

May 23, 2016

The Chehalis city council met in regular session on Monday, May 23, 2016, 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, and Tony Ketchum. Councilor Taylor was absent (excused). Staff present included: Merlin MacReynold, City Manager; Bill Hillier, City Attorney; Mark Scheibmeir, Asst. City Attorney; Judy Schave, City Clerk; Glenn Schaffer, Police Chief; Judy Pectol, Finance Manager; Rick Sahlin, Public Works Director; Don Schmitt, Street/Stormwater Superintendent; and David Fleckenstein, Airport Manager. Members of the media included Justyna Tomtas from *The Chronicle*.

1. **Conduct Public Hearing on the 2017-2022 Six-Year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)**. Mayor Dawes closed the regular meeting at 5:01 p.m. and opened the public hearing.

Public Works Director Rick Sahlin provided information on the 2017-2022 TIP, noting they currently have funding for the National Avenue Salzer Creek Bridge Scour Project and the National Avenue Grind and Overlay. He briefly reviewed the list of unfunded projects, to include:

- National Avenue/Coal Creek Improvements – Coal Creek Bridge and pedestrian improvements
- National Avenue Safety Improvements – Sidewalks, guardrails and safety improvements
- Market Blvd./Park Street/National Avenue – Renaissance streetscape planning
- Market Blvd. from Park Street to 13th Street – Grind/overlay
- Market Blvd. from 13th Street to city limits – Grind/overlay
- Snively Avenue Improvements – Reconstruct 16th Street to 20th Street
- Guardrail – Various locations throughout city
- Riverside Drive/Newaukum Avenue Repairs – Spot repairs from Hwy 6 to Shorey Rd.
- Chamber Way Bridge Replacement – Replace bridge
- Kresky Avenue Improvements – Overlay
- Kresky Avenue Flood Mitigation – Raise roadway between Exhibitor Road and Scott Johnson Road
- Front Street/Pacific Avenue/Park Street Improvements – Grind, overlay, utility, and frontage improvements
- Louisiana Avenue Repairs – Spot repair and overlay to Hwy 6

Councilor Pope asked if the city could apply for a Safe Routes to School grant for the Snively Avenue Improvements.

Mr. Sahlin reported they've applied for those grants in the past, but have not been able to score enough points to be successful.

Mayor Dawes suggested with the construction of the new elementary school it would tie all of the schools to that one area and thought it would be worth applying for again.

Mr. Sahlin reported the issue they've had in the past and continue to have is the lack of right-of-way along Snively Avenue. He noted the residents have been against the improvements because it basically cuts their front yards down to nothing.

Councilor Spahr inquired about the National Avenue Grind and Overlay Project wanting to know the exact area.

Mr. Sahlin reported it would start at the north end near the fairgrounds and end south of Staples, Inc., where National Avenue meets Kresky Avenue.

Councilor Spahr asked what it would cost to do just an overlay for that project.

Street Superintendent Don Schmitt reported the preferred method is to grind and overlay, so you don't lose your curb reveal, which has happened in other areas around town. He noted an overlay also creates issues with meeting the side streets, as well as the transition to curbs and gutters once they get further south near Sunbirds.

Mr. Sahlin reported the overlay projects for Market Blvd. and 13th Street will also have to be ground down, otherwise there won't be any curb left.

Mayor Dawes wondered why the two projects that received funding were not at the top of the list.

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Mr. Sahlin reported there's no significance in the order in which they are listed, adding they just need to be on the list to be eligible for grant funding. He noted the TIP can also be amended during the year if they apply and receive grant funding for another project not listed on the TIP.

There being no public comment, Mayor Dawes closed the public hearing at 5:10 p.m. and reopened the regular meeting.

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

a. Minutes of the regular meeting of May 9, 2016;

b. Claim Vouchers No. 115663-115808 and Electronic Funds Transfer Nos. 42016 and 52016 in the amount of \$569,062.57 dated May 13, 2016; and

c. Adopt Resolution No. 14-2016 on first and final reading authorizing the city manager to apply for a Recreation and Conservation grant for the Dillenbaugh Creek Culvert Assessment and Basin Flood Analysis Project.

The motion was seconded by Councilor Pope and carried unanimously.

3. **Administration Reports.**

a. **April Financial Report.** Finance Manager Judy Pectol reported everything is looking fine, but she would be keeping a watch on the building permit fee revenue to make sure we reach our projected budget. She stated she's also not surprised that the property tax revenue is still low since they extended the payment deadline to May 2 this year.

Ms. Pectol reported she plans to make the adjustments for the contra expenses in June, which will make the general fund look much better.

Councilor Harris inquired about the garbage tax revenue, wondering why it is so low.

Ms. Pectol believed it was a timing issue, adding if it's not received by June 1 she would be contacting the state to find out why it's delayed.

b. **Request for Smoking Ban in City Parks.** City Manager MacReynold reported he had received this request from a citizen through a couple of the councilors. He had City Attorney Bill Hillier look into the matter and asked that he provide his findings to the council.

City Attorney Hillier reported state statute speaks about bans within 25 feet of facilities; however, open space is not considered a facility. He noted a couple of cities have attempted to place bans in city parks, but have not been successful. City Attorney Hillier believed they may have the ability to ban smoking in parks if there's a children's event going on. He stated he could probably craft something to ban it within 25 feet of Penny Playground, but didn't believe they would get it very far into the slow pitch fields, and such.

Councilor Pope stated his concern is Penny Playground. He reported its frustrating to see kids running around the play area and having someone standing in the middle smoking a cigarette, or throwing it down on the wood deck to mash it out. Councilor Pope felt this particular facility should be restricted to no smoking within 25 feet.

Councilor Harris stated he wouldn't mind including the kiddy spray park and pool area, as well.

Mayor Dawes suggested it might make more sense to make designated areas rather than trying to ban it.

Councilor Ketchum stated he's worked with this before and if you designate an area for smoking you're basically promoting it, which could come back on the city.

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Recreation Manager Lilly Wall reported they already have signage at the spray park that states no smoking within 25 feet. She noted the area they get the most complaints is at the aquatics facility, but people are pretty good about moving out and away if asked to do so. Ms. Wall stated they truly do not get a lot of complaints in their office regarding smoking.

City Manager MacReynold reminded the council that in 2009 the city was approached by the Girl Scouts, asking that we restrict smoking at Penny Playground. He noted it was decided they could put signage up to encourage people not to smoke in that area, but it would not be enforceable. City Manager MacReynold stated with the changes in the laws we may be able to be a little more restrictive about it, especially with reference to Penny Playground.

The consensus of the council was to have the administration proceed to bring something back for their consideration that would prohibit smoking within 25 feet of the areas discussed.

c. **Update on Recreation Park Improvement Project - Request for Policy Direction.** City Manager MacReynold reported the administration has been working with the Parks Committee on an alternative approach for the Recreation Park Improvement Project. He noted they're looking for guidance from the rest of the council to see if they support the alternative approach that the committee came up with.

Project Manager Tom Skillings walked the council through the alternative approach to Phase 1 of the Recreation Park Improvement Project. He noted a few months ago the council approved a project direction for Recreation Park that included:

- Safer, accessible parking
- More walkways
- Improved drainage, lighting, and landscaping
- New community building, Penny Playground, restroom facilities, and picnic shelters
- Improved overall access to the park

Mr. Skillings reported the overall budget for the entire project was defined as approximately \$6 million. He noted the administration and the Parks Committee looked at alternative ways to fund the project and came up with an alternative solution in the interim for the first phase of the project (Stage 1 of Phase 1). This project will include priorities from the Committee, to include:

- New and improved parking area (including lighting and ADA accessible sidewalks)
- Connector drive
- Drainage improvements
- New Penny Playground
- Restroom renovation

Mr. Skillings reported the Stage 1 improvements rough order of magnitude cost is estimated at \$1,949,000. He reported they would like to start the preliminary design in September 2016, which will allow them to engage the students to get their input for the new Penny Playground. Mr. Skillings reported the project would be ready for construction in March 2017, with construction starting in June 2017.

Councilor Spahr asked if the softball fields would be usable during construction.

Mr. Skillings reported they plan to start construction after the tournament season is over. He noted they would go out to bid in the spring and push construction out until later in the year.

Mayor Dawes asked how they planned to pay for the project.

Mr. Skillings reported they've applied for two (2) Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) grant opportunities and will know in November if they were successful, or not. He noted that money would not be available until June 2017, which is another reason they pushed the construction out until after June. Mr. Skillings reported they hope to have \$1 million in RCO grants and the remainder would be paid for with city funds. He noted if they're not successful with the RCO grants the entire amount would be funded by the city.

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City Manager MacReynold suggested the city funds could be a council manic bond, or a loan.

Councilor Harris stated it also depends on whether the RCO is funded through the state budget process. He noted another reason for not starting construction until June is because anything done prior to that time would not be eligible for the grant.

Mr. Skillings clarified that any planning or design work can be incurred prior to June and would be grant eligible, but the construction can't be started until we have the grant contract in hand.

Michael Holst (citizen) asked if this was supposed to be a choice between Stan Hedwall Park and the new school, or if those were separate items.

City Manager MacReynold stated what Mr. Holst is speaking to is the ballfields. He reported, based on the cost, they're looking at leaving the ballfields at their current location during Stage 1, noting the improved drainage will help expand the time in which tournaments can function. City Manager MacReynold indicated the feasibility study is complete and they're now looking at Stan Hedwall Park, noting the school location doesn't look as feasible as it did a few weeks ago.

Mr. Holst inquired about the parking, wanting to know how it would affect the plan if they don't get the parking area from Green Hill School.

City Manager MacReynold stated he believed they would get it based on the most recent conversation.

Mr. Skillings reported it would not change the benefits of what's being done it just reduces the number of stalls by 99.

Councilor Pope asked Mr. Holst why he asked the question.

Mr. Holst stated he had heard that Green Hill was not necessarily in favor of it and just wanted to know if it would make a difference. He suggested 90 stalls is a lot and if it's not there then where are all of these people going to park?

Mr. Holst inquired as to why they choose to make Pacific Avenue a one-way from 13th Street to around the backside as opposed to the other way around.

City Manager MacReynold reported it's a safety issue, noting they didn't want people exiting next to the railroad tracks.

City Manager MacReynold reported this is a very different approach to what they were talking about two months ago. He noted this is a more phased approach that will minimize the financial impact to the community. City Manager MacReynold stated they recognize there are a lot of other things that the city and council are interested in, such as funding for our streets.

Councilor Spahr asked if the Chehalis Foundation had been involved in any of the discussions, or with any of the funding.

Mr. Skillings stated they were not involved with this stage of the project; however, they were with the feasibility for the relocation of the ballfields and funded that portion in its entirety.

City Attorney Hillier stated the money to pay for the feasibility study was primarily engineered because the Foundation had funding dedicated for ballfields and parks. He noted the Foundation has a certain amount of money available each year and the funds for ballfields are exhausted for 2016, but there would be more money in the pot for 2017.

Mayor Dawes stated he liked this approach a little better. He reported it would be nice to have it all, but it might be a tough pill for the citizenry to swallow given the amount it would take. Mayor Dawes stated if they continue in this way there's a good chance it will all go in, especially if folks can see progress.

Councilor Spahr stated he believed the Bearcats girls' softball team would take first place again this year at state and suggested they're going to need a quality place to play. He felt everyone would get behind that.

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The consensus of the council is to continue in the direction of phasing in the project.

4. **Update on LC Communications Center Services.** City Manager MacReynold reported he received an update from Lewis County Commissioner Edna Fund on what the county is doing with reference to the issues discussed at the previous council meeting. He noted Commissioner Fund indicated that the announcement for the recruitment of the Communications Center Director position will go out on Wednesday. Additionally, the Commissioners were supposed to meet with representatives from the chiefs' group last week, but the meeting had to be rescheduled.

5. **Council Reports.**

a. **Update From Councilor Harris.** Councilor Harris reported he attended the Chehalis Community Renaissance Team meeting, noting some of their discussion paralleled things that were talked about at the last council meeting. He stated a representative from the Farmers Market talked briefly about restroom accessibility and the issues they have with the restrooms located on N. Market Blvd. Councilor Harris reported he and City Manager MacReynold talked after the meeting about potentially building or contracting with a company to lease portable restrooms when there's a program going on, such as the Farmers Market, Santa Parade, Music in the Park, or any other function we may have. He suggested if we do something like that it might allow us to remove the restrooms on N. Market Blvd.

Councilor Harris reported he had a chance to watch the city of Centralia council meeting and found it ironic that here we are talking about possibly removing our restrooms and the Centralia Downtown Association is talking about building them. He noted Centralia is also running into issues with their downtown parking, adding this may lead to putting up signs to limit the amount of time people can park.

b. **Update From Councilor Pope.** Councilor Pope reported he and his wife had a chance to travel across the country on the backroads, noting this is a most beautiful and wonderful country that we live in. He stated it was a wonderful experience, but it's also wonderful to be back in Chehalis where his heart is.

c. **Update From Councilor Spahr.** Councilor Spahr reported he attended two Lewis Economic Development Council meetings, noting they have a lot of interesting things going on. He also attended the Business After Hours along with Mayor Dawes at Just Wood Furniture.

d. **Update From Councilor Lund.** Councilor Lund stated he was glad Councilor Pope had a great and safe trip. He reported on May 11 he attended a Fair Association meeting; on May 18 he attended a Fair Commission meeting; and earlier in the day he attended the Lewis County Commissioners meeting.

e. **Update From Mayor Dawes.** Mayor Dawes reported he had a chance to tour the Twin Transit facility with General Manager Rob LaFontaine. He noted they exchanged some ideas with regard to building their new regional transit center, adding he hoped their project works out well for them.

6. **Executive Session.** Mayor Dawes closed the regular meeting at 5:48 p.m. and announced the council would convene into executive session for approximately 30 minutes pursuant to RCW 42.30.110(1)(i) – potential litigation, and RCW 42.30.110(1)(g) – discuss qualifications of applicants and there would be no decision following conclusion of the executive session.

Following conclusion of the executive session, the regular meeting was reopened at 6:34 p.m., and there being no further business to come before the council, the meeting was immediately adjourned.

Mayor

Attest:

City Clerk

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SUGGESTED MOTION

I move that the council approve the minutes of the regular city council meeting of May 23, 2016.