

Anacortes City Council Minutes - July 14, 2025

Call to Order

Mayor Matt Miller called to order the July 14, 2025, Anacortes City Council meeting at 6:00 p.m. Councilmembers TJ Fantini, Ryan Walters, Anthony Young, Carolyn Moulton, and Bruce McDougall were present. Councilmembers Christine Cleland-McGrath and Amanda Hubik were absent.

Ms. Moulton moved, seconded by Mr. Young, to excuse the absence of Ms. Cleland-McGrath and Ms. Hubik. The motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

Pledge of Allegiance

The assembly joined in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Announcements and Committee Reports

Mayor Miller handed out certificates to the Fourth of July parade award winners announced at the last regular meeting. He then announced that the Commercial Avenue Complete Streets project phase 1 began last week and that there would be reduced driving lanes between 11th Street and 13th Street. He thanked the Parks and Recreation department for a successful Kids Are Best festival over the weekend and announced that the Ace of Hearts Dog Park will be closed beginning Monday, July 21st for approximately one week to allow city crews to complete work on the stormwater retention pond.

Finance Committee

Ms. Moulton reported from the Finance Committee meeting held July 10th. The topics discussed included an update to the city's purchasing policy as a result of state legislative changes, the kickoff of the enterprise resource planning software replacement process that is planned to last for the next two years, the Capital Facilities Plan process and the associated facility assessment, and a sales and utility tax revenue update. Mr. Fantini asked for clarification regarding the sales tax revenue update. Ms. Moulton responded that the sales tax revenue marginally exceeds projections for the year thus far.

Planning Committee

Mr. Walters reported from the Planning Committee meeting held earlier in the evening. The topics discussed included the obligation under the Growth Management Act to designate resource lands as part of the Comprehensive Plan update process, and possibly having University of Washington Professor Gregg Colburn and others come to talk about housing and its importance in the context of the Comprehensive Plan update to the Northstar Housing Task Force at a time and Skagit County location to be determined.

Public Safety Committee

Mr. Fantini reported from the Public Safety Committee meeting that was held immediately following the previous regular City Council meeting. The topics discussed included marine grant funding that could be utilized for the purchase of a police maritime response boat. He clarified that the purchase contract would not come before the full council due to the purchase price being below the price threshold. Mr. Young asked what other purposes the funds could serve. Mr. Fantini responded that it is largely for public safety maritime uses.

Public Comment

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

Public comment was given as follows:

Boshie Morris of Anacortes addressed the traffic, parking, street, and safety conditions of the Old Town neighborhood and the upland improvements around the Guemes Island ferry. She also spoke about the sound and its effects on nearby residences of the tennis courts at 22nd Street and K Avenue as a result of proposed

resurfacing for pickleball.

Malcom McCutcheon of Anacortes spoke about diagonal parking in his neighborhood, requesting that diagonal parking be eliminated, that parking enforcement be carried out on vehicles parked too close to the end of a block, and that there be two permitted parking spots for each residence on 6th Street and 7th Street near the Guemes Island ferry. He also mentioned Accessory Dwelling Unit regulations in Old Town.

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 July 7, 2025

b. Approval of claims in the amount of \$757,115.83

The following vouchers/checks were approved for payment:

EFT numbers: 112975 through 113014, total \$414,310.85

Check numbers: 113015 through 113034, total \$341,944.34

Wire transfer numbers: 372129 through 372359, total \$860.64

Other Business

Presentation of Economic Development Strategic Plan

Planning, Community, and Economic Development Director John Coleman presented the Economic Development Strategic Plan, referring to a slide presentation that was added to the packet materials for the meeting.

Discussion topics included:

- Identifying challenges that need solutions and allowing for targeted efforts to address them.
- The cost of the assessment was reasonable.
- High quality of life ratings and the listing of professions.
- 20% of respondents left Anacortes for work.
- Improving community engagement.
 - Adding public information inserts to utility bills.
- The study's focus was on what Anacortes has or does not have; consideration of the surrounding county and other jurisdictions would come after.
- Significant civic engagement and economic potential from the retired community.
- Producing a tangible solution and implementing it.
- An objective outside perspective that confirmed local perceptions.
- Figuring out the 'how' for the entire list of recommendations.
- Improved housing density and availability through development regulation updates and the [Housing Action Plan](#).
- Mobility improvements through public transit - [Skagit Transit Long-Range Transit Plan](#).

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

Interlocal Agreement #25-201-IDS-001 with Fidalgo Pool and Fitness Center and Resolution 3184: Fidalgo Pool and Fitness Center

City Attorney Darcy Swetnam introduced proposed interlocal agreement #25-201-IDS-001 with Fidalgo Pool and Fitness Center that clarifies that the district will pay to the county all election-related costs associated with placing an initiative on November 4, 2025, general election ballot to create a metropolitan recreation district. She also introduced Resolution 3184 that would place an initiative on the general election ballot to create a

metropolitan park district, which would replace the Fidalgo Parks and Recreation District, referring to a slide presentation that was added to the packet materials for the meeting.

Discussion topics included:

- Approval would mean that the Fidalgo Pool and Fitness Center Board of Commissioners would be able to set the initial tax rate based upon the budget presented.
 - Then limited to raising the tax levy by 1% each year unless submitted to an additional vote of the people.
 - Funds would support operations and maintenance budgets and spread the cost among more households.
- Elected commissioners have requested this ballot measure.
- Clarity on the planned tax rate would be for the ballot measure.
- Voters did not know what the measure would do.
- The ballot measure language should contain the initial levy rate.
- Does the ballot language need to contain the maximum levy rate?
- The pool district could come up with the maximum levy rate.
- Verify the joint language requirement with the county.
- The Fidalgo Pool Board of Commissioners should have been present.
- August 5th deadline for the November ballot.
- Any limit on bringing the measure back before the voters?
 - No, assuming that the city and county act by resolution to add it to the ballot.
- Could citizens file a resolution to disband the taxing district if it were eventually approved?
- Add language that would clarify that this measure would replace the current pool district structure rather than add a new tax.

The mayor announced, and the council agreed, that the interlocal agreement and accompanying resolution will come back before the council at the next regular meeting.

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

Public comment was given as follows:

Linda Martin of Anacortes expressed disappointment that the issue would come before the City Council for a second time and that the council should consider that the public had already disapproved of the measure the previous year. She also mentioned that the language "joint proposition" implies that Anacortes and Skagit County endorse the measure and should be changed and that the levy rate should be included in the ballot.

Suzanne Rohner of Anacortes spoke about citizens being subjected to excessive taxation and pointed out that levies appear to be permanent tax increases, and that a similar measure that is currently proposed was narrowly disapproved and that the people and not an elected board should determine what tax rate is appropriate. She also spoke about excessive taxation making it more difficult for citizens to access housing.

Steve Anderson of Anacortes asked why he should pay taxes and a membership or use a fee to use the Fidalgo Pool and Fitness Center. He also asked about a par course in the parks.

Malcolm McCutcheon agreed with the previous speakers, and asked if there could be a corresponding initiative to repeal the tax district if it were passed, and suggested term-limited bonds to temporarily raise required revenues.

Arik Dahlen, Executive Director of the Fidalgo Pool and Fitness Center, spoke about the reason the board of the Fidalgo Pool and Fitness Center decided to revisit this issue, pointing out that it is a replacement of an old tax, not a new tax, that adjusting the district boundaries would ensure that additional facility patrons are supporting the facility via the tax levy, that the facility is old and increased tax revenue gives the elected board of commissioners options to attain financing for a possible replacement facility, and that the pool continues to be there for everyone in the community.

Adjournment

There being no further business, at approximately 7:18 p.m. the Anacortes City Council meeting of July 14, 2025, was adjourned.