

May 9, 2016

The Chehalis city council met in regular session on Monday, May 9, 2016, in the Chehalis city hall. Mayor Dennis Dawes called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. with the following council members present: Terry Harris, Bob Spahr, Daryl Lund, Chad Taylor, and Tony Ketchum. Councilor Pope was absent (excused). Staff present included: Merlin MacReynold, City Manager; Bill Hillier, City Attorney; Judy Schave, City Clerk; Glenn Schaffer, Police Chief; Ken Cardinale, Fire Chief; Judy Pectol, Finance Manager; Peggy Hammer, Human Resources Administrator; and David Fleckenstein, Airport Manager. Members of the media included Justyna Tomtas from *The Chronicle*.

1. **Proclamation.** Mayor Dawes presented Police Chief Glenn Schaffer with a proclamation declaring the week of May 15-21 as 'Police Week' in the city of Chehalis. He noted being a police officer is a very tough job these days and commended our officers, as well as those throughout the state.

Police Chief Glenn Schaffer reported one of the 252 names being added to the wall this year is one of our own, Officer Rick Silva. He noted on Friday he had the honor of being in Olympia to see Officer Silva's name engraved on the Washington State Memorial, and to stand with Office Silva's wife Cindy and family as Officer Silva was awarded the Medal of Honor. Chief Schaffer reported he and Officers Mike Bailey and Matt McKnight will leave for Washington, D.C., later in the week to attend the memorial service and candlelight vigil, and to be by Ms. Silva's side as they go to those events.

2. **Request for Flood Mitigation Funding.** Lewis Economic Development Council (EDC) Executive Director Matt Matayoshi reported the work being done by the Governor's Chehalis Basin Work Group is supported by local government. He noted some of the fruits of the work done by the group include the Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement that reviews all options and alternatives, including water retention as an option to reduce and mitigate flooding in the Chehalis Basin. Mr. Matayoshi also recognized J. Vander Stoep who has put in both paid and unpaid hours to this effort.

Mr. Matayoshi requested \$15,000 in funding that the EDC will monitor and oversee to reimburse Mr. Vander Stoep for his efforts and work on the Chehalis Basin Work Group.

Councilor Lund moved that the council approve the request by the EDC for flood mitigation funding in the amount of \$15,000.

The motion was seconded by Councilor Ketchum and carried unanimously.

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

- a. Minutes of the regular meeting of April 25, 2016;
- b. Claim Vouchers No. 115547-115662 in the amount of \$183,773.58 dated April 29, 2016; and Payroll Vouchers No. 38785-38835, Direct Deposit Payroll Vouchers No. 7041-7134, and Electronic Federal Tax Payment No. 159 in the amount of \$770,358.75 dated April 29, 2016;
- c. Adopt Resolution No. 12-2016 on first and final reading declaring personal property of the city to be surplus;
- d. Adopt Resolution No. 13-2016 on first and final reading authorizing the city manager to apply for Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program grant funding through the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office on behalf of the Discover! Children's Museum; and
- e. Set date and time of May 23, 2016, at 5:05 p.m. for a public hearing on the city's 2017-2022 Six-Year Transportation Improvement Program.

The motion was seconded by Councilor Lund and carried unanimously.

4. **Briefing on Lewis County Communications Center Services.** City Manager MacReynold reported, over the past few weeks, he's had several conversations with Chief Schaffer and Fire Chief Ken Cardinale about the on-going issues concerning the Lewis County Communications Center. He noted recently it seems like there's been a lot of frustration not only by our chiefs, but by others in the county about the lack of progress in moving forward.

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City Manager MacReynold reported he drafted a letter and sent it to the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) asking for their leadership to try to get something positive moving forward. He thought it would be helpful to have Chief Schaffer and Chief Cardinale brief the council on what they've done to date.

Mayor Dawes stated this issue is not just with our two chiefs, but also with Lewis County Sheriff Rob Snaza, Centralia Police Chief Carl Nielsen, and Riverside Fire Authority Chief Mike Kytta. He indicated he didn't want people to think this is just a Chehalis issue, adding it appears to be countywide.

Chief Schaffer reported, in September 2015, local fire and police chiefs met to discuss the problems they were experiencing with the Communications Center. He noted some of the issues involve individual dispatchers and how calls are being handled, but more concerning is the ability to go to management to get issues resolved. Chief Schaffer reported, over time, they brought in the former Central Services Director Mike Strozyk and former Communications Manager Craig Larson to discuss the various topics, some being baseline operational issues and others that were more global. For instance:

- Complaints/Concerns/Compliments: There is no clear system on how to deliver these to the communications center, or a system of getting feedback to the agencies about what is going on.
- Follow-up Information: Needs to be relayed to responding law, fire and medic units if conditions are changing and dispatchers become aware of new information.
- Check Compliance with Adopted Dispatch Processing Times: Experiencing some lengthy processing delays in getting calls out to fire and police officers.
- Logging of Correct Times: Time entered into Spillman must be accurate.

Chief Schaffer reported, on a bigger scale, they have no strategic plan and a lot of their communication equipment is at or past its end of life. He thought this problematic because if they're going to spend an incredible amount of money replacing their infrastructure he would imagine some of that is going to come back on the users that are paying for the service.

Chief Schaffer reported another long-term strategic issue that came up is having a Critical Incident Dispatching Plan. He noted this issue came up almost two years ago and they still don't have this plan in place.

Chief Schaffer reported they met with the BOCC to discuss the situation and a short time later Mr. Strozyk and Mr. Larson were no longer with the county. He noted Steve Walton was put in as interim director and has since been made the permanent director of Central Services, and they also appointed Dave Anderson as the interim dispatch manager of the Communications Center.

Chief Schaffer reported they outlined a list of expectations, noting the operations were the primary issues they brought to the table. He stated one of the things that came to light after bringing Mr. Walton in was the financial situation of the 911 Communications Center. Chief Schaffer reported after reviewing a series of spreadsheets provided by Mr. Walton he had no doubt that the situation is grim. He stated they are talking about a 17 percent increase in dispatch fees for 2017, in order for the county to start recovering from some of their financial problems. Chief Schaffer noted there's also been talk about a one-tenth of one percent tax increase to help fund the dispatch center, but he hasn't seen anything come forward on that. He indicated the discussion at the last couple of meetings has been primarily about the financial issues, as opposed to operations.

Chief Schaffer reported last month they had a conversation with Mr. Walton and made it clear that they do not have a lot of confidence in the current dispatch manager. He noted they are hoping that the county will be doing a hiring process soon for this position.

Councilor Harris asked if the 17 percent increase will repair the problem, or just keep up with current expenditures.

Chief Schaffer thought it was to cover current operational costs and that any equipment updates would probably come from the one-tenth of one percent tax increase being talked about.

Councilor Ketchum suggested if something fails and they don't have a backup plan the county would be liable. He stated you would think the word 'lawsuit' would make them want to do something about it.

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Chief Schaffer reported he hasn't given much consideration to the liability, adding the issue he sees is public safety. He noted this is not an attack on the dispatchers, adding they're under a lot of pressure and have a lot to do. Chief Schaffer stated when mistakes are made, or we find a weakness in the procedures, we need to have faith in the management that they are going to address it and resolve it.

Mayor Dawes reported, while dispatchers may make some mistakes, they can also be your best source of information to correct mistakes.

Chief Schaffer agreed.

Councilor Taylor asked if there would ever be a point that the users of the service might decide that the county is not the best place for this service to be hosted.

Chief Schaffer reported he didn't know if they were at that point yet, but those conversations have happened. He stated a group of individuals is looking at the idea of both regionalization and contracting with other dispatch centers. Chief Schaffer noted the inherent problem in doing that is the cost, and if you go to an outside dispatch center you're not their sole focus. He indicated they're still exploring those options, but hoped it wouldn't get to that point.

Councilor Spahr asked if they've always been without a strategic plan, or is it just deteriorating service.

Chief Schaffer stated he didn't believe there's ever been a plan in place for what they call "Critical Incident or Tactical Dispatching." He noted other jurisdictions have specific sections in their manual for when things hit the fan.

Councilor Spahr asked if the chiefs' group would be involved with vetting the new manager.

Chief Schaffer reported they have two representatives on the board and have approached the Central Services Director and the BOCC about sitting on whatever process they put in place to hire the permanent manager.

Chief Cardinale reported this is a management problem and money is not going to solve the issues they're experiencing with the day-to-day operations. He stated they experienced an eight percent increase this year and now they plan to increase the fee by 17 percent, yet the service is still subpar. Chief Cardinale noted until they have an effective manager to set expectations and to hold the employees accountable, the service is not going to improve. He reported they still have issues with dispatchers talking too quickly and not tracking their units out in the field properly, adding that puts our personnel at risk.

Chief Cardinale reported when they met with the BOCC they clearly expressed that they wanted to be involved in the hiring process of the new manager. He indicated the group sent a couple of letters requesting notification of when that process will take place, but to date they have not been notified.

Councilor Lund reported Chehalis has always been a leader and he would like to see the council help fix the problem. He suggested his fellow council members support him in directing the city manager to work with our two chiefs to start a new dispatch center.

Councilor Taylor stated he supported Councilor Lund if that's what they're asking for. He noted he wants to make sure he's part of a group that gives the city manager the tools necessary to fix the problem.

Councilor Harris stated if he was on the receiving end of the letter from City Manager MacReynold, he would take the bullet points provided and use those as his to-do Bible.

Councilor Taylor asked Chief Schaffer if he knew where the Commissioners are on the issue.

Chief Schaffer reported the only time the group met with the BOCC was back in January. He noted that was their initial discussion with the previous director and manager, and to that regard, they were extremely receptive and acted quickly. Chief Schaffer believed after that point it's only been individual conversations.

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Councilor Ketchum asked if their group sent any similar letters to the BOCC with all of their signatures. He noted even though it states other agencies are concerned, it appears to be a Chehalis issue because we stepped up and made the effort to send a letter.

Chief Schaffer stated they did, adding any meeting they've had has been with the fire and police chiefs, as a group.

Chief Cardinale reported every fire and police department is represented in the group, and the document given to the management was a culmination of all of their concerns and complaints. He stated they got the message that this was not just the city of Chehalis.

Mayor Dawes suggested it would be nice to see the city of Centralia and Riverside Fire Authority chime in with a letter stating they were part of the planning process and they agree with the letter 100 percent.

Mayor Dawes stated he was a little alarmed about the funding issue, noting the first thing they throw out is a 17 percent increase, plus the possibility of raising the tax rate one-tenth of one percent. He noted having to pay for the county's mistake doesn't set well with him as an agency that uses the service, or as a taxpayer. Mayor Dawes agreed that the best solution is to fix the existing dispatch center and make it work, but to make it work you need to have the right people.

Councilor Taylor asked what a reasonable timeframe would be for the county to get it fixed.

Chief Schaffer stated he didn't know if you could put a timeframe on it, adding there are short-term things on the list that can be turned around quite easily and others that might take up to 12 months. He suggested they would be happy if they could just see some progress.

Councilor Taylor thanked Commissioner Edna Fund for attending the meeting and asked if she put an emphasis on taking care of some of the issues outlined in the letter.

Commissioner Fund reported a lot of changes were made last January after hearing from folks about the issues they were dealing with. She talked briefly about the interim process, noting they have a lot of bumps that they're trying to get through. Commissioner Fund stated one of the things the county needs to do is to address the issues outlined in the letter. She stated she would like to see the county provide a written response, to include a timeline and their objectives. Commissioner Fund noted Mr. Walton is in the process of putting together a recruitment process for the dispatch manager position and they would like the chiefs to be part of that process. She noted she would also be talking with the other two Commissioners about setting up a time to work on the issues. Commissioner Fund reported, with regard to any potential increases, she would first want to have a financial workshop with the Central Services Director to explain why they need to do it.

Mayor Dawes stated he would like Commissioner Fund to also question how it got to this point. He reported the purpose of this discussion was to make sure the whole council had the same amount of information, and a chance to give feedback.

5. Council Reports.

a. **Update From Councilor Lund.** Councilor Lund reported he attended the Chehalis Parks Committee meeting, adding it went well.

b. **Update From Councilor Spahr.** Councilor Spahr reported he had a couple of comments from citizens about smoking in and around Penny Playground. He asked if the administration could take a look at what we have in our ordinances regarding smoking in city parks.

City Manager MacReynold reported he's already looking into it and they would be having a discussion about it at the next council meeting.

Councilor Spahr also noted the weeds have overtaken the flowerbeds on Chehalis Avenue.

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City Manager MacReynold introduced Andrew Hunziker, the city's new Property Maintenance Technician II.

Mr. Hunziker reported their seasonal help just came on and they've already started working on cleaning up the flowerbeds around town.

c. **Update From Councilor Harris.** Councilor Harris expressed concern about the large delivery trucks driving down Market Boulevard that are busting up the curbs and watering system while trying to turn onto Boistfort Street. He asked if there is a way to regulate it so the large trucks are not allowed to turn at certain intersections.

Police Chief Schaffer reported it's possible to make it part of a truck route and restrict certain areas, but it would involve more signs.

Councilor Harris stated he's tired of watching all of the shrubs and the hard work everyone does downtown get run over every week, but the last thing he wants to see is more signage.

d. **Update From Mayor Dawes.** Mayor Dawes reported the local Zonta Club held a meeting at the Holiday Inn Express on April 30 and asked if he would be there to welcome them to town. He stated it's great to see those types of events come to Chehalis, adding they had some very nice compliments about our city.

6. **Ordinance No. 958-B, Second and Final Reading - Establishing a Zero-Rise Policy for Development in the Chehalis Floodplain.** City Manager MacReynold reported this is a very progressive and yet cautious effort for the city to be a good partner in the Flood Authority and with our downstream partners in the Chehalis Basin. He thanked the staff, adding they did an exceptional job working with the city attorney and J. Vander Stoep to come up with this approach.

Councilor Ketchum moved to pass Ordinance No. 958-B on second and final reading.

The motion was seconded by Councilor Taylor and carried unanimously.

7. **Executive Session.** Mayor Dawes closed the regular meeting at 6:01 p.m. and 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.

Following conclusion of the executive session, Mayor Dawes reopened the regular meeting at 6:42 p.m., and there being no further business to come before the council, the meeting was immediately adjourned.

Mayor

Attest:

City Clerk

SUGGESTED MOTION

I move that the council approve the minutes of the regular city council meeting of May 9, 2016.