

Anacortes City Council Minutes - November 12, 2024

Call to Order

Mayor Matt Miller called to order the Anacortes City Council meeting of November 12, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. Councilmembers TJ Fantini, Ryan Walters, Christine Cleland-McGrath, Carolyn Moulton, and Amanda Hubik were present. Councilmember Anthony Young participated in the meeting remotely via Zoom. Councilmember Bruce McDougall was absent.

Ms. Hubik moved, seconded by Mr. Fantini, to excuse the absence of Mr. McDougall. The motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

Pledge of Allegiance

The assembly joined in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Announcements and Committee Reports

Mayor Miller thanked all involved in the successful Veterans Day parade. He then announced the Parks and Recreation Special Meeting on community pickleball scheduled for Thursday, November 14th at 6pm in City Council chambers and the Economic Development stakeholders meeting scheduled for November 19th at 12pm in City Council chambers. He also encouraged the public to participate in the Economic Development [online survey](#).

Planning Committee

Ms. Moulton reported from the Planning Committee meeting held earlier in the evening. The topics discussed included the countywide planning policies resolution and scheduling for the remainder of the year for the Planning Commission and City Council.

Port / City Liaison Committee

Mr. Fantini reported from the Port / City Liaison Committee meeting held November 5th. The topics discussed included the \$63.5 million Clean Ports Grant from the Environmental Protection Agency, the A-Dock sewer line, Curtis Wharf improvements, the Marine Supply and Hardware building, and the proposed interlocal agreements for construction and operations of the event center.

Housing Affordability and Community Services Committee

Mr. Walters reported from the Housing Affordability and Community Services Committee meeting held November 6th. The topics discussed included the Anacortes Family Center and Anacortes Housing Authority projects funded by the affordable housing sales tax and tiny house development from a representative from Volunteers of America.

Economic Development Committee

Ms. Hubik reported from the Economic Development Committee meeting held earlier in the morning. The topics discussed included the online survey and the conversation with stakeholders that will happen on November 19th at 12pm in the City Council chambers.

Public Safety Committee

Ms. Cleland-McGrath reported from the Public Safety Committee meeting held November 5th. The topics discussed included police vacancies, the opening of the northwest regional law enforcement training academy in Arlington, recruiting methods and strategies, trespass procedures in the Anacortes Municipal Code, fire vacancies and proposed command structure changes. Mr. Fantini mentioned that the committee also discussed the parking situation on West 8th Street and possible measures to prevent feeding deer.

Mr. Walters announced that he Ms. Moulton, and Mr. Young will be hosting a community meeting on

Thursday, November 21st from 6-8pm at the Library.

Public Comment

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

Public comment was delivered as follows:

Linda Martin of Anacortes commented on the promised park on city-owned property on West 6th Street, presenting a petition signed by over 140 residents asking that the park be built in 2025. She acknowledged that it is on the Capital Facilities Plan for 2026, but pointed out that this funding is not assured, citing that this park had been considered for many years. She proposed that the funding for the sand volleyball courts planned for Storvik Park be reallocated to the West Side park.

Xuhua Mu of Anacortes commented on the proposed West Side park on West 6th Street, mentioning the significant number of children present in the neighborhood and that the people had spoken via the petition Ms. Martin had just submitted. She asked that the City Council not delay any longer and work together with the community to develop and construct the park.

Margaret Graham of Anacortes commented on the proposed park on West 6th Street, asserting that the neighborhood would benefit from the lot being developed as a park

Consent Agenda

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

a. Minutes of November 4, 2024

b. Approval of claims in the amount of \$2,419,942.17

The following vouchers/checks were approved for payment:

EFT numbers: 110891 through 110931, total \$2,286,881.85

Check numbers: 110932 through 110955, total \$114,535.75

Wire transfer numbers: 357647 through 357898, total \$18,524.57

c. Contract Award: WTP Access Control Cabling Installation #24-079-WTR-003

d. Contract Award: WTP Security Cameras Project - Cabling Installation #24-280-WTR-001

Other Business

Community Action of Skagit County

Planning, Community, and Economic Development Director John Coleman introduced Dulce Vazquez-Cruz, Community Action's Anacortes Resource Center Manager, and Sandi Phinney, Community Action's Chief Strategy Officer, who provided a second and third quarter update of the Resource Center's activities and annual funding support request, referring to a slide presentation that was included in the packet materials for the meeting.

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

Discussion topics included:

- The reason(s) Anacortes residents are receiving services at the Mount Vernon office.
- Street outreach program.
- Some services are not here in Anacortes due to staffing limitations.
- Communications plan for 2025.

- Impact report and community needs assessment.
- Half of the funding is from the community.
- Use of limited funds for the most good.
- Increased community awareness of the Anacortes resource center.
- An energy assistance program for income-qualified individuals is now open.
- City of Anacortes utility discount program.
- The Housing Affordability and Community Services committee could come up with a community engagement strategy - through the Anacortes Senior Center and Anacortes School District.
 - Utility bill insert.
- Level of support for 2025 compared to 2024.

Anacortes Alerts - Mass Notification System

Administrative Services Director Emily Schuh provided an introductory presentation on 'Anacortes Alerts', a new mass notification system that will be integrated into the City of Anacortes website, referring to a slide presentation that was added to the packet materials for the meeting.

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

Discussion topics included:

- When the app is downloaded, are subscribers able to access all alert subscriptions?
- Do Notify Me subscriptions need to be updated?
- Check the spam filter/folder for a verification code.
- Narrow number of categories and encourage citizens to provide their addresses.
- Skagit 911 code red alerts are still valid and citizens should register if desired.
- Template messages for emergency communications.
- Who decides when an alert is issued?
- Do fiber customers need to opt in or are they automatically signed up?
- Matching phone numbers with utility customers.
- Danger of too many texts or emails.
- Succinct source of information instead of numerous links.
- Use cases of other municipalities.

Ordinance 4091: ACCESS Anacortes Fiber Internet Limited Tax General Obligation Bond Issue

Finance Director Steve Hoglund and re-introduced Ordinance 4091, referring to a draft copy of the proposed ordinance that was included in the packet materials for the meeting. Mr. Hoglund specified that the maximum interest rate is 5.5%. Administrative Services Director Emily Schuh presented an ACCESS Anacortes Fiber financial outlook and business plan summary, referring to a slide presentation that was added to the packet materials for the meeting. Bond Counsel Alice Ost diek of Stradling and Bond Underwriter Justin Monwai of Piper Sandler answered questions from the Council.

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

Public comment was given as follows:

Linda Martin of Anacortes asked about the current bond rating, if it was affected by the interfund loans, and if that would impact interest rates.

Discussion topics included:

- \$5 million will go back into the general fund to pay for construction and other costs associated with fiber.
- Federal Emergency Management Agency funding is nearly \$4 million for 2021 disaster aid.
 - Station 3 purchase, ladder truck, and 4 patrol vehicles totaling approximately \$4.8 million.
- Fully funding of equipment rental and replacement (ERR) fund.
 - Possibly by 2026.
 - What is the amount being deferred from ERR fund?
- Contributions to the general fund by fiber income are spoken for.
- Is the city borrowing enough to cover equipment purchases that have already been made?
- Revenue projections for 2025-2027 are based on the actual take rate.
- Are customers maintaining their service?
- The higher take rate was balanced out by higher construction costs.
- The Finance Director is the designated representative for the market transaction.
- Actual capital expenditures for fiber are reimbursable with bond proceeds.

Carolyn Moulton moved, seconded by Anthony Young, to adopt Ordinance 4091.

Vote: Ayes - Carolyn Moulton, Anthony Young, Ryan Walters, Christine Cleland-McGrath, Amanda Hubik, TJ Fantini. Nays - None. Abstentions - None. Result: Passed

Ordinance 4089: Setting the City's 2025 Property Tax Levy Increase

Finance Director Steve Hoglund introduced Ordinance 4089 that would set the City's 2025 property tax levy increase, referring to a copy of the draft ordinance that was included in the packet materials for the meeting.

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

Discussion topics included:

- How many years in a row have the Council voted to approve the 1% raise?
- Would there be a catastrophic impact on the budget if the increase were not approved?
- Is there a specific purpose for the increase?
- The impact is not significant on taxpayers and based on property value.
- The amount of increase is consumed by inflation.
- Other ways the Council can affect revenues via impact fees.
- Sales and utility tax.

Resolution 3170: Countywide Planning Policies

Planning, Community, and Economic Development Director John Coleman introduced Resolution 3170: Countywide Planning Policies, reviewing the process that brought the policies before the Council. Planning Commissioner Linda Martin answered questions from the Council regarding the Planning Commission's recommendations.

Discussion topics included:

- Why did the Planning Commission make the changes they made? Particularly striking the Department of Commerce.

- Good data that shows population growth.
- Not good historical data by area median income.
- Housing for all planning tool that the Department of Commerce developed is done by jurisdiction.
- Geographic scale of the projection - per city.
- How were the growth allocations determined?
- Removing the Department of Commerce suggests local control of the policies.
- Climate adaptation is mandatory per state law.
- Altering allocations is outside the Council's responsibility.
- ‘Greenspace’ correction and Growth Management Act Technical Advisory Committee.
- Whose job is it to respond to the Department of Commerce numbers?
- Planning document.
- It allows for recommended housing units to be built.

Christine Cleland-McGrath moved, seconded by Anthony Young, to adopt Resolution 3170 supporting Countywide Planning Policies as adopted by the Skagit Council of Governments Growth Management Act Steering Committee with amendments to Urban Growth Policy 1.4 to add a comma after “greenspace” and to replace "Planners Committee" with "Growth Management Act Technical Advisory Committee (GMATAC)" throughout the Countywide Planning Policies to properly reference the name of the committee.

Vote: Ayes - Carolyn Moulton, Anthony Young, Ryan Walters, Christine Cleland-McGrath, Amanda Hubik, TJ Fantini. Nays - None. Abstentions - None. Result: Passed

Adjournment

There being no further business, at approximately 8:29 pm the Anacortes City Council meeting of November 12, 2024 was adjourned.