

May 27, 2014

The Chehalis city council met in regular session on Tuesday, May 27, 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, Chad Taylor, and Tony Ketchum. Councilor Lund was absent (excused). Staff present included: Merlin MacReynold, City Manager; Bill Hillier, City Attorney; Judy Schave, City Clerk; Glenn Schaffer, Police Chief; Judy Pectol, Finance Manager; Dennis Osborn, Community Development Director; Peggy Hammer, Human Resources Administrator; Rick Sahlin, Public Works Director; Don Schmitt, Street Superintendent; and Patrick Wiltzius, Wastewater Superintendent. Members of the media included Kyle Spurr from *The Chronicle*.

1. **Citizen Business.** Mark Japhet (624 Murray Court NW, Olympia) reported he was previously before the council to request a waiver on the assessment fees to hook up water utilities on two of his homes that participated in the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) Home Elevation Program. At the recommendation of the city council, he and his wife Julie met with city staff to discuss options for taking care of the assessed fees. Mr. Japhet stated one of the options provided by city staff was to come back before the council to obtain a waiver, in part or whole, of the fees owing.

City Manager MacReynold reported the administration had a good discussion with the Japhets and laid out some options for their consideration. He noted they were very candid that the situation created a serious cash flow problem for them. City Manager MacReynold stated he would not recommend the council waive the charges, noting the Japhets received a significant amount of federal monies to complete the work. He felt the administration had been very fair in working with the applicants, adding they went in knowing what the situation was.

Councilor Pope reported, after looking at the information provided, he agreed that the Japhets should be made to pay the full amount. He suggested if council were to waive the fees they could end up hurting the utilities, or having to transfer monies from the general fund to cover it and didn't believe they should put themselves in that position.

Councilor Harris agreed, adding the Japhets had already received roughly \$95,000 in grant monies for their projects. He noted they also signed for the packet of information in 2012 that stipulated the fees would have to be paid to connect to public utilities.

Councilor Spahr stated he concurred, and suggested they would be opening up Pandora's Box if they start waiving fees. He noted if they give certain individuals breaks it would end up costing the other utility customers more in the long run.

Mayor Dawes stated the only red flag raised with him was the unknown charges from the previous owners, which he requested staff take a look at. He noted, after reviewing the materials provided, it was his understanding that everything that was to be paid was known up front.

Julie Japhet stated that was not true, adding they were not aware of any outstanding bills from the prior owners. Mr. Japhet indicated the title search did not show anything owing on the properties.

City Attorney Hillier stated, under the city's current code, meters are pulled after four months of delinquency. He noted if a meter is pulled all of the prior fees go away and a new connection fee is required if the owner wants use of the home. The alternative is to pay the back base charges for the time there's been no use, which in this case is less than a new connection fee.

Ms. Japhet stated they proposed to city staff to have a reduced rate for red-tagged homes. She suggested it would be wise of the council to consider creating incentives for potential investors to purchase the homes to renovate.

City Manager MacReynold indicated Ms. Japhet proposal was included in the written response.

Mayor Dawes stated it appeared from the comments of the council that they were not inclined to make any reductions to the assessed fees. He noted opening that door could inundate the council with similar requests, which would not be good for the city. Mayor Dawes suggested if there was any further discussion on the matter the appropriate place to do that would be outside the meeting.

Ms. Japhet inquired about the number of red-tagged homes in Chehalis that could potentially come back to the city to ask for money back.

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City Manager MacReynold stated he didn't know. He reported the Japhets are in the business of rehabbing and renting houses and didn't know if the city would draw that distinction as an organization.

Mayor Dawes stated he appreciated the Japhets bringing up the issue and suggested they continue to look at the options provided by the city administration.

2. **Public Hearing on the 2015-2020 Six-Year Transportation Improvement (TIP) Program.** Mayor Dawes closed the regular meeting at 5:15 p.m. and opened the public hearing.

Public Works Director Rick Sahlin reported the city had two projects on the statewide transportation list, to include the Chehalis Avenue Beautification and Paving Project, and the National Avenue Salzer Creek Bridge Scour Project. He noted Street Superintendent Don Schmitt put together 11 other projects for the TIP that they felt were important to pursue funding for.

There being no public comment, Mayor Dawes closed the public hearing and reopened the regular meeting at 5:17 p.m.

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

- a. Minutes of the regular meeting of May 12, 2014; and
- b. Claim Vouchers No. 109206-109355 and Electronic Funds Transfer Nos. 42014 and 420141 in the amount of \$681,260.58 dated May 15, 2014.

The motion was seconded by Councilor Taylor and carried unanimously.

4. **Administration Reports.**

a. **April Financial Report.** Finance Manager Judy Pectol reported on the general fund revenues. She noted May is generally when the city receives the largest payment of property tax from Lewis County, adding those numbers will look a lot better on the May financial statements. Ms. Pectol reported, based on the permits that have been approved, they should see a big increase in June's revenues. She noted some of the items that don't appear to be meeting expectations should start looking better on future statements, as well.

Ms. Pectol reported on the general fund expenditures, noting the large deficit in the non-departmental fund was due to the grant expenditures for the FEMA Home Elevation Project and the Pool Project. She noted as the grant reimbursement monies come back in, that fund will start to look better.

Ms. Pectol reported the revenues and expenditures for the utility funds look good at this time. She noted she was still working out some things with the airport fund, but overall it looked good.

b. **Briefing on Coal Creek Failing Septic Systems.** Wastewater Superintendent Patrick Wiltzius reported on a residential area along Coal Creek Road just east of the Vintage at Chehalis that has 10-12 homes with failing septic systems. He noted this issue has been going on for several years and Lewis County would like to see it corrected.

Mr. Wiltzius noted the county will be sending a letter to the residents to let them know their septic systems are failing and they need to do something. Mr. Wiltzius reported a public meeting has been set for June 18, at 6:00 p.m., to meet with the property owners to discuss options. He noted the city's participation will be to help get funding and to provide our expertise.

Mr. Wiltzius reported he's working with the county to get a general cost estimate for what the work might involve, should they decide to hook up to the city's sewer line. He noted hooking up to the city's line appears to be the only option at this time.

Councilor Ketchum inquired as to how far away the city's sewer line was from the homes. Mr. Wiltzius stated it was about 800 feet.

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City Attorney Hillier noted the other consideration the council needs to be aware of is that the homes are within the city limits. He noted one solution could be to do a Local Improvement District, which the city will have to sponsor and oversee. City Attorney Hillier stated they wouldn't make any decisions until after they find out what the property owners want to do.

c. **Update on Additional Funding for 2014 Chip Seal Program.** City Manager MacReynold reported, based on the discussion at the last council meeting, Mr. Schmitt put together an outline of the city's 2014 street and stormwater projects. He noted the program was very aggressive compared to previous years and it didn't appear that they can do much more than what they already have scheduled for this year. City Manager MacReynold stated the administration does not recommend making any changes to the 2014 schedule at this time.

5. **Council Reports.**

a. **Update From Councilor Harris.** Councilor Harris reported, due to other conflicts, he was not going to be able to attend the Association of Washington Cities (AWC) Annual Conference in June. He noted he was still in the process of trying to get on the Community Rails Committee, even though their first meeting was scheduled at the AWC conference.

Councilor Harris thanked Mr. Wiltzius and Airport Manager Allyn Roe for completing the upgrades to the airport pump station.

Councilor Harris reported on the Downtown Revitalization Group (DRG) meeting. He noted the DRG is working with the downtown businesses and building owners to see if they can help revitalize the area. Councilor Harris reported they recently started working with Stan Foster from PARC, who sent a team down to look at some of the facilities. He stated one of the issues brought to their attention was, if we can do some work on our ordinances it might make it easier and more profitable for building owners who want to do some redevelopment to their properties.

City Manager MacReynold felt the discussion was very encouraging, adding there are a lot of possibilities. He noted the team from PARC met with Community Development Director Dennis Osborn prior to the meeting and had a very positive conversation about options to deal with the historic buildings in Old Town.

b. **Update From Mayor Dawes.** Mayor Dawes reported the next Joint Oversight Board meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, June 28, at 6:30 p.m.

6. **Ordinance No. 929-B, Second and Final Reading – Repealing Surcharges and Latecomer Fees for Roads and Utilities in the Airport District.** There being no questions or comments, Councilor Spahr moved to pass Ordinance No. 929-B on second and final reading.

The motion was seconded by Councilor Pope and carried unanimously.

There being no further business to come before the council, the meeting adjourned 5:31 p.m.

Mayor

Attest:

City Clerk

SUGGESTED MOTION

I move that the council approve the minutes of the regular city council meeting of May 27, 2014.