

City Council Minutes – September 3, 2019

Mayor Laurie Gere called to order the Anacortes City Council meeting of September 3, 2019 at 6:00 p.m. Councilmembers Eric Johnson, Anthony Young, Brad Adams, Carolyn Moulton, Bruce McDougall and Matt Miller were present. Councilmember Ryan Walters was absent.

The assembly joined in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Announcements and Committee Reports

Port/City Liaison Committee: Mr. Miller reported from the committee meeting earlier in the day. Topics discussed included the 30% design for the Port's north basin redevelopment plan and ongoing investigation of parking concerns there, Lavle, and high demand for the laydown area behind the Olsen Building. Mr. Johnson added that clean-up of Quiet Cove was also discussed. Mr. Young elaborated on the north basin redevelopment process. Mayor Gere added that the committee had also discussed the grant from Skagit County to construct restrooms at the Depot Plaza. She said the grant had been awarded based on the economic development value of the Anacortes Farmers Market.

Mr. McDougall moved, seconded by Mr. Young, to excuse the absence of Mr. Walters. The motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

Public Works Committee: Ms. Moulton reported from the committee meeting earlier in the evening. Topics discussed included ongoing investigation of costs and benefits of acquiring the South Fidalgo water system; Ms. Moulton indicated that a memorandum of understanding with the PUD would likely come before Council for consideration. The committee also discussed acquisition of property for the water treatment plant and the Edwards Way roundabout which would begin construction in the fall using state funding and impact fees.

Mr. Young asked how the transfer of water rights to farmers by Skagit PUD would factor into the city's potential acquisition of the South Fidalgo water system from the PUD. City Attorney Darcy Swetnam clarified that the PUD's recent emergency transfer to Diking Districts 15 and 22 affected direct withdrawals from the Skagit River and that the operation of the South Fidalgo water system did not affect any jurisdiction's water right, only which agency would be responsible for delivering the piped water to the customers.

Appointments to the Forest Advisory Board and the Museum Advisory Board:

Mayor Gere requested Council confirmation of her appointment of JoAnn York-Gilmore to a position on the Forest Advisory Board expiring November 30, 2022. Mr. Young moved, seconded by Mr. Johnson, to confirm the appointment. Vote: Ayes – Young, Adams, Moulton, McDougall, Miller and Johnson. Motion carried.

Mayor Gere advised Council of her appointment of Dana Webb to fill a mid-term vacancy on the Museum Advisory Board to complete a term expiring December 31, 2021.

Mr. Miller encouraged members of the public to consider applying for an open position on the Planning Commission. Mayor Gere advised that her staff were working to make applying for volunteer positions even easier for the public.

Public Comment

Bob Barry, 1914 22nd Street, recalled the introduction of track changes technology for document revisions, lauded the value of that technology for the public and decision makers, and highly recommended that a track changes version of the Forest Lands Comprehensive Plan be included when that document came back to Council

for consideration in the near future. Mr. Barry said he really felt sorry for the Planning Commission which considered the document at its March 27, 2019 meeting without benefit of a track changes version.

Kathleen Lorence-Flanagan, 2005 10th Street, applauded Anacortes for posting information on a new website for the Guemes Channel Trail (GCT) and noted the daunting volume of information posted. Ms. Lorence-Flanagan described sections of the website that she felt were missing detail and specifically called for documents reflecting opposition to the trail to be included on the site. Ms. Lorence-Flanagan submitted a written copy of her comments with more specific examples; her comments were added to the packet materials for the meeting.

Brian Wetcher, 814 26th Street, expressed concern with how the city was moving forward on agreement with Skagit PUD for management of the South Fidalgo water system. Mr. Wetcher said he felt it was a good plan for the city to take over management of that system but that he was very concerned that such a change not encourage density infill by new water systems and new water system developments that wouldn't be acceptable under current Skagit County development standards for south Fidalgo Island. He said he would not want to see significant expansion of developments in rural south Fidalgo once water was readily available from the Anacortes water utility.

Liz Lovelett, 2111 23rd Street, alerted Council and the audience to the Keep Washington Working law in Washington State to create sanctuary status for workers in the state whether documented or not. Senator Lovelett urged elected leaders to take public stands against hate speech and tactics that intimidate people of color in the community.

Consent Agenda

Mr. Johnson moved, seconded by Mr. Adams, to approve the following Consent Agenda items. The motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

- a. Minutes of August 26, 2019
- b. Approval of Claims in the amount of: \$368,809.68
- c. Contract Modification: City Hall Remodel Project - Demolition & Construction #19-054-FAC-004
- d. Contract Award: Anacortes Public Library Roof Replacement #19-110-FAC-001

The following vouchers/checks were approved for payment:
EFT numbers: 94421 through 94465, total \$93,621.48
Check numbers: 94466 through 94507, total \$114,781.04
Wire transfer numbers: 255027 through 255298, total \$824.81

OTHER BUSINESS

Sewer Rate Structure Update by FCS Group

Public Works Director Fred Buckenmeyer introduced Gordon Wilson from FCS Group, the consultant that helped develop the city's water and sewer rates. Mr. Wilson presented the results of the firm's analysis of the rate structure following up on its presentation to City Council on November 26, 2018. His slide presentation was included in the packet materials for the meeting. Mr. Wilson indicated that FCS would write up a technical memo summarizing its findings and recommendations based on Council feedback following the presentation.

Mr. Wilson presented a Cost-of-Service Analysis to address equitable distribution of rates among customer classes; recommendations on implementing a monthly fixed charge for small meters, restructuring rates into two classes for single family and non-single family (including duplexes), removing the tiers from the Average Winter Water User (AWWU) calculation, and phasing in a cost-of-service shift; and an analysis recommending adjustments to both water and sewer General Facilities Charges (GFCs).

Mr. Wilson responded to councilmember questions about the impact of rate changes on Council's goal of encouraging affordable housing and multifamily housing. Mr. Wilson said his firm could analyze the impact of creating a third customer class to separate multifamily from commercial customers if Council so directed.

Mayor Gere invited members of the audience to comment on this agenda item.

Ward MacKenzie, 1302 7th Street, said he owned both a single family and a non-single family property. He said he just wanted to see people pay for what they get and pay an equitable amount. He said the analysis made sense to him assuming the data was correct.

Councilmembers generally supported implementing the recommended cost-of-service shift but were surprised by the magnitude of the recommended water GFC revision. Mayor Gere indicated that discussion of this topic would continue.

At approximately 7:35 p.m. Mayor Gere called a brief recess. At 7:44 p.m. the mayor called the meeting back to order.

Challenges and Options to Address Homelessness

City Attorney Darcy Swetnam shared a slide presentation summarizing information gathered by a number of city departments on the topic of homelessness. She introduced the topic by noting the one page fact sheet that had been distributed to Council prior to the meeting and made available for the public. Both Ms. Swetnam's slides and the fact sheet were added to the packet materials for the meeting. Ms. Swetnam reported on current legal issues affecting the response of cities to homelessness; how the police, library, parks and other departments were encountering and responding to homeless individuals; resources available in Anacortes and Skagit County to help homeless individuals and families; steps other local jurisdictions were taking to address homelessness; and potential avenues for Anacortes to explore. She noted that the Salvation Army would not be providing a cold weather shelter for the 2019-2020 season as it had for several years prior.

Councilmembers shared ideas for addressing the problem and expressed some support for establishing a social worker position or helping to fund such a position in conjunction with another agency. Mr. Johnson reported on a number of active programs being pursued in Olympia and suggested an actual or virtual visit to learn more about those programs. Several councilmembers suggested establishing a team or task force to address the topic. Mayor Gere encouraged councilmembers to consider short term response as well, particularly a means of addressing the anticipated lack of a cold weather shelter with winter just around the corner. She said she would be meeting with the new director of the local Salvation Army to continue exploration of options. Mayor Gere encouraged each councilmember to investigate more options and potential partners before continuing the discussion in the near future.

Mayor Gere invited members of the audience to comment on this agenda item.

Brian Wetcher, 814 26th Street, urged against adding a park ranger to address homeless individuals camping in the ACFL and urged instead expanding the existing police in the woods presence. Mr. Wetcher suggested a number of specific options including working with the Samish and Swinomish to make sites at their campgrounds available to the homeless, particularly during their low volume winter season; establishing a shelter in the former Snelson Anvil warehouse near the skatepark or at the old modular Teamsters warehouse or some available space in new warehouse areas along Texas; and setting up a fund to accept donations from the public to support vouchers.

Ward MacKenzie cautioned against overgeneralizing the term "homeless" and distinguished between different reasons for being homeless which might best be addressed by different types of services. Mr. MacKenzie urged

focusing on solutions, not ameliorative care, and holding people accountable while helping them to get back on track. He also warned against providing services that would draw homeless people from other areas to Anacortes and suggested that services be provided to those with a nexus to Anacortes.

There being no further business, at approximately 8:52 p.m. the Anacortes City Council meeting of September 3, 2019 was adjourned.