

July 13, 2015

The Chehalis city council met in regular session on Monday, June 13, 2015, 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; Erin Hillier, Assistant City Attorney; Judy Schave, City Clerk; Glenn Schaffer, Police Chief; Ken Cardinale, Fire Chief; Dennis Osborn, Community Development Director; Judy Pectol, Finance Manager; Peggy Hammer, Human Resources Administrator; Don Schmitt, Acting Public Works Director, Street/Stormwater Superintendent; and Dave Vasilauskas, Water Superintendent. Members of the media included Dameon Pesanti from *The Chronicle*.

1. **Introductions.** Mayor Dawes recognized Boy Scouts Justin Hilliker and Jacob Blomdahl who were attending the meeting in order to earn one of their merit badges.

2. **Public Hearing.** Chehalis Fire Captain Casey Beck reported the current Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Levy is up in December and a resolution is being proposed to renew it on the November 3 general election ballot. He noted by waiting until November they can split the cost amongst other agencies, making it a lot cheaper for the city.

Captain Beck reported the proposed six-year levy is a continuation of the current EMS levy. He indicated there was some thought of making it a 10-year, or permanent levy, but that would require a super majority vote.

Captain Beck reported Local 2510 will sponsor and fund the proposition. He noted the levy funding will help pay for personnel, equipment, and related expenses for emergency medical services.

Captain Beck stated they have a lot of support for the EMS levy, noting in 2009 they received 81 or 82 percent approval rating. He noted he did not anticipate any issues passing the EMS levy this time around and asked that the council approve the resolution that would be presented later in the meeting.

Mayor Dawes recessed the regular meeting at 5:05:07 p.m. and opened the public hearing.

There being no public comment, Mayor Dawes closed the public hearing and reopened the regular meeting at 5:05:55 p.m.

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

a. Minutes of the regular meeting of June 22, 2015, and the special work session of July 7, 2015; and

b. Claim Vouchers No. 112873-112983 in the amount of \$131,593.63 dated June 30, 2015; and Payroll Vouchers No. 38140-38228, Direct Deposit Payroll Vouchers No. 6144-6233, and Electronic Federal Tax Payment No. 149 in the amount of \$788,239.37 dated June 30, 2015.

The motion was seconded by Councilor Pope and carried unanimously.

4. **Administration Reports.**

a. **Update on City Water Use/Availability.** City Manager MacReynold reported there's been a lot of discussion about the possible lack of water due to the warmer weather and thought it would be good to get up update on the city's current water situation.

Water Superintendent Dave Vasilauskas reported there's been a lot of talk about the availability of water in Chehalis with other systems in the area having issues with their supplies. He noted the city is doing pretty well considering the lack of rain the area has received this year.

Mr. Vasilauskas reported in 2013 the city filtered 620 million gallons of water, and in 2014 it was up to 680 million gallons. He noted, to date, the city has filtered 304 million gallons, which is down considerably from 2013 and 2014 when they averaged 1.4 million gallons during the same time period.

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Mr. Vasilauskas reported he compared the river readings from three years ago to what we currently have and we're right on track for 2015. He stated the operators feel pretty comfortable that we should have plenty of water throughout the summer months.

Councilor Harris asked Mr. Vasilauskas to provide a brief report on the discussion they had at the Chehalis River Basin Partnership meeting a couple of weeks ago regarding individual water rights. He noted he received an email stating the Department of Ecology (DOE) was going to be meeting with the partnership to discuss all types of water rights.

Mr. Vasilauskas reported the Environmental Protection Agency will be sending out letters to the junior water right holders who have rights to withdraw water from the Chehalis River, notifying them that they are at-will to be put on hold if need be to keep water in the river. He noted the city of Chehalis has been a senior water right holder since the early 1900s and has consumptive rights on the Chehalis River and the Newaukum River.

Councilor Harris stated he appreciated that Wastewater Superintendent Patrick Wiltzius offered to put 1.2 cubic feet per second back into the river, however; DOE does not care for that during the summer months because the water the city emits is cleaner than the water in the river, which changes the ecology of the river.

Councilor Pope asked if the city had any wells in our system.

Mr. Vasilauskas stated we do not, adding we're strictly surface water.

b. **Update on Twin Transit Senior Discounts.** City Manager MacReynold reported, a few meetings back, the city received a request from Janet Rowley asking the council to consider a waiver for senior transit use. This was based on the service being cut by Twin Transit earlier in the year. He noted at the time he recommended the council not do that because there were other options and providers. City Manager MacReynold reported Citizen Rowley spent a great deal of time researching the issue and identified that many of the agencies do not provide senior waivers, or discount passes to ride Twin Transit.

City Manager MacReynold reported he met with Twin Transit General Manager Rob LaFontaine, and after discussing the issue he is standing by his earlier recommendation of not funding a senior discount/waiver program. He indicated it would require the use of public money, which would mean our citizen's would pay more than others in the county for the same service. City Manager MacReynold suggested the council could recommend to the Twin Transit Board that they consider implementing a senior discount program.

Councilor Taylor, who represents the city on the Twin Transit Board, stated the cost of providing paratransit services has risen so much that it affects the amount of money they have left over to provide regular bus service. He noted the amount they can charge for paratransit is based on the lowest rate they charge to individual passengers, and it can only be up to one and a half times that amount. Councilor Taylor reported they had to eliminate the senior discounts in order to increase the amount they charge for paratransit, and by doing that it eliminated the lifetime passes for seniors. He reported his original thought was to have the city buy bus passes for our seniors, but it makes better sense not to charge our citizens twice.

Councilor Taylor indicated he was happy to carry the wishes of the council forward; however, he didn't feel it would change anything because the other two members on the Board would probably not support it.

Councilor Ketchum stated he agreed with City Manager MacReynold, adding they need to do something as a council to strongly urge the Board to look at it again and approve something for the senior citizens.

Councilor Lund stated his grandmother used to always say you need to plan for your future; plan ahead and don't expect anyone else to take care of you. He felt she would be offended if she was still alive and someone tried to pay her way to ride the bus.

Councilor Spahr stated there is no free ride, adding the taxpayers are already paying 95 percent of the system. He suggested they could go back to the taxpayers to see if they want to pay another penny in sales tax, but felt the citizens are already paying enough. Councilor Spahr stated it was a tough call and hated to say it that way, but that's the way it is.

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Mayor Dawes suggested if anyone wanted to offer up a motion the council could vote on it.

Councilor Ketchum moved to request the Twin Transit Board look into the possibility of reinstituting a free pass or discount for senior citizens to ride the bus.

The motion was seconded by Councilor Taylor.

Councilor Pope stated he didn't feel it was right for the council to suggest to Twin Transit what they should do.

Councilor Harris stated he had to disagree, adding he thought they could ask to have them look at it again.

Mayor Dawes stated, while it's great to ask, he would like to know where it stops. He reported the city has a discount program for our senior and disabled utility customers, but what happens when they start having other utility customers asking for help to pay their bills.

Councilor Ketchum stated they're not looking to solve the problem, or to raise other funds to fund the seniors, they're formally asking Twin Transit to look at it. He suggested if the Board can't do anything then the council has done their due diligence.

The motion failed 3-4 with Councilors Pope, Spahr, Lund and Mayor Dawes voting against the motion.

5. Council Reports.

a. **Councilor Ketchum.** Councilor Ketchum reported he noticed a couple of large piles of dirt near Blakeslee Junction, adding he didn't know if it was clean fill dirt, but if it is, the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) will have to get rid of it. He suggested the city talk with them to see if they would be interested in giving it to us for fill at the airport.

City Manager MacReynold stated since WSDOT is always looking for fill they're probably going to use it, but we can certainly ask.

b. **Update From Mayor Dawes.** Mayor Dawes reported he attended the 2015 Association of Washington Cities Annual Conference in Wenatchee. He noted he had to come back a little earlier than planned for Officer Rick Silva's memorial, so he didn't get to see which project beat out our pool project, but he could guarantee it wasn't as good as ours. Mayor Dawes reported, while in Wenatchee, he had a chance to visit a 'legal' marijuana grow and processing operation and retail store. He suggested it was very interesting and quite a process.

Mayor Dawes reported a lot of the council was in attendance for Officer Silva's memorial at W.F. West High School, adding the Behind the Badge program and the police department put together a very nice ceremony for Office Silva.

Mayor Dawes reported he attended a ribbon cutting at Jeremy's Fruit Stand, noting they relocated to the north end of State Street because they got too big for the area near the restaurant. He also attended the entrance conference for the 2014 audit, noting in about two weeks they'll be doing the exit conference.

Mayor Dawes reported the council held an all-day workshop on planning. He stated it's always good to sit down in a setting like that and exchange ideas.

City Manager MacReynold stated the facilitator was impressed with the council's candor and focus.

6. Resolution No. 6-2015, First and Final Reading – Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Levy Proposal for November 3 General Election Ballot. City Manager MacReynold stated he and Fire Chief Ken Cardinale were available to answer any questions the council might have concerning the resolution.

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Councilor Ketchum asked if the \$0.50 per \$1,000 of assessed value is the maximum they can ask for.

Chief Cardinale reported the maximum is up to \$.050, but historically the city has not collected the full amount.

Councilor Ketchum asked if they were asking to go up to \$.050 this time.

Chief Cardinale stated yes.

Councilor Spahr stated we're not asking the citizens to allow us to tax them up to \$0.50, adding it's already at \$0.50. He noted historically they've charged less and they have no plans at this time of going up to \$0.50, the city just has that ability.

City Manager MacReynold stated it's the same approach they took in 2009, adding the city can collect up to \$0.50 per \$1,000, but the council ultimately decides what that amount is through the budget process. He reported the cost of providing services has increased over the years and suggested they would need to ask for more than what they're currently collecting. City Manager MacReynold reported, traditionally they've collected right around \$0.38 to \$0.40 per \$1,000.

Chief Cardinale reported the rate has fluctuated over the years, but they've never collected the full \$.050 per \$1,000. He stated with costs going up they would be urging the council to go up to the full collection.

Councilor Harris reported it's basically a repeat of the levy that passed in 2009 when everyone was getting hit the hardest. He suggested the support they received last time is a testament to what a good program it is.

Councilor Taylor moved that the council adopt Resolution No. 6-2015 on first and final reading.

The motion was seconded by Councilor Spahr and carried unanimously.

7. Lodging Tax Advisory Committee (LTAC) Recommendation for Visiting Nurses Foundation Event. Councilor Harris reported Jenny Collins and Councilor Ketchum presented an application from the Visiting Nurses Foundation for the "Summer Slam 3 on 3 Basketball Tournament" to be held August 1 and 2 at the PAC (Pacific Athletic Center) in Chehalis. He noted the Committee was concerned with whether or not they would be able to utilize the full \$5,000 with the tournament being held on the 1st of August, but they did see the potential of it growing into something greater if operated properly.

Councilor Harris reported the hoteliers had some concerns about holding the event during the summer months because most of the hotels are already pretty full. Another concern was when you host something new and people can't find a place to stay they may not want to return the next time.

Councilor Spahr asked if the tournament was just for youth.

Councilor Ketchum stated if this goes well, they hope to expand the age group to include adults. He noted if it does expand next year and the PAC can't hold it they would try to move it into the schools, or any place that has a basketball court. Councilor Ketchum stated they hope to make it a huge event.

Mayor Dawes asked if they were able to approve funding in the current year for another budget year.

Councilor Harris stated yes, adding they did it about four years ago for the Babe Ruth tournament.

Councilor Ketchum reported the initial \$2,500 would be spent in 2015, but the other \$2,500 probably wouldn't be used because they won't be that far along. He stated he was disappointed that two of the hoteliers whose hotels are already full dominated the meeting, so the other hotels got left out. Councilor Ketchum noted it would have been nice if they would have just given them the full \$5,000 to do what they need to do.

Councilor Harris stated they gave them the ability to spend \$5,000 this year to promote the event. He reported they also suggested they come back at the end of this year to ask for more money next year.

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Councilor Harris reported the revenue stream for the hotel/motel tax is looking better this year and they have greater reserves than anticipated. He noted with the steam train not running yet they have not been able to receive their funding that was granted for this year.

Councilor Spahr moved that the council approve the recommendation of the LTAC to award \$5,000 to the Visiting Nurses Foundation's "Summer Slam 3 on 3 Basketball Tournament" - \$2,500 for this year's tournament and \$2,500 for next year's tournament.

The motion was seconded by Councilor Taylor and carried unanimously.

There being no further business to come before the council, the meeting adjourned at 5:41 p.m.

Mayor

Attest:

City Clerk

SUGGESTED MOTION

I move that the council approve the minutes of the regular city council meeting of July 13, 2015.