

Anacortes City Council Minutes - October 13, 2025

Call to Order

Mayor Matt Miller called to order the October 13, 2025, Anacortes City Council meeting at 6:00 p.m. Councilmembers TJ Fantini, Ryan Walters, Anthony Young, Christine Cleland-McGrath, Carolyn Moulton, and Amanda Hubik were present. Councilmember Bruce McDougall was absent.

Mr. Walters moved, seconded by Mr. Young, 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 announced that the Council would move into Executive Session after the regular meeting agenda and added it as item 7.a. He then wished all a happy Columbus Day and Indigenous Peoples Day. He also recognized the 250th birthday of the United States Navy, thanking the Ann Washington Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution for hosting an event honoring Navy personnel and veterans last Sunday. He then announced that portions of the Guemes Ferry terminal parking lot would be closed due to stormwater maintenance from October 13th - 16th, that the Chamber of Commerce would host a Candidate Forum on October 14th from 5 to 8 pm in City Council Chambers, that the city, Downtown Anacortes Alliance and First Forty Feet would host the Downtown Streetscapes Open House on October 15th from 5:30 to 7:00 pm in Council Chambers, that the city would participate in the Great Shakeout earthquake and tsunami preparedness exercise on October 16th at 10:16 am, and that the town photo is available for [free download on the city's website](#).

Port / City Liaison Committee

Mr. Walters reported from the Port / City Liaison Committee meeting held October 7th. The topics discussed included next steps on the event center, including a preliminary cost estimate from the architectural firm that indicates the facility will be able to be accomplished within the \$8 million estimate. It included a revised exterior and floor plan design that will move the port's lease space closer to the 9th Street and R Avenue connector, minimize space usage and specifically define storage space to continue to lower the estimated construction cost. The committee also discussed when future meetings with local user groups would occur and how to make the best of available time with the project architect at the next meeting. Mr. Young expressed hope that there would be the capability for a mobile kitchen to be attached to the facility. Mr. Walters responded that the committee is tracking this requirement.

Finance Committee

Ms. Cleland-McGrath reported from the Finance Committee meeting held October 9th. The topics discussed included an update on the ongoing state audit that should be wrapped up in the near term, the challenges associated with balancing the 2026 budget without the needed increase in sales tax but with increases in commitments the city has. The committee explored trying to pare down and cut as much as possible to meet expectations the council communicated to staff at this year's budget retreat. The committee considered the funding level for the equipment rental and replacement (ER&R) fund, the cash balance, property tax and maintenance funds, and possible operating increases of approximately \$5 each per month for sewer and storm charges; and the utility tax rate increase of approximately \$2.50 per month for residential, commercial and industrial customers.

Planning Committee

Ms. Moulton reported from the Planning Committee meeting held earlier in the evening. The topics discussed included the Streetscape Open House on Wednesday, October 15th, the budget constraints the department is

facing, improvements in the permitting process including standard operating procedures and city information technology personnel assisting with SmartGov permitting software application use optimization, the ongoing digitization of paper records, and the Planning Commission having approved the draft Comprehensive Plan update for Council to review in the following weeks with additional opportunities for public comment.

Public Safety Committee

Ms. Cleland-McGrath reported from the Public Safety Committee meeting held October 7th. The Fire / EMS topics discussed included a hiring and recruiting update with two new paramedics starting, a grant for four additional thermal imaging cameras for \$25,000 with a 5% matching requirement for medical units and the battalion chief vehicle, and the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant that is on this evening's agenda.

Police topics included an update on boat operations with two officers being already certified for boat operations and an additional four officers to be certified by May 2026, training for a local instructor for bicycle-mounted officers, digital forensics updates, and a training update to include two officers completing the academy and two engaged in field training.

Mr. Fantini mentioned that the Association of Washington Cities District 14 meeting to discuss the 2026 legislative agenda would take place on Monday, October 20th, from 11:30 am to 1 pm at the Oak Harbor Yacht Club.

Public Comment

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

Public comment was given as follows:

Colette Arvidson, president of the Anacortes Lions Club, and Andrew Arvidson, president of the Washington Council of the Blind, spoke about White Cane Day, which improves public awareness for individuals with low vision. Mr. Young added that this occasion is a wonderful opportunity for members of the public to better understand and be aware of the community.

Katherine Strandberg of Anacortes spoke about the possibility of having a covered pickleball court facility in Anacortes.

Xuhua Mu of Anacortes addressed the draft property tax ordinance and the council's legal and ethical responsibilities to explain the tax levy, and Resolution 3184 that placed the Fidalgo Pool and Fitness Center metropolitan park district proposal on the November 2025 ballot.

Suzanne Rohner of Anacortes spoke about Resolution 3184 that placed the Fidalgo Pool and Fitness Center on the November 2025 ballot as a proposed limited purpose metropolitan park district.

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 October 6, 2025

b. Approval of claims in the amount of \$1,131,355.23

The following vouchers/checks were approved for payment:

EFT numbers: 113722 through 113792, total \$721,106.24

Check numbers: 113793 through 113819, total \$364,240.85

Wire transfer numbers: 376963 through 377682, total \$46,008.14

Other Business

Ordinance 5006: Authorizing an Interfund Loan from Water to Sewer

Finance Director Steve Hoglund and Public Works Director Andrew Rheaume reintroduced Ordinance 5006 that would authorize an interfund loan from the water fund to the wastewater fund for approximately \$4.5 million to enable completion of the Combined Sewer Overflow project, referring to a draft copy of the ordinance and 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:

- Percentage of rooftops, roads, and parking lots that are part of the combined sewer system.
- When did the city start moving away from the combined sewer system? ~1950s
- How the CSO pump works to empty out the pipe on R Avenue without increasing flow volume.
- Over a 5-year loan repayment period, an approximately \$5 per month increase in rates would be needed, otherwise finding internal funds would be necessary.
 - Other wastewater projects would need to be cut if rates stay at current levels, and some wastewater capital projects would not be funded with the rate increase.

Carolyn Moulton moved, seconded by Ryan Walters, to adopt Ordinance 5006 authorizing an interfund loan from the water fund to the wastewater fund.

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

Contract Award: WWTP Pump Station 13 Replacement Pump Purchase #25-263-SEW-001

Mr. Rheaume and Wastewater Treatment Plant Manager Brian Walker introduced proposed contract #25-263-SEW-001 with Whitney Equipment Company, Inc. for the Wastewater Treatment Plant Pump Station 13 replacement pump purchase to be available in case of primary pump failure and while each of two existing pumps are refurbished.

Discussion topics included:

- For use at pump station 13 location only.

Carolyn Moulton moved, seconded by Amanda Hubik, to authorize the mayor to sign contract #25-263-SEW-001 with Whitney Equipment Company Inc.

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

Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant

Fire Chief Bill Harris introduced the SAFER grant, referring to a slide presentation that was added to the packet materials for the meeting.

Discussion topics included:

- Lieutenants are the red-faced stick figures on the shift of the 11 vs. 12 comparison slide.
- Definition of a Kelly Day.
- After the 3 years of the SAFER grant, what is the plan for the costs?
 - Use the EMS levy funds if the budget was stable.

- Ambulance utility model for funding.
- Regionalization of the fire department?
- Where can we trim services if needed?
- If levy funds are properly spent on the Fire Department, still net positive on the General Fund.
- Battalion Chiefs are needed for incident command responsibilities.
- Maintaining the level of service.
- Appreciation for the work that was involved in the grant application process.
- Well articulated justification for Battalion Chiefs.
- Levy lid lift was carried out to improve the level of service.
- Leave Assistant Chief position on the books, but unfunded.
 - Removing the position from the organization chart.

Amanda Hubik moved, seconded by Anthony Young, to authorize the mayor to accept the Fiscal Year 2024 SAFER grant award to create three new Fire Department full-time employees in 2026.

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

ACCESS Anacortes Fiber Internet Presentation and Ordinance 5007 (Municipal Code Update)

Administrative Services Director Emily Schuh delivered an ACCESS Anacortes Fiber Internet update and introduced Ordinance 5007 that would add section 13.56.060 and amend subsection 1.30.080 to the Anacortes Municipal Code to establish and limit the city's use of dark fiber leases, referring to an updated 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:

- Thanks to Jim Lemberg for his efforts.
- The benefit of having local teams doing the work.

Resolution 3188: City Council Procedures

City Attorney Darcy Swetnam introduced Resolution 3188 that would update City Council procedures, referring to a draft red-line copy of the proposed resolution that was included in the packet materials for the meeting. Councilmembers and Mayor Miller provided feedback on substantive changes through Section 7 of the draft procedures. The council will continue consideration of the draft procedures at the next regular meeting.

Executive Session

Potential Litigation or Litigation per RCW 42.30.110(1)(i) (15 minutes)

At 8:25 pm, Mayor Miller announced that City Council and the City Attorney would convene in Executive Session per RCW 42.30.110 (i) for approximately 15 minutes to discuss potential litigation or litigation. The mayor advised that the regular meeting would then adjourn with no final action having been taken. Councilmembers TJ Fantini, Anthony Young, Ryan Walters, Christine Cleland-McGrath, Carolyn Moulton, and Amanda Hubik attended the executive session.

Adjournment

At 8:38, Mayor Miller announced that the Council had returned from executive session with no action being taken, and there being no further business the Anacortes City Council meeting of October 13, 2025 was adjourned.