

Anacortes City Council Minutes - November 18, 2024

Call to Order

Mayor Matt Miller called to order the Anacortes City Council meeting of November 18, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. Councilmembers TJ Fantini, Ryan Walters, Anthony Young, Christine Cleland-McGrath, Carolyn Moulton, Bruce McDougall and Amanda Hubik were present.

Pledge of Allegiance

The assembly joined in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Announcements and Committee Reports

Mayor Miller announced that the Economic Development Stakeholders meeting will be held at 12pm on November 19th in the City Council chambers, that he would be at the Senior Center on Wednesday, November 20th at 1:30pm for the monthly conversation with Mayor Miller, and that on Saturday, November 23rd, the Anacortes Farmers Market will have a holiday market from 10am-4pm and the Anacortes Downtown Alliance is sponsoring Elves Night Out from 4-7pm.

Finance Committee

Mayor Miller announced that the Finance Committee did not meet as scheduled.

Public Works Committee

Mr. Walters reported from the Public Works Committee meeting held earlier in the evening. The topics discussed included traffic safety improvements, including a proposal for photo enforcement at the signal at 12th Street and D Avenue, speed study methods and reports, and the addition of a sidewalk on 14th Street between L Avenue and M Avenue.

Mr. Walters reminded the public that he, Ms. Moulton, and Mr. Young will hold a community meeting Thursday, November 21st, from 6-8pm at the Anacortes Public Library.

Mr. Fantini mentioned the special meeting of the Parks Commission regarding community pickleball held on November 14th, reporting that the discussion was civil and productive and that there were good ideas brought forward for the commission's consideration.

Ms. Moulton reported attending the Northwest Straits Foundation Initiative conference in Everett on November 15th with representatives from Snohomish, Whatcom, Island, and San Juan counties where there are ongoing efforts to ameliorate marine health in the North Puget Sound region.

Public Comment

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

Public comment was given as follows:

Nina Le Baron of Anacortes addressed sewer hook-up fees for single and multifamily homes, citing a nine-bedroom apartment building where the cost of permitting comes to approximately 8% of the total project cost. She asserted that the sewer hook-up fee should be based on the number of bedrooms rather than a different calculation depending on whether the structure is a single-family or multifamily dwelling. She asked the Council to consider rolling back the multifamily sewer general facilities charge (SGFC) rate to match single family rates.

Consent Agenda

Mr. McDougall moved, seconded by Mr. Young, to approve the following Consent Agenda items. The motion

carried unanimously by voice vote.

a. Minutes of November 12, 2024

b. Approval of claims in the amount of \$1,399,677.49

The following vouchers/checks were approved for payment:

EFT numbers: 110956 through 111004, total \$1,179,835.05

Check numbers: 111005 through 111015, total \$219,344.97

Wire transfer numbers: 357994 through 358328, total \$497.47

c. Contract Award: "On Water Education" Program #25-004-PRK-001

d. Special Event: Coastal Christmas Tree Lighting

e. Contract Award: "Q" Avenue Pedestrian Crossings - Design #24-018-TRN-001

Public Hearings

Public Hearing on the 2025 Operating Budget

Finance Director Steve Hoglund opened the advertised public hearing on the 2025 Operating Budget, referring to an electronic draft copy of the 2025 Budget Book 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:

- Parks and Recreation - West 6th Street park proposal - move design funding to 2025?
 - \$50,000 could be allocated for the design of a park on West 6th Street.
- Appreciation for the staff work that went into producing the budget book.
- High-level discussion on revenues and expenditures.
 - Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) funding is still not received.
 - \$2.3 million shortfall - how to make up for this shortfall and achieve permanent solvency.
 - The mayor has engaged with Senator Murray's office on FEMA reimbursement, and does not expect funding to arrive in 2025.
 - A study session or group discussion would be preferred to a regular meeting. To be held at the 2025 City Council retreat?
 - Impact fees should be considered due to recent legislative action.
 - Learn about the budget priorities of each Councilmember.
 - Get new revenues or cut staffing.
 - How long does the Council / City have to plug the funding gap in the budget?
 - Consider altering connection fees and impact fees to close the gap.
- Selectively holding back on filling vacant positions.
 - Vacant police positions - how are they accounted for in the 2025 budget?
 - It is assumed that the positions are full as of January 1st.

Other Business

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

Finance Director Steve Hoglund re-introduced Ordinance 4089 that sets the city's 2025 property tax levy increase at 1%, referring to an electronic graph of the Consumer Price Index versus annual property tax and new construction revenues that was added to the packet materials for the meeting and an electronic draft copy of the 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 much does the 1% help in keeping up with revenues?
- The Association of Washington Cities is lobbying state legislators to allow municipalities to raise property tax by 3% annually.
- Greater discussion next year about alternative ways to make up the gap via another revenue source - sales tax.
- Ensure provision of quality services.
- Consider all possible revenue sources.

Anthony Young moved, seconded by Bruce McDougall, to adopt Ordinance 4089 setting the 2025 property tax levy increase.

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

Amendment to Interlocal Agreement #IL267 with Skagit County

Fire Chief Bill Harris introduced the amendment to interlocal agreement #IL267 with Skagit County for emergency medical services (EMS) training, which would extend the current agreement through June 2025, at which point a new agreement would come before the Council for consideration.

Bruce McDougall moved, seconded by Amanda Hubik, to authorize the mayor to execute amendment #4 to interlocal agreement #IL267 with Skagit County.

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

Interlocal #24-282-PLN-001 Accepting the Paper to Digital Permitting Grant

Planning, Community, and Economic Development Director John Coleman introduced interlocal agreement #24-282-PLN-001 with the Washington State Department of Commerce to accept \$197,335 in grant funding to assist the city with the transition from paper permitting systems to software systems capable of processing digital permit applications, virtual inspections, electronic review and with the capacity for video storage.

Discussion topics included:

- Virtual inspections and video capability - how does it work?
 - Would it replace in-person inspections? Save staff time?
 - Effective for small or specific areas of a property, not a full inspection.
 - Would save staff time necessary to transit to and from the inspection site.
- What is the expected time until noticeable process improvements are realized?
 - Deliverables in the grant agreement.
 - No specific timeline.
- Does the city want to get away from paper-based permitting altogether?
 - Stopped accepting paper plans last year.
 - Staff work with the public to assist with submitting electronic permit documents.

Carolyn Moulton moved, seconded by TJ Fantini, to authorize the mayor to execute interlocal #24-282-PLN-001 with the Washington State Department of Commerce.

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

Adjournment

There being no further business, at approximately 6:57 pm, the Anacortes City Council meeting of November 18, 2024, was adjourned.