

May 28, 2013

The Chehalis city council met in regular session on Tuesday, May 28, 2013, in the Chehalis city hall. Mayor Ketchum called the meeting to order at 5:29 p.m. with the following council members present: Terry Harris, Dr. Isaac Pope, Bob Spahr, Daryl Lund, Chad Taylor, and Dennis Dawes. Staff present included: Merlin MacReynold, City Manager; Bill Hillier, City Attorney; Judy Schave, City Clerk; Glenn Schaffer, Police Chief; Eva Lindgren, Finance Manager; Herta Fairbanks, Public Works Director; and Rick Sahlin, Street Superintendent. Members of the media included Kyle Spurr from *The Chronicle* and Christina Crea from *Business to Business*.

1. Work Session – 2013-2015 Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) Transit Grant Award and Proposed Changes to Service Levels. Twin Transit General Manager Rob LaFontaine reported, last September, he came before the council to share their six-year transit development plan that outlined their anticipated revenues, services and potential grant needs. He noted he was seeking direction from his board members and input from the respective councils and commissions on what the next move would be for Twin Transit.

Mr. LaFontaine gave a brief update on the current state of Twin Transit and shared the results of the 2013-2015 WSDOT grant awards. He advised the council that the Twin Transit Board was considering a 10 to 25 percent reduction in service.

Mr. LaFontaine reported on the 2013-2015 grant strategy, noting they requested \$1,406,766 in operating grant funding and \$313,177 in capital grant funding. He was disappointed that they only received funding from the operating grant in the amount of \$930,000. Mr. LaFontaine reported the revenue was insufficient to continue to meet their forecasted expenses and current hours of service (31,148). He noted the forecasted revenues for the next two years supported approximately 23,400 hours of bus service each year. Mr. LaFontaine provided the following potential courses of action that he presented to the Twin Transit Board:

- Cut service hours to approximately 20,280
- Cut service hours to approximately 23,400
- Cut service hours to approximately 28,080 and don't fund the capital account
- Maintain existing services levels and increase revenue
- Cut service hours to approximately 26,500 and fund the capital account at 50 percent

Mr. LaFontaine presented the following six scenarios, based on the potential courses of action:

Scenario 1 – Reduce service hours to +/- 20,280

- 35% reduction in services hours
- Would require 94% of forecasted revenue
- Capital fund would be fully funded

Scenario 2 – Reduce service hours to +/- 23,400

- 25% reduction in service hours
- Would require 101% of forecasted revenue
- Capital fund would be fully funded

Scenario 3 – Reduce services hours to +/- 28,080

- 10% reduction in service hours
- Would require 99% of forecasted revenue
- Capital fund would not be fully funded

Scenario 4 – Maintain existing service and use fund balance

- Operating fund balance would be depleted in early/mid 2015
- Would require 105% of forecasted revenues
- Capital fund would not be funded

Scenario 5 – Maintain existing service and increase revenues

- .01% local sales tax would provide \$667,246.82

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- Service would require 86% of forecasted revenue
- Capital fund would be fully funded

Scenario 6 – Reduce service hours to +/- 26,500

- 16% reduction in service hours
- Would require 99% of forecasted revenue
- Capital fund would be funded at 50%

Councilor Harris asked how the union employees would be affected if they cut service hours. Mr. LaFontaine stated they would have some flexibility if they only make changes in the Monday through Friday routes.

Councilor Spahr stated it would be helpful to know what the ridership is for the various routes. Mr. LaFontaine stated he would provide that information.

Mr. LaFontaine stated they were going to have to look at the amount of service they can afford to provide and how to apply the hours.

Mr. Spahr thought the bigger question was how much are the people willing to pay who use the service.

Councilor Dawes suggested there were two factors: were the taxpayers going to subsidize it more; and, are the riders going to want to share more in the costs. He felt the general answer for both was no, adding nobody wants to raise taxes and nobody wants to pay more to ride the bus.

Councilor Taylor reported the Board received ridership reports every month and thought it was probably safe to say that they serve fewer than 1,500. Mr. LaFontaine stated they didn't really know because they base the ridership on boardings. He suggested they could probably estimate the number based on bus pass sales.

Councilor Dawes asked Mr. LaFontaine what the staffing level was when he arrived. Mr. LaFontaine stated they were currently at the same level. Councilor Dawes suggested if they were going to reduce services up to 33 percent they should consider looking at the staffing levels first, to make sure everyone is absolutely needed. He also suggested they look at how useful some of the routes are, such as the Grand Mound route.

Councilor Dawes reported there was a rumor going around about a proposal to look at providing service to Olympia. He stated he would not be in favor even if they received grant money to do it, adding he felt it would be sending the wrong message.

Councilor Dawes talked briefly about capital purchases and suggested they look at other vehicles rather than the Gillig transit buses. He felt there were smaller and cheaper buses available that would get better gas mileage.

Councilor Dawes stated he wasn't real high on raising taxes. He felt their main focus should be transit and urged Mr. LaFontaine to look at how to get the most service with the existing dollars they have, before they look at cutting services.

Councilor Spahr stated he echoed what Councilor Dawes had to say, adding he would like to see the ridership numbers on each of the routes. He noted concerns about the routes that go out of the area, wondering what the benefit was to our community.

Mayor Ketchum closed the work session at 6:01 p.m. and announced the council would take a two minute recess before opening the regular meeting at 6:03 p.m.

2. Introductions.

a. **Police K-9 Unit.** Police Chief Glenn Schaffer introduced Chehalis Police Officer Warren Ayers and the city's new K-9 "Reign." He noted Officer Ayers and Reign had spent the last 10 weeks in training and completed their certification last

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Thursday. Chief Schaffer reported Reign's first patrol shift was last Sunday, adding he was deployed to Thurston County to help them track a domestic violence suspect. He thanked the council for their support of the K-9 program.

Officer Ayers provided some background information on Reign, noting he was a 19-month-old German shepherd and Belgian Malinois mix. He noted Reign was trained for apprehension, tracking, evidence locating and officer protection, and would also be available for other agencies to use for locating evidence and suspects.

Officer Ayers reported they would continue to train about four hours a week for patrol work. He noted they were also thinking about training the K-9 for narcotics, which would be an additional 200 hours of training. Officer Ayers stated Reign was a valuable tool for the department, adding his senses and capabilities are far superior to man.

b. **Host Medical Student.** Councilor Pope introduced Anna Snyder, a medical student from the University of Washington. He noted Ms. Snyder would be rotating around to the different physicians' offices for the next four weeks. Ms. Snyder thanked Councilor Pope, adding she was very excited to be in the program.

3. **Public Hearing.** Public Works Director Herta Fairbanks reported the city's transportation improvement program (TIP) had to be updated annually. She noted the public hearing would allow them to take public comment and get direction from the council as to what they would like to see included in the TIP.

Ms. Fairbanks reported there were not a lot of projects on the list for 2014-2019, noting it was primarily funding driven. The projects listed included the National Avenue Bridge Scour Project and the Exhibitor Road Bridge Scour Project.

Ms. Fairbanks reported they had a pretty hefty list of roads that need work; however, there was not a lot of funding available at this time. She noted, like many towns and cities in Western Washington, the older roads weren't necessarily built to engineering standards. Ms. Fairbanks reported, in most cases, it would be best to start over with the older roads and do them right, so they will last a lot longer.

Ms. Fairbanks talked briefly about two projects on the 2013 TIP: the Airport Road Extension and the Chehalis Avenue Project from Pacific Avenue to Main Street. She stated they were asking for review and approval of those projects, as well.

Councilor Spahr asked if the Louisiana Avenue Improvement Project was something that would be done in connection with what WSDOT is doing with the I-5 expansion. Ms. Fairbanks stated anything was possible.

Councilor Harris asked if it wouldn't hurt to move the Exhibitor Road Scour Project up a little higher on the priority list. Ms. Fairbanks stated the fact that it was on the list was all that mattered.

Mayor Ketchum closed the regular meeting at 6:20:12 p.m. and opened the public hearing. There being no public comment, Mayor Ketchum closed the public hearing at 6:20:35 and reopened the regular meeting.

4. **Update on the Chehalis Renaissance.** Chehalis Community Renaissance Team (CCRT) Chair David Hartz provided the council with a summary of projects that the CCRT was helping to facilitate, or is partnering with others on. He reported on the downtown beautification project, adding they had a great partnership with Kaija's for this project. Mr. Hartz noted about half of the project had been underwritten so far, and wanted to publicly thank the Dawes Family and IP Callison & Sons Inc., for their contributions towards the project. He stated they were expanding the project this year to include a chance to sponsor a local non-profit organization. It was decided that any contribution beyond \$50 for the beautification project would be donated to Pope's Kids Place.

Mr. Hartz talked briefly about the success of the pilot project for the Discover! Children's Museum. He noted they had a great partnership for this project with former co-chair Allyn Roe and former chair Larry McGee.

Mr. Hartz reported they recently partnered with PARC Resources, a consulting firm from Oregon, to look at the projects that the CCRT was working on to see if they might be able to help out. He noted a meeting was set up with PARC and each

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project leader was given an opportunity to go over their project. Their next meeting with PARC is scheduled for Wednesday, June 5.

Mr. Hartz talked briefly about some of the other projects and partnerships, noting they had a lot on their plate, but he was very excited about it.

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

- a. Minutes of the regular meeting of May 13, 2013;
- b. Claim Vouchers No. 106082-106199 and Electronic Funds Transfer Nos. 42013 and 52013 in the amount of \$250,626.41 dated May 15, 2013; and
- c. Accept the State Avenue Pump Station Upgrade Project as complete and release retainage in the amount of \$22,219.95 to Triad Mechanical, Inc., after the city clerk ensures all statutory requirements have been met.

The motion was seconded by Councilor Taylor and carried unanimously.

6. **Administration Reports.**

a. **April Financial Report.** Finance Manager Eva Lindgren reported on the general fund, noting the property tax revenues would look better in the May report due to the timing of when they were received.

Councilor Spahr inquired about the debt principal in the wastewater fund, noting we were quite a bit lower in our payments this year over last year. Ms. Lindgren reported the state was late in sending out the invoices, and the payment would be reflected in May's report.

7. **Council Reports.**

a. **Update From Councilor Pope.** Councilor Pope reported the Chehalis Foundation met last week and they had a lot going on. He requested that we invite a representative from the Foundation to give the council an update at the next meeting.

b. **Updated From Councilor Dawes.** Councilor Dawes reported he was able to attend the Business After Hours event at the Twin Star Credit Union in Centralia.

Councilor Dawes requested an update on the roundabout landscaping project on Louisiana Avenue. He noted he had received some correspondence about having to wait for the state to do some things before we can proceed. Ms. Fairbanks reported the city still had not formally accepted the project, so we are somewhat limited in what we can do right now. She reported very late in the design phase the city requested there be a water stub-out for irrigation into the roundabout, but unfortunately, it was too late in the process to add.

Ms. Fairbanks reported the city was unaware that they would be putting in grass, which isn't sustainable without water. She noted they were looking at some other options, such as drought tolerant plants. Ms. Fairbanks reported they were working with a local landscape architect to come up with some ideas that will withstand the weather conditions in our area, as well.

Councilor Dawes reported the next Regional Fire Authority Planning Committee meeting was scheduled for June 12. He noted they would be providing some information to the committee for their review and to make recommendations.

c. **Update From Councilor Harris.** Councilor Harris reported they lost a very valuable part of the CCRT when Mr. McGee stepped down as the committee chair to go to work for Centralia College. He wanted to give Mr. Hartz a big thank you for stepping up, noting they didn't miss a beat when he came on board.

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8. **Ordinance No. 910-B, First Reading – Providing for a Change in Time of Regular City Council Meetings.** City Manager MacReynold reported, based on council discussion at the April 22 council meeting, it was requested that the administration put something before the council to change the time of council meetings from 6 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Councilor Pope stated he didn't believe it needed to be debated, adding he was just asking that the council consider changing the start time to 5 p.m.

Councilor Spahr thought it would be worth a try, adding people who are on their way home at 5 p.m. can stop off at the meeting, rather than going home and coming back later.

Councilor Taylor stated Councilor Spahr made a good point. He reported the idea of changing the meeting to 6 p.m. was to get more people here, adding that obviously didn't work. Councilor Taylor stated he was all in favor of trying something new when something doesn't work and he would be supporting it.

Councilor Spahr moved to pass Ordinance No. 910-B on first reading.

Councilor Taylor seconded the motion.

Based on the comments made, Councilor Dawes asked if it would be subject to review after a certain amount of time. Councilor Spahr stated he didn't believe that was necessary.

The motion carried unanimously.

9. **Approve Interlocal Agreement Between the City and the Chehalis-Centralia Airport for the Improvement of the Wastewater Lift Station Located on Airport Property and Authorize City Manager to Execute Agreement.** City Manager MacReynold reported, at one of the past council meetings, it was recommended that the administration explore partnering with the airport on how to deal with the long-standing issues at the lift station located on airport property.

Ms. Fairbanks reported on the capacity restrictions at the airport lift station, noting that taxing it could be detrimental to the retail and commercial businesses in that area. She stated, in an effort to take the issue off the table, the administration worked with the airport to come up with an agreement to complete the upgrades.

Ms. Fairbanks reported the estimated cost for the project is about \$50,000 and the airport was very generous to offer \$35,000 toward the improvements. She noted they fully expect the lift station to be up and operational by December 2014, adding they gave themselves some additional time should they run into any issues.

Councilor Taylor asked if the project might be done by the end of this year. Ms. Fairbanks stated that would be pushing it, noting the equipment supplier indicated once we place the order for the equipment it would be eight to twelve weeks before we actually receive it. She reported that would put construction towards the beginning of the rainy season, which was never optimal when you're going underground.

Councilor Harris moved to authorize the City Manager to execute the interlocal agreement between the city and Chehalis-Centralia Airport Governing Board for the improvement of the wastewater lift station located on airport property.

Councilor Pope seconded the motion.

Councilor Spahr asked if it would be worth it to manage a latecomer fee if they're only talking about \$15,000.

City Attorney Hillier noted it does take some effort to set it up, but noted the fees could be waived by the city at any time. He stated a latecomer agreement would last for a period of 10 years and would apply to any development within that period, based upon the percentage of ownership of the land that will benefit from it.

Councilor Spahr stated people need to realize that the city's policy has always been that growth will pay for itself. He felt if it was going to cost more than \$15,000 to set up and administer, it wouldn't be worth it.
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Ms. Fairbanks noted there are several people involved in the process whose time would need to be accounted for, adding the city charges a \$100 administrative fee for each latecomer fee we bill.

Councilor Dawes suggested the latecomer fee was a separate issue that staff could look at later. He stated he was happy to see the city getting it done and didn't want to do anything to delay it. Councilor Dawes called for the question.

The motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Ketchum stated he really appreciated the airport stepping forward and taking the lead.

10. **Executive Session.** Mayor Ketchum closed the regular meeting at 6:47 p.m. and announced the council would be in executive session pursuant to RCW 42.30.110(1)(b) – purchase or acquisition of real estate for approximately 30 minutes and there would be no decision following conclusion of the executive session.

There being no further business to come before the council, the meeting adjourned at 7:16 p.m.

Mayor

Attest:

City Clerk

SUGGESTED MOTION

I move that the council approve the minutes of the regular city council meeting of May 28, 2013.