

Anacortes City Council Minutes - November 6, 2023

Call to Order

Mayor Matt Miller called to order the Anacortes City Council meeting of November 6, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. Councilmembers Jeremy Carter, Ryan Walters, Christine Cleland-McGrath, and Bruce McDougall were present. Councilmembers Anthony Young, Carolyn Moulton, and Amanda Hubik participated in the meeting remotely via Zoom.

Pledge of Allegiance

The assembly joined in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Announcements and Committee Reports

Mayor Miller shared an update on the election day deadline of 8pm to turn in ballots on Tuesday November 7th, that North Star project meeting minutes would be provided to the Council, the commencement of the R Avenue and 30th Street roundabout project, and that City Hall will be closed on Friday November 10th in observance of Veterans Day with an even commemorating veterans to be held at 11am at the Port Transit Shed.

Fiber Committee

Mr. McDougall reported from the Fiber Committee meeting held November 2nd. The topics discussed included an update on 2,150 customer connections, a 43.2% take rate in Guemes View and 46.4% take rate city-wide, and the Economic Development Area project construction beginning in late 2024.

Housing Affordability and Community Services Committee

Ms. Cleland-McGrath reported from the Housing Affordability and Community Services Committee meeting held on October 25th. The topics discussed included a discussion with representatives from the Salvation Army and Anacortes Family Center for cold weather shelters, a possible hot weather shelter at the Anacortes Senior Activity Center, and a Community Development Block Grant conference attendance debrief from Planning, Community, and Economic Development Coordinator, Stephanie Snyder.

Public Works Committee

Ms. Moulton reported from the Public Works Committee meeting held earlier in the evening. The topics discussed included public areas of concern in the parking code, the R Avenue long-term improvement project materials testing contract, and the AMI antenna poles for water meter monitoring.

Lodging Tax Advisory Committee

Mr. Young reported from the Lodging Tax Advisory Committee meeting held on October 26th. The topics discussed included submitted proposals, the strategic plan, and event space in light of the imminent closure of the Port Transit Shed.

Parks and Recreation Committee

Ms. Moulton reported from the Parks and Recreation Committee meeting held on October 25th. The topics discussed included Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) funding, the 2024 budget, the Guemes Channel Trail environmental impact statement, the Washington Park restroom contract, having a police presence in the Anacortes Community Forest Lands during the summer months, and the Depot and Senior Activity Center event lease price levels.

Finance Committee

Mr. McDougall reported from the Finance Committee meeting held October 25th. The topics discussed included flat sales and utility tax revenues and ramifications for budget planning, FEMA replacement funds, and a preview of OpenGov budget reports.

North Star Housing Work Group

Mr. Walters reported from the North Star Housing Work Group meeting held earlier in the afternoon. The topics discussed included bringing additional public entities, including ports, into the search for public property sites that could be developed for additional housing and the Skagit Council of Governments proposal of jurisdictions re-zoning industrial lands to allow residential uses as part of comprehensive plan updates.

Public Comment

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

Public comment was given as follows:

Bill Turner of Anacortes addressed the Fidalgo Landing project, asking that information be provided to the city and citizens so that permitting and public input can be facilitated. He also addressed affordable housing in relation to Fidalgo Landing.

Theresa Baker of Anacortes asked about Little Cranberry Lake possibly being opened to a private commercial endeavor that would provide a paddle boarding service, and that if this were the case, the initiative should be open for public comment.

Dan Baker of Anacortes echoed Theresa Baker's comments.

Consent Agenda

Ms. Moulton moved, seconded by Ms. Hubik, to approve the following Consent Agenda items. The motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

a. Minutes of October 23, 2023

b. Approval of claims in the amount of \$1,055,321.12

The following vouchers/checks were approved for payment:

EFT numbers: 1077166 through 107774, total \$974,451.47

Check numbers: 107775 through 107795, total \$76,288.85

Wire transfer numbers: 333782 through 334448, total \$4,580.80

c. Contract Award: Washington Park New Restroom Facility #23-071-PRK-003

d. Special Event Application: Turkey Trot

e. Contract Award: R Avenue Long-Term Improvement Project - Materials Testing #20-127-TRN-006

Public Hearings

Continued Public Hearing: Revenue Sources, Including an increase in the property tax levy

Mayor Miller announced that the continued public hearing on revenue sources remains open and that no public comment had yet been received.

Other Business

Anacortes Waterfront Alliance Update

Recreation Manager, Dustin South, introduced Anacortes Waterfront Alliance Executive Director, Mary Trester, and Program Manager, Elise Murphy, who gave a presentation on their organization's public programs, referring to a slide presentation that was included in the packet materials for the meeting.

Discussion topics included:

- Inclusive provision of services, possible additional facilities for operations, and environmental preservation.

Ordinance 4058: Amending Critical Areas Regulations

City Attorney, Darcy Swetnam, introduced Ordinance 4058: Amending Critical Areas Regulations, referring to a slide presentation that was added to the packet materials for the meeting.

Discussion topics included:

- settlement language of "avoidance" and "disturbance".

BRUCE MCDOUGALL moved, seconded by AMANDA HUBIK, to adopt Ordinance 4058. Vote: Ayes - JEREMY CARTER, ANTHONY YOUNG, RYAN WALTERS, CHRISTINE CLELAND-MCGRATH, CAROLYN MOULTON, BRUCE MCDOUGALL, AMANDA HUBIK. Nays - None. Result: Passed

2024 Budget Review - Public Works

Finance Director, Steve Hoglund, reviewed the 2024 budget calendar and then introduced Public Works Director, Andrew Rheume, who opened the discussion of the 2024 budget review for public works, referring to the [2024 Online Budget Book](#) on the city's website.

Discussion topics included:

- Inclusion of debt service as expenditures, cash flow worksheets, reasons for salary and benefit increases, approval of Full-Time Employee count, explanations of significant budget fund increases or decreases, and engineering services contract.
- Equipment Rental and Replacement Fund - details of the number of vehicles and associated conditions.
- Street Maintenance - funds spent on overlays, saving funds not spent on overlays via code amendment.

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

Public comment was given as follows:

Dennis Clark of Anacortes addressed overlay funding, suggesting an increase to \$2.4 million for fund 104 in light of inflation.

Ordinance 4062: An Ordinance Adopting New AMC Chapter 2.08 Regarding Appointive Officers of the City

City Attorney, Darcy Swetnam, re-introduced Ordinance 4062 that would adopt a new Chapter 2.08 of the Anacortes Municipal Code regarding appointive officers of the city, referring to a slide presentation that was added to the packet materials for the meeting.

Discussion topics included:

- Human Resources as an independent department with its own independent director, codifying the structure of city government, corporate best practices, and recent history of the Human Resources

director position.

- Municipal Court judge selection.
- Interim appointment duration, Council notification if the hiring process is expected to be lengthy.
- Council review of candidate application materials.
- Contracting authority of the Council.
- Forms of city government.
- Communications between the branches of government,
- Current political environment in the city.
- Ordinance introduction timing.
- Protecting the city from legal exposure and employee rights.

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

Public comment was given as follows:

Marketa Vorel of Anacortes commented on transparency and protection of the democratic process, expressing discomfort with the executive deleting a department head position without consulting the Council, advocating for improved communication between the executive and legislative branches, and supporting limitations on power to the executive as drafted in the ordinance.

Connie Miller of Anacortes asked who has the authority to establish the position of City Administrator. She advocated for the efficiency of empowering the executive to have appropriate autonomy and authority in personnel and staff matters and that there should be further discussion of the matter in another forum.

Rochelle Kealoha of Anacortes expressed support for City Council's efforts to bring forth the ordinance.

Ward MacKenzie of Anacortes echoed the written comments of Denis Law. He then addressed the "gray areas" of democracy that lead to conflict and advocated for cleanup of the code to address it. He expressed disappointment about choosing to bring it before this forum without prior internal discussion.

RYAN WALTERS moved, seconded by CAROLYN MOULTON, to approve ordinance 4062 as amended in 2.08.040.A. from "immediately" to "timely" and in 2.08.040.C. delete "meet informally with the appointed officer". Vote: Ayes - ANTHONY YOUNG, RYAN WALTERS, CHRISTINE CLELAND-MCGRATH, CAROLYN MOULTON, BRUCE MCDUGALL, AMANDA HUBIK. Nays - JEREMY CARTER. Result: Passed

Adjournment

There being no further business, at approximately 8:50 p.m. the Anacortes City Council meeting of November 6, 2023 was adjourned.