

Anacortes City Council Minutes – July 27, 2020

Mayor Laurie Gere called to order the Anacortes City Council meeting of July 27, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. Councilmembers Jeremy Carter, Anthony Young, Ryan Walters, Christine Cleland-McGrath, Carolyn Moulton, Bruce McDougall and Matt Miller all participated in the meeting in absentia via video conference.

Announcements and Committee Reports

Confirmation of Library Director: Mayor Gere requested confirmation of her appointment of Jeff Vogel as Director of the Anacortes Public Library effective August 1, 2020. The mayor summarized Mr. Vogel's qualifications as detailed in the packet materials for the meeting. Mr. Walters moved, seconded by Mr. Miller, to confirm the appointment of Jeff Vogel as Library Director. The motion carried unanimously by voice vote. Mr. Vogel thanked the mayor and City Council for the opportunity to serve the city in his new capacity.

COVID-19 Update: Mayor Gere reported current COVID case statistics for Anacortes and Skagit County. She described her visit to the Skagit County testing site and expressed hope that the site would eventually serve as a vaccination site instead. The mayor summarized the governor's latest restrictions on social interaction.

Finance Committee: Mr. Carter reported from the committee meeting the prior week. He said the committee had previewed Mr. Hoglund's finance update and budget discussion that would be addressed later on the agenda.

Personnel Committee: Ms. Cleland-McGrath reported from the committee meeting the prior week. She noted with regret that Human Resources Director Vanessa Bronsema would be leaving the city but that Ms. Bronsema was working on extending bargaining unit agreements, planning the search for a new director and arranging interim coverage for her position.

Planning Committee: Ms. Moulton reported from the committee meeting earlier in the evening. She summarized the topics discussed including potential use of CDBG funding for rental assistance to low income residents, the Critical Areas Regulations update which would come to Council for consideration in August, the Shoreline Master Program update, city-owned property on West 5th Street that could potentially be used for affordable housing, opportunities for tiny homes to be placed on land owned by religious organizations, status of the city's Small Business Stabilization grants, staffing needs in the Planning Department, and the upcoming installation of the parklets on Commercial Avenue to expand outdoor restaurant seating capacity. Mr. Walters added that the committee supported filling the currently vacant Senior Planner position. He also clarified the procedures for updating the Critical Areas Regulations, which had been followed consistent with city code.

Public Comment

Per Section 3 of Resolution 2082 Ratifying Proclamation of Emergency and Providing Temporary Procedures to Respond to the COVID-19 Epidemic, adopted by the Anacortes City Council on March 16, 2020, the public comment portion of Council meetings and any scheduled public hearings were temporarily suspended to discourage public in-person attendance of City Council meetings. The public was encouraged to comment via email or written comment addressed to: City Clerk, P.O. Box 547, Anacortes, WA 98221. Public comments received prior to the meeting become part of the record for the meeting, just as if presented in person.

Consent Agenda

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

- a. Minutes of July 20, 2020
- b. Approval of Claims in the amount of: \$483,055.50
- c. Interlocal Agreement with City of Burlington for Dark Fiber Lease #20-169-FBR-001

The following vouchers/checks were approved for payment:
EFT numbers: 97705 through 97741, total \$333,499.48
Check numbers: 97742 through 97747, total \$28,350.85
Wire transfer numbers: 271034 through 271416, total \$121,205.17

OTHER BUSINESS

Monthly Finance Update and COVID-19 Impacts

Finance Director Steve Hogle presented the monthly update on the city's financial position, referring to the graphs and charts that had been included in the packet materials for the meeting. He compared actual vs. budgeted revenue streams to each other and to the same point the prior year. He noted that shortfalls in some streams were significant but not as severe as had initially been feared and that some revenue streams such as utility tax and permit fees were coming in greater than budgeted.

2021 Budget Planning

Mr. Hogle invited Council feedback on the option of reverting to annual budgeting for 2021. He said staff recommended that change given the difficulty of projecting revenue streams due to COVID-19. Mr. Hogle also recommended maintaining the provisions of Resolution 2082 calling for a hiring freeze where possible and for deferring purchase of all non-mandatory equipment. He addressed his expectations for both revenue and expenditure reductions in 2021, referring to his slide presentation that had been included in the packet materials for the meeting. Finally, Mr. Hogle reviewed with City Council the budget goals established in 2016. He solicited Council input on any amendments to those goals.

Councilmembers were generally supportive of adopting an annual budget for 2021. Mr. Walters asked the mayor to bring Council a budget proposal that included the hiring freeze but listed any specific exceptions to that freeze, included the deferral of purchase of any non-mandatory equipment, and in all other ways was a very conservative budget with the exception of spending to maintain city infrastructure that would become unusable without adequate spending, including the pavement network. Mr. Walters also supported pushing the budget process as late in the year as possible to allow the most accurate forecasting.

Resolution 2096: Extending the Duration of Resolution 2082 Providing Temporary Procedures to Respond to the COVID-19 Epidemic

Mr. Hogle presented Resolution 2096 to extend the terms of Resolution 2082 through September 30, 2020, as directed by City Council at its meeting on July 20, 2020. Mr. McDougall asked if staff was implementing technology that would allow public participation in virtual meetings. Mayor Gere confirmed that technology would be in place for the August 10, 2020 City Council meeting.

Mr. Miller moved, seconded by Mr. Young, to approve Resolution 2096 as presented. Vote: Ayes – Young, Walters, Cleland-McGrath, Moulton, McDougall, Miller and Carter. Motion carried.

There being no further business, at approximately 7:00 p.m. the Anacortes City Council meeting of July 27, 2020 was adjourned.