

Anacortes City Council Minutes - April 3, 2023

Call to Order

Mayor Matt Miller called to order the Anacortes City Council meeting of April 3, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. Councilmembers Ryan Walters, Anthony Young, Christine Cleland-McGrath, Carolyn Moulton, and Bruce McDougall were present.

Councilmember Amanda Hubik participated in the meeting remotely via Zoom.

Councilmember Jeremy Carter was absent. Mr. Young moved, seconded by Ms. Hubik, to excuse the absence of Mr. Carter. The motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

Pledge of Allegiance

The assembly joined in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Announcements and Committee Reports

Mayor Miller shared a recap of his attendance at the National League of Cities conference. Highlights included rail safety, American Rescue Plan Act funds, a discussion with the Department of Defense regarding the importance of Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, and a meeting with Representative Larsen regarding Federal Emergency Management Agency permitting.

Mayor Miller continued with an update on the Anacortes Police Department accreditation process, reporting that the department received a perfectly clean review. He also remarked that WT Preston museum is now open on weekends, and thanked the Samish Indian Nation for hosting the Tommy Thompson Trail Trestle re-opening ceremony that was held at Fidalgo Bay Resort on March 31, 2023. He then announced being a charter member of the Anacortes Young-McCool Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 12220.

Mayor Miller then addressed the situation on T Avenue, mentioning partnerships with the Anacortes Family Center to provide social workers to respond with the Anacortes Police Department and Community Paramedic to struggling residents. He remarked that the city has been monitoring the situation and is working diligently to support alternative options for those in need. He continued by reporting that the number of tents and RVs had increased in February and March 2023, along with the amount of refuse in the area having created an increased risk to public health and safety, and that a fire which occurred on March 18th made immediate response necessary. Mayor Miller reported that on March 22nd he directed a cleanup operation for the health and safety of those living on T Avenue and the surrounding area no later than March 31, 2023. Cleanup notices were posted on March 24th. On March 28th, the Parks and Recreation and Public Works departments supported by the Anacortes Fire and Police departments removed nearly 6,000 pounds of refuse from the area and four unoccupied tents. He added that shelter space was available for anyone who needed it, but no one took up the offer. He continued by detailing that city staff cataloged and stored all personal property, which will be retained for 60 days to allow owners to collect it and that city staff were able to clean the entire area with minimal risk to public and staff safety. He concluded that the city will use this effort as a model for future efforts to keep the streets clean and safe. He then mentioned longer term efforts at addressing the problem, including the Council working on a Title 9 update outlawing public drug use and depositing drug paraphernalia, parking code updates, revised street sweeping and possible addition of no-camping ordinances. He thanked the Council and public for their support in the challenging environment, and that this effort is at least owed to the other 17,800 residents not living on the streets who also have the same rights to health and safety.

Public Works Committee

Ms. Moulton reported from the Public Works Committee meeting held earlier in the evening. The topics

discussed included the contract for Cartegraph implementation at the Wastewater Treatment Plant, See-Click-Fix application roll-out, the boulders on 6th Street and H Avenue, wildlife corridor signs for Oakes Avenue and 12th Street, the proposed 71% Guemes Ferry rate increase and paid parking.

Public Comment

Mayor Miller invited the public to comment on any item not on the agenda.

Beth Bell of Old Town Anacortes thanked the Council for the cleanup on T Avenue and expressed hope that the City would continue to monitor the situation and do what is needed. She then addressed Ordinance 4044, expressing shock that the Council took action when it did not need to, as she termed the ordinance as being unclear and written in circles, referencing questions by Mr. Walters and Ms. Moulton about when, how and should the re-write take place. She mentioned that it was irresponsible, though probably well-intentioned, of the Council to take action in light of the Finance Director not knowing the number of affected multi-use buildings. She then asked if business owners on the first floor, taxpayers, or a city slush fund would be used to pay the difference for discounting the cost of utilities. She asked when the city will have a multi-meter system for current and future multi-use buildings.

Mike Pearl of Anacortes asked if this was the day that the bonus height moratorium expired? Mayor Miller responded that it may have expired at the end of March. Mr. Pearl noted the expiration of the bonus height ordinance, calling attention to public input against the original ordinance that put the bonus height incentives in place that precipitated the moratorium. He expressed a belief that only the minimum legal information was provided, and mentioned a presumption that the city and county would confirm any tax levy on a bonus height building, referencing a recent instance that resulted in \$46,000 being brought back to the county. He continued by recounting that only 25 people attended the original public hearing at the Senior Center because it was only regarding the parking lot for Fidalgo Flats and then former Mayor Gere called another public hearing due to public demand. He asserted that the city's lack of transparency has engendered mistrust between the public and some Councilmembers and Planning, Community, and Economic Development staff, and advocated for greater transparency in the future. He asked where the shelters are located for those on T Avenue? Mayor Miller responded that they are at the First Step Center.

Evan Saxton of Anacortes mentioned that those who were ousted from T Avenue during the recent city cleanup effort did not end up at the First Step Center. He recounted that there was a recreational vehicle that was being towed, which belonged to his friend, Randy, who has lived on T Avenue for some time and is on a recovery program for substance use, which was offered to him. He continued that Randy was doing the right thing to address his issues and comply with what the community had asked of him, but not in the particular way the mayor and police demanded of him. He then commented that with the vehicle being towed containing all of his personal property, that he is currently unavailable to retrieve those items and is accruing the cost of having his vehicle towed, stored and does not have an income to pay those costs. He termed this situation as unconscionable and pointed to a number of ordinances and rules that are directed against a very specific portion of the population and decried that when those individuals try to do the right thing, they are harmed again. He remarked that as a person of means, it is difficult for him to imagine the day to day experience of someone in that situation, but that when someone overcomes their circumstances, they are knocked down again. He expressed disgust with local leaders for congratulating themselves on recent cleanup efforts in light of the result.

Consent Agenda

Mr. McDougall moved, seconded by Mr. Young, to approve the following Consent Agenda items. Mayor Miller took additional discussion on item d. reminding the Council that there has been successful staff work done internally to save on expenditures for fiber network construction, and that without such efforts, there would have been a \$4 million project cost. The motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

a. Minutes of March 27, 2023

b. Approval of claims in the amount of \$301,613.90

The following vouchers/checks were approved for payment:

EFT numbers: 105920 through 105939, total \$228,301.85

Check numbers: 105940 through 105961, total \$62,830.17

Wire transfer numbers: 321531 through 321876, total \$10,481.88

c. Contract Award: WWTP Odor Control Heat Trace Project - Insulation Installation #23-115-SEW-001

d. Contract Award: Guemes View Aerial Fiber Construction #23-127-FBR-001

Public Hearings

Ordinance 4047: Amending the 2023-2028 Capital Facilities Plan

Parks and Recreation Director, Jonn Lunsford, introduced Ordinance 4047: Amending the 2023-2028 Capital Facilities Plan, outlining a plan to convert the Depot Pavilion into an event center by referring to a slide presentation that was added to the packet materials for the meeting.

At 7:13pm, Mayor Miller opened the public hearing.

Mr. Young expressed appreciation for the idea of replacing the iconic Transit Shed venue with the town being able to use it for other purposes, in addition to hosting events of appropriate size for Anacortes. He expressed support for the idea.

Ms. Moulton asked how this ties into the Depot Master Plan of 2006. Mr. Lunsford responded that this does fit into the plan for finding covered space for the Farmers Market. Ms. Moulton responded that this is a new process in her experience, and that she generally supports the idea, though she expressed discomfort with supporting the addition of an \$800,000 building until the process is further developed. Mr. Lunsford responded that he needs the project added to the CFP to be able to apply for grant funding for the project, otherwise he would be compelled to spend reserve funds to initiate the project. Mayor Miller mentioned that it would have been better to have the project added to the CFP earlier on, but that the timing of the project becoming larger was in late December and early January.

Mr. McDougall mentioned that there is a chicken and egg problem, and expressed support for adding the item to the CFP, clarifying that there are categories of items on the plan for which this would fall into if funds are available. He expressed support for categorizing the project as something that should move forward if funding is available.

Ms. Cleland-McGrath commented that providing shelter for the Farmers Market to extend their season makes sense, but how would market activities be coordinated to avoid conflict with other scheduled events? She asked if research accomplished by the Port could be used to determine how such issues might be effectively managed. She also added that \$800,000 for a structure of that size would not be enough, citing heating and acoustics considerations. She expressed support for adding it to the CFP with the aforementioned reservations, and suggested taking advantage of research that had already been done.

Mr. Walters expressed concern with integrating the proposed building design with the existing Depot building and reluctance to categorically support the amendment without having an architecturally sound plan. He suggested that lodging tax funds could be spent on the project and that he shared the concern voiced by Ms. Cleland-McGrath about scheduling. Mr. Lunsford responded that it is done currently with events at the Farmers Market, by not allowing even setup until after 2pm on Farmers Market days, proposing that there would be a Farmers Market that could host events. Mr. Walters responded that a public events center owned by a public entity is what the community wants, and one that honors its maritime heritage and is located on the water. He added that it is the city's problem to figure out, positing that many community members would be upset if

architectural integration with the existing structures were not considered. Mr. Lunsford responded that this is a rudimentary drawing and that more funding would provide a higher quality rendering. Mr. Walters specified that he would like to see higher quality rendering, expected funding sources, and an estimate of the operating and replacement costs prior to lending his support.

Mr. Young cited that the challenge lies in finding the resources and that it will be an open public process. He expressed concern that without a draw to downtown in light of the MJB development and the Port's North Basin development, that the city could lose out, and added that in order to move forward, it must be in the CFP, and that it is an exploratory effort with conditions.

Ms. Cleland-McGrath commented that the challenge with this proposal is the changes in Anacortes over the past 17 years, and that putting a building there would result in the loss of the special open plaza, and that how the plaza is to be used should be articulated in the CFP to ensure that the space is enhanced rather than simply enclosed.

Mayor Miller expressed his hope that the Port or MJB would build a hotel and convention center that the community needs with set aside for non-profits that have typically used the Transit Shed, offering that 2025 would be the most optimistic of scenarios to realize such a development and reminded the Council that the Transit Shed is closing at the end of 2023.

Other Business

Community Action of Skagit County Quarterly Update

Administrative Services Director, Emily Schuh, introduced Sandi Phinney, Division Director, and Executive Director at Community Action of Skagit County, who presented a quarterly update on the organization's activities, referring to a slide presentation that was included in the packet materials for the meeting.

Ms. Phinney answered questions from the Council.

Mr. Young expressed appreciation for the report, citing his previous experience as a member of the organization's board. He mentioned that he saw the organization providing many beneficial services to the community without substantial funding and pointed out that the physical presence of Community Action in Anacortes will allow the local community to benefit from those services firsthand. He welcomed a regular update to the Council in order to demonstrate the tremendous good being done by Community Action and how it complements the work being done by other community organizations.

Mr. Walters mentioned the fundraising event held the previous weekend and the impressive stories that were related there of those being helped by the organization, including veterans and seniors, and the importance of having it here in Anacortes, especially for seniors. He expressed appreciation for having office space here in town and the participation with the street outreach team. Ms. Phinney responded that she would include stories in future updates to the Council. Mr. Walters asked that Steve Simmons present to the Council a second quarter update on his street outreach efforts.

Ms. Cleland-McGrath expressed appreciation for the accurate data and cited the change in the care coordination services model. She asked Ms. Phinney to expand on the program. Ms. Phinney described the old program, and described the changes to include an immediate meeting with a care specialist to identify and address other needs (e.g. healthcare, employment) while waiting for housing. She added that the care specialist or street outreach team stays in contact with participants on a more frequent basis.

Ms. Moulton underscored the partnerships with the Anacortes Housing Authority and Anacortes Family Center, pointing out that those organizations exercise good communication to provide effective services without

duplication of efforts. Mr. Walters added that Community Action is filling gaps along with Helping Hands, the Salvation Army and others, which demonstrates the need for city coordination of those efforts.

Contract Award: Microsoft Enterprise Agreement - Office 365 Renewal #23-122-ITS-001

Administrative Services Director, Emily Schuh, introduced the proposed Microsoft Enterprise Agreement - Office 365 Renewal contract #23-122-ITS-001. She detailed that the agreement is the result of an annual audit of Microsoft computing needs, and that the renewal brings automatic updates for the Windows operating system and associated software applications. She added that this year's agreement includes access to unique phone numbers for Microsoft Teams meetings for department heads and the mayor, multi-factor authentication and conditional access rules.

Mr. Walters asked if a one-year term is the right duration, should there be a three-year term? Ms. Schuh responded that the agreement is regarded as a three-year contract with a series of one-year agreements, so that it does not necessarily change the pricing. Mr. Walters posited that a longer-term contract might lock in better pricing. He asked if the city was still operating on premises exchange servers to enhance security. Ms. Schuh responded that the city is in the final stages of migrating all exchange servers off site to the cloud. Mr. Walters asked if the city could revisit the security audit, and expressed a desire for the city to implement multi-factor authentication in the near term. Ms. Schuh mentioned that the Washington Cities Insurance Authority is working with Critical Insights and the city to update the critical incidents operations plan specific to the Information Technology division, including on-site training.

Mr. McDougall asked if Microsoft Teams was part of Microsoft Office 365 license. Ms. Schuh responded affirmatively.

BRUCE MCDOUGALL moved, seconded by AMANDA HUBIK, to approve contract #23-122-ITS-001 as presented. Vote: Ayes - ANTHONY YOUNG, RYAN WALTERS, CHRISTINE CLELAND-MCGRATH, CAROLYN MOULTON, BRUCE MCDOUGALL, AMANDA HUBIK. Nays - None. Result: Passed

Adjournment

There being no further business, at approximately 7:21 p.m. the Anacortes City Council meeting of April 3, 2023 was adjourned.