

Town of La Conner
Town Council Meeting
October 24, 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 and Finance Director DeGoede, Public Works Director Lease and Planner Davolio.

This was a hybrid meeting held in-person and electronically on Zoom. Information to join was posted at Town Hall, the La Conner Weekly News, and on the Town Website.

Presentations:

Dan O'Donnell – City of Anacortes Reconciliation

Due to the projector not working, Mr. O'Donnell will attend the next Council meeting for his presentation. He did state his figures show the City of Anacortes owes the Town \$13,800 for the 2021 Reconciliation, which they have not provided yet.

Public Comments:

Upcoming Mayor Hanneman suggested acknowledging the Retirement Inn for providing their bus and driver, to transport the Planning Commission, Councilmembers and others, at no charge, to Langley last week.

Resident Leslie Smith asked for an update on the Center Street Project when it comes up for discussion on the Agenda.

Resident Linda Talman questioned why we would need paid parking on First Street after a parking survey showed we didn't need any more parking.

Planner Davolio – Fee Waiver

Planner Davolio provided a handout and explained Sacred Heart Church plans on removing and replacing two trees. Because they are in the Historic District, it would require a Historic Review. There is no fee for the Historic Review, however they have requested a waiver of the \$515 Tree Removal fee. Planner Davolio stated the review will take little staff time and there is no tree removal fee in the residential or historical districts, only the commercial, so he has no objection to waiving the fees. After discussions Council tabled this request for the next meeting to be sure it qualifies for a waiver.

Consent Agenda:

Approval of Agenda

Approval of the Minutes of the October 10, 2023 Council Meeting.

Accounts Payable:	Checks	26496 - 26532	\$116,919.48
	Electronic Pmts.	2018159 Excise Tax	\$9,266.18
		Total Accounts Payable	\$126,185.66
Payroll of October 20, 2023:	Checks 5793 - 5800		3,664.88
	Payroll Auto Tax Payment #2018158		\$7,775.79
	Payroll Auto Deposit		\$23,127.35
	Total Payroll		34,568.02

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

Administrator's Report:

Administrator Thomas attended a County meeting for Flood Week, and for the first time, coastal flooding was brought up as an issue for the local area. He also went to the Puget Sound Energy meeting that focused on failing

dams and the impact to the County. There will be certification training on community emergency response the weekend of November 11, 2023. Information to register for the training will be posted on the Town website.

Mayor's Report:

Mayor Hayes shared the grand opening of the library was well attended. He would like to help them out financially in some way. He and staff will discuss options, such as funding a program like we do for the school. Also, he and Administrator Thomas attended a dredging meeting with the Port of Skagit County, Port of Anacortes, the Swinomish Tribal Community and Shelter Bay. Funding on the Federal level is stable, but it is important to keep the heat up with Washington to continue it. Another funding we will request is going to the State to request Federal funding for the fireboat. The Tribe confirmed they will provide a letter of support. Now we are waiting for confirmation from other entities to do the same.

Council Committee Reports:

Arts Commission:

Councilmember Taylor reminded everyone Art's Alive will be the second weekend of November.

Emergency Management Commission:

Councilmember Dole reported everything has been staged for the upcoming flood season. There will be a Tide Meter installed at the Marina and there are plans to purchase a real time weather station for La Conner to be installed at the Public Works building. Now their discussions are moving toward earthquakes and educating the community on mapping your neighborhood for what people need around you. Learning what you have useful in your home to contribute.

Communication Committee:

Councilmember Chamberlain noted they have been on a pause lately, but possibly looking at attempting a path of communication with our Swinomish neighbors.

Parks Commission:

Councilmember Wohleb reported 1) she is encouraging the Commission to look at alternative designs for the pavilion, 2) the fish slide will be covered for the winter, 3) they are looking at an "adopt a tree" program to replace the trees in Town with an initial cost of \$3,000 per tree, and 4) they partnered with the La Conner Rotary to purchase and plant the Ethan's Smile Tulips at the roundabout.

Center Street Project:

Public Works Director Lease stated they have submitted their building permit application, the infrastructure plans for engineering review and it is also under concurrent review with the County. There is nothing to report until the results come back. There were discussions on the elevator shaft exceeding the 32ft. height restrictions. Planner Davolio will look into it. Also, their original plans showed six short-term rental units on the bottom floor, but the plans they just submitted had five units.

Jensen Property:

Mayor Hayes noted the difference between the Jensen property and other properties such as the Hedlin field, Snapdragon Hill and the proposed Center Street Project is that the Town owns it. He encouraged everyone to really think about what should happen with it in the future.

Lease Agreement: Upper Skagit Tribe – Placement of Flood Barriers:

Administrator Thomas explained this is license agreement, which is less formal than an easement, for the placement of the ecology blocks on the Tribes property. Council will be seeing more of these flood prevention agreements as we get them from other property owners.

Councilmember Carlson moved to approve the Mayor to sign the License Agreement between the Town and the Upper Skagit Tribe for the placement of Flood Barriers. Motion seconded by Councilmember Wohleb. Motion carried 5/0.

Agreement: Cascadia Renewables:

Administrator Thomas stated this is one of two agreements for the Solar and Storage Project Design for the Fire Hall. All costs are covered by a grant from the Department of Commerce.

Councilmember Dole moved to approve the Mayor to sign the Agreement between the Town and Cascadia Renewables for the Solar Storage Project Design. Motion seconded by Councilmember Taylor. Motion carried 5/0.

Parking Solutions for First Street:

Mayor Hayes explained this is just up for discussion to learn about possible options with parking apps. Administrator Thomas explained the information in the packet is an example of what the City of Leavenworth is doing. Other cities such as Bellingham and Seattle are now using parking apps as well. There will be a joint Council/Planning Commission meeting on November 28th to provide more information on what the possibilities are. Also, Public Works has payment stations in the Town parking lot and moorage, so we will also look at what that company has to offer.

Discussions included:

- Even though the results of the parking review showed there was enough parking, we believe there is a parking issue on First Street.
- Parking apps do not require major infrastructure costs as the past old meters did.
- Charging for parking will generate a significant amount of revenue for the Town.
- There are significant issues with workers parking in spaces on First Street, rather than utilizing the free parking passes the Town provides the businesses.
- Businesses have abused the parking by putting out cones and dumpsters to reserve parking spots.
- There are businesses that are using several off-street parking for storage instead use of their business parking.
- The Town issues two free parking passes per business, however, there is one business that has requested over 50 free passes.
- People leaving their cars in spots for weeks at time.

Also discussed were problems, such as what to do with people that live on First Street and need the parking on a daily basis and the possibility of people parking in residential areas to avoid the paid parking.

2024 Budget Discussions:

Finance Director DeGoede noted she made the changes and additions from the last meeting. Also, it was confirmed we could use the Corona Virus Grant to fund both the Maple Hall and the Fire Hall HVAC, so the Budget has been updated to reflect this in both the General and the Facility Funds. Mayor Hayes reiterated the need to support the library in some way.

Public Works Director Lease has the new dump truck in the 2024 Budget. The problem is he has to order it now in order to get it next year. He requested Council to approve the submittal of a purchase order now for the dump truck in the amount of \$111,000, paid at delivery in 2024 as budgeted.

Councilmember Wohleb moved to approve Public Works Director Lease to submit a purchase order this year for the purchase of the new dump truck in 2024. Motion seconded by Councilmember Dole. Motion carried 5/0.

Mayor Roundtable:

Councilmember Chamberlain suggested, while we are talking about parking, we should address the need to change First Street to one-way with angled parking for the safety of pedestrians and cars. Planner Davolio confirmed the Planning Commission is looking at several options for First Street, to include the one-way and angled parking. Also, Public Works Director Lease has updated his TIP to include the same with the addition of a built-in flood barrier and sidewalk, for the First Street project. It will be up for Council approval at the next meeting.

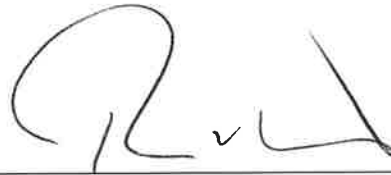
Councilmember Wohleb recommended the Emergency Management Commission communicate awareness through community outreach.

Also discussed was the Tsunami siren test that went off recently.

There being no further business the meeting ended at 7:04 p.m.



Maria DeGoede, Finance Director



Ramon Hayes, Mayor