

Anacortes City Council Minutes - November 27, 2023

Call to Order

Mayor Matt Miller called to order the Anacortes City Council meeting of November 27, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. Councilmembers Jeremy Carter, Ryan Walters, Christine Cleland-McGrath, Bruce McDougall and Amanda Hubik were present. Councilmember Carolyn Moulton participated in the meeting remotely via Zoom. Councilmember Anthony Young was absent.

Mr. Carter moved, seconded by Ms. Hubik, to excuse the absence of Mr. Young. 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 an update on upcoming holiday events, the Island Hospital emergency services project, the R Avenue improvement project, and congratulated the Anacortes High School football team on advancing to play in the state championship game.

Fiber Committee

Mr. McDougall reported from the Fiber Committee meeting held November 16th. The topics discussed included a subscriber update of over 2200 and a nearly 47% take rate and the Economic Development Administration grant area sections.

Planning Committee

Ms. Moulton reported from the Planning Committee meeting held earlier in the evening. The topics discussed included identifying 2024 budget funding for the environmental impact study for the Guemes Channel Trail from the ferry landing east, associated trail easements, permitting requirements, and potential impacts on the near shore.

Public Comment

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

Kirk Kennedy of Anacortes and board member of the Anacortes Senior Activity Center Foundation, spoke about the changes and opportunity associated with the imminent departure of Lea DeVere, Senior Activity Center Administrative Assistant, citing the 35% increase in the 65 and over population between 2012 and 2021 in the city. He outlined the partnership between the city, county, and the foundation, advocating for a full-time employee to take the place of Ms. DeVere in the 2024 budget to continue the high level of service and support to the 65 and over community.

Mayor Miller added that he appreciated the foundation's work and cited the inclusion of funding for Meals-on-Wheels in the 2024 budget.

Consent Agenda

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

a. Minutes of November 20, 2023

b. Approval of claims in the amount of \$272,382.52
The following vouchers/checks were approved for payment:
EFT numbers: 107922 through 107956, total \$183,765.71
Check numbers: 107957 through 107966, total \$70,452.52
Wire transfer numbers: 335401 through 335761, total \$18,164.29
c. Special Event Application: Anacortes Santa Run

Other Business

2024 Budget Discussion

Senior Accountant, Philip Steffen, introduced the discussion of the 2024 operating budget, adding that the budget book would be available to the Council and the public on Wednesday, November 29th.

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

Linda Martin of Anacortes commented on the thoughtful construction of the budget and the demographics of Anacortes, citing that approximately one-third of households in the city are cost burdened. She mentioned that only two of the departments had hold-the-line budgets and that other departments proposed 20% increases and asked that the Council push back on these increases.

Discussion items included:

- More information is needed for discussion, budget book, capital facilities plan. Click-by-click instructions on how to access the website materials.
- Anticipated adoption date of December 11th.
- October 16th City Council meeting discussion.
- Expectations that the budget reflect discussion points from previous meetings.
- Environmental Impact Statement cost.
- Non-funded requirements.
- Use of Federal Emergency Management Agency funds.
- Using parks reserve funds.
- Dedicated fund for pavement management.
- Possible funding for an Assistant Senior Center Administrator.
- Ambulance purchase.
- Community recreation center.
- Carnegie Building addition.
- Washington State Department of Transportation funding.
- Alternative sources of funding for the Guemes Channel Trail

Resolution 3138: Update of Tourism Promotion Strategic Plan

Planning, Community, and Economic Development Director, John Coleman, introduced Resolution 3138 that would update the Tourism Promotion Strategic Plan, referring to the draft document that was included in the packet materials for the meeting. He mentioned that the changes had been approved by the Lodging Tax Advisory Committee (LTAC).

Discussion topics included:

- Moving forward with the matter in light of Mr. Young's (LTAC chair) absence.
- Remove year (2023) from page 10 with the phrase 'Comprehensive Plan'.

- Infrastructure and Attractions no longer includes the Port Transit Shed and add Buxtons.
- New paragraph on page 12.
- Page 8 - Annual events update needed
 - Should include events receiving LTAC funds.
- Promoting environmentally responsible tourism.
- Page 14 - goal of establishing a Council tourism committee or placing it under the Economic Development Committee.
- Placed on the consent agenda for next week with changes incorporated.

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

Community Development Block Grant Balance Update

Planning, Community, and Economic Development Director (PCED), John Coleman, and PCED Coordinator, Stephanie Snyder, introduced the Community Development Block Grant balance update, referring to a slide presentation that was added to the packet materials for the meeting.

Discussion topics included:

- Expiration date of funds
- Citizen participation plan and Council interaction.
- The next 5-year plan is due in 2028.

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

Resolution 3139: 2024 Legislative Priorities

Administrative Services Director, Emily Schuh, introduced Resolution 3139 that would lay out the 2024 legislative priorities for the city, referring to a slide presentation that was included in the packet materials for the meeting.

Discussion topics included:

- Public Safety
 - Juvenile access to attorney.
 - Vehicular pursuits.
- Property Tax Cap
 - Tying the rate to population growth.
- Investment in Infrastructure
 - Passenger-only for the international ferry run.
 - Wait until the December 15th report is issued before finalizing the language.
- Liability
 - Washington Cities Insurance Authority talking points to be distributed.

- Possibly narrower language.
- Locally relevant priorities for appropriations.
 - Sales tax exemptions for building supplies for multifamily housing.
 - Wildfire preparedness funding for municipalities with significant urban forest lands.

Adjournment

There being no further business, at approximately 7:43 p.m. the Anacortes City Council meeting of November 27, 2023 was adjourned.