

November 23, 2015

The Chehalis city council met in regular session on Monday, November 23, 2015, in the Chehalis city hall. Mayor Dawes called the meeting to order at 4:30 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; and Dennis Osborn, Community Development Director.

1. **Executive Session.** Mayor Dawes announced the council would be in executive session pursuant to RCW 42.30.110(1)(i) – potential litigation for approximately 30 minutes and there would be no decision following conclusion of the executive session.

Mayor Dawes closed the executive session at 4:55 p.m. and announced the council would take a short recess and reopen the regular meeting at 5:00 p.m. Additional staff included: Glenn Schaffer, Police Chief; Judy Pectol, Finance Manager; Dale McBeth, Municipal Court Judge; Melody Guenther, Court Clerk; Rick Sahlin, Public Works Director; Don Schmitt, Street/Stormwater Superintendent; David Vasilauskas, Water Superintendent; and Patrick Wiltzius, Wastewater Superintendent. Members of the media included Dameon Pesanti from *The Chronicle*.

2. **Citizens Business.** Hillary Harader reported her brother was kicked out of school for wearing a hat with the Confederate flag on it, even though there is no mention of the flag in the school dress code. She noted she was not here to defend the symbol, but to defend the liberty and constitutional rights of kids while at school. After a brief statement about the schools disregard for the laws and policies regarding the constitution, Mayor Dawes suggested she contact the Chehalis School Board of Directors regarding her grievance.

3. **Proclamation Presentation.** Mayor Dawes presented CCRT Chair Annalee Tobey and Vice-Chair Andy Skinner with a proclamation declaring December 2015, as “Choose Local First Month” in the city of Chehalis.

4. **Public Hearing on 2016 Proposed Budget and Revenue Sources, Taxes and Levies.** Mayor Dawes closed the regular meeting at 5:08 p.m. and opened the public hearing.

City Manager MacReynold reported the administration provided a more detailed presentation at the previous public hearing on what the proposed 2016 budget entailed.

There being no public comment, Mayor Dawes closed the public hearing at 5:09 p.m. and reopened the regular meeting.

5. **Public Hearing on the Assumption of the Transportation Benefit District (TBD).** Mayor Dawes closed the regular meeting at 5:10 p.m. and opened the public hearing.

City Manager MacReynold reported this recommendation was developed by the administration based on recent legislative action at the last session. He noted he is seeking the council’s consideration and approval to make the change as recommended by the administration.

Mayor Dawes asked, “If this was to go through, would the TBD be handled similar to how we handle the enterprise funds.”

City Manager MacReynold stated yes. He noted the city has not taken any action on funding for the TBD, so there’s no funding source at this time.

Mayor Dawes stated, at the start of 2015, four percent of the general fund sales tax revenue was set aside to go towards street repairs. He noted the TBD funds will be used for bigger street projects.

City Manager MacReynold stated that is correct.

There being no public comment, Mayor Dawes closed the public hearing at 5:13 p.m. and reopened the regular meeting.

November 23, 2015

6. **Recreation Park Improvement Project Presentation**. Community Development Director Dennis Osborn reported the purpose of the presentation was to share the findings from the public participation process and give the council a recommendation to consider between now and the special meeting of November 30.

Project Manager Tom Skillings with Skillings Connolly, Inc., reported the public outreach goal was to inform the community about the project and provide information about the initial concepts for Recreation Park and Penny Playground. He noted they offered several methods for public comment and feedback, and provided opportunities for the community to directly engage with the project and city staff.

Public outreach activities included:

- Public comment period: October 15 - November 13, 2015
- Two in-person open houses – 46 attendees
- Online open house (live for one month) – 204 responses, 332 unique visitors
- Eight Facebook posts – 543 engagements
- Letter mailed from city council – 3,200 mailers
- Experience Chehalis e-newsletter
- Signs in Recreation Park
- Presentation at the Chehalis Middle School

Mr. Skillings reported a majority of the respondents said they enjoy the park's open space and grassy areas. They also valued the informal play areas, gathering spaces and flexible open space of the park. Mr. Skillings reported the top desired uses of Recreation Park include: fast-pitch/softball, open/adaptable space, and community performances, such as Music in the Park. Some of the specific elements desired by the respondents included:

- Important to retain four fields for tournament play
- Increase safety and security of Penny Playground and maintain current characteristics
- Upgrade and improve bathrooms; create larger building available for private events of varying sizes
- Provide additional parking (remove limited green space if necessary)
- Amphitheater, walking trails, and more open green space if space allows

Juliet Vong, HBB Landscape Architects, reported on each of the major elements within the park in relation to what they heard from the respondents regarding the ballfields and Penny Playground.

- Ballfields:
 - Four fields needed for current programming
 - Natural outfield and synthetic infield preferred
 - Add more support facilities (batting cages, warm-up area, dugouts, seating, etc.)
 - Not all park users use the ballfields
 - Desire for more open space
 - Desire for more diverse park uses, such as trails, more picnic shelters, and dog park
- Penny Playground:
 - New playground to generally match character and scale of existing play area
 - Keep location near the parking and community building
 - Would like to have community involved in construction
 - Make more accessible for all users and age groups
 - Fencing for security
 - Provide better lighting for visibility to all areas
 - Rubberized surfacing preferred

Garner Miller, MSGS Architects, provided some specifics on what they heard concerning the buildings.

November 23, 2015

- Buildings:
 - Single, multi-use building preferred
 - Size to support variety of uses
 - Ability to sub-divide meeting spaces
 - Natural character, wood materials
 - Reuse some elements of existing structure
 - Add outside entrance to restrooms for park users
 - Restrooms need to be clean and secure

Mr. Skillings reported on the specifics regarding drainage, parking, off-site issues, and other topics that came up.

- Drainage:
 - Drainage needs to be improved
 - Off-site drainage is undersized, needs to be repaired or replaced
 - Off-site improvements needed to ensure adequate drainage for any improvements
 - On-site improvements needed for fields and the rest of the park
- Parking
 - More parking is needed (tournaments absorb all available parking)
 - Balance parking with desire for more open space
 - Connecting vehicular circulation between parking areas
 - Add RV parking
 - Improve parking adjacent to the VR Lee Building and Fred Hess Kitchen
- Off-site
 - New sidewalks needed on 13th Street
 - Improve access/safety on adjacent streets
 - Consider traffic calming measures, especially around the aquatics center, sharp curves, and on SW Williams Avenue
- Other Topics
 - Like the idea of an amphitheater, but not too big – keep in scale with the park
 - Add more picnic shelters and tables
 - Make vandal resistant and have open sight lines to all areas
 - Add more lighting for safety/security
 - Allow flexible open space for a variety of uses
- Interpretation of Findings
 - Keep all four ballfields
 - More open space
 - More parking
 - Replace Penny Playground
 - Rebuild the VR Lee Building and Fred Hess Kitchen

Ms. Vong walked through each of the design features and provided the following recommended concepts.

- Ballfields – maintain use of all four fields at current location
- Drainage Improvements – off-site and limited on-site drainage improvements
- Parking – Increase capacity and connectivity
- Street frontage improvements (on-street and off-street options), and off-site safety around the site
- New Penny Playground with fencing and lighting

November 23, 2015

Mr. Miller talked briefly about the design options for a new community building, to include:

- 5,800 sf facility
- Use current location
- Additional restrooms with outside entrance for park users
- Event space
- Potential for office space for parks department
- Drop-off area
- Service access
- Removable (inside) walls

Mr. Miller also reported on the Phase 1 design for the miscellaneous park features, to include:

- New paths, picnic shelters, etc.
- New amphitheater stage area and informal seating
- Frontage improvements: sidewalks and lighting
- Traffic calming
- Lighted crosswalks

Mayor Dawes stated there was some discussion at one time about looking at the triangle area across from the aquatics center for some additional parking.

Mr. Skillings reported they could probably get 35-39 parking stalls in that area, but from a budget standpoint and the need for it with this first phase they left it out. He noted it can be added later if the council desires.

Mr. Skillings reported on the proposed improvements for Phase 1, to include:

- Maintaining the four fields with minimal drainage improvements
- New parking lot next to Penny Playground
- New Penny Playground
- New Community Building and event space

Mr. Skillings reported there isn't adequate space at Recreation Park to make it a first class facility. He recommended another component, which is to investigate the feasibility of relocating the four fields to Stan Hedwall Park. Mr. Skillings stated they know Hedwall Park is prone to flooding, but believed there is opportunity to fix that. He suggested by relocating the fields to Stan Hedwall they would have adequate space for parking, gathering spaces, and the opportunity to development a first class facility with room to expand. Mr. Skillings reported they would continue to use the four fields at Recreation Park until the new facility can be built at Stan Hedwall (Phase 2). He noted after Stan Hedwall is in operation they can reconfigure Recreation Park to provide more open space, trails and other park activities/amenities (Phase 3).

Mr. Skillings reported the cost for the improvements identified in Phase 1 will run about \$5.8 million. He noted a special work session is scheduled for November 30 for the council to go through the recommended concepts and give input on exactly what they want to do. Mr. Skillings reported their schedule has them starting design in mid-December and completed by April 2016. He noted they hope to advertise for bids in late April and commence construction in phases starting in May/June 2016.

Councilor Ketchum reported he would not be at the November 30 work session, but wanted to share that he was not opposed to looking at developing Stan Hedwall Park and removing the fields from Recreation Park to open it up as a bigger more functional park.

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

- a. Minutes of the regular meeting of November 9, 2015;

November 23, 2015

b. Claim Vouchers No. 114142-114269 and Electronic Funds Transfer Nos. 1020151 and 112015 in the amount of \$497,045.11 dated November 13, 2015; and

c. Adopt Resolution No. 12-2015 on first and final reading declaring city property to be surplus.

The motion was seconded by Councilor Taylor and carried unanimously.

8. Administration Reports.

a. **October Financial Report.** Finance Manager Judy Pectol reported things were looking fairly good for the general fund. She noted the property tax we normally receive from Lewis County in November will not be paid to us until December since October 31 fell on a weekend this year. Ms. Pectol reported most of the departments will have adequate budgetary authority to get through the end of the year, with the exception of the Community Development Department. She noted later in the meeting there will be a request for approval of a budget amendment that will increase the budget authority for this department.

Ms. Pectol reported the utility funds are looking good; however, she did have some concerns regarding the timing of the revenues for the airport fund. She stated she expects to receive some .09 Distressed Counties funding in the next few weeks, which will make things look a lot better for that fund.

b. **Proposed Property Acquisition by Twin Transit.** Twin Transit General Manager Rob LaFontaine reported the discussion of a new transit office building is one that's been going on for quite some time. He noted the Transit Board met last week to discuss the acquisition of property, which would be developed into a combination bus transfer center/transit office building. Mr. LaFontaine reported Councilor Taylor requested that he come and brief the council on the possible acquisition.

Mr. LaFontaine stated he was excited about the conceptual project. He noted their primary barrier for not using their current facility as a transfer station is the railroad tracks.

Mr. LaFontaine reported the Transit Board tabled this item until their next meeting scheduled for December 17, at which time they will reconsider the acquisition.

Councilor Spahr inquired as to what they would do with the existing location if they moved the office and transfer center to the new location.

Mr. LaFontaine reported the proposed location is not large enough to store all of their buses, or to provide maintenance and repairs, so they would continue to use the existing location for bus storage, fueling, maintenance and repairs.

Mayor Dawes stated after reading the article in *The Chronicle* it appears the decision has already been made. He noted when they talked about this issue before they had some fixes for the current office situation. Mayor Dawes stated he wanted to make sure everything had been studied, but if it's not a concern to the rest of the council he would not take up their time expressing the concerns of one council person.

Councilor Lund felt Mayor Dawes owed it to the citizens to ask questions.

Mayor Dawes inquired about the fix they had for the current office. He suggested by the time they build something it's going to cost close to \$700,000 and wondered if it made sense to spend that kind of money for the size of our area.

Mr. LaFontaine reported the most recent plan was to add an addition to the existing building; however, as they were preparing to move forward the opportunity to purchase property availed itself. Mr. LaFontaine reported their current location will not work for a transfer location. He stated he would not have brought this forward if he didn't think it was a good solution.

Mayor Dawes inquired about their reserve funding, asking if the acquisition would completely deplete their reserves. He also asked Mr. LaFontaine if he thought they would be successful at getting any grants.

November 23, 2015

Mr. LaFontaine reported they have funding in their capital program that's earmarked for facility improvement. He noted it would be their intent to utilize a portion of those funds primarily for the acquisition and look at regional mobility grants for the transfer center. Mr. LaFontaine believed their project would compete very well for those funds and hoped to be able to apply for those this year, if not in 2016.

Mayor Dawes stated, if it does go through, he hoped in a year or two the Transit Board would not be looking at raising our local sales tax.

Mr. LaFontaine reported their 5-Year Transit Improvement Plan does not forecast raising their transit sales tax.

Councilor Lund stated they don't have service on Sundays anymore and wondered how people are supposed to get to church. He asked, "If you don't have the funding to do that, how do you have money to do this project."

Mr. LaFontaine reported they did have to reduce bus service, noting those were difficult decisions in order to make sure they have adequate funding to invest in better infrastructure.

Councilor Lund inquired about service from the Centralia Amtrak station.

Mr. LaFontaine stated connectivity with the Amtrak station is certainly something they would maintain as part of their transportation program. He noted they have many riders who make the transition from their system to the train system.

Councilor Taylor apologized for not bringing this matter to the council earlier. He noted the Transit Board has looked at a lot of different options for infrastructure, adding one of the things he liked about the current proposal is that it takes care of the concern of having people loitering around the train station. Councilor Taylor reported this seems to be one of the best options and it takes care of a lot of different concerns they've had over the years without raising taxes.

c. **Transportation Improvement Board (TIB) Funding.** Street Superintendent Don Schmitt reported, in August, the public works department submitted an application to TIB to address pavement conditions on National Avenue. He noted TIB has an Urban Preservation Program which is designed to grind and overlay maintenance items that are not full-blown reconstruction projects. Mr. Schmitt reported they were notified late Friday that the city had been approved for a grant to take care of National Avenue. He noted the project would start from where the city of Centralia left off and terminate at the Kresky fork, just south of Staples.

Mayor Dawes reported during the last rain event the dig out the city did on the drainage ditch that runs between 19th Street over to Snively Avenue really made a big difference.

9. **Council Reports.**

a. **Update From Councilor Taylor.** Councilor Taylor asked if the city would be looking at some kind of fix to help water get through the area near Rhode Island Place during heavy rain events. He noted they had about five inches of water in their business during the last event because it doesn't seem to be able to go down the drains fast enough.

Mr. Schmitt reported that's been happening for a number of years in that particular area. He noted there's a fairly large drainage system that comes off the hill near National Avenue, which backs up once it reaches the bottleneck in the area of State Street over to Rhode Island Place. Mr. Schmitt reported the fix for that would be very expensive, not that it's to be ignored.

b. **Update From Council Lund.** Councilor Lund reported he's been told by a number of people that the city has several street lights out.

Mr. Schmitt reported there are city maintained street lights, which our crews respond to as quickly as we can; and there are street lights on power poles owned by the Lewis County Public Utility District (PUD), which the city pays PUD to maintain. Mr. Schmitt stated he had a feeling that the lights that are currently out belong to the PUD.

November 23, 2015

City Manager MacReynold suggested Councilor Lund encourage people to call the city when they have issues with street lighting.

c. **Update From Council Spahr**. Councilor Spahr reported he attended the Lewis Economic Development Council luncheon last week. He noted Representative Richard DeBolt spoke about the special multi-million dollar fund that TransAlta is putting into three different categories to help the communities affected by their closing in 2025. Councilor Spahr stated it was a really nice gesture on the part of TransAlta, adding he was sorry to see them go.

d. **Update From Council Harris**. Councilor Harris thanked staff for hitting it at 6:00 a.m. that morning to start putting up the Christmas decorations. He reported it was cold, but at least it was dry and not windy.

e. **Update From Mayor Dawes**. Mayor Dawes reported he attended the Business After Hours at the Parkside Salon, noting they have a lot going on in that facility. He also attended the Lewis County Historical Museum membership meeting and dinner.

Mayor Dawes reported on the Point .09 Committee meeting, noting a grant awarded to the Industrial Commission to do some sewer extension work for some projects they have going on. He noted they're talking about extending memberships, so both cities and both ports will be represented at all times. They also talked about offering a membership to the Industrial Commission. Mayor Dawes stated he was looking forward to seeing that happen.

10. **Ordinance No. 946-B, Second and Final Reading – Determining and Fixing the Amounts of Revenue to be Raised by Ad Valorem Taxes During 2016, and Ordinance No. 947-B, Second and Final Reading – Stating the Dollar Amounts and Percentages of Change in Property Tax Levies for 2016**. Councilor Taylor moved to pass Ordinance Nos. 946-B and 947-B on second and final reading.

The motion was seconded by Councilor Lund and carried unanimously.

11. **Ordinance No. 949-B, Second and Final Reading – Amending the 2015 Budget**. Ms. Pectol reported there were a few items added to the budget amendment since first reading. She noted the city received a small donation from the Chehalis Community Renaissance Team to buy some Christmas decorations. She also increased some revenue and expenditure accounts to handle the monies received from the state that we have to turn around and pay out. Ms. Pectol reported the largest change was to increase appropriations for the Community Development Department to cover expenses related to the Recreation Park Project, as well as other professional services related to the project.

Councilor Spahr moved to pass Ordinance No. 949-B on second and final reading.

The motion was seconded by Councilor Lund and carried unanimously.

12. **Ordinance No. 948-B, Second and Final Reading – Adopting the Proposed 2016 Budget**. City Manager MacReynold reported the administration went through the details and major changes to the budget at the previous meeting. He thanked the department directors and program managers for all of their work on the 2016 budget. He also thanked the council budget committee, noting they spent a great deal of time giving guidance and policy direction. City Manager MacReynold encouraged the council's consideration and approval of the ordinance.

Councilor Spahr moved to pass Ordinance No. 948-B on second and final reading.

The motion was seconded by Councilor Lund and carried unanimously.

13. **Ordinance No. 950-B, First Reading – Assuming the Rights, Powers and Functions of the Transportation Benefit District**. Ms. Pectol reported, to date, the council has not approved any fees or taxes for the TBD. She stated by approving the ordinance it will eliminate having a separate district and will save the city unnecessary costs, such as audit fees, advertising costs for public hearings, or any other action taken by the TBD. Ms. Pectol reported a special fund will be set up in the budget for the TBD.

November 23, 2015

Councilor Harris moved to pass Ordinance No. 950-B on first reading.

The motion was seconded by Councilor Lund and carried unanimously.

14. **Special Work Session**. City Manager MacReynold reminded the council about the special work session on Monday, November 30, at 4:30 p.m., to review the concepts and provide direction to the administration on the Recreation Park Project.

15. **Christmas Decorations**. Mayor Dawes reported the Christmas decorations are going up and they look very nice. He stated he appreciated the work of Councilor Harris and the group that helps put them up.

There being no further business to come before the council, the meeting adjourned at 6:42 p.m.

Mayor

Attest:

City Clerk

SUGGESTED MOTION

I move that the council approve the minutes of the regular city council meeting of November 23, 2015.