Anacortes City Council Minutes - February 17, 2026

Call to Order

Mayor Ryan Walters called to order the February 17, 2026, Anacortes City Council meeting at 6:01 p.m. Councilmembers Luke Currier, Anthony Young, Christine Cleland-McGrath, Carolyn Moulton, Bruce McDougall, and TJ Fantini were present.

Pledge of Allegiance

The assembly joined in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Announcements and Committee Reports

Mayor Walters made announcements regarding the Downtown Streetscapes Survey, Community Development Block Grant applications, serving on city boards and commissions, the updated timing of Planning Commission meetings, which will now occur on the second Tuesday of each month at 6 pm in City Council chambers, the Anacortes Police Department Citizen Police Academy, and project updates on the 12th Street and Commercial Avenue intersection, the Q Avenue Crossing near Safeway, the fiber network buildout, and bids for Fire Station 1 kitchen and office remodel, referring to a slide presentation that was added to the packet materials for the meeting.

Economic Development Committee

Mr. Young reported from the Economic Development Committee meeting held February 10th. The topics discussed included introductions and where the committee had been and the way forward, the tools that were used in past committee analyses and their applicability moving forward, and the possibility of each committee member having three ideas for how to move the city forward economically. Mr. Currier emphasized the energetic nature of the committee and the encouraging prospect of new ideas moving forward. Ms. Cleland-McGrath emphasized the importance of working with community partners to improve the quality of life in the city and helping to bring those entities together through direct communication.

Housing Affordability and Community Services and Planning Committee

Ms. Moulton reported from the Housing Affordability and Community Services and Planning Committee meeting held February 10th. The topics discussed included introductions, clarification of acronyms associated with community services, the Skagit County point-in-time count done in cooperation with the Anacortes Family Center, and that the contract with the Salvation Army for the cold weather shelter has only $700 remaining of the $10,000 total for 2026 and 2027. Mr. Currier added that the contract with the Salvation Army was used so heavily due to funding cuts for other agencies who provide similar services.

Public Works Committee

Mr. McDougall reported from the Public Works Committee meeting held earlier in the evening. The topics discussed included the Waste Management contract renewal, for which the council will receive a high-level update on the state of the negotiations in the next few weeks, and the list of public safety calls that the Public Works department fields including through the 'See-click-fix' application, such as increasing speed limit hours in school zones and a request for speed bumps on 32nd Street between Commercial Avenue and H Avenue.

Personnel Committee

Mr. Fantini reported from the Personnel Committee meeting held earlier in the morning. The topics discussed included a recruiting update, a 2025 turnover report that included reasons for departures led by a reduction in force followed by better job opportunity, retirement, and personal reasons. The committee also discussed a survey of other cities for how many human resources employees serve their organization based on the ratio of city employees to human resources personnel, for which Anacortes ranked third worst. Additionally, the committee discussed biennial police and fire promotional testing that will occur in March and April of this year and the associated selection process for openings that might become available. Ms. Moulton added information about the open Library Page position due to the retirement of the incumbent. She clarified that the position had initially been offered to the individual who had been laid off from a separate Library Page position, and after that individual refused due to finding other employment, the position would be publicly advertised. Mayor Walters added that the Human Resources Assistant position that the council had previously approved would not be funded to be filled until 2027, though the city is actively searching for funds to enable the position to be filled in 2026.

Mr. Young spoke about the well-attended 'Love Out Loud' event held downtown on February 14th, expressing optimism that the event would be bigger and better next year.

Public Comment

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

Public comment was given as follows:

Nicholas Genovese of Ward 1 in Anacortes spoke about the increasing property tax levels in Washington state and associated fiscal concerns.

Consent Agenda

Ms. Cleland-McGrath moved, seconded by Mr. Fantini, to approve the following Consent Agenda items. The motion carried unanimously by voice vote.
a. Minutes of February 9, 2026
b. Approval of claims in the amount of $899,384.79
The following vouchers/checks were approved for payment:
EFT numbers: 114857 through 114904, total $578,471.13
Check numbers: 114905 through 114922, total $285,872.83
Wire transfer numbers: 384290 through 384567, total $35,040.83
c. Contract Award: 2026 Water Pipeline Replacements - Jura Lane #26-067-WTR-001
d. Special Event: Pride Parade
e. Special Event: Earth Day Celebration — Luminary Light Parade and Procession of the Species Parade

Other Business

Contract Modification: Anchor QEA Master Services Agreement #21-024-LEG-001

Parks and Recreation Director Jonn Lunsford introduced proposed contract modification #21-024-LEG-001 with Anchor QEA for consulting services to allow Anchor QEA, LLC to work on behalf of the City with the Department of Ecology (DOE) to respond to DOE comments received on the Draft Remedial Investigation Work Plan, including additional sampling requirements and analysis as part of the remedial investigation activities associated with the A Avenue Landfill site. He explained that the $2.8 million associated with the original contract was associated with the decommissioning of the old Water Treatment Plant and that the current contract modification amount is for the A Avenue Landfill, which will be conducted in 2026 and 2027. He then introduced Julia Fitts, Principal of Anchor QEA, who then presented an overview of the project process, area, and work plan details, referring to a slide presentation that was added to the packet materials for the meeting. Mr. Lunsford, Ms. Fitts, and City Attorney Darcy Swetnam answered council questions.

Discussion topics included:

- The affected area size is about 7 acres.
- How many hours will it take to install the water monitoring wells?
    - 1–2 wells per day for easily accessible sites, and increased time for those more difficult to access.
- Contract amount will cover all the work in the scope of work.
- Will there be additional project requirements before remediation options are presented?
    - The current contract will be through the remedial investigation report.

    - Department of Ecology will decide if a feasibility study and further cleanup is required.
- Why is this contract not separate from the Water Treatment Plant contract?
    - The master services agreement covers all services provided by Anchor QEA and staff believe the agreement is in the city's best interest.

Carolyn Moulton moved, seconded by Bruce McDougall, to authorize the mayor to sign modification to #21-024-LEG-001 with Anchor QEA.
Vote: Ayes - Carolyn Moulton, Anthony Young, Christine Cleland-McGrath, Bruce McDougall, TJ Fantini, Luke Currier. Nays - None. Abstentions - None. Result: Passed

Ward 1 City Council Applicant Interviews and Appointment

Human Resources and Labor Relations Director Kendall Moyle introduced the Ward 1 City Council Applicant interviews and appointment, explaining the interview and appointment process, referring to a slide presentation that was included in the packet materials for the meeting.

The council discussed the selection method:

- Voting and selection method.
    - Borda method.
    - Ranked choice voting.
    - Codify the method for future vacancies.
    - Ranking the top three versus top five candidates.
    - Nominating candidates to a slate for a final vote
- The recognition of the excellent qualifications of all candidates.
- Not wanting to designate someone as a number four or five ranked candidate.
- Challenging two-year term ahead.
- The process is not a substitute for the general election.
- The need for one capable councilmember.
- Difficult public decision to be made and ranked choice voting could be seen as avoiding that responsibility.
- Ranked choice voting is more well suited to elections with many electors.

Mr. Fantini moved to adopt a rule to follow ranked-choice voting as proposed in the agenda packet. The motion died for lack of a second.

Mr. Currier moved, seconded by Mr. Young, to adopt rank choice voting where each councilmember provides their top three candidates and each councilmember can discuss their choices and the clerk would enter the rankings into the online tool (RCV123.org).

Ms. Cleland McGrath moved, seconded by Mr. Fantini, to amend the main motion to have ranked choice voting whereby each councilmember would provide their top three candidates on paper to the clerk, who would then read each councilmember's choices aloud and then enter the rankings into the online tool (RCV123.org). The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

The council voted by roll-call vote on the amended motion to have ranked choice voting whereby each councilmember would provide their top three candidates on paper to the clerk, who would then read each councilmember's choices aloud and then enter the rankings into the online tool (RCV123.org).
Vote: Ayes - Anthony Young, TJ Fantini, Luke Currier. Nays - Carolyn Moulton, Christine Cleland-McGrath, Bruce McDougall. Abstentions - None. Result: Failed

Ms. Moulton moved, seconded by Mr. McDougall, to accept nominations from the bench and put together a slate of nominations and then have councilmembers vote for their top choice via paper ballot.

Mr. McDougall moved, seconded by Mr. Fantini, to amend the main motion to limit the number of nominees on the slate to three. The vote proceeded by a show of hands.
Vote: Ayes - Carolyn Moulton, Christine Cleland-McGrath, Bruce McDougall. Nays - Anthony Young, TJ Fantini, Luke Currier. Abstentions - None. Result: Failed

The council then voted by roll-call vote on the main motion to accept nominations from the bench and put together a slate of nominations and then have councilmembers vote for their top choice via paper ballot.
Vote: Ayes - Anthony Young, Carolyn Moulton, Christine Cleland-McGrath, Bruce McDougall. Nays - TJ Fantini, Luke Currier. Abstentions - None. Result: Passed

The candidates made their five-minute statements in the following order: John Gasser, Marcia Hunt, Courtney Orrock, Sarah Henry, Suzana Clements.

Each councilmember asked one follow-up question of the candidates. Each candidate had one minute to respond to the question in turn, with the order of the candidates' responses rotating with each councilmember question.

Mayor Walters announced, without objection, that the City Council would continue with the remainder of the agenda and return to this item after completing the remaining items on the agenda.

At 8:41 the council took a 10-minute recess. At 8:51, the council reconvened and moved on with the remainder of the agenda.

Resolution 3205: Updating the Unified Fee Schedule

Finance Manager Rhonda Peck introduced Resolution 3205 that would update the Unified Fee Schedule with revised fees for cemetery and permitting services. Planning, Community, and Economic Development Director John Coleman provided details regarding the fees that are relevant to Planning departmental services, referring to a slide presentation that was included in the packet materials for the meeting. Mr. Coleman and Ms. Swetnam answered councilmember questions.

Discussion topics included:

- Impact of fee changes on developers.
- Other cities' practices.
- In-house stormwater review capacity.
- Hearing Examiner recruitment process.
- The fiscal situation makes these fee changes necessary to recoup costs.

Anthony Young moved, seconded by Bruce McDougall, to approve Resolution 3205 updating the unified fee schedule.
Vote: Ayes - Carolyn Moulton, Anthony Young, Christine Cleland-McGrath, Bruce McDougall, TJ Fantini, Luke Currier. Nays - None. Abstentions - None. Result: Passed

Contract Award: 2026 Terrace Drive Utility Improvements #26-016-WTR-001

Public Works Director Logan Lee introduced the proposed contract award to SummitX Contractors for the Terrace Drive utility improvements project, referring to a slide presentation that was added to the packet materials for the meeting.

Discussion topics included:

- Appreciation for the detailed agenda bill and map, and the price being under the estimate.

Carolyn Moulton moved, seconded by Anthony Young, to authorize the mayor to sign #26-016-WTR-001 with SummitX Contractors.
Vote: Ayes - Carolyn Moulton, Anthony Young, Christine Cleland-McGrath, Bruce McDougall, TJ Fantini, Luke Currier. Nays - None. Abstentions - None. Result: Passed

Ordinance 5022: Codification of Resolutions

Ms. Swetnam introduced Ordinance 5022 that would codify city resolutions that detail policies such as personnel policies, purchasing policies, and the unified fee schedule, referring to a slide presentation that was added to the packet materials for the meeting.

Discussion topics included:

- How it will be presented to the public on the website.

TJ Fantini moved, seconded by Christine Cleland-McGrath, to adopt Ordinance 5022 regarding codification of resolutions.
Vote: Ayes - Carolyn Moulton, Anthony Young, Christine Cleland-McGrath, Bruce McDougall, TJ Fantini, Luke Currier. Nays - None. Abstentions - None. Result: Passed

Ward 1 City Council Applicant Interviews and Appointment (Resumed)

After having completed Other Business items 6.c., 6.d. and 6.e., at approximately 9:20 pm, the Council resumed consideration of the applicants for City Council Ward 1. Mayor Walters reviewed the adopted process for nominating a slate of candidates and then have councilmembers vote for their top choice via paper ballot. The council discussed the group of candidates in general.

Mayor Walters opened the floor to nominations.

Mr. Currier nominated Suzana Clements. Mr. Young nominated Sarah Henry. Ms. Moulton nominated Marcia Hunt. Mr. Fantini nominated Courtney Orrock.

Mayor Walters, without objection, closed the floor to nominations.

The council discussed how to proceed with the vote.

Mr. Fantini moved, seconded by Mr. Currier, to adopt a rule that the candidate must receive four council votes to be confirmed as Ward 1 Councilmember. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

The first vote by paper ballot produced the following results:

Vote 1	Suzana Clements	Sarah Henry	Marcia Hunt	Courtney Orrock
Luke Currier	x			
Anthony Young		x		
Christine Cleland-McGrath			x	
Carolyn Moulton			x	
Bruce McDougall			x	

TJ Fantini				x

Mr. Fantini moved, seconded by Mr. Currier, to take another vote with the rule of 4 by roll-call vote (as amended without objection by Ms. Cleland-McGrath).

The second vote by voice roll-call vote yielded the following results:

Vote 2	Suzana Clements	Sarah Henry	Marcia Hunt	Courtney Orrock
Luke Currier	x			
Anthony Young				x
Christine Cleland-McGrath			x	
Carolyn Moulton			x	
Bruce McDougall			x	
TJ Fantini	x			

Mr. Currier moved, seconded by Mr. Fantini, to take another vote with the rule of 4 by roll-call vote.

Ms. Moulton moved, seconded by Ms. Cleland-McGrath to amend the main motion to provide that the mayor would have the tie-breaking vote in case of a tie between the top two candidates.
Vote: Ayes - Carolyn Moulton, Christine Cleland-McGrath, TJ Fantini, Luke Currier, Bruce McDougall. Nays - Anthony Young. Abstentions - None. Result: Passed

The council voted on the amended motion to have each councilmember vote for one candidate on the slate by voice roll-call vote with the mayor casting the tie-breaking vote in the case of a tie between the top two candidates. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

The third vote by roll call voice vote produced the following results with Mayor Walters casting the tie-breaking vote:

Vote 3	Suzana Clements	Sarah Henry	Marcia Hunt	Courtney Orrock
Luke Currier	x			
Anthony Young	x			
Christine Cleland-McGrath			x	
Carolyn Moulton			x	
Bruce McDougall			x	
TJ Fantini	x			
Ryan Walters			x	

Marcia Hunt was selected for appointment to the Ward 1 City Council position.

Adjournment

There being no further business, at approximately 9:54 pm, the Anacortes City Council meeting of February 17, 2026, was adjourned.