

Anacortes City Council Minutes - July 21, 2025

Call to Order

Mayor Matt Miller called to order the July 21, 2025, Anacortes City Council meeting at 6:00 p.m. Councilmembers TJ Fantini, Ryan Walters, Christine Cleland-McGrath, Carolyn Moulton, Bruce McDougall and Amanda Hubik were present. Councilmember Anthony Young was absent.

Ms. Moulton moved seconded by Ms. Hubik, to excuse 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 reminded the public of road construction on Commercial Avenue between 11th Street and 13th Street, and to note the signs put up for alternate routes. He also reminded the public that the Ace of Hearts Dog Park is closed to allow work on the detention pond to clean it and ensure it is working properly.

Mayor Miller also noted the draft City Comprehensive Plan update is published on the [city website](#), and encouraged the public to review and submit comments via email to CompPlan@anacorteswa.gov through 5:00 PM August 28th, 2025.

Public Works Committee

Ms. Moulton reported from the Committee meeting held directly before the council meeting. The topics discussed included the future format of the Traffic Safety committee and an update on the D Avenue project and the associated traffic safety improvements. She also noted there are multiple pedestrian crosswalks in design at this time that should also help with traffic safety.

Public Comment

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

Public comment was given as follows:

Bill Turner addressed the Council about the City Dog Park, making several comments regarding the same.

Mark Robinson also addressed the Council regarding the City Dog Park.

Judy Billings addressed the Council regarding the proposed Guemes Island electric ferry.

Suzanne Rohner also expressed her views on the proposed electric ferry as well.

Maggie Miller addressed the Council concerning the proposed pickle ball court lines that are proposed to be drawn on the existing high school tennis courts.

Consent Agenda

Mr. McDougall moved, seconded by Ms. Hubik, to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. The motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

a. Minutes of July 14, 2025

b. Approval of claims in the amount of \$500,281.21

The following vouchers/checks were approved for payment:

EFT numbers: 113035 through 113116, total \$376,545.57

Check numbers: 113081 through 11315 total \$101,645.88

Wire transfer numbers: 372463 through 372686, total \$22,089.76

c. Special Event: Anacortes Half Marathon & 5K

d. Contract Modification: WWTP PS4 Flowmeter Vault & Force Main Installation #24-209-SEW-001

Other Business

Contract Amendment: Residential Recyclables and Residential Organics Collection, 2015-2025 #15-102-SAN-001

Public Works Director Andy Rheume addressed the council, and introduced Rhianne Janovich, a Waste Management (WM) representative, to discuss the existing recycling contract with WM. He reminded council the contract has already been administratively extended; another extension requires approval by council. Mr. Rheume recommended council approve the 1-year extension. He noted the proposed contract cost is consistent with what other cities are paying.

Ryan Walters moved, seconded by TJ Fantini, to authorize the mayor to sign amendment 3 to contract #15-102-SAN-001 with Waste Management.

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

Residential and Commercial Recyclables and Organics Collection Contracting

Mr. Rheume then presented the Organics contract with Waste Management. Mr. Rheume requested direction from the Council if they had thoughts on the upcoming organics contract. Mr. Rheume asked for council's preference of direct negotiation with WM to continue the service, or if they would prefer to issue a Request for Proposal to see what other options may be available.

Discussion topics included:

- Direct negotiation with WM with other provisions and possibilities included, such as smaller organic options if a smaller household just wants to recycle kitchen waste where the current large bin does not make sense.
- Recent complex state legislation regarding recycling.
 - Universal collection list.
 - The producer has responsibility for paying the cost of recycling through an organization that will be implemented by 2030. That should affect the length of the contract renewal.
 - On April 1, 2027, cities and counties must have a year-round organic collection service.
- Bellingham recently made organics mandatory, which angered many people who were already taking care of their own organics.
- Getting food waste out of the solid waste stream reduces overall waste weight going to landfill.
- Penalizing customers for contaminating or overfilling the bins.
- Who handles the billing?
- Service frequency. What does it save?

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

City Attorney Darcy Swetnam introduced proposed interlocal agreement #25-201-IDS-001 and accompanying resolution 3184, while the Mayor welcomed members of the City Pool Commission. Ms. Swetnam provided the background of the proposed Metropolitan Park District as described in the State statute and clarified issues that were brought up in the prior meeting regarding some of the language in the proposed resolution, referring to a slide presentation that was added to the packet materials for the meeting. Fidalgo Pool and Fitness Center Commissioner Jeremy McNett invited questions from the Council.

Discussion topics included:

- Changes in language from the prior year's measure that did not pass.
- Difference between a broad purpose and a limited purpose Metropolitan Park District.

- The proposed measure would provide perpetual committed funding for operations and maintenance through property tax.
- A separate voter-approved bond would be required for the construction of a new facility.
- When is the tax rate determined for perpetual funding?
- The current levy mill rate is approximately 9.5 cents.
- If voters approve the measure, then an election would be held for new commissioners who would then set the new millage rate.
- More consultation is required to answer the questions regarding differences between a limited to a broad purpose district.
- Could the new Metropolitan Park District conduct a new levy after the ballot measure?
- Does it have to be a limited-purpose metropolitan park district?
- Awareness of the August deadline to place the measure on the November ballot.
- It would be up to the elected board to decide what would happen if the metropolitan parks district if the pool were to close.

Mayor Miller invited members of the audience to comment on this agenda item. Public comment was given as follows:

David Hanson of Anacortes and the Treasurer of the Pool foundation, expressed the importance of, and his endorsement of, the proposed voter initiative, pointing out the importance of the pool and the city agreeing on a maximum levy rate, as it would remove an uncertainty that was unfavorable in the eyes of voters.

Pat Barrett of Anacortes noted that 30 years ago the pool levy failed, and the pool was only kept open by volunteers providing safeguarding services for a year. He asserted that the Fidalgo Pool and Fitness Center is something that the local government can do to provide these facilities for the community. He explained that more residents paying into the same levy could actually decrease the amount each resident pays to support the pool. He emphasized the importance of the levy, as a failed levy could easily drive the pool to closure.

Linda Martin spoke on the issue as well, expressing her displeasure at the current proposal, with the preference of retaining the current structure with a vote on the O&M levy every 6 years, as she pointed out that the current measure as written takes away the community's right to vote regularly on pool funding.

Malcolm McCutcheon of Anacortes asked questions about the existing district and facilities, noting the confusion between what city facilities and pool facilities, and noting that nowhere in the ballot material is the pool mentioned, and the difficulty in reconciling that information.

Barbara Smart of Anacortes asked what the final charge of the property tax rate, explaining she was still unsure, and taking note that citizens living on the margins are struggling with the significant impact of rising taxes, asking for clarity in the ballot language.

City Council Committees Structure

Mayor Miller introduced this item as a topic of discussion that occurred at and came out of the Council Retreat in June.

Mr. Fantini said that he requested a review of the current committee structure, and spoke about potentially trying to refine the structure in council procedures. He went on to suggest a public work session with just the single agenda item to discuss the current structure with city staff as opposed to a different committee format including, potentially, a committee of the whole.

Discussion topics included:

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- There are some things in the Council Procedures that should be addressed, noting there are currently a variety of lists of issues held by various council and staff members, and perhaps a master list could be combined from those as a starting point.
- Are all committees necessary? Could some of them be combined? Should there be term limits? She encouraged holding the work session no later than 6–8 weeks from now.
- Include staff in the discussion as they are impacted as well.
- Number of meetings a councilmember could miss, excused or not.
- Preserve flexibility for future adaptations.
- New directors need council expectations for committee meetings.
- Monthly reports from directors to council via email or memo.
- Public attendance is welcome at committee meetings.
- Council committee meetings are posted on the [city website](#).

Mayor Miller invited members of the audience to comment on this agenda item. Public comment was given as follows:

Ward MacKenzie of Anacortes expressed his support of the Council for taking a hard look at existing processes towards improvements, pointing out that there is the possibility of a vocal minority exercising undue influence and that he supported the idea of more transparency.

Council agreed suggestions should be submitted to Mayor Miller and City Attorney by August 11th, with the intent of having the discussion at the August 25th meeting.

Adjournment

There being no further business, at approximately 7:35 p.m. the Anacortes City Council meeting of July 21, 2025 was adjourned.