

September 27, 2010

The Chehalis city council met in regular session on Monday, September 27, 2010, in the Chehalis city hall. Mayor Ketchum called the meeting to order at 5:20 p.m. with the following council members present: Terry Harris, Dr. Isaac Pope, Bob Spahr, Daryl Lund, and Dennis Dawes. Councilor Taylor was absent (excused). Staff present included: Merlin MacReynold, City Manager; Bill Hillier, City Attorney; and Judy Schave, City Clerk.

1. **Executive Session.** Mayor Ketchum announced the council would be in executive session pursuant to RCW 42.30.140(4)(a) – collective bargaining for approximately 45 minutes and there would be no decision following conclusion of the executive session.

Mayor Ketchum announced the council would take a five minute recess at 6:01 p.m. before reopening the regular meeting at 6:06 p.m. Additional staff included: Glenn Schaffer, Police Chief; Larry Allen, Assistant Fire Chief/Fire Marshal; Eva Lindgren, Finance Manager; Bob Nacht, Community Development Director; Andy Sennes, Property Manager; and Judi Smith, Public Works Office Manager. Members of the news media included Paul Walker from KITI.

2. **Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Levy.** Kevin Reynolds (1915 SE Maple Drive, Chehalis) thanked City Manager MacReynold for responding to his questions from the last council meeting. He noted he didn't necessarily agree with all of the responses; however, he appreciated the fact that City Manager MacReynold took the time to get back to him.

Mr. Reynolds stated, as a citizen, he was curious as to the council's resistance to raising the EMS levy. He felt the city should raise the amount collected on the levy to a reasonable amount to provide for the current 13 fire fighters. Mr. Reynolds reported he went through all of the literature that was handed out prior to the election and concluded they sold the levy on the fact that it would maintain the current level of service. He noted the literature stated several times they were only taking .36 cents for the past calendar year, and mentioned just as many times the cap on the levy was .50 cents per thousand.

Mr. Reynolds reported the Chehalis EMS levy collection rates from 2004 to 2010 ranged from .36 cents to a little over .48 cents. He felt the variation reflected the needs of the department and the citizens. Mr. Reynolds believed with the current call volumes and stress level being put on services citywide, it would only make sense to increase the amount of the budget to whatever was necessary to meet the needs. He reported in reviewing minutes from past council meetings in 2009, there were a couple of quotes by the council that supported the need to budget what was necessary, and as a citizen and taxpayer, he felt the council should budget as much city services as they could get, especially police and EMS.

Mr. Reynolds stated it had become apparent to him that there was a disconnect between the department and what the city council needed to know. He invited the council to come down to visit them either through their chief, or City Manager MacReynold. Mr. Reynolds stated they would be happy to show the council the numbers, what they do every day, and how it impacts the citizens.

Councilor Pope stated he appreciated Mr. Reynolds making his presentation in such a professional and understandable manner.

Councilor Spahr stated he appreciated Mr. Reynolds passion and commitment, as well. He explained the council could not raise the levy for 2010 and they were just beginning the budget process for 2011, and any increase would take affect in 2011. Mr. Reynolds stated that was understood, adding because the council was not going to be having as many meetings this year to discuss the budget, he felt it was paramount to inform people before the budget was finalized.

Councilor Dawes responded to what Mr. Reynolds quoted him as saying in previous year minutes, noting, as a member of the budget committee, when giving input he was not only looking at next year's budget, but was also looking down the road. He stated fire equipment was very expensive and fortunately they only had to replace it every few years. Councilor Dawes indicated his position on the budget committee was to try to figure out how much was needed each year, adding if they take too much too soon and need something down the road, they might not have anything left.

Councilor Dawes stated, while it would be nice to just look at one department, there were other departments within the city that also do important work for various services the city provides. He believed our country and our city had been hit with something that it hasn't been faced with since the great depression.

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Councilor Dawes stated he too appreciated the fact that Mr. Reynolds was willing to come up and discuss it, adding he was well aware of what their intention and desire was and the budget committee would take that into consideration.

3. **Introductions.** Mayor Ketchum introduced Boy Scout Ethan Lund from Troop #373. Mr. Lund stated he was attending the council meeting to earn his 'Citizenship in the Community' merit badge.

4. **Employee Service Award.** Mayor Ketchum presented an award to Property Manager Andy Sennes for 25 years of service to the city. Bob Nacht talked briefly about the projects and partnerships Mr. Sennes had been involved with over the last 25 years. Councilor Dawes noted he had the pleasure of working with Mr. Sennes for 19 years as a fellow staff member, adding Mr. Sennes was truly missed by the staff and the people he worked with. He stated Mr. Sennes had tremendous organizational skills and the ability to get things done.

5. **Proclamations.**

a. **Domestic Violence Awareness Month – October 2010.** Mayor Ketchum presented Emily Marecle, Domestic Violence Program Manager from Human Response Network, a proclamation declaring the month of October as "Domestic Violence Awareness Month" in the city of Chehalis.

b. **Fire Prevention Week – October 3-9, 2010.** Mayor Ketchum presented Larry Allen with a proclamation declaring October 3-9, 2010, as "Fire Prevention Week" in the city of Chehalis.

6. **Consent Calendar.** Councilor Dawes moved to approve the consent calendar comprised of the following:

a. Minutes of the special meeting of August 30, 2010, and the regular meeting of September 13, 2010; and

b. Claim Vouchers No. 97914-98046 and 82010 in the amount of \$428,414.61 dated September 15, 2010.

The motion was seconded by Councilor Spahr and carried unanimously.

7. **Staff Reports.**

a. **August Financial Report.** Eva Lindgren gave a brief update on the August financial report, noting she highlighted the more significant variances of the revenues and expenditures. She offered to answer any questions the council might have.

Councilor Harris inquired about the net budget income in both the water and wastewater funds, noting they were both coming up short in revenue. Ms. Lindgren noted the wastewater fees, sewer connections and miscellaneous fees were close to what they expected to receive in the wastewater fund. She indicated the bottom line total revenue variance from the expected revenue was being driven by the fact that the city had not yet issued the debt to repay the interfund loans.

Ms. Lindgren reported, with reference to the water fund, they did not have a great estimate on connection fees and did not expect them to come in at what was budgeted for 2010. She noted she had discussed the issue with the public works director, adding he and his staff had been more involved in generating the estimates for 2011.

Councilor Harris stated the reason he brought it up was because the city was hurting financially. He felt it wouldn't do any good to reduce workforce in the revenue earning departments; however, the current numbers in the utilities were a little scary, considering they were self-generating. Councilor Harris reported he would hate to think they would have to raise revenues or reduce staff in those areas. He noted the funds that always seemed stable were not as stable as he would like to see them.

Ms. Lindgren reported the city had not instituted any of the proposed rate increases, adding the council had been very reluctant to do so for obvious reasons. She reported they also had some very large debt service with the wastewater fund, which was drawing down the fund balance. Ms. Lindgren noted by budgeting for the interfund principal repayment it made the fund look okay for the year; however, the debt had not yet been issued.

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City Manager MacReynold stated the city had no choice but to build the new wastewater treatment plant. He stated it was expensive, but long-term it was an investment for the city.

Councilor Dawes stated when they do the budget committee formulation he hoped they would come out with a timeline to start paying back the interfund loan between the two enterprise funds and the general fund.

Councilor Lund felt just because the utility funds had money coming in didn't mean they could spend all they want, and suggested they take a look at what they're spending money on. Mayor Ketchum noted Councilor Lund had a good point.

b. **Update on Website Design Project.** City Manager MacReynold reported the website project was funded through the tourism fund, adding it was a tool in modern communication with how we promote our city and provide information for our citizens.

Judy Schave reported in May 2010 the council awarded the website re-design project to Aha Consulting, Inc., and estimated the cost to be around \$15,350. She noted the cost of the project would end up being closer to \$15,100. Ms. Schave reported a team of city staff was put together to work with Aha Consulting President Brian Gilday to design the new website, which included a one-day design workshop and one-day training session. She reported, in mid-June, the team started adding real content to the site, such as: department information, forms, links, photos, etc.

Ms. Schave walked the council through the content of the new site, which included the new city logo and tagline, department information, and information for residents, visitors, and business. She noted the middle navigation bar included several items, such as: agendas and minutes for city council meetings and various city board and commission meetings; a calendar for upcoming events and meetings; documents; forms; job announcements; a quick link to parks & recreation; and the Renaissance. Ms. Schave noted the home page and each of the department micro-sites could have up to five "headline" stories and ten "Key Topics" each. The new site also included an area for current weather, news and press releases, and a listing of the most recent upcoming community events and/or city meetings.

Councilor Dawes stated in the process of talking about a new website they discussed giving residents the ability to go on-line to get forms and to provide services, such as on-line payments. He asked if the site would be set up in a secure way for residents to charge their utility bill to their VISA card, or such. Ms. Schave noted they had a drop-down link under "Residents" for on-line 'utility type' payments; however, until they had a vendor in place to take utility payments, that option would not be available. Councilor Dawes stated he just wanted to see the city get to a point of when they expend money into a project that they get the most usefulness out of it. He noted he was hoping that would be where we were at, or where we were going. Ms. Schave noted it was certainly where they were headed. She pointed out that municipal court's micro-site had a link to the 'Official Payments' site for visitors to make on-line payments for court fines, and such. It was noted parks and recreation used the same site to take on-line payments for recreation programs. Ms. Schave stated it was their intent to make the site more user friendly for residents and visitors, and to offer options like on-line payments and auto-forms.

Ms. Schave reported staff was also in the process of making new banners for the home page, and for each department. Councilor Dawes suggested they rotate the banner on the homepage for the various events and/or seasonally. She stated Deputy Police Chief Randy Kaut was actually the one working on the banners, noting he was very good at it.

c. **Neighborhood Meeting – October 18, 2010.** City Manager MacReynold reported, based on the number of concerns and complaints the city had received with reference to American Behavioral Health Systems, staff would be hosting a neighborhood meeting on October 18 to give citizens and city staff an opportunity to raise their concerns. He noted the meeting would take place in the city hall basement meeting room sometime after 5 p.m., and the director from the Spokane facility and the Chehalis facility would be at the meeting. City Manager MacReynold noted a flyer would be mailed out to invite all of the residents and property owners in the area of the facility to the meeting.

Councilor Dawes asked if the council could be given information on the concerns and types of complaints, since he had not received any calls, personally. He added the only time he'd seen the individuals was when they were out walking in a group, to go to the park and back.

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8. Council Reports.

a. **Meetings and Events Attended by Councilor Dawes.** Councilor Dawes reported he attended a meeting with the District 6 Commissioners on the 14th; noting Mayor Ketchum and Councilor Spahr were also in attendance. He stated they gave direction to the chiefs to look to see where things could possibly go.

Councilor Dawes reported he and Mayor Ketchum also attended the 4th Annual Tour DaVita Bike Ride held at Stan Hedwall Park, adding it was quite an event and very well organized. He stated the event was put on by DaVida, the company that provides kidney dialysis up at the hospital site. Councilor Dawes reported they were a nationwide company and each year they picked a state to hold their event in, and this year it just happened to be Washington.

Councilor Dawes reported on September 22, at the invitation of the Chehalis Rotary, he and Mayor Ketchum stopped in to see the restroom project at the Scout Lodge. He indicated it was a very nice project and very well done.

b. **Update on Meetings Attended by Councilor Harris.** Councilor Harris reported the Chehalis Basin Partnership met the previous Friday, and Dan Davidson from the Department of Ecology presented information on reclaiming water, water rights, and usage.

Councilor Harris reported the flood authority requested the basin partnership be at their October 7 meeting, noting there seemed to be some communication that needed to be clarified with reference to flooding and projects the partnership had going on. He noted it basically had to do with the general investigation study. Councilor Harris stated even though there were a lot of challenges, the United States Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) was set to move on the levees.

Councilor Harris reported he also attended the Chehalis Business Association meeting, and talked briefly about a few of their upcoming events.

Councilor Harris reported the Department of Revenue sent out information about the streamlined sales tax mitigation and, according to the report, the city should have received eight litigation payments by now with losses as much as \$400,000 a year. He reported it was pretty amazing to see how much they were paying out to the cities and counties that had lost revenue, adding the dollars didn't add up anywhere near what the mitigation should be. Councilor Harris reported the information provided stated, "The department, at the advice of the Mitigation Advisory Committee, implements a \$25 threshold on mitigation payments. Any jurisdiction with a net loss less than \$25 would not receive a payment." He indicated he found it hard to believe they were watching it down to the \$25 limit with as much as we are all hurting and as little as they are paying out in mitigation.

c. **Chehalis Foundation.** Councilor Pope reported the Chehalis Foundation agreed to assist with plaques for all the buildings on the Chehalis walking tour. He noted the plaques would include the city logo and information about each of the buildings.

d. **Meetings and Events Attended by Mayor Ketchum.** Mayor Ketchum reported he attended the following meetings and events:

- September 14 – attended the Fire District 6 meeting
- September 15 – attended the Chehalis-Centralia Airport Board meeting
- September 16 – attended Business After Hours at the Lewis County Historical Museum
- September 17 – attended Constitutional Day at Washington Park in downtown Centralia
- September 17 – attended the ARTrails opening event at the Centralia Train Depot
- September 20 – attended the DaVida dinner at Stan Hedwall Park
- September 22 – stopped in at the Scout Lodge to see the new restrooms project by the Chehalis Rotary
- September 23 – attended the Corps project presentation at the Centralia Middle School

Mayor Ketchum reported on the Corps meeting, noting he believed the report they received was the same report they received back in January, adding he didn't know what they had accomplished since then. He stated the Corps wouldn't give any answers, and the information provided suggested the following:

- the levees they plan to build were not 100-year levees
- the levees may fix the freeway in Chehalis, but there were two other areas along I-5 that would still flood
- Kresky Avenue and National Avenue would flood worse
- Mellen Street would also flood worse, and shut down access to the hospital

Mayor Ketchum reported they had people at the meeting to give the demonstration, but no representatives in authority to answer any of the questions. He stated it was very frustrating and when a couple of people became aggressive, the meeting got very tense. Mayor Ketchum felt the next two meetings were probably going to be a lot worse since those were the people the Corps would be pushing the water onto.

9. **Lodging Tax Advisory Committee (LTAC) Recommendation – Special Request for Funding.** Councilor Harris reported the Lodging Tax Advisory Committee held a special meeting to re-direct some money that was to go to the Spring Home Tour, which had been cancelled. He introduced Lynn Ford from the Visiting Nurses Foundation to talk about the new project.

Ms. Ford reported the neighborhood they were working with decided to cancel the Spring Home Tour and do their own Christmas Tour this year.

Ms. Ford reported, in talking with Debbie Knapp at the Lewis County Historical Museum, she found out about the 100th anniversary for women's right to vote in Washington State. This prompted her and Ms. Knapp to look at doing something to recognize the 100th anniversary here in Lewis County.

Ms. Ford reported the project would involve a traveling exhibit from the Washington State Nursing Centennial Consortium from November 1 to December 15 at the Lewis County Historical Museum. She noted, in 1910 the same Washington State legislature that gave women the right to vote also approved the Nurses Practice Act that gave legally recognized graduates of nursing schools recognition as "Registered Nurses."

Ms. Ford noted she spoke with the Veterans Memorial Museum who traditionally targeted women in the military, and they would have some displays set up, as well. She noted the Veterans Memorial Museum would be partnering with them and giving a reduced rate the same weekend.

Ms. Ford noted other events on November 20 and 21 would include:

- a Pink Tea with a keynote speaker, tentatively at the Washington Hotel or the Lewis County Historical Museum
- a skit on the McKinley Stump called "Failure is Impossible"
- Sunday Brunch on the Steam Train
- a showing at the Chehalis Theater called "Iron Jawed Angels"

Ms. Ford reported they were hoping to receive \$2,500 from the hotel/motel tax money to promote the event.

Councilor Harris moved that the council approve the recommendation of the LTAC for the Visiting Nurses Foundation and Lewis County Historical Museum to use the \$2,500 that was to be used for the Spring Home Tour to be used for the Women's Suffrage Event.

The motion was seconded by Councilor Pope and carried unanimously.

Councilor Harris thanked the LTAC for always taking time out of their busy schedule to get together.

10. **Ordinance No. 859-B – First and Final Reading – Amending Ordinance No. 841-B.** Becky Fox reported when they passed Ordinance No. 841-B in December 2008 there was a Scribner's error in Section 240 of Title 7.04 that was repealed. She noted Ordinance No. 859-B would amend 841-B to include Section 240 of Title 7.

Councilor Dawes moved that the council suspend the rules requiring two readings of an ordinance.

The motion was seconded by Councilor Spahr and carried unanimously.

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Councilor Dawes moved to pass Ordinance No. 859-B on first and final reading.

The motion was seconded by Councilor Spahr and carried unanimously.

11. **Update on Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) Maps.** Mayor Ketchum reported, in response to a letter sent to Senator Patty Murray's Office regarding support to hold off on the release of the FEMA maps and to continue to put pressure on FEMA to provide information the city needed, the city received a phone call from Sean Murphy apologizing for his actions and attitude at the meeting held the previous week to discuss the matter. Mayor Ketchum reported through the rumor mill he had heard Senator Murray's Office had agreed to send the letter of support. He noted they also sent a letter to *The Chronicle*, but to date they had not printed it.

There being no further business to come before the council, the meeting adjourned a 7:29 p.m.

Mayor

Attest:

City Clerk

SUGGESTED MOTION

I move that the council approve the minutes of the regular city council meeting of September 27, 2010.