

Anacortes City Council Minutes - January 20, 2026

Call to Order

Mayor Ryan Walters called to order the January 20, 2026, Anacortes City Council meeting at 6:00 p.m. Councilmembers Luke Currier, Anthony Young, Christine Cleland-McGrath, and Bruce McDougall were present. Councilmembers Carolyn Moulton and TJ Fantini were absent.

Mayor Walters pointed out a quorum existed and the meeting would proceed.

Pledge of Allegiance

The assembly joined in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Young moved without objection to excuse the absence of Mr. Fantini.

Ms. Cleland-McGrath moved without objection to excuse the absence of Ms. Moulton.

Announcements and Committee Reports

Re-appointments to Historic Preservation Board by City Council

Museum Director Bret Lunsford introduced the two eligible board members, Virginia Heiner and Ralph Walter, whose terms expired at the end of 2025 but are agreeable to re-appointment to continue serving on the board. He added that with these two appointments the board would still have one vacant position with the recent departure of Carolyn Suryan, for which applicants are being sought.

Mr. Currier moved, seconded by Mr. Young, to approve the re-appointments of Virginia Heiner and Ralph Walter to the Historic Preservation Board. The motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

Information Technology and ACCESS Anacortes Fiber Internet Committee

Mr. McDougall provided an update on the Fiber - IT committee, which did not meet but received a written update from Administrative Services Director Emily Schuh. Fiber topics included the current number of fiber customers (2,950), the take rate of each area of the city currently covered by the city fiber network, and the imminent departure of Ms. Schuh and the return of Jim Lemberg to serve as Fiber Manager. Information Technology topics included that Information Systems and Technology Manager Jose Cervantes would continue to lead the department and that the portion of the administrative, fiber and information technology budgets that funded Ms. Schuh's position would be conserved as an additional savings for the city.

Mayor's Announcements

Mayor Walters announced the Downtown Streetscapes Open House to be held at city hall at 5:30 pm on Wednesday, January 21st in the City Hall Council Chambers to discuss the future of downtown.

He also announced the city was awarded a grant of \$1 million from the Washington State Department of Commerce that will be used towards the refurbishment of the Olson building to convert the building into additional affordable housing units. He added that the project is being undertaken in conjunction with the Anacortes Housing Authority with additional resources provided by the affordable housing sales tax that was approved by the voters in 2020, and that the Olson Building project would effectively double the number of units provided by the tax revenue.

Public Comment

Mayor Walters invited the public to comment on any item not on the agenda. No one present wished to address the Council on any topic not already on the agenda.

Consent Agenda

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

a. Minutes of January 12, 2026

b. Approval of claims in the amount of \$1,592,493.48

The following vouchers/checks were approved for payment:

EFT numbers: 114618 through 114674, total \$1,264,854.45

Check numbers: 114675 through 114696, total \$255,144.60

Wire transfer numbers: 382463 through 383159, total \$72,494.43

c. Contract Award: Skagit River Deep Anode Well Groundbed Installation #26-046-WTR-001

Other Business

Ordinance 5019: Adopting New AMC Chapter 2.48 Regarding the Community Forest Lands Advisory Board

Mayor Walters provided general background information on city boards and commissions and introduced Ordinance 5019 to codify the Anacortes Community Forest Lands (ACFL) Advisory Board. Parks and Recreation Director Jonn Lunsford gave more specific information regarding the proposed make-up of the board, including that the board position reserved for a Planning Commissioner would be reallocated to any resident of the city. He added that city residency would be an eligibility requirement for four of the five positions with the fifth position available to a non-city resident, and that the ordinance would reduce the term length from 5 to 4 years and delete the board responsibility of managing timber sales.

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

Mark Nihart of Anacortes spoke in support of the ACFL advisory board and the proposed ordinance to codify it, and recommended the council continue to seek other qualified people to include on the board. He suggested there are many people in the community with a lot of knowledge of the flora and fauna of the local woods, as well as other professional experience that could be tapped for the benefit of the ACFL.

Christine Cleland-McGrath moved, seconded by Anthony Young, to adopt Ordinance 5019 creating AMC Chapter 2.48 Regarding the Community Forest Lands Advisory Board.

Vote: Ayes - Anthony Young, Christine Cleland-McGrath, Bruce McDougall, Luke Currier. Nays - None.

Abstentions - None. Result: Passed

Ordinance 5015: Amending AMC Chapter 2.42 Regarding the Planning Commission

Planning, Community, and Economic Development Director John Coleman introduced the ordinance, explaining that it would clarify elements of the code related to the Planning Commission. He mentioned that the ordinance would change commissioners' terms from 6 years to 4 years and would establish a staggered schedule of no more than 2 commissioner terms ending in the same year, and that the requirement to meet every month was removed, thus giving the commission more flexibility over scheduled meetings.

Discussion topics included:

- Staggered term logic.
- Meeting schedule.
- Providing the public with opportunities to be involved in planning matters.

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

Bruce McDougall moved, seconded by Christine Cleland-McGrath, to adopt Ordinance 5015 amending AMC Chapter 2.42 Regarding the Planning Commission.

Vote: Ayes - Anthony Young, Christine Cleland-McGrath, Bruce McDougall, Luke Currier. Nays - None. Abstentions - None. Result: Passed

Ordinance 5018: Amending AMC Chapter 2.08 Regarding Appointive Officers of the City & Ordinance 5017: Amending Anacortes Municipal Code Section 1.30.080 Regarding Fiber Contracts

Mayor Walters announced that the following two proposed ordinances amend the code to adapt to the departure of the Administrative Services Director, which will not be filled and account for financial savings for the city.

Finance Director Steve Hoglund introduced the ordinance as a housekeeping measure that would eliminate the Administrative Services Director position from the Appointive Officer list in Exhibit A, under Anacortes Municipal Code section 2.08.020.A.1. and would allow a person to hold the City Engineer and Public Works positions at the same time under 2.08.020.E.

Regarding proposed Ordinance 5017, Mr. Hoglund specified that the AMC 1.30.080 would be amended to name the Fiber Manager as the approver of business and residential fiber contracts.

Discussion topics included:

- Achieving efficiencies in a challenging fiscal environment.

Mayor Walters invited members of the audience to comment on both ordinances. No one present wished to address the Council.

Anthony Young moved, seconded by Bruce McDougall, to adopt Ordinance 5018 amending AMC Chapter 2.08 Regarding Appointive Officers of the City.

Vote: Ayes - Anthony Young, Christine Cleland-McGrath, Bruce McDougall, Luke Currier. Nays - None. Abstentions - None. Result: Passed

Luke Currier moved, seconded by Anthony Young, to adopt Ordinance 5017 amending AMC Section 1.30.080 Regarding Fiber Contracts.

Vote: Ayes - Anthony Young, Christine Cleland-McGrath, Bruce McDougall, Luke Currier. Nays - None. Abstentions - None. Result: Passed

Collective Bargaining topics per RCW 42.30.140(4)(b) (30 minutes)

At approximately 6:26pm Mayor Walters announced that the Council would enter a closed session pursuant to RCW 42.30.140(4)(b) regarding collective bargaining topics. The closed session lasted 30 minutes and no action was taken.

Adjournment

At approximately 6:56 pm, after the council returned from closed session, Mayor Walters adjourned the meeting.