

Anacortes City Council Minutes - May 11, 2026

Call to Order

Mayor Ryan Walters called to order the May 11, 2026, Anacortes City Council meeting at 6:01 p.m. Councilmembers Marcia Hunt, 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 recognized the passing of former Councilmember William Turner, who served on the council from 2006 to 2014, extending the city's condolences to his family. He then addressed an issue that affected fiber internet services to customers in Downtown, Old Town and other areas east of Anacopper over the past couple of weeks, which resulted in significant latency over the past weekend, reporting that an optical line terminal located in the library experienced a fault. He announced that staff had worked diligently to isolate and correct the problem, recommending that customers should reboot their fiber equipment should they experience any additional service interruption. He then pledged that replacement equipment would be ordered as soon as possible to enhance system redundancy and that he would work closely with staff and the Fiber Committee to improve communication regarding fiber service to mitigate similar future challenges. He concluded by apologizing to all those users, especially businesses, whose operations were affected by the outage.

Housing Affordability and Community Services and Planning Committee

Ms. Moulton reported from the Housing Affordability and Community Services and Planning Committee meeting held earlier in the evening. The topics discussed included the Shoreline Master Program update and the public participation plan that will be coming back before the council for the first time since 2022 after being considered by the Planning Commission at its May 12th regular meeting. Other activities associated with the update would include an open house during the Planning Commission meeting on June 9, 2026, and a public hearing. She added that the Shoreline Management Act emphasizes public access to the shoreline and business access for water-dependent businesses. The committee also discussed the critical areas ordinance update, and the proposed hiring of a consultant to ensure that both initiatives are accomplished with the best available science.

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

a. Minutes of May 4, 2026

b. Approval of claims in the amount of \$318,252.36

The following vouchers/checks were approved for payment:

EFT numbers: 115530 through 115572, total \$252,667.76

Check numbers: 115573 through 115585, total \$50,073.61

Wire transfer numbers: 388357 through 388601, total \$15,510.99

c. Special Event: Anacortes Arts Festival

Other Business

Anacortes Arts Commission Update

Parks and Recreation Director Jonn Lunsford introduced Anacortes Arts Commissioners Todd Young and Kami Bratten, who provided an update on the Anacortes Arts Commission, referring to a slide presentation that was included in the packet materials for the meeting. Mayor Walters announced that he had appointed Joanie Schwartz to the Arts Commission.

Discussion topics included:

- The art community punches above its weight, and the art displayed around the city is noticed.
- Bringing a [NW Troll](#) to Anacortes.
- The commission continues to explore ways to market all art forms in the community.
- The Arts Commission is working with the Downtown Anacortes Alliance for the Downtown Streetscapes initiative.
- Appreciation for the push to include the performing arts.
- Origin of the Luminary Light Parade and the Procession of the Species

Ordinance 5030: Arts Commission

Mr. Lunsford introduced Ordinance 5030 that would codify the Arts Commission, referring to a slide presentation that was added to the packet materials for the meeting.

Discussion topics included:

- Setting up an obvious place to allow individuals to donate or leave a bequest.
- Rules around the establishment of a fund.
- Important to publicly acknowledge the work that is being done in the arts, regardless of the fiscal environment.
- Goals of the commission for public display of art installations.
- A re-invigoration of the relationship with the Anacortes Arts Festival.
- How to balance the different entities that are proponents of the arts and prevent duplication of efforts.
- How to encourage more performing and literary art.
- Voice and Verse, an initiative on how to bring poetry or songwriting to the community in a performative setting that is supported by the city.
- Having two students on the commission and their voting rights.
 - It is difficult to find and retain students who would consistently participate.
 - The commission can always come back to the council to make changes if needed.
 - Getting young people involved as artists.
 - Conditional participation of up to two students.
 - No mention of the grade level of student and a change of pronoun to 'their'.

Mayor Walters announced, without objection, that the ordinance would be brought back to the council for approval on the consent agenda at the next regular meeting.

Ordinance 5029: Anacortes Community Forest Lands

Mr. Lunsford re-introduced Ordinance 5029 that would amend [Anacortes Municipal Code Chapter 8.10](#) regarding enforcement of city ordinances and regulations and create AMC Chapter 12.18 regarding the Anacortes Community Forest Lands, referring to a slide presentation that was added to the packet materials for the meeting. Mr. Lunsford and Assistant Parks and Recreation Director Bob Vaux answered questions from the council.

Discussion topics included:

- How the public will be notified of the changes to the code.
 - Signage (required by the ordinance), the Forest Advisory Board, staff, the *Anacortes American*, word of mouth, the Trail Ambassador program with the Friends of the Community Forest Lands.

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

Wim Houppermans of Anacortes asked for clarification regarding the building of structures in the Anacortes Community Forest Lands. Mayor Walters responded that the conservation easement for individual parcels would restrict the execution of capital projects, and that any necessary projects for area maintenance, such as roads, would need to be approved by the City Council through the annual Capital Facilities Plan process, which requires a public hearing and public comment period.

TJ Fantini moved, seconded by Carolyn Moulton, to approve Ordinance 5029 as presented.

Vote: Ayes - Carolyn Moulton, Anthony Young, Christine Cleland-McGrath, Bruce McDougall, TJ Fantini, Luke Currier, Marcia Hunt. Nays - None. Abstentions - None. Result: Passed

Resolution 3215: Updating the Unified Fee Schedule

Finance Manager Rhonda Peck introduced Resolution 3215 that would update the Unified Fee Schedule for new fees for niches and modified 'Green Burial' fees for Grand View Cemetery; updated fees for planning appeals items related to the Hearing Examiner and Engineering and Development; and incorporating existing fees for Museum, Library, public records requests, and the Police Department; referring to a slide presentation that was included in the packet materials for the meeting.

Discussion topics included:

- The fees cover the costs of the police transporting impounded animals.
- New public records request fees are for digital production and transmission.
- Right-of-way fees affect current projects.
- Inclusion of these fees as part of a discussion of revenue budgeting for the following fiscal year.
- The fee schedule will be revised again to pull permitting fees that are currently specified in the municipal code and will be reformatted to be posted on the [Code Publishing website](#).

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

Wim Houppermans of Anacortes asked about the fees associated with code enforcement that are not enforced and asked for clarification regarding the removal of the note for Hearing Examiner fees for denied appeals.

Planning, Community, and Economic Development Director John Coleman responded that these fees do not apply to those who submit a request for code enforcement but to someone who appeals a code enforcement decision to the Hearing Examiner, and that the fees associated with the Hearing Examiner are now factored in to each type of appeal based on an estimate of how much time the hearing examiner would take on the type of appeal. Mayor Walters added that it provides more certainty about the fees to the appellant and that the city had compared these fees to other jurisdictions in Skagit County, and they remain lower than those of Skagit County.

Marcia Hunt moved, seconded by TJ Fantini, to approve Resolution 3215 updating the Unified Fee Schedule as presented. The motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

Resolution 3216: Adopting Hearing Examiner Procedures

City Attorney Darcy Swetnam introduced Resolution 3216 that would adopt procedures for the city's Hearing Examiner services as provided by Laminar Law under contract [26-134-LEG-001](#) with Laminar Law for Hearing Examiner services that the council approved at the April 6, 2026, regular meeting, referring to a slide presentation that was added to the packet materials for the meeting.

Discussion topics included:

- Section 1.8.3 Withdrawal of an application — who would have the authority to refund the permit fees?
 - Planning Director – it should be spelled out.
- The ability of the council to change the procedures as necessary to ensure stability through any change in the Hearing Examiner.
- Procedures have been used successfully in other jurisdictions and have been adjusted to the AMC.

Mayor Walters announced, without objection, that the resolution would be placed on the consent agenda for approval at the next regular meeting.

Adjournment

There being no further business, at approximately 7:13 pm, the Anacortes City Council meeting of May 11, 2026, was adjourned.