilmembers Stokes reported the Finance Committee recommended fully funding the Hotel Motel requests, due to the funds that were not expended out last year. Recommended distributions are as follows:


La Conner Chamber \$80,000, Skagit Valley Tulip Festival \$2,500, Skagit County Historical Museum \$2,000, Pacific NW Quilt & Fiber Museum \$1,700, Museum of NW Art \$5,000, La Conner Art's Foundation (Art's Alive) \$1,000, Public Restrooms \$50,200, La Conner Live \$6,000, Skagit Artists Together \$1,000, Love La Conner Sculpture & Advertising \$21,800, La Conner Advertising \$12,000 and \$250 Administrative, for a total distribution of \$183,450.

Councilmember Stokes moved to approve the 2022 Hotel Motel Distribution of \$183,450 as presented. Motion seconded by Councilmember Leaver. Motion carried 3/0.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 6:30 p.m.



Maria DeGoede, Finance Director



Ramon Hayes, Mayor