

Anacortes City Council Minutes - November 13, 2023

Call to Order

Mayor Matt Miller called to order the Anacortes City Council meeting of November 13, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. Councilmembers Jeremy Carter, Ryan Walters, Anthony Young, Christine Cleland-McGrath, Bruce McDougall and Amanda Hubik were present. Councilmember Carolyn Moulton participated in the meeting remotely via Zoom.

Pledge of Allegiance

The assembly joined in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Announcements and Committee Reports

Mayor Miller thanked the port staff and the community for the Veterans Day celebration, provided an update on the R Avenue construction project, mentioned Washington State Ferries' responsibility to provide the state office of financial management with alternative service options and recommendations by December 15th, and reminded the public of information sources to help safely prepare for winter storms.

Finance Committee

Mr. Walters reported from the Finance Committee meeting held the previous Thursday. The topics discussed included reconciliation of the overlay fund for pavement management through code amendment, the health of the solid waste fund, possibly purchasing yard waste trucks, and the emergency medical services fund being collapsed into the general fund.

Housing Affordability and Community Services Committee

Ms. Cleland-McGrath reported from the Housing Affordability and Community Services Committee meeting held November 8th. The topics discussed included meeting state expectations for housing units, possible development of Sharpes Corner, and a presentation about a Vancouver, Washington 99-year ground lease.

Planning Committee

Mr. Walters reported from the Planning Committee meeting held earlier in the evening. The topics discussed included the required number of housing units under state legislation, the idea of changing the multi-family housing height code from 600 square feet to 650 square feet, and the multi-family tax exemption program as a tool to get more housing built.

Public Safety Committee

Ms. Cleland-McGrath reported from the Public Safety Committee meeting held November 7th. The Fire/Emergency Medical Services (EMS) topics discussed included a hiring update, expected delivery of the ladder truck in April 2024, and the consolidation of the EMS fund into the general fund. Police topics included a hiring update for current openings and the additional openings created under the public safety levy, and funding for a virtual reality training system.

Port / City Liaison Committee

Mr. Carter reported from the Port / City Liaison Committee meeting held November 7th. The topics discussed included a plan for replacing the executive director in early 2024, storage of items that were held in the Transit Shed, and a port pledge to help with items needed in a temporary events center that would be managed by the city.

Samish Indian Nation Quarterly Meeting

Mayor Miller reported on the Samish Indian Nation Quarterly meeting held November 9th. The topics discussed included the Tommy Thompson Trail and Trestle replacement grant, city assistance with going out to bid for the Samish Early Learning Center, and ongoing cooperation with the Museum and Parks and Recreation departments for signage for local parks and monuments.

Anacortes Museum Advisory Board: Reappointments

Mayor Miller recommended the reappointment of Deane Brazas, Gib Moore, Pat Dunn and Tom Kuhn to the Anacortes Museum Advisory Board.

Mr. Walters moved, seconded by Mr. Carter, to approve the reappointment of Deane Brazas, Gib Moore, Pat Dunn and Tom Kuhn to the Anacortes Museum Advisory Board. The motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

Historic Preservation Board: Reappointment

Mayor Miller recommended the reappointment of Bob Ross to the Historic Preservation Board.

Mr. Walters moved, seconded by Ms. Hubik, to approve the reappointment of Bob Ross to the Historic Preservation Board. The motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

Public Comment

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

Public comment was given as follows:

Evan Saxton of Anacortes addressed the passage of Ordinance 4062, the mayor's duties and conduct during the November 6th City Council meeting, the separation of powers, and the leadership abilities of councilmembers and the mayor.

Meredith McIlmoyle, Director of the Anacortes Arts Festival announced that the City of Anacortes has been officially designated as a creative district by the state of Washington.

Consent Agenda

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

a. Minutes of November 6, 2023

b. Approval of claims in the amount of \$2,172,428.68

The following vouchers/checks were approved for payment:

EFT numbers: 107799 through 107844, total \$1,850,494.51

Check numbers: 107845 through 107868, total \$271,285.97

Wire transfer numbers: 334493 through 334898, total \$50,648.20

c. Contract Award: Municipal Court A/V Upgrade Project #23-301-FAC-001

Public Hearings

Continued Public Hearing: 2024 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. Mayor Miller invited members of the audience to comment on this agenda item. No one present wished to address the Council.

Other Business

Downtown Event Venue Discussion

Mr. Walters opened the discussion by outlining the situation regarding the closure of the Transit Shed at the end of 2023 and the need to find a replacement venue. He detailed options including a pole building / tent at the Depot, a tent at the Majestic Inn and Spa, and a portion of the Integra Building as an indoor event space. He invited the public to comment on those options and others that have yet to be considered. Mr. Young added that there is a cost associated with not having an events venue for 300 people or more and discussed how to make

the community aware of the economic impact of possibly losing those events to other locations. He pointed out that most large events have found alternate venues with three or four exceptions for 2024, adding that it will be important to identify viable alternatives for late 2024 and on. Ms. Cleland-McGrath pointed out that this will be an expensive, though temporary, solution to the loss of the Transit Shed as a large event venue. She encouraged community feedback to best solve the problem over the next three years. Mayor Miller added that his 2024 budget proposal does not include any funds for the follow-on event center and pointed out that there are competing proposals for a solution.

Planning, Community, and Economic Development Director, John Coleman, and Parks and Recreation Director, Jonn Lunsford, introduced the Anacortes Senior Activity Center meeting room and the Depot Arts Center as city facilities capable of holding events. Mr. Coleman provided further details on the Depot Arts Center temporary tent options, referring to a slide presentation that was added to the packet materials for the meeting.

Discussion topics included:

- Size of the tent, heating options and associated costs.
- Urgency of the matter, Lodging Tax Advisory Committee (LTAC) fund restrictions, and community needs.
- Suitable locations for a tent with 6,000 to 7,000 square feet area to accommodate an event with 400 people.
- Legal considerations for placing the venue at the Majestic Inn and Spa.
- Majestic Inn proposal.
- Defining the three principal variables of community objectives, venue location, and venue management.
- A summary of the Philips building - indoor event during winter months and shoulder seasons with restrooms, heating and lighting.
- Setup and takedown costs for temporary tents,
- Price matching costs of the Transit Shed.
- Affordability of events for organizations.
- Parking for events and traffic control.
- Availability of the Transit Shed calendar for advanced planning purposes.
- Part-time use of multiple venues.
- Farmers Market equities.
- Tent orientation at the Depot.
- An inclusive table of events and organizations.
- LTAC meeting on Thursday November 16th.
- Programming considerations for the various parts of the Depot.
- Additional costs for add-ons such as heat and lighting in a temporary tent venue.

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

Public comment was given as follows:

Brenda Ramsdell, President of the Anacortes Youth Sports Coalition Auction, spoke about the amount of community non-profit funds associated with the event venue. She added that a replacement venue is desperately needed and organizations are experiencing distress, and expressed support for a temporary tent as an alternative option.

Abby Biederman, Vice President of the Anacortes Youth Sports Coalition, stressed that immediate action is needed to ensure access to needed donor funding, which would be ensured with an appropriately sized venue.

Russ Olivier, Vice President of Operations for the Majestic Inn and Spa, outlined the options including renting or buying the tent and the possible locations, catering, and event management. He also pointed out fire code considerations related to temporary structures that would need to be addressed.

Jesica Kiser, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Anacortes Chamber of Commerce, defined the needs for their events, including 10,000 square feet of event space, a tourist draw (e.g. view of the water), and an additional area for eating and registration. She then mentioned the pros and cons of the three venue options: the Philips Building, the Majestic Inn parking lot, and the Depot Arts Center.

Lindy Reno of the Anacortes Rotary Club expressed support for the Depot as an event venue.

Marta McClintock of the Anacortes Schools Foundation commented that the best option is the Depot. She stressed that the fire code considerations are of extreme importance.

Joe Mulcahy of Anacortes spoke in support of a temporary tent space at the Depot.

Katie Earley, Executive Director of Friends of the Forest, voiced support for the Depot as the first choice of the temporary events center, but asked for clarification regarding the availability of the space with the tent included.

Meredith McIlmoyle, Executive Director of the Anacortes Arts Festival, supported the Philips Building because it is heated, lighted and on Commercial Avenue. She acknowledged that a tent meets the size requirements, but is difficult to heat and secure.

Kathleen Lorence-Flanagan of Anacortes asked if the involved organizations had been polled so that the city and others can know their requirements. She added that the MJB plan includes an events center that would not necessarily be used in the same manner as the Transit Shed.

Ward MacKenzie of Anacortes asked about the business plan for an event center. He added that criteria must be established for what the follow-on event center will be based on what the intermediate solution will be for the next 2-3 years, including cost, location, and funding sources.

Brenda Ramsdell added that a tent can be heated with six propane heaters, there are several local security providers, flooring is optional, and loading and unloading can be accomplished south of the Depot plaza area. She pointed out that there would be additional parking located in the Port's North Basin lot and that a single event space is preferable to one with separate spaces.

Rosemary Walter of Anacortes spoke about the effects of multiple events on the neighborhood residents in the vicinity of the Depot.

Leslie Symonds of Anacortes pointed out that each organization would need to communicate its own needs to the tent provider and that the city or another entity would only manage the scheduling.

2024 Budget Review - General Governmental

Finance Director, Steve Hoglund, opened the discussion for the 2024 budget review for General Government, presenting the 2024 Combined Budget on the city's website and referring to a slide presentation that was added to the packet materials for the meeting.

Discussion topics included:

- Inclusion of a salary schedule as an attachment to the budget ordinance.

Administrative Services - Emily Schuh

- Salary and benefits for human resources.
- The 'per node' charge.
- Number of public defense cases.

Planning, Community and Economic Development - John Coleman

- Revenues from grants.

Legal - Darcy Swetnam

- Incorrect node count and security concerns.

Fire / Emergency Medical Services - Bill Harris

- Equipment rental and replacement funds do not include ladder truck funding.
- Radios that can communicate with law enforcement.

Parks and Recreation - Jonn Lunsford

- Where Washington Park revenues are located for Council reference.

Library - Jeff Vogel

- Level of service and hours of operation.

Mayor Miller invited members of the audience to comment on this agenda item. No one present wished to address the Council.

Security Agreement with U.S. Commerce Department Economic Development Administration #23-013-FBR-004

Administrative Services Director, Emily Schuh, introduced the security agreement with the US Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration #23-013-FBR-004, referring to a slide presentation that was added to the packet materials for the meeting.

BRUCE MCDOUGALL moved, seconded by AMANDA HUBIK, to authorize the mayor to execute the security agreement with US Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration #23-013-FBR-004. Vote: Ayes - JEREMY CARTER, 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 9:35 p.m. the Anacortes City Council meeting of November 13, 2023 was adjourned.