

October 14, 2021

**Mayor Steve Sexton** called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance. Council members present: Bill Aslett, Keith Chaplin, Joe DeGloria, Rick DeGloria, Scott Green, Chris Loving, and James Stavig. Staff present: Janice Burwash, Leif Johnson, Mike Luvera, Kristen Morrison, Katie Olafson, Travis Schwetz, Joe Stewart, Sarah Ward, and Greg Young.

**MINUTES:**

A motion was made by **Councilors R. DeGloria/Loving** to approve the minutes of the September 9, 2021, City Council meeting. All in favor; motion carried.

**AUDIT OF BILLS:**

A motion was made by **Councilors Loving/Chaplin** to approve Accounts Payable invoices to be paid as of September 23, 2021, in the amount of \$344,840.59 and October 14, 2021, in the amount of \$378,660.10 and Payroll Expenses for Pay Period ending September 15, 2021, in the amount of \$722,839.49 and September 30, 2021, in the amount of \$519,999.17. All in favor; motion carried.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

**Margaret Wilson** of **11096 View Ridge Drive** and President of the Genealogical Society spoke in favor of the Burlington Public Library upgrading their meeting room AV equipment to accommodate a hybrid of in-person and remote Zoom conferencing attendance. **Wilson** spoke of the growth the group has seen and cited many examples of how the audio equipment upgrade would benefit many groups that frequently use the meeting room space.

**City Attorney Leif Johnson** stated that members of the public may submit comments or questions by mail to City Hall at 833 S. Spruce Street, ATTN: Greg Young, or by email to [badministration@burlingtonwa.gov](mailto:badministration@burlingtonwa.gov). Contact information for all the City Departments is available at [www.burlingtonwa.gov](http://www.burlingtonwa.gov).

**COUNCIL COMMENTS:**

**Councilor Keith Chaplin** attended the public policy listening session put on by the Latinx Advisory Committee where needs for housing, behavioral health, community services,

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and childcare were discussed. **Chaplin** also shared about an upcoming Housing Consortium meeting he plans to attend.

**Councilor James Stavig** attended the Burlington Chamber of Commerce meeting via Zoom where **Mayor Sexton** gave a great presentation and suggested a similar presentation about updates on the “State of the City” be presented at City Council meetings periodically.

**MAYOR’S UPDATE:**

**No Mayor’s Update.**

**SPECIAL PRESENTATION:**

**No Special Presentations.**

**PROCLAMATION:**

No Proclamation.

**COMMITTEE & BOARD REPORTS:**

**Councilor Keith Chaplin** gave a brief update of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board meeting. Topics of discussion included, field and turf management, parks signage on hold updates on the dog park development process and promoting the fireworks for the Harvest Festival in a broader way in upcoming years.

**OFFICERS REPORTS:**

**City Administrator Greg Young** spoke in favor of the progress made at the Council Retreat held in the previous month. Additionally **Young** shared the Canton parking lease agreement has officially gone on a month-to-month basis and the owners of the property are asking Council to consider an amount higher than \$800 a month. **Councilors Chaplin** and **Stavig** spoke in favor of a 3% inflation increase. A discussion was held amongst staff and Council. **Young** will communicate with the owners on Councils’ behalf and the topic will be brought back to Council in an upcoming meeting.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

No Unfinished Business.

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**CONSENT AGENDA**

No Consent Agenda.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Public Hearing on 2022 Property Tax**

**Finance Director Joe Stewart** explained the City of Burlington's 2022 property tax assessment needs to be set in time to be sent to the County for inclusion on the tax rolls. Before the Council decides on the preferred property tax assessment, the City is required to hold a public hearing to gain insight from interested citizens. A 1% increase has been built into the 2022 budget that will generate approximately \$27,000,000.00 over the prior year. The increase would help to offset inflation and other increases in operating costs.

**Mayor Sexton** opened the public hearing.

A motion was made by **Councilors Bill Aslett and Scott Green** to close the public hearing. All in favor; motion carried.

A brief discussion was held amongst Council and staff regarding the 1% property increase. **Councilor Bill Aslett** requested a comparison of other cities' property taxes be presented to Council as a reference. **Councilor James Stavig** spoke against the property tax increase. This topic will be brought back to Council for action in an upcoming meeting.

**Library Bad Debt Write-Off**

**Library Director Sarah Ward** stated, in reviewing patron accounts, it was discovered the library was not adhering to a Library Board policy to clear fines every seven years. A proposed ordinance was presented that would result in an amendment to the Burlington Municipal Code and conform to the Library Board policy concerning the write-off of these bad debt fines. The amount totals around \$69,000.00. **Councilor Bill Aslett** shared the fines being presented are very old as the library has not charged fines in several years. **Councilor Joe DeGloria** added he was on the Library Board when they stopped issuing fines eight years prior. Further discussion was held amongst staff and Council.

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A motion was made by **Councilors Chaplin/Aslett** to approve the proposed ordinance and resulting amendment to the BMC and authorize the mayor's signature. All in favor; motion carried.

**Proposed Ordinance Repealing Burlington Municipal Code Section 2.44.030 Paid Holidays**

**Human Resources & Administrative Manager Kristen Morrison** explained the observance of all/only state holidays referenced in the Burlington Municipal Code (BMC) Section 2.44.030, is not accurately reflected in the established practice of observing Christmas Eve (December 24); as a result, the BMC would need to be revised to reflect what is practiced and included in the City's Personnel Policy. The proposed ordinance addresses the changes necessary to reflect the state and federal holidays that have become recognized in the time since the most current Policy Manual update occurred. City staff is questioning the addition of Juneteenth to the schedule of observed employee holidays and the renaming of the day after Thanksgiving to Native American Heritage Day.

A motion was made by **Councilors Chaplin/R. DeGloria** to adopt the ordinance as written and authorize the mayor's signature. All in favor; motion carried.

**Proposed Resolution Amending the City of Burlington Personnel Policy & Procedures Manual: Paid Holidays**

**Human Resources & Administrative Manager Kristen Morrison** shared City staff seeks to reflect the holidays of Juneteenth and Native American Heritage Day in the City of Burlington Policy & Procedures Manual Chapter 9.6 "Paid Holidays" to reflect the state and federal holidays which have been established since the manual was last updated in 2014. The language "When New Year's Day falls on a Saturday, it shall be observed on a Monday, to ensure there is the appropriate number of holidays per calendar year." will be added to the City's Policy & Procedures Manual Chapter 9.6.

A motion was made by **Councilors Green/Loving** to approve the resolution as written and authorize the mayor's signature. All in favor; motion carried.

**Resolution to Declare Certain Property as Surplus**

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**Chief of Police Michael Luvera** presented a resolution to authorize the sale of City surplus equipment and vehicles; a 2001 GMC Sonoma Pickup truck that is no longer operational.

A motion was made by **Councilors Stavig/J. DeGloria** to approve the resolution declaring the property as surplus and authorize their sale. All in favor; motion carried.

**Comprehensive Plan Update – Inter-Agency Agreement with WWU for Economic Development Element Work**

**City Administrator Greg Young** shared the city is required by Washington State Law to periodically update its comprehensive plan. The last comprehensive plan update was due in June 2016. Due to the complexity of the project and limited Community Development staffing, the City has not completed the required update. As a result, the city has become ineligible for state-backed grants and other funding. To remain eligible for state funding it is imperative to complete the required comprehensive plan update as soon as possible. After exploring various options, including private sector consultants, Community Development has identified Western Washington University (WWU) Center for Business and Economic Research as the best available option to help complete the Economic Development Element of the Comprehensive Plan. A lengthy discussion was held amongst Council and staff.

A motion was made by **Councilors Stavig/J. DeGloria** to approve the attached inter-agency agreement with Western Washington University and authorize the mayor to sign the attached agreement. All in favor; motion carried.

**Library AV Upgrades for Zoom Presentations**

**IT Director Geoff Hawes** explained the library front meeting room is requiring AV upgrades to accommodate a hybrid of in-person and remote Zoom conferencing attendance. The upgrades will utilize some of the existing AV equipment and will add a Creston operator touch panel, along with 2 HD Zoom compatible cameras, one fixed camera facing the presenter in the north room, the other for the second half of the meeting room. These upgrades fit into the American Rescue Plan dollars and will have no cost to the city. **Councilor James Stavig** asked if there will be any additional costs for Zoom. **Hawes** shared any costs would be minimal.

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A motion was made by **Councilors Chaplin/Stavig** to approve the Library Zoom AV upgrades as proposed by Dimensional Communications for approximately \$21,823.45 with tax. All in favor; motion carried.

**Professional Service Agreement: Townzen & Associates, Inc.**

**Human Resources & Administrative Manager Kristen Morrison** explained, as of June 1, 2021, the City's Building Official position has been vacant. Despite comprehensive and far-reaching recruitment for the position, the city has not yet filled the position. For the time being, as the city re-evaluates the details associated with the position of Building Official, the recruitment process has been paused. City staff requested information from several firms that provide plan review services. After careful review, the city has selected, for recommendation to the Council, the best-qualified firm: Townzen & Associates, Inc. The city has previously utilized the services of Townzen & Associates, Inc. for sprinkler and alarm system review, and received satisfactory services.

A motion was made by **Councilors Chaplin/R. DeGloria** to approve the agreement with Townzen & Associates, Inc. for plan review services, and authorize the mayor's signature. All in favor; motion carried.

**Placement of Building Official Position on Non-Represented Salary Schedule**

**Human Resources & Administrative Manager Kristen Morrison** explained the city is required to provide the services of a Building Official and must be able to successfully recruit for the position. The Building Official position is currently on the City's Non-Represented Salary Schedule under Grade "L". Staff is proposing to adjust the schedule to include the position under Grade "M". By doing so, the salary of the position would be much closer to average. This would provide the city the opportunity to enter into recruitment efforts with an accurate and competitive wage, and to hopefully attract and hire a qualified candidate.

A motion was made by **Councilors Chaplin/R. DeGloria** to approve the placement of the Building Official position wage scale to Grade M of the Non-Represented Salary Schedule. All in favor; motion carried.

**Addendum for Indigent Defense Services with Mount Vernon**

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**City Administrator Greg Young** shared the cities of Burlington and Mount Vernon currently share the expense for Indigent Defense Services which has been impacted by the current Pandemic. With the courts shuttered for some time, there has been a growing backlog of unresolved cases. Now that the courts are beginning to reopen, there is an increased need for these types of services – far above our current capacity. As a result, the city has reached out to the provider of these services (Mountain Law) to temporarily (up to one year) add personnel to address this backlog. Burlington’s share is 40% of the costs, \$50,000.00 for 2022.

A motion was made by **Councilors Stavig/Green** to approve the Addendum to Contract for Indigent Defense Services and authorize the mayor’s signature. All in favor; motion carried.

**Public Defense Program Assistant Interlocal Agreement with the City of Mount Vernon**  
**City Administrator Greg Young** explained Burlington and Mount Vernon currently share the services of a Defense Program Assistant. This position is currently filled by **Juan Farias**. Both cities are very pleased with Juan’s services and with his experience in the position and being bilingual in English and Spanish, **Farias** is very well suited to fill the needs of the position. The current Interlocal Agreement between Mount Vernon and Burlington has lapsed and both cities are interested in extending this Agreement into the future.

A motion was made by **Councilors R. DeGloria/Aslett** to approve the Interlocal Agreement with Mount Vernon for the services of a Defense Program Assistant and authorize the mayor to sign the Interlocal. All in favor; motion carried.

**Lodging Tax Advisory Committee 2022 Grant Award Recommendations**

**City Administrator Greg Young** shared, annually the Lodging Tax Advisory Committee solicits grant requests for projects that serve to increase, attract, or host tourism-related events and activities. Following presentations by the applicants, the Committee meets, discusses the requests, and formulates a recommended list of awards for Council consideration. The composition of the Lodging Tax Advisory Committee is dictated by State Law and must include representatives from the hotel industry in whose establishment guests pay the lodging tax to the city. The Council is not permitted to

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alter their recommended amounts but can refer the recommendations back to the Committee for further refinement should there be concerns.

A motion was made by **Councilors Chaplin/Stavig** to approve the 2022 Lodging Tax Grant requests as detailed in the Lodging Tax Advisory Committee recommended award list. All in favor; motion carried.

**Councilmember Salaries**

**City Administrator Greg Young** stated staff had been asked to prepare an agenda item relating to the salary of City Council members. There are two options for changing Councilmember salaries. First, Council can adopt to increase salaries via ordinance, but any increase would not take effect until the next election. Secondly, the Council can form a Salary Commission which sets the salaries and whose salary increase would take effect immediately. **Councilor James Stavig, Councilor Keith Chaplin, Councilor Chris Loving, and Councilor Bill Aseltt** spoke in opposition to changing the salaries of the Councilmembers sharing their feelings that the current salary is extremely fair. **Councilor Rick DeGloria** spoke in favor of appointing a Salary Commission. **Councilor Joe DeGloria and Councilor Scott Green** spoke in favor of increasing the salary of the Councilmembers. A lengthy discussion was held amongst the Council.

A motion was made by **Councilors Green/J. DeGloria** to bring this item back to Council in 30 days. **Councilors Green, J. DeGloria and R. DeGloria** in favor. **Councilors Aslett, Chaplin, Loving, and Stavig** opposed. Motion failed.

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**EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

No Executive Session.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

**Mayor Sexton** adjourned the meeting at 9:15 p.m.

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Joe Stewart  
Finance Director

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Steve Sexton  
Mayor

CITY OF BURLINGTON, WA

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