
CITY OF SEDRO-WOOLLEY

Regular Meeting of the City Council
January 13, 2021– 6:00 P.M. – Via ZOOM

Call to Order

Mayor Julia Johnson called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.

Pledge of Allegiance

ROLL CALL: Present: Mayor Julia Johnson, Councilmembers: Kevin Loy, Chuck Owen, Brendan McGoffin, Karl de Jong, Glenn Allen, JoEllen Kesti and Brenda Kinzer. Staff: Finance Manager Scott, Recorder Wolf, City Supervisor/Finance Director Merriman, IT Director Chambers, Planning Director Coleman, Public Works Director Freiburger, Fire Chief Klinger, Police Chief Tucker, Police Lt. McIlraith and City Attorney Thompson.

Approval of Agenda

Mayor Johnson requested motion to approve the agenda.

Councilmember Kinzer moved to approve the agenda. Seconded by Councilmember McGoffin. Motion carried (6-0).

Consent Calendar

1. Minutes from Previous Meeting
2. Finance
 - Claim Checks #194356 to #194455 plus EFT's in the amount of \$719,213.92
 - Claim Checks #194456 to #194540 in the amount of \$746,404.06
 - Payroll Checks #60240 to #60250 plus EFT's in the amount of \$314,854.42
 - Payroll Checks #60251 to #60265 plus EFT's in the amount of \$548,166.30
3. Peace Health United General Clinical Contract - Amendment
4. Final Acceptance of the 2020 SR20 West Lane Widening & Safety Improvement Project - Contract No. 2020-PW-01
5. Purchase Order Approval - 2020-PO-28
6. Recommendation from the Lodging Tax Advisory Committee for the 2021 Lodging Tax Grant Program

Councilmember Kinzer moved to approve the consent agenda items 1 thru 6. Councilmember Owen seconded. Motion carried (6-0).

Introduction of Special Guests and Presentations

Mayor Johnson spoke of the honor and privilege of swearing in new officers and asked Lt. McIlraith if he would like to say a few words. Lt. McIlraith spoke of the challenges the new class of officers faced in the midst of the COVID pandemic and the lack of a formal graduation ceremony to be sworn in to service in front of family and friends. He briefly introduced the new officers and listed their graduation dates.

Mayor Johnson swore in the following officers:

- Ruben J. Fortuna
- Keira G. Foster
- Harrison A. McGaughey
- Cody T. Velthuisen
- Deion C. Whitt

Police Chief Tucker spoke after the swearing in regards to the planned increase in police officer staffing due to replacing members leaving the force. Emphasized new crew is full of really good officers and that the council is looking at the future of the police force for Sedro-Woolley.

Presentation by city attorney, Nikki Thompson, regarding a possible future code amendment for a Hearing Examiner Decision Making in Quasi-Judicial Matters for Land Use processes.

There was discussion about how much it would cost the city and whether the council would remain a part of the process. Attorney Thompson stated that there is a trend towards eliminating Council decision making.

It is being recommended to amend the Sedro-Woolley Municipal Code (SWMC 2.90, 2.34) to make the Hearing Examiner the final decision maker in quasi-judicial matters as authorized by State Law with appeal to the Superior Court.

Attorney Thompson clarified that the Council sets the rules and laws that will apply to these applications. Council still determines how they want the city to look and function by implementing those rules and laws. The Hearing Examiner would decide whether Land Use proposals met the requirements and adhered to all ordinances that the Council has in place.

Mayor Johnson clarified with Attorney Thomson that the Hearing Examiner is an expert on the law in regards to land use applications and with the increase in applications to the City of Sedro-Woolley, the Council would essentially need to be as well versed in the laws and regulations as the Hearing Examiner to be able to participate in that decision making, if the Hearing Examiner is not utilized. She advised Council this was just an informative presentation and at a later date, it will be brought before Council for a decision based on the information given.

Staff Reports

Fire Chief Klinger – gave a Covid update noting there are 96 new cases today in Skagit Co. Spoke of Washington's Healthy Roadmap to Recovery and stated that Skagit, Whatcom, Island and San Juan

Counties are judged as a group. As a group, we must hit 4 out of 4 objectives to move to Level 2. With what is going on in Whatcom County, it doesn't appear that will happen soon. Will work with IT Director Chambers to get that info up on the city website.

Councilmember de Jong asked about the vaccine roll-out and if the staff of the Fire Dept are taking them. Chief Klinger advised that out of the 47 members of his department, 20 chose to have the vaccine. 2nd dose is scheduled to be on the 27th. It was asked if there had been anyone experiencing side effects from the vaccine and Chief Klinger said no. Clarification was made that only 20 employees wanted the vaccine, if more had wanted it, it would have been provided to more staff.

Police Chief Tucker – spoke of an incident where someone was locked in a public restroom and had to call 9-1-1 and the police were able to assist. He also updated on the body-worn cameras, noting that we are the only ones with body-worn cameras. Said the cameras are for both the safety of the officers but also for the accountability and transparency to the people we serve. New system to upgrade the cameras was about \$15,000 but that allows for unlimited storage, tech assistance, upgrades and replacements. Advised Police Dept will be able to start scheduling their COVID vaccinations next week, per the Health Dept. Will have Max and Brady coming out of the Academy soon. Sgt. Jason Harris retired at the end of 2020. Det. Hannawalt is moving to Florida. Will need to replace both of those officers. At the beginning of March, also losing another senior officer to military duty for a year. Result will be that in 2022, there will be 10 or 11 “new” officers that weren't on the force in 2019 or just starting in 2020.

Planning Director Coleman – Planning commission will start to review the regulations for the electronic reader boards in the central business district in the January 19th meeting. Also in that meeting, they will begin work on a State required periodic review of the shoreline management program. Mostly applies to the city park since it is in the flood plain. This is required by the Dept of Ecology. Also received this week the formal annexation petition for the annexation just south of Bassett Road, towards the northern part of the city. City Council has already reviewed and approved for the applicants to submit formal petition.

Public Works Director Freiburger – has four projects under design right now: 1. Resignalization project at Hwy 20 and Hwy9/Township. That is getting close to final design and hope to have out to bid in next couple of months. 2. Electrical upgrade project at the water treatment plant is finishing submittals and should be ready to start construction in March. 3. Working with Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad to build a rail crossing to support the Jonestown Liner Trail project. Have had a major breakthrough with them and we have an agreement being reviewed by them and have another meeting on Friday and they have started on the design of the undercrossing itself. Should be complete by June 2021. Will talk a little later about last project.

Councilmember de Jong made a comment that neighbors have approached him in regards to the intersection of Township and Jameson, stating that many drivers don't stop at the stop sign and they were wondering if there was something that could be done with enforcement patrols or make the stop sign a little more visible, proposing flashing lights.

IT Director Chambers – calling from the road. Glen is working a lot with the police and fire vehicles for new hires and new vehicles. Assisting with the WIMS software install out at the wastewater treatment plant and will be assisting with the financial web-based software upgrade.

Finance Manager Scott –will be converting to web-based version of current software called BIAS and will allow for secure and better flexibility when working remotely and should be happening within the next two weeks. Also working with John and our online bill pay vendor to accept online payments for the planning dept so that is also coming soon and will allow for planning customers to go online and make payment which will streamline things for the planning dept. Introduced new AP clerk, Trina Wolf, who has been here about 3 weeks and will be taking the minutes now for the council meetings. January is always a busy time of the year trying to close out the prior year.

City Attorney Thompson – didn't have anything to add after giving presentation earlier in the meeting.

City Supervisor/Finance Director Merriman – Library project is looking good. Next 2 weeks will show substantial completion and project is coming in under budget and relatively on time, considering the challenges of COVID. Construction will be done by the end of the month and then will begin moving in of the furniture, books and equipment. Skagit PUD is going to sign a Quit Claim Deed to transfer the property of the ball fields. It has to remain ball fields or property will revert back to the Skagit PUD. Just need to finish up some easement issues and then close on the property. Updated on the search for Finance Director. Received 14 applications, interviewed four and narrowed the list to two people. Plan on grilling them hard on financial questions to test aptitude and then looking to make selection of the next Financial Director. Also looking at implementing Agendase which is a software to streamline the workload on Cristine in the Finance Dept putting together all the materials for the agenda packets. Software will allow each dept to upload their materials and it sends an email for review, then Christine does some administrative work and the software puts the package together, numbers it and emails it to everybody automatically. So this will be a great time savings and a few less trees get dropped. Last thing is a congratulations to all of us for qualifying for the AWC Wellness Award. We met the 50% participation requirement that allows for a 2% reduction on our health insurance premiums that the city pays for the employees, which works out to be around \$25,000 in savings.

Mayor Johnson prompted City Supervisor Merriman to mention the auditor.

City Supervisor/Finance Director Merriman –today we had an exit conference with the state auditor's office. This is for auditing the year 2019. We came out with a clean audit opinion. We usually take a more proactive approach and keep a good working relationship with the auditor and ask questions and ask for updates/reviews prior to the audits. A couple of recommendations were given this year. One is the court. Heidi works all by herself but we want to give her some backup and support so finance will be working with her to maybe split up some of the money collecting functions. This will help to get internal controls where they need to be and also allowing for cross-training for days Heidi is out of the office. Audit was done over Zoom.

Mayor Johnson said the auditors stated that working with Sedro-Woolley was phenomenal in that we were very transparent and we offered everything they asked for and then some. Said we usually offered before they even asked so it was very efficient and thorough with great teamwork on our part to make that all happen. Then the mayor thanked Doug and Jill and the Finance Dept for working so hard for a clean audit that came with kudos.

Councilmember and Mayor's Reports

Councilmember Loy – present and ready to go.

Councilmember Owen – welcome to Councilmember Loy and the new police officers.

Councilmember McGoffin – welcome to Councilmember Loy and the new police officers

Councilmember de Jong – welcomed Councilmember Loy, AP Clerk Wolf and all new officers. Questioned the tree work at Township and State intersection and how long the street would be closed. Again brought up safety concern of enforcement spot #53 at Township and Jameson and hoped engineering could help make the stop sign more noticeable. Reported he had been to Riverfront Park at 10:00 a.m. and the river was quite high but not at flood level. Asked for clarification as to why only 20 COVID vaccines were coming to front line workers.

Mayor Johnson stated that not a lot of vaccines are coming into Skagit County.

Fire Chief Klinger added that only 20 out of 47 people in his department wanted to take the vaccine and the rest chose not to get it. He is hoping they will change their minds later.

Public Works Supervisor Nathan Salseina answered the question about the tree work at Township and State intersection reporting that the damage was about 70' high and the bucket only goes to 60'. Said there is a widow-maker about 20" diameter at that 70ft level. City has hired tree service but they could not get to it until tomorrow. Estimated to only take about two hours once work begins to open the street back up to traffic.

Councilmember Allen – wanted to offer personal thank you to the citizens of Sedro-Woolley, including Police Chief Tucker, for passing Prop. 1.

Councilmember Kesti – wanted to welcome everybody and hope to one day meet all in person.

Councilmember Kinzer – want to welcome all the new officers as well. Welcome to Councilmember Kevin Loy. Just wanted to update on the COVID vaccine. Has been working to administer in Anacortes to tribal elders, first responders and front line workers. Anyone that has requested a vaccine has received the vaccine and no one has been denied. Will eliminate the possibility of at least 100 new cases by taking the vaccine. Hoped city would extend well-wishes to the upriver communities that were hit very hard by the wind storm. Many without electricity and will be for several days.

Mayor Johnson – mentioned that PSE sent out a report that there were 64 mph winds and heavy rains that caused extensive damage. They were reporting 114 outages that equated about 20,000 customers without electricity. Then Mayor Johnson reported that she received an email that there had been more vandalism up at the State Hospital Cemetery in the form of spray painting and graffiti. We will be working with Skagit County Parks and Public Works Supervisor Salseina, decided to put up ecology blocks and cabling to help keep cars and people out. Asked if the blocks had been installed yet.

Public Works Supervisor Salseina – said that between the storm and other projects, he had not had the opportunity yet to get up there to get the blocks installed. Informed the Mayor that it will take one full day of sandblasting to remove the graffiti and spray paint.

Councilmember Kinzer – suggested getting a security camera to catch vandals and prosecute them.

PW Supervisor Salseina – could get game camera up there and try to catch the criminals.

Councilmember Kinzer -- thinks it would be very beneficial and would probably pay for itself with all of the damage occurring.

Mayor Johnson –wanted to comment on the Outstanding Merit Award that the wastewater treatment plant once again received. Great team and great staff working there.

Proclamation(s): none for this meeting

Public Comments

Mayor Johnson announced that Daniel Downs has requested 3 minutes to make a public comment. When asked if he was present, there was no response. Mayor noted that he was also not listed as a participant of the Zoom meeting.

Mayor Johnson states that she has two letters that were received by the city. One was from Elizabeth Waldren and the mayor read the letter aloud. It was urging the city to open fully and gave the example of the town of Mossy Rock opening.

Mayor Johnson made a side note that she did call the city hall of Mossy Rock and asked to speak with Mayor Sasser. The mayor was not available but his assistant was. They did pass an ordinance that stated if they wanted to open their businesses, they could. When asked how many businesses opened, the assistant said one did open and the state came in and gave a warning to close or get a fine and the business closed.

Mayor Johnson then read aloud the second letter sent to the City Council. That letter was from George Henson. And afterward, she mentioned that both letters were available on the website for anyone who wants to read them.

New Business

Mayor Johnson noted the time was currently 7:36 P.M. and not a lot of time was remaining in the allotted schedule. Three items of new business:

1. The 2021 Athletic Field and RV Park Fee Ordinance—this is a first read. Public Works Supervisor Salseina said this is an ordinance proposing to amend the Sedro-Woolley Municipal Code, Section 12.36.020. It addresses RV Park rate increase. Haven't been increased for many years. Second item addresses the length of stay. And last is the change to charge fees for the city owned athletic facilities. With addition of Winnie Houser Park, and very close to adding the new baseball fields down at Riverfront Park, but staffing hasn't

grown. The fees will help to hire one person as a seasonal employee for 4-5 months of the year to help with maintenance.

Councilmember de Jong asked for clarification if it was 5 seasonal employees.

Public Works Supervisor Salseina clarified that it was one person to work for 4 or 5 months.

Councilmember de Jong noted that the plans no longer included tent spaces at Riverfront Park.

Public Works Supervisor Salseina explained that there is no sanitary way to deal with tent campers due to the lack of shower and sewer facilities.

Councilmember de Jong said that many cyclists stop on their way east from Anacortes and that Sedro-Woolley was a major stop for many of those cyclists.

Public Works Supervisor Salseina stated that many of the cyclists and other tent campers were bathing in the restroom sinks and making a huge mess that was taking extra time to clean up and maintain.

Moved on to the proposed revision to Sedro-Woolley Municipal Code 15.04 Local Amendments to Adopt State Building Codes.

Planning Director Coleman – every 3 years the state requires all jurisdictions to adopt the most up to date building codes and then the state makes some amendments to it in order to make it more specific to the state of Washington. They go into effect 02/01/21 with or without city action. But this proposal would serve to formally adopt the state of Washington codes in our ordinance under chapter 15.04. Just proposing to update the 2018 codes to the new 2021 codes. Really just a formality.

Councilmember McGoffin makes a motion to approve ordinance 1975.21. Councilmember Kesti seconded. Motion carried (6-0).

Mayor Johnson – Last item of new business is Amendment 4, 2018-PS-12

Public Works Director Freiburger presented a powerpoint presentation in regards to all phases of the Wastewater Treatment Plant expansion. This was to authorize the Director of Public Works to execute Amendment 4 to Professional Services Agreement 2018-PS-12 with Carletti Architects P.S. of Mount Vernon, WA to add final design work and construction phase services for the Solid Waste/Fleet and Public Works Operations Building at a cost not to exceed \$192,075.

During the presentation, at 8:06 P.M., Councilmember de Jong proposed to extend to 8:15 P.M.. Mayor Johnson asked for objections and no objections were made. Then the presentation continued.

Motion to Authorize Public Works Director to execute Amendment 4, 2018-PS-12 was made by Councilmember de Jong and seconded by Councilmember Allen. Motion carried (6-0).

Mayor Johnson reminded everyone that the next City Council Meeting will be January 27, 2021 at 6:00 P.M.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 P.M.

ATTEST:

Darla H. McCombs

APPROVED:

Julie Joe