

August 26, 2013

The Chehalis city council met in regular session on Monday, August 26, 2013, in the Chehalis city hall. Mayor Ketchum called the meeting to order at 5:00 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; Brian Kelly, Assistant City Attorney; Judy Schave, City Clerk; Glenn Schaffer, Police Chief; Eva Lindgren, Finance Manager; Peggy Hammer, Human Resources Administrator; Dennis Osborn, Community Development Director; and Herta Fairbanks, Public Works Director. Members of the media included Kyle Spurr from *The Chronicle* and Christina Crea from *Business to Business*.

1. **Citizens Business.** Ron Munson (246 SW 2<sup>nd</sup> Street) stated he had a problem with the city water department and how they handle extension requests. He noted he gets paid on the 5<sup>th</sup> of each month and they had already used their two extension requests for the year. When he called to ask for an additional extension city staff told him they couldn't help him and hung up.

Mr. Munson stated he contacted Councilor Dawes with his concerns, and asked that he be allowed an extension to the 5<sup>th</sup> of the following month, and to have the water left on until that time.

Mr. Munson reported they get billed on the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month and if it's not paid by the 21<sup>st</sup> they're hit with a \$40 fee and then another fee if the water gets shut off.

Mayor Ketchum apologized for Mr. Munson being hung up on, adding that would be looked into. He also suggested Mr. Munson contact City Manager MacReynold and have a conversation with him to see what can be worked out.

Councilor Dawes reported he spoke with City Manager MacReynold earlier about the issue and was a little concerned that there was a change in policy with regard to the number of extensions customers can be granted. He stated he would like to have it looked at, especially if a customer is only looking for a six day extension.

City Manager MacReynold reported he and Public Works Director Herta Fairbanks would be happy to meet with Mr. Munson and his wife. He noted they had already looked into the situation and the reason for changing to two extensions per year was because in years prior, when the city had unlimited extensions, people were building up huge utility bills and there were issues trying to collect it.

Councilor Taylor inquired about how the billing cycle worked. Ms. Fairbanks reported the city bills at the end of the month and bills go out no later than the last business day of the month. She noted utility customers have until the 21<sup>st</sup> of the following month to pay the bill; otherwise, a late fee is assessed on the 21<sup>st</sup>. Ms. Fairbanks reported, after the late fee is assessed, the customer has an additional seven days to make arrangements for payment before being disconnected. She noted the disconnect date is usually the last business day of the month and is a full 30 days after the bills have gone out.

Councilor Taylor stated he didn't know how to fix the situation for Mr. Munson, or others with the same issue. City Manager MacReynold stated they originally fixed it by providing unlimited extensions, but that only created a huge financial burden in which people ended up owing thousands of dollars. By limiting it to two extensions per year they've eliminated that burden, and for the most part, it seems to have worked.

Mr. Munson didn't know what the problem was with allowing someone more time, especially if they're a homeowner and have paid their bill for the last 20 years. He wondered why the city couldn't give that courtesy to anyone who needs it.

Mayor Ketchum suggested Mr. Munson call first thing in the morning to set up a meeting.

2. **Interview Applicant for Chehalis Planning Commission Appointment.** The council interviewed Charles Pollock who submitted an application to be considered for appointment to the Chehalis Planning Commission.

3. **Update on Chehalis-Centralia Airport Activities.** Airport Manager Allyn Roe reported he brought Lewis County Representative John Spears along, since neither city representative was able to attend the meeting.

Mr. Roe stated they were primarily focused on capital projects and general day-to-day operations. Capital projects included:

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- Construction of a new garage facility to house the FAA funded snow removal equipment and a new fuel truck to be purchased later this year (building is 60% FAA funded)
- Levee Improvement Project (on-going)
- Received a \$92,000 FAA grant to fund the garage and new markings on the runway (approved by city and county)
- Four-year FAA inspection (everything approved)

Mr. Roe reported they've had to make some changes in their capital funding projects in order to not have to dip into their reserve funds. He noted they've had a lot of unexpected capital projects, including the sewer lift station project along Louisiana Avenue, and the installation of an entryway to serve the properties around the Home Depot site. Mr. Roe reported they also had to return the deposit from Taco Time that was received in 2012, which also impacted their 2013 budget. He noted by shuffling things around they should be able to accommodate the extra in their budget and not really see a large impact.

Mr. Roe reported they were also working with Ms. Fairbanks on getting traffic counts on Louisiana Avenue near Walmart, noting the information was necessary to show prospective tenants how much traffic goes through that area. He suggested 100 percent of the traffic that passes through, less business employees, is there specifically for retail purposes.

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

- a. Minutes of the regular meeting of August 12, 2013; and
- b. Payroll Vouchers No. 36695-36782, Direct Deposit Payroll Vouchers No. 4205-4283, and Electronic Federal Tax Payment No. 126 in the amount of \$664,442.85 dated July 31, 2013; and Claim Voucher No.106847-106993 and Electronic Funds Transfer No. 72013 in the amount of \$442,498.35 dated August 15, 2013.

The motion was seconded by Councilor Lund and carried unanimously.

5. **Administration Reports.**

a. **July Financial Report.** Finance Manager Eva Lindgren stated the July financial report included the budget amendment approved by council at the first meeting in July. She reported the general fund revenues were on track, adding she just received an update on the latest sales and use taxes and they were up again in the 4 percent range.

Ms. Lindgren stated they had a 1.1 percent variance in the general fund expenditure totals, with a net budget/income variance of negative 0.6 percent. She noted the significant cash out at the beginning of the year was the biggest component of the variance.

Ms. Lindgren reported the utility funds were pretty much on track, noting she included explanations in the report regarding the debt service and capital outlays that are not made evenly throughout the year.

6. **Council Reports.**

a. **Update From Councilor Dawes.** Councilor Dawes reported he attended the opening of the Southwest Washington Fair and had a chance to work a couple of shifts in the Lewis County Historical Museum's booth. He also worked a couple of shifts at the Chehalis Garlic Fest & Craft Show, as well.

Councilor Dawes reported the Riverside Fire Authority Planning Committee was continuing to make progress, adding regardless of what happens, the work being done was going to be a tremendous benefit for everyone. He noted one of the more notable situations where there's a vast difference between the four local departments, including: Riverside Fire Authority, Chehalis Fire Department, and Lewis County Fire Districts No. 5 and 6, is with incident command. Riverside and Chehalis have been training together on the incident command system and there's been interest by Fire Districts 5 and 6 to attend some of those trainings. Councilor Dawes hoped it might light the fire of common sense and desire, and perhaps everyone can get back on board and look at what they were looking at before. In the meantime, he felt the training was a tremendous benefit for all taxpayers.

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Councilor Dawes reported Fire Chief Jim Walkowski is very pleased with the progress that's being made and with the spirit of all of the employees. He noted they've been very dedicated towards the goal.

Councilor Spahr reported the departments would be doing hose evolutions at the fairgrounds on Tuesday, August 27, if anyone was interested in watching how they stack fire hose on the trucks. He agreed there was a lot more interest by the outlying fire departments to train with Riverside and Chehalis, which will be extremely useful when working together.

b. **Update From Councilor Spahr.** Councilor Spahr reported he also attended the opening of the Fair and Garlic Fest, which had some great after-hours entertainment. He noted the lead singer of one of the bands got started in Lewis County through the Miss Lewis County Pageant.

Councilor Dawes added, Garlic Fest is one event that really puts heads-in-beds, noting in talking with a number of people a lot of them were staying in hotels in Chehalis. He reported Garlic Fest also donates a certain amount of money to a number of charitable organizations, noting the donations are based on the hours worked by volunteers, and each volunteer gets to choose the charitable organization they wish to donate to.

c. **Update From Councilor Lund.** Councilor Lund reported one of the nice things they learned was that Riverside Assistant Chief Mike Kytta received a grant to update our fire department's radio system, so we're on the same frequency as Riverside. He was impressed with the way the new system will work and was glad to see that we're finally getting into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

There being no further business to come before the council, the meeting adjourned at 5:35 p.m.

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Mayor

Attest:

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City Clerk

**SUGGESTED MOTION**

**I move that the council approve the minutes of the regular city council meeting of August 26, 2013.**