

Town of La Conner
Town Council Meeting
October 10, 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, Chamberlain and Wohleb.

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

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.

Public Comments:

John Doyle gave an update on the Fish Slide repairs. The grant application was not a success, but he and Ollie Iversen are moving forward with other funding, such as donations and applying for another grant next year. The Fish Slide is an intricate part of the Waterfront Park, as it was planned around the slide features. He and Ollie are planning on doing some repairs on the slide next spring, but until then, Public Works will cover it for the winter. Their goal is to have it fully repaired and fully functioning as a slide.

Parks Commissioner Ollie Iversen thanked Council for their patience with the ongoing process of fixing the Fish Slide.

Emergency Management Commissioner Jerry George discussed the recent earthquake that measured at 4.5. It was big enough to cause damage if it wasn't so deep, with a depth of 35 miles.

Consent Agenda:

Approval of Agenda

Approval of the Minutes of the September 26, 2023 Special Meeting and Regular Council Meeting.

Accounts Payable:	Checks	26450 - 26495	\$112,930.26
	Electronic Pmts.	2018155 - US Bank Fees	\$351.46
		2018156 – Leasehold Tax	\$1,562.52
		2018157 – Invoice cloud Fees	\$158.60
		Total Accounts Payable	\$115,002.84
Payroll of October 5, 2023:	Checks 5785 - 5792		\$3,801.89
	AWC Benefit Trust	#2018150	\$13,646.08
	Deferred Comp	#2018151	\$2,404.46
	PERS Retirement	#2018152	\$10,241.95
	Teamsters Benefit	#2018153	\$8,716.00
	Auto Payroll Taxes	#2018154	\$9,370.82
	Payroll Auto Deposit		\$29,885.43
	Total Payroll	\$78,066.63	

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

Chamber's Report:

Chamber Director Hurst reported PSE approved the size increase for the new 7ft. banners. He has been ramping up the TV ads for the upcoming events to include Jingle "Belles" A Ladies Night Shopping, the Christmas Tree Lighting and the Holiday Lighted Boat Parade. He is encouraging the businesses to participate in a holiday contest on the evening of the Jingle "Belles" night for the best decorated business. The beautification grant was not successful but he is looking at other funding.

Revenue & Expenditure Reports:

Mayor Hayes noted Sales Tax is at 76%, Hotel Motel is 104% and everything else is stable.

Planner's Report:

Planner Davolio reminded everyone of the upcoming joint Planning Commission and Council meetings, one at the Garden Club focusing on short-term rentals and the second one is a trip to Langley to see tiny home villages and housing options. Also, he has planned for a presentation on parking options for First Street to both the Council and the Planning Commission in November.

WWTP:

Mayor Hayes acknowledged WWTP Operator Kelly Wynn for his 43 years with the Town.

Sheriff's Department:

Incidents have declined due to heading into the winter months and school is back in session. There was further discussion on vehicle snatch and grab thefts targeting unlocked vehicles.

Public Works:

Public Works Director Lease reported Public Works focused on flood protection this last month and filled 2,000 bags with a borrowed sandbagger. The prefilled sandbags he ordered have been delivered and are being placed in mapped staging areas. The tides have been higher than normal and he noticed mid-November there is a massive low-pressure system, but it is about 1,000 miles off shore. He doesn't know what impact that will have here.

Mayor's Report:

Mayor Hayes reminded everyone of the Library Dedication on Saturday the 14th from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Council Committee Reports:

Fire Boat:

Councilmember Carlson reported they have not been successful in setting up a meeting with the Port. They are going to ask the Legislature for funding. In order to do that, we need to show support from as many entities as possible. They are starting with a meeting with Fire District 13.

Communication Committee:

Councilmember Chamberlain shared the Committee is discussing what they will be doing next, but she and Councilmember Dole plan on attending the school's parent school conferences next week with the focus on Solar.

Ordinance 1231 – Amending Titles 5 & 15 of the La Conner Municipal Code:

Planner Davolio explained the is for the Adult Business Regulations Council approved. It has completed the 60-day State comment period and is now up for Council approval.

Councilmember Dole moved to approve Ordinance 1231 amending Titles 5 & 15 of the La Conner Municipal Code on Adult Business Regulations. Motion seconded by Councilmember Wohleb. Motion carried 5/0.

Ordinance 1232 – Amending Section 2.05.015 of the La Conner Municipal Code:

Administrator Thomas explained this is an amendment addressing public notification of Town meetings. The new notification policy will be established in the following resolution. Upcoming Mayor Marna Hanneman requested the Study Session portion stay in.

Councilmember Chamberlain moved to approve Ordinance 1232 amending Section 2.05.015 of the La Conner Municipal Code with the modification to leave the Study Sessions portion in.

Resolution 625 – Adopting the Town Meeting Notification Policy:

Administrator Thomas explained recently we have had problems publishing the agendas because there was no room in the paper. Also, the Town has received free publication of our agendas through the years, but now will be charged for it. Another issue is we have to submit the agendas to the paper approximately nine days before the meeting. In that time, the agendas frequently change. The only true updated agenda is on our website. We plan to have abbreviated notices in the calendar of events section of the paper, that directs people to the website. Notices required by the State, such as public hearings, will continue to be published as before.

Councilmember Carlson moved to approve Resolution 625 adopting the Town Meeting Notification Policy. Motion seconded by Councilmember Wohleb. Motion carried 5/0.


Formation of a Transportation Benefit District:

Administrator Thomas explained this is for review to be sure he is on track on what Council wants. One is how it is going to be funded, either by sales tax, or by a vehicle license fee. The second is if Council will assume powers of the Transportation Benefit District. It requires a publication of a public hearing that he is planning for the November 14, 2023 Council meeting. At that meeting, Council can vote in one tenth of a percent of sales tax. Later, if Council decides to increase it up to three tenths percent, it would have to go for a vote of the residents.

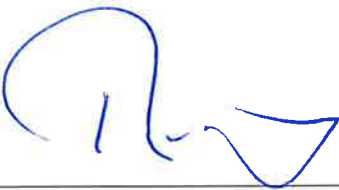
Mayor Roundtable:

Discussions included misinformation on social media and the need to encourage people to sign up for Notify Me.

There being no further business the meeting ended at 6:58 p.m.



Maria DeGoede, Finance Director



Ramon Hayes, Mayor