

Anacortes City Council Minutes - January 21, 2025

Call to Order

Mayor Matt Miller called to order the Anacortes City Council meeting of January 21, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. Councilmembers TJ Fantini, Ryan Walters, Anthony Young, Christine Cleland-McGrath, Carolyn Moulton, and Bruce McDougall were present. Councilmember 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 provided a statement regarding the fire and associated response that occurred January 19th at 2011 Cove Place.

Civil Service Commission Reappointments

Mayor Miller announced the re-appointment of Vicki Stasch and Mary Ann Gutierrez to the Civil Service Commission for a three-year term effective through December 31, 2027.

Public Works Committee

Ms. Moulton reported from the Public Works Committee meeting held earlier in the evening. The topics discussed included the Commercial Avenue re-signalization project between 11th Street and 13th Street, the Commercial Avenue re-surfacing project between 14th Street and 34th Street, and coming crosswalks and traffic calming improvements on Q Avenue near Safeway and on 32nd Street between M Avenue and Commercial Avenue.

Economic Development Committee

Mr. Young reported from the Committee meeting held January 14th. The topics discussed included a discussion of the rough draft from Western Washington Institute of Economic Development that included survey results and other stakeholder input. The committee asked for more specificity on each of the issues, summaries of the data, and how the committee would like the information presented as the draft report is finalized with the goal of producing tangible ideas and solutions. The next phase after the report is finalized would be implementation.

Public Safety Committee

Ms. Cleland-McGrath reported from the Public Safety Committee meeting held January 7th. Police topics discussed included a training and recruiting update, the award of a \$20,000 boat safety grant from the state for public safety courses and crew training for the new fire boat, and the canine program. Fire topics included the cost estimate for new medic units and if they need to be included in the equipment rental and replacement schedule.

Ms. Cleland-McGrath also addressed the imminent departure of the Public Defender, reminding the Council that a staff position for a public defender is in the budget as well as a second position approved for the 2025 budget that could be filled or contracted out depending on demand and policy. She asked that the Council be updated regarding the direction that staff is considering regarding the position in the near term.

Mr. Fantini announced that he and Port Commissioner Bonnie Bowers would hold a joint town hall meeting on February 25th at 6pm at the library.

Public Comment

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

Public comment was given as follows:

Xuhua Mu of Anacortes spoke about financial sustainability and fiscal responsibility as it relates to the 2025 city operating budget, referring to a slide presentation that was added to the packet materials for the meeting.

Pat Gardner of Anacortes spoke about proposed safety measures for pedestrians crossing on Q Avenue between Anthony's and Safeway, in school zones, and enforcement and associated penalties for traffic infractions.

Consent Agenda

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

a. Minutes of January 13, 2025

b. Approval of claims in the amount of \$811,145.08

The following vouchers/checks were approved for payment:

EFT numbers: 111451 through 111504, total \$481,762.61

Check numbers: 111505 through 111535, total \$305,752.87

Wire transfer numbers: 361750 through 361818, total \$23,629.60

Other Business

Finance Update

Finance Director Steve Hoglund presented a finance update, referring to a slide presentation that was included in the packet materials for the meeting.

Discussion topics included:

- Revenues for street maintenance
 - Pending real estate excise tax (REET) transfers
- REET transfer periodicity.
- Impact fees spent on R Avenue improvement project were matching funds for the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) grant funding.
- Breaking impact fees into separate funds for clarity and budgeting purposes (e.g. streets, fire and parks)
- Reasons for fluctuation in fire impact fee collection.
- Cottage permit fees
 - Per individual cottage or per project?
- Reason for drop in impact fee collection
 - Slowing building market.
 - Understanding where potential bottlenecks are that are limiting impact fee collection.
- Property tax budgeted versus actual revenue.
- Increase in property value does not correspond to an increase in property tax revenue.
- Focus on revenue options during annual Council - Mayor retreat.
- Invite the County Assessor to speak to the Council prior to April.
- Broader conversation about how to generate additional sales tax revenue.
 - Look back at years prior to the COVID pandemic for a better trend analysis.
- Annual revenue for transportation benefit district tax.
 - Approximately \$1.3 million.
- Update in development regulations encouraged more building.
- Pending changes to permitting regulations awaiting resolution of appeal.
- Creating affordable housing and encouraging demand for market rate housing.

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

Police Department Canine Program Update

Police Chief Dave Floyd provided a recruiting update on the addition of two new officers. He then introduced Sergeant Terrence Clifford and Officer Tyler Hatcher, who provided an update on the Police Department Canine Program, referring to a slide presentation that was added to the packet materials for the meeting.

Discussion topics included:

- New canine breed is German Shepherd
- Any limitations on where the canine can be deployed?
 - Handler conducts risk assessment prior to deployment.
- Other canine units in Skagit County.
- Name for new canine - Zeke.
- How T-Bone is handling retirement and new canine.
- Deployment for assisting with lost individuals?
 - Drones more likely to be used for county search and rescue dogs.
- Different perceptions by breed - hopeful for continued positive public interaction.
 - Vendor selection made based on breeder that has a dog with the proper temperament and skill aptitude.

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

Commercial Ave Phase I and II Project Update

Public Works Director Andrew Rheume provided a Commercial Avenue project update for phase I and phase II, referring to a slide presentation that was added to the packet materials for the meeting.

Discussion topics included:

Phase I

- Buffered bike lanes with barriers at the intersections of 14th, 13th and 12th Street and Commercial Avenue.
- Add design drawings to the city's website for public access.
- No opportunity for edits to design.
- Increase acceptance and comfort level of the Council and the public with the design.
- Change from the roundabout design to a signalized intersection.
- 6-month construction timeline for the intersection.
- Less disruptive than a roundabout.

Phase II

- Use of transportation benefit district funds versus REET.
 - Transportation benefit district funds are budgeted for \$1.1 million for 2025.
 - \$3 million in fund balance for REET.
 - \$1.5 million in REET in Capital Facilities Plan
 - Invest 2 years of pavement management fund at the expense of overlaying other areas.
- WSDOT offered to contribute \$365,000 to the project.
- What is the return on investment for resurfacing the project area?
- Condition of water line and connectors underneath and in the vicinity of Commercial Avenue.

- Third-party assurance of condition prior to going out to bid for overlaying Commercial Avenue.
 - Guarantee that the water line will not break during construction.
- Budgeting for resurfacing Commercial Avenue every 20 years.
- Improvement of bike lanes and accessibility.
- Breakdown of funding sources to clarify project costs.
- Requirement to assume maintenance of a state highway based on local population.

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

Adjournment

There being no further business, at approximately 8:18 pm the Anacortes City Council meeting of January 21, 2025, was adjourned.