

Langley City Council Meeting Minutes

December 6, 2010

Mayor Samuelson called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM. Present were City Council Members Robert Gilman, Rene Neff, Fran Abel and Bob Waterman. Also present were Director of Planning, Larry Cort; Director of Public Works, Challis Stringer; Planner Fred Evander; and Director of Finance/City Clerk, Debbie Mahler. The flag salute was led by Council Member Gilman.

MOTION: To approve the Consent Agenda. Motion - Waterman, 2nd - Gilman. Motion carried unanimously.

CONSENT AGENDA

- a. Council Meeting Minutes – November 15, 2010
- b. Claims Warrants Nos. 27167-27166, 27198-27199, 27227, 27254-27257, 27262-27282 in the amount of \$39,038.00
- c. Approval of Agenda

COUNCIL REPORTS

Rene Neff reported that a Cemetery Board meeting was held this morning and they are discussing raising the fee for plots. She will come back to Council with a proposal in the near future. Rene also reported that Sharon Hart resigned as director of the Economic Development Council.

Bob Waterman reported that a presentation will be held at the Methodist Church on December 9th at 7 PM – “When Women Ran Langley”, regarding the all women Council and Mayor in 1919 and the lives of these women and their affect of Langley.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Larry Cort reported that Langley Passage is working through process, Shoreline Master Plan working on update, met with County’s shoreline planner and with Oak Harbor’s planner. Fred is working on the mapping and a public participation strategy. They will put together a citizen advisory committee in the 1st quarter of 2011.

Debbie Mahler passed out financial reports for the month of October and went over the fund budgets.

Challis Stringer reported that a pre-planning meeting with Department of Health on the water comprehensive plan has been rescheduled to January.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

Marianne Edain of WEAN, expressed her concern that there are three unfinished developments in the city, and she would like to propose that when large projects are approved, the city require a “put it to bed bond” to make sure the project is finished in good condition.

Kim Tiller of Whidbey Soap Co., announced that a Mainstreet program state coordinator will be here Wednesday, January 12th at the United Methodist Church at 6:30 to talk about the program. She urged all concerned about the economic development of Langlely to attend.

OLD BUSINESS

PUBLIC HEARING – 2011 BUDGET

Mayor Samuelson opened the public hearing at 5:48 PM and outlined the issues to be covered in the hearing. Finance Director Debbie Mahler explained how the City’s budget works, where revenues come from in each fund and how the numbers in the budget were arrived at. Debbie explained the Council’s goal of 10% of fund cash carryover balance and what the finance committee has done to reach that goal. She also gave a history of the fund’s cash carryover for the last 18 years. Debbie then explained the services that are performed by the Finance and Records department and the current and past staffing levels.

Larry Cort, Director of Planning explained the mandated and essential services of the planning and building department. Larry explained that in his 20 years in the planning arena, many mandates have been added, with planning becoming more complex over time. The City is staffed by 2 full time planners and a half time building official. The department does generate revenue from land use and building fees.

Bob Herzberg, Chief of Police gave a report on the history of the City’s police department, the services that they provide, current staffing levels and how their budget is spent. Services are provided 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days per year. Bob explained the social services and law enforcement services provided.

Challis Stringer, Director of Public Works explained what services are provided by the public works department and the funds which support them. She went through the staffing levels currently and historically. She explained that engineering has been cut to ½ of its historical cost and the contracts for water and sewer service were eliminated and are now being done by public works employees who have all been cross trained in all the tasks of the department.

Rene Neff stated that she feels that the tree trimming and parks department transfers in the Tourism fund should be taken out and expended from the public works or general

funds. Rene would like to approve the \$2,500 proposal from the Whidbey Children's Theater from the Tourism funds. Rene would like to see more resources allotted from tourism to the landscaping at the Visitor Information Center/Chamber office and to allot more money to the Chamber for promoting Langley as a destination. She also feels that the Tourism fund should pay for police and public works services provided to special events such as Choochokum and Mystery Weekend.

Bob Waterman also feels that the tree trimming and parks should not be funded from Tourism and that if the Main Street Program is implemented in Langley that Tourism funds could possibly be allotted to that. Bob also agreed that funding the Whidbey Children's Theater would be money well spent. Fran Abel feels the rent we charge the Chamber for the use of the Visitor Information Center is very low and that if the rent is raised which is paid to general fund; the tourism fund can pay more to Chamber for services. She also supports Whidbey Children's Theater. Robert Gilman would also like to remove parks and tree trimming from the tourism fund, and wants to take the time to figure out how the city can support the Main Street Program. He would prefer to not be too quick to allocate funds removed from parks and tree trimming, but possibly amend the budget in 2011 when the city knows more about the program.

Fran Abel asked for details of the expenditures for planning in the street grant. Larry Cort explained what services would be provided by the planning department. Project management services, public outreach efforts to find the best design for the commercial, pedestrian and public aspects of the Second Street project, engineering design, bid documents, etc. Fran Abel asked Chief Herzberg if he has looked into the makeup of the city, i.e. if certain services are more necessary for a retired population, etc. Chief Herzberg explained that the daytime population is often very different and the police department needs to cover 168 hours per week, regardless of the activity or number of calls during a given time.

Robert Gilman appreciated the staff presentations. Robert was concerned about reducing the General fund transfer of \$40,000 to the Street Fund and asked Challis how the streets will be maintained without it. Challis explained that this is a one year reduction and she would like to put it back into the budget in future years and used or saved for street projects. Robert is also concerned about the lowered expenditures in the parks department and how the parks will be maintained. Challis is hoping to get some volunteers to help with parks maintenance, but feels there are sufficient funds in parks to maintain them for the year. Robert would like to add funds to pay a part-time volunteer coordinator. Robert suggested three areas for getting funds for parks – 1) Bob Herzberg retire sooner 2) the timing of the transition in planning and when the city goes below two planners 3) salaries could be reduced; he suggested exempting the first \$50,000 of compensation and reducing salaries by a percentage thereafter. Bob Waterman is concerned about the legal fees in the budget and whether we have budgeted enough if the wealth of public

disclosure requests continues. Sustainability, low energy, vehicles, and police bike patrols were also discussed.

At 7:55 PM a recess was held and the meeting reconvened at 8:05. Kim Tiller stated that when the City allocates tourism money to an agency, that agency must document the tourists they bring in from more than 50 miles away. Kim also mentioned that many cities have a citizen committee comprised of stakeholders in the community to recommend allocations from the fund. Kim also stated that she has volunteered to do weeding and landscaping upkeep at the Visitor Information Center and thinks we could get more volunteers to do that kind of work instead of spending money on it. Kim Tiller feels the Chamber does not need to be located in the Visitor Information Center and suggested that the committee working on signage may be able to help find funding for the highway signs. Marianne Edain mentioned reinstating volunteers at the front desk of city hall, which would help free up money for a volunteer coordinator. Leanne Finley thinks Whidbey Children's Theater is a viable service, but thinks the funding should be tabled until the City considers funding the Main Street program.

Stacy Burgia, Executive Director of Whidbey Island Center for the Arts (WICA) explained some of the promotions and programs offered by WICA. She stated that over 50% of their outreach is off island. Marketing dollars are 20% of their budget. Kathleen Waters stated that she finds it odd that the city is not looking at employee benefits package reductions instead of reducing salaries. Rolph Seitle asked how operating transfers were calculated and expressed his feeling that fuel and maintenance costs for police cars seem high to him.

Rene Neff wants to look at cutting employee benefits. She also wants to reduce any wages over the top wage scale in the city's pay resolution and eliminate the policy of 1-3% increases to annual salaries. Robert Gilman agreed.

MOTION: To bring to a first reading, an Ordinance adopting the 2011 Operating Budget in the amount of \$4,567,070. Motion - Waterman, 2nd - Neff. Motion passed unanimously. The public hearing was closed at 8:38.

NEW BUSINESS

MOTION: To bring to a first reading, a Resolution amending the Municipal Code Fee Schedule. Motion - Waterman, 2nd - Neff. MaryJo McArdle does not feel the building permit fees are clearly identified as they are not in the municipal code fee schedule and should be added with detail that makes it very

transparent as to what people are paying for when they receive a building permit. Barbara Seitle asked why the land use fees are separate. Larry Cort explained why they are identified in a separate schedule. Motion carried with all in favor.

MOTION: To bring to a first reading, an Ordinance amending the Capital Facilities Element of the Langley Comprehensive Plan. Motion - Gilman, 2nd - Waterman. Larry Cort explained the proposed upgrade to the capital improvement program within the Comp Plan. The definition of “capital improvement” was amended to include more than a monetary test. The Planning Advisory Board has held two workshops and a public hearing on this issue. Discussion on the construction of the CMA/City parking lot ensued for some time. Marian Edain stated the appraiser showed the value to the city was \$100,000 and the cost is \$480,000. She doesn’t think it is a good bang for the buck. Leanne Finlay thinks this project should have proceeded long ago. MaryJo McArdle asked if grading was proposed before the paving takes place. Challis said yes in some areas. Mary Jo suggested establishing an assurance bond for installation of landscaping and a 3-4 year maintenance agreement on the riparian corridor, and to also include the crosswalk at the NW corner to Cascade. Chris Jerome stated this project has been affirmed many times and there is nothing to warrant changing our minds at this time. Motion was approved.

MOTION: To adjourn the meeting at 9:55 PM. Motion – Waterman, 2nd – Neff. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie L. Mahler, Director of Finance/City Clerk