

March 24, 2014

The Chehalis city council met in regular session on Monday, March 24, 2014, in the Chehalis city hall. Mayor Dawes 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 Tony Ketchum. Staff present included: Merlin MacReynold, City Manager; Bill Hillier, City Attorney; Judy Schave, City Clerk; Glenn Schaffer, Police Chief; Dennis Osborn, Community Development Director; Judy Pectol, Finance Manager; Peggy Hammer, Human Resources Administrator; Rick Sahlin, Public Works Director; and Allyn Roe, Airport Manager. Members of the media included Kyle Spurr from *The Chronicle*.

1. **Presentation of Proclamation.** Mayor Dawes presented Coach Henri Weeks and the Chehalis Girls Basketball Team with a proclamation declaring the team District and State 2A Champions.

2. **Consent Calendar.** Councilor Spahr moved to approve the consent calendar comprised of the following:

a. Minutes of the regular meeting of March 10, 2014;

b. Claim Vouchers No. 108634-108779 and Electronic Funds Transfer No. 22014 in the amount of \$424,269.34 dated March 14, 2014; and

c. Adopt Resolution No. 05-2014 on first and final reading authorizing the investment of City of Chehalis monies in the Local Government Investment Pool.

Councilor Pope seconded the motion.

Council Spahr suggested a change be made to Resolution No. 05-2014 to simply state "City Manager" as our designee rather than "Merlin G. MacReynold," so it doesn't have to be updated in the future. City Manager MacReynold stated that would be a much better approach.

Councilor Spahr moved to amend the motion by inserting the words "City Manager" and taking out the individual's name.

The motion to amend the motion was seconded by Councilor Pope and carried unanimously.

The main motion, as amended, carried unanimously.

3. **Administration Reports.**

a. **Update on Outdoor Pool Project.** Community Development Director Dennis Osborn reported he thought it would be timely for the council to receive an update on the status of the pool project, now that they're past the demolition phase. He introduced Architect/Engineer Norm Pfaff to give a brief update on what's going on and what they can expect over the next few months.

Mr. Pfaff stated they were making wonderful progress on the project. He believed 95 percent of the excavation was complete, adding the only thing left were the footings for the two slides in the back. Mr. Pfaff reported you really don't get a good feel until you go on site to see how big the pool really is. He noted he gave the mayor and city manager a tour of the site last week.

Mr. Pfaff reported, with regard to the concrete work, they finished all of the foundation with the exception of the slide. He noted the slab had been poured in the building, which has allowed them to move on to the block.

Councilor Harris stated it was interesting to see that the doors are up, but not the walls. Mr. Pfaff stated the doors are completely welded metal frames that are painted on the inside with a special material, so they don't rust. He noted they go up first because they have to butt the block up to them. Mr. Pfaff reported the block work will be done in two colors using split face blocks, and once they finish the exterior they will start on the interior with regular gray block. After that, they can begin to set the trusses and plywood the roof, so it will be weathered in.

March 24, 2014

Mr. Pfaff reported they'll be installing a brand new five-inch deck around the pool rather than just skim coating it, as previously planned. He was happy to report they've had one change order to date for zero dollars.

Mr. Pfaff reported the building project was on schedule and they were about one week behind on the deck area. He noted they've had wonderful weather and it's been great working with Schwiesow Construction on the project, as well as city staff.

Councilor Pope stated he is overjoyed with the progress of the project. He thought it looked wonderful, particularly with the trees starting to bloom. Mr. Pfaff stated it's an exciting project when you get on site, adding he would be happy to take any of the council through on a tour.

Councilor Dawes stated he would like to tour the site and suggested setting up a couple of dates when Mr. Pfaff is available.

Councilor Harris stated he's been taking himself on a self-guided tour every weekend, adding it's amazing what happens from week to week.

Councilor Pope stated the Chehalis Foundation still needs a little more money to reach their fundraising goal. He noted if anyone would like to help raise the final \$50,000 it would be greatly appreciated. Mr. Pfaff stated part of that could be raised by anyone who would like to be the first person down the slides.

b. **Introduction of New Finance Manager.** City Manager Merlin MacReynold introduced Judy Pectol, the city's new Finance Manager. He noted the city was very fortunate to get Ms. Pectol from the Port of Chehalis, adding she brings a wealth of government and private sector experience.

Ms. Pectol stated she was very excited to be a part of the City of Chehalis. She noted she's worked for a couple of cities in Washington State and one in California. Ms. Pectol reported she also works well with the State Auditor's Office and felt her experience would be a benefit to the city.

c. **February Financial Report.** Ms. Pectol reported there were still a number of variances throughout the report that relate to the fact that we estimate revenues and expenditures will come in equally during the year, which really doesn't happen. She noted in some instances the city only receives money at certain times of the year, such as the bulk of our property tax which isn't received until May and November. Ms. Pectol reported she didn't see any major concerns in any of the funds at this time.

Councilor Harris inquired about the new airport fund, asking Airport Manager Allyn Roe if the numbers and percentages appear to be what they expect at this time. Mr. Roe reported they looked pretty good from a budget standpoint. He noted one of the key items he looks at as far as operations is the capital lease receipts and the total expenses. Mr. Roe reminded the council that part of the money in their capital contribution was left with the county to cover the bond payment as part of the transfer agreement. He noted once Ms. Pectol is settled he would work with her on a budget amendment to take care of some of the balances.

d. **Update on Loans Received for City Projects.** Public Works Director Rick Sahlin reported on the three loans the administration applied for earlier this year. He stated two are for the water division through the Department of Health from the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund. The first loan is for \$900,000 to add a second redundant flocculation basin at the water filter plant. It has a one percent loan fee and an interest rate of one and one-half percent for 20 years. It's his understanding that we have up to four years to build the project and payment on the loan wouldn't start until after the project was built.

Mr. Sahlin reported the second loan for the water division is to replace the high reservoir at McFadden Park. The loan amount is for \$550,000 with a one percent loan fee and an interest rate of one and one-half percent for 10 years. He noted the same terms apply in that the loan payment wouldn't start until the project is completed.

Mr. Sahlin reported the third loan they applied for was through the Department of Ecology for inflow and infiltration projects at the wastewater treatment plant. He noted the city ranked eighth out of 89 projects submitted. Mr. Sahlin indicated

March 24, 2014

the loan hasn't been finalized yet, but there's a draft report out with the final draft due date of July 1. The loan amount requested was for \$1.4 million. He noted we qualified for a hardship determination, so they're looking at giving the city \$301,850 in Centennial grant funds; and \$75,000 from the revolving grant fund, which the city would not have to repay. The total loan would be for \$1,033,150, at 2.4 percent for 20 years.

Mr. Sahlin reported, with regards to the loans for the water division, there were 21 projects funded and the city received two of them. He noted the city has already received the contracts and he hopes to bring them to the council for their consideration at the first meeting in April.

Councilor Spahr inquired about the high reservoir project, wondering where it was currently located and how many gallons it holds. Mr. Sahlin stated it was about three quarters of the way up on the backside of the hill near McFadden Park, and believed it held about 80 gallons that feeds the north end of town.

#### **4 Council Reports.**

a. **Update From Councilor Ketchum.** Councilor Ketchum reported last weekend he attended the Home and Garden Show, adding the weather was good and the event was well attended. He noted this was the first year they charged admission and people didn't seem to be bothered by it.

b. **Update From Mayor Dawes.** Mayor Dawes reported he attended the open house at Adolphsen Real Estate, noting it was a very nice function. He stated he's also been doing a number of rail presentations with Lewis County Commissioner Bill Schulte and Larry McGee. He indicated they still had a couple more presentations to do; one at the Chamber Board meeting on Wednesday, and one at the Port of Chehalis on Thursday. He also attended a Business After Hours event at the Southwest Washington Fairgrounds.

Mayor Dawes reported the Joint Oversight Board for the Regional Fire Authority was scheduled to meet for the first time this month; however, Fire Chief Jim Walkowski didn't have anything for the agenda because it's so new, so the meeting was postponed until Wednesday, April 23.

**5. Resolution No. 01-2014, First and Final Reading – Adopting an Interlocal Agreement (ILA) Between the City, Lewis County, and the City of Tacoma, Outlining the Terms and Conditions of a Potential Purchase of Railroad Right-of-Way Running From Maytown to Chehalis.** Mr. McGee reported one of the things they've worked hard to make clear is they are not saying this purchase should be made right now. He noted there's some significant evidence that this could make economic sense, as well as evidence that they may want to maintain control over the line. Mr. McGee stated they want to use this time to study it correctly.

Commissioner Schulte first thanked Mr. McGee, adding he's put in a lot of his own time and effort to look at the proposal and analyze whether or not it was something they should pursue. He also thanked Mayor Dawes for coming and testifying at their Commission meeting earlier that day, noting the Commissioners passed a resolution 3-0 in favor of continuing the exploration.

Mayor Dawes stated it was not a done deal by any stretch of the imagination. He reported they first need to make sure it makes sense; second, that the funding is there; and third, that there are local tie-in opportunities, which is what the study will tell them. Mayor Dawes encouraged anyone with questions to come to one of their public presentations. He felt *The Chronicle* did a good job on reporting and getting the story out that this is something that's being studied, and not a done deal.

Mayor Dawes stated it was a tough time economically and in their roll of representing the people they have to look outside the box. He submitted that our community is well worth taking a look at this to see if it makes sense.

Commissioner Schulte stated they would also be doing a presentation for the Women's Republican Club on Thursday morning at Woodland Estates. He also noted the ILA has a clause that states they are in negotiations with Western Washington Railroad, LLC (WWR) whose contract with Tacoma expired January 17, 2014. Commissioner Schulte reported that agreement has been negotiated to include a five-year extension on their lease and the Commissioners plan to go back to amend the ILA.

March 24, 2014

Mr. McGee reported he had a conversation with Toby Van Altvorst, owner of (WWR) and he stated by the end of April they will have spent \$40,000 on replacing some rail and ties that needed to be replaced. He stated that spoke to him as someone pretty serious about the economic activity.

Councilor Spahr moved that the city council adopt Resolution No. 1-2014 on first and final reading.

Councilor Pope seconded the motion.

Councilor Spahr reported he's still a little skeptical, but is glad to have two years to look at it and develop a business plan. He reported there are several things that will need to be looked at, such as: environmental impacts and risks; the condition of the rail and bridges associated with maintenance and operation costs; and how to go about doing it.

City Manager MacReynold believed we will have to acquire the skills of someone to do that for us. He noted currently WWR maintains the line, adding they have knowledge and expertise in the actual rail line, but obviously not in the environmental side. City Manager MacReynold stated he suspected we would utilize WWR since they have a financial and business commitment to the rail line. Additionally, a work group would need to be put together to determine what needs to be done, but the first item of business had to be the business plan. City Manager MacReynold stated if it doesn't make good sense financially, there would be no reason to continue.

City Manager MacReynold reported they have a commitment for federal funding for \$50,000 to conduct the business plan. He noted at some point they will need to do a Request for Qualifications to get someone to do the business plan for us.

The motion carried unanimously.

**6. Resolution No. 04-2014, First and Final Reading – Revising the Chehalis Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).**

Mr. Osborn reported a few meetings back, the administration presented the proposed updates to the CIP and the council gave direction to bring back a resolution for their consideration. He thanked Hillary Hoke, noting she spend a lot of time entering the data for the CIP.

Councilor Harris inquired as to where the other half of the funding was coming from for the replacement of the sweeper. He noted he could only find half of the replacement cost (\$125,000) listed in the street fund. Mr. Sahlin reported it was in the storm fund, but in the future it will all come out of the storm fund.

Councilor Spahr moved that the city council adopt Resolution No.4-2014 on first and final reading.

The motion was seconded by Councilor Taylor and carried unanimously.

**7. Questions Regarding Tacoma Rail Line.** Larry G. Boothby (541 Tausher Road) inquired about the purpose of the railroad and what the economic sense of it was.

Mayor Dawes noted, about eight or nine years ago, Tacoma Rail bought the line and there was great concern over having grain trains coming through town several times a day tying up traffic. He noted it would have affected Centralia more than Chehalis because they have more at-grade crossings then we do. Mayor Dawes believed there was a group in Centralia that looked at a proposal to purchase the line at a cost of \$7 million; however, when they went to the state to look for funding, the funding wasn't available and the idea was dropped.

Mayor Dawes reported WWR has an agreement with the city of Tacoma to operate on the line. They currently provide transloading for some local businesses, and they also provide storage which makes the City of Tacoma between \$50,000 and \$70,000 a year.

Mayor Dawes stated if there's a chance to purchase the line for \$3 million it would allow us to exercise some local control over what goes through. He reported if the City of Tacoma were to sell the line to a private entity, Tacoma would have to pay back FEMA and other governmental agencies for any funding they received, much like if we tried to sell the airport we would

March 24, 2014

have to pay back a number of FAA grants. But, if they sell it to another municipal agency, they wouldn't have to pay the funding back, which is why they can sell it to us for \$3 million.

Mr. Boothby stated the people he's talked with are wondering why the city would have any interest in railroad tracks, and asked where the money would come from if the deal goes through.

Mayor Dawes reported the county has certain funds that are dedicated for this type of transaction. He noted anything they use out of that fund would be paid back making it a zero net cost. Mayor Dawes noted the other \$2 million would have to come from grant funding.

City Manager MacReynold reported the agenda report identified the potential economic development opportunities that were identified by the research done by Mr. McGee. He noted there's a possibility for freight service, transloading, trackage rights, and car storage.

Mayor Dawes stated there are fail-safes within the ILA to make sure we have options out, such as: if the business plan doesn't make sense, then we're not going to do it; and, if we don't get the \$2 million in grant funding, we're not going to do it. He noted there's also a possibility that someone could come out of nowhere and offer the City of Tacoma \$20 million for the line. He noted the city would have first right-of-refusal, but he could guarantee they're not going to come up with that kind of money to do it.

There being no further business to come before the council, the meeting adjourned 5:46 p.m.

---

Mayor

Attest:

---

City Clerk

**SUGGESTED MOTION**

**I move that the council approve the minutes of the regular city council meeting of March 24, 2014.**