

Chehalis City Council

Meeting Minutes

October 25, 2021

The Chehalis City Council met in regular session on Monday, October 25, 2021. Mayor Dennis Dawes called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm with the following members present: Terry Harris, Jerry Lord, Dr. Isaac Pope, and Bob Spahr. Councilor Daryl Lund participated via Zoom. Councilor Tony Ketchum was absent, excused. Staff present included: Jill Anderson, City Manager; Tammy Baraconi, Planning and Building Manager; Kiley Franz, City Clerk; Erin Hillier, City Attorney; Andrew Hunziker, Facilities Manager; Randy Kaut, Police Chief; Brandon Rakes, Airport Operations Coordinator; Chun Saul, Finance Director; and Lilly Wall, Recreation Manager.

1. **Approval of Agenda.** City Manager Anderson informed the Council that the executive session for sale and lease of real estate was not needed; it was removed from the agenda. A motion to approve the agenda as amended was made by Councilor Pope. The motion was seconded by Councilor Spahr and carried unanimously.

2. **First Responders Appreciation Day Proclamation.** Mayor Dawes read a proclamation designating October 28th as First Responders' Day in the City of Chehalis and thanked first responders for their service.

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

- a. Minutes of the regular City Council meeting of October 11, 2021; and
- b. October 15, 2021 vouchers and transfers - accounts payable in the amount of \$452,560.69;

The motion was seconded by Councilor Lord and carried unanimously.

4. **Incentive Program for Lateral Police Officer Applicants.** Chief Kaut explained that it has become difficult to recruit quality, experienced officers. In response, many agencies have created a signing bonus incentive to entice lateral officers. He further explained that the cost of sending an entry level officer to academy is slightly under \$26,000; which includes wages, benefits, and the cost of the academy.

The proposed program would provide a \$20,000 signing bonus to be paid out over a two-year period. \$8,000 would be paid at the time of hire, \$6,000 upon completion of probation, and \$6,000 at the end of the two-year period. A three-year agreement would be required, which would ensure that the City would be paid back if the applicant left City of Chehalis employment.

Discussion between Council members ensued regarding the amount of the signing bonus; Mayor Dawes supported \$15,000, Councilor Harris supported \$20,000, and Councilor Lund supported \$25,000. Councilor Lund asked why the reserve program was no longer in place. Chief Kaut explained that the stringent training requirements placed upon volunteers made it not financially viable.

Councilor Spahr made a motion to approve the lateral police officer monetary incentive program where the amount of \$20,000 is paid over two years to lateral police officer applicants who successfully complete three years of service with the City. The motion was seconded by Councilor Lord and carried unanimously.

5. **Memorandum of Understanding with the Lewis County Economic Development Council (EDC) for Infrastructure Project Funding, Coordination, and Advocacy Assistance.** Todd Chaput of the Lewis County Economic Development Council explained that while the project had originally been discussed for use with ARPA funds, the restrictions placed upon those funds has led to discussions of alternative funding. The focus of the project is to bring multiple entities together when completing a project to work cohesively to improve the area.

Councilor Lord asked if other jurisdictions had implemented a similar program. Todd Chaput explained that the infrastructure project was unique and encouraged coordination between entities. Councilor Pope asked when something tangible would be seen from this project. Todd Chaput explained that it would be unlikely they would have something for this legislative session, but would expect to see something proposed at the next.

A motion to approve the MOU and authorize the City Manager to sign the MOU with the EDC (Economic Alliance) was made by Councilor Spahr. The motion was seconded by Councilor Harris and carried four to one; Councilor Lord disapproved.

6. Administration Reports.

- a. **3rd Quarter Financial Status Report.** Chun Saul provided a third quarter financial report. The City's general fund revenue has collected 75.2% of the 2021 budget. 60% of property taxes have been collected, which is expected at this time of year since the second half of taxes are due in November. Sales and use taxes have collected 79% of the 2021 estimated revenue; utility taxes have collected 81.9%; and other tax collections are roughly 75%. Total tax collections through September is \$7,079,733.

Most departments spent below the 75% targeted amount. The facilities and parks departments are over the 75% target due to seasonal staff and projects completed in the summer months. Overall, the City has expended 62.8% of the 2021 budgeted amount.

- b. **Parks and Facilities Project Updates.** Andrew Hunziker provided an overview of parks and facilities projects within the City; projects include: renovation of the Stan Hedwall Park RV bathroom and shower facility, concrete parking stops at Lintott Alexander Park, tree trimming at Lintott Alexander Park, final preparations for the opening of Penny Playground, repairs to Penny Playground after a vehicle accident, new landscape at Lintott Alexander Park, new asset essentials work order system, cleaning and replacing parking stops, drainage at the Scout Lodge, cleanup of a giant cottonwood at Lintott Alexander Park; and other landscaping and maintenance projects throughout the city. Andrew Hunziker thanked the Streets Department for their assistance.

Mayor Dawes suggested signs at Stan Hedwall Park encouraging visitors to visit local shops and attractions.

Andrew Hunziker also informed the Council that prior to the repairs to the pool, it was losing approximately 25,000 to 30,000 gallons of water per day. After the resurfacing project was completed, only about 3,000 gallons a day are being lost. Heating and chlorine costs have been reduced with these repairs.

- c. **City Manager Update.** City Manager Anderson informed the Council that Marilyn Snider, the strategic planning facilitator, will be unable to attend in person but would be able to conduct the session remotely. The Council unanimously agreed to postpone the strategic planning session until able to participate in person. Positions are available on the Planning Commission and Historic Preservation Committee; applications have been posted on the City's website (www.ci.chehalis.wa.us). City Manager Anderson provided the telephone numbers to report street light outages: City of Chehalis (metal poles) 360-748-0238 and Lewis County PUD (wooden poles) 360-748-9261.

7. Councilor Reports/Committee Updates.

- a. **Councilor Harris.** Councilor Harris informed the Council that the Chehalis Basin Partnership heard from the Office of the Chehalis Basin, they are involved with a plan for the Skookumchuck dam. They are analyzing everything from dam removal to fish passages; they have indicated that it will not have an effect on water rights issues with TransAlta, but Councilor Harris expressed apprehension.
- b. **Mayor Dawes.** Mayor Dawes informed the Council that budget meetings had concluded.

8. **Executive Session.** Mayor Dawes announced the council would take a short recess and then be in executive session pursuant to RCW 42.30.110(1)(g) – Review performance of a public employee, not to exceed 7:00 pm and there will be no action taken following conclusion of the executive session. Mayor Dawes closed the regular meeting at 6:30 pm. and the executive session began at 6:34 pm. Following conclusion of the executive session at 7:00 pm, the regular meeting was reopened and was immediately adjourned.

Dennis L. Dawes, Mayor

Kiley Franz, City Clerk

Approved:

Initials: KF