

CITY OF BURLINGTON, WA

January 26, 2023

Mayor Steve Sexton called the meeting to order at 7:11 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance. Councilmembers present: Bill Aslett, Keith Chaplin, Anna Chotzen, Joe DeGloria, Scott Green, James Stavig, and Jamie Weiss. Staff present: Jenny Cole, Leif Johnson, Brad Johnson, Kristen Morrison, Marv Pulst, Travis Schwetz, Rob Toth, and Greg Young.

MINUTES:

A motion was made by **Councilors Aslett/Green** to approve the January 12, 2022 minutes. All in favor; motion carried.

AUDIT OF BILLS:

Councilor Scott Green updated Council regarding the Audit & Finance meeting which met in person with **Councilors Aslett** and **Chotzen** also in attendance. A few expenses of note include: fiber repair for about \$11K, Boys & Girls Club program reimbursement for \$68K, and Fire Department renovations for \$111K.

A motion was made by **Councilors Green/Aslett** to approve Accounts Payable invoices to be paid as of December 31, 2022, in the amount of \$870,348.41 and January 26, 2023, in the amount of \$212,746.74; and Payroll Expenses for Pay Period ending January 15, 2023 in the amount of \$778,733.34. All in favor; motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

No Public Comments.

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. Contact information for all the City Departments is available at www.burlingtonwa.gov.

MAYOR'S UPDATE:

Mayor Sexton shared that during the holidays the local community enthusiastically responded to the First Steps Center's call for aide in the form of blankets and bedding for their residents and our local homeless population.

COUNCIL COMMENTS:

Councilor Stavig asked for clarification of the process of Committee assignments and their delegation. **Stavig** requested for there to be a specific Agenda Item added to a future Council Meeting that would consider a change to the municipal code on how those assignments are

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organized or voted on. **Councilors Weiss** and **Chotzen** added their support of this topic being discussed and process being reevaluated.

Councilor Aslett thanked the mystery community member whom had already painted over graffiti and reported on a recent visit to the First Steps Center which offers 25 warming beds that had already been at full capacity five times this winter. **Aslett** shared that the Center could also benefit from clothing donations.

COMMITTEE & BOARD REPORTS:

Councilor Aslett provided a brief update for the Public Safety Committee meeting.

OFFICER'S REPORTS:

Public Works Director Marv Pulst provided Council with an educational video presentation on the workings of a Vactor Truck, one of the most expensive equipment on wheels in the Streets Department fleet, for the City of Burlington. A new truck would be priced in the \$500K range and the current truck for the City is nearing 20 years of service which means that in 2-3 years there will need to be a review of the vehicle with options ranging from a \$55K+ repair, a new vehicle purchase, or a vehicle rental lease of \$14K per month. **Pulst** shared that the ER&R schedule includes the future purchase of a new Vacuum Truck. **Councilor Chaplin** proposed a discussion on the ER&R and upcoming purchases for the Public Works Department stating that some forward sight for the Council would be beneficial. **Councilor Aslett** expanded on **Chaplin's** suggestion with a request for evaluating "savings" that the City might be seeing from getting more use out of vehicles than forecasted and overall to better understand the health of the ER&R budget and corresponding schedule.

City Administrator Greg Young updated Council on the progress of the CIP which had been distributed for Staff to refresh and review. The CIP will then come back before Council in a few months.

PROCLAMATION:

No Proclamation.

PRESENTATION:

Introduction of New City Prosecutors

City Attorney Leif Johnson introduced new law firm Zachor, Stock & Krepps that had been approved by Council at a recent meeting. The law firm will be working together to process the

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cases and as the load lightens Mr. Krepps will be the primary prosecution lawyer handling cases for the City of Burlington. The prosecuting team shared that they look forward to working with the City and Skagit County on the Community Court program.

Dike District 17

Daryl Hamburg with Skagit County Dike District 17 shared a detailed presentation at the City Council meeting with many statistics about the Skagit River including the cubic feet per second flow of the river, Burlington flood risks, and data from the most recent 2021 flood which highlighted the correlation between Ross Dam and downstream flooding. Hamburg stated that water storage is the number one flood reduction strategy, with levy's ranking second. There is a 50 year contract with Seattle City Lights that is up for renegotiation. **Jenna Friebel** of the Skagit Drainage and Irrigation District Consortium, provided more detailed metrics and a summary of major floods along the Skagit River. There are currently many stakeholders interested in the contract renegotiation outcome. Skagit County filed a preliminary license application with SCL in December 2022 that requests specific storage levels as mandatory for flood protection. Council, the Mayor, and the presenters engaged in a discussion wherein Council inquired on specific actions that could be taken to support the work of Dike District 17, the County and others involved in the application and some clarification questions were answered about the Ross Dam operations in relationship to the Army Corp of Engineers versus SCL. **Will Honea** responded to Council with the request for a letter of support which the Mayor shared was already drafted but had not been reviewed by Council. **Councilor Chotzen** requested a copy of the PowerPoint presentation to be shared with Councilors.

2022 Year in Review – Municipal Court, Legal & Indigent Defense & Human Resources

In a series of presentations, Council heard from multiple speakers including **Jenifer Howson** the Skagit County District Court Commissioner at Skagit County District Court who educated Council on some of the happenings at Burlington Municipal Court in which **Mickey Zitkovich** Municipal Court Administrator added additional information including the passport processing that the City of Burlington can provide and a technology grant that has improved Court functions. Jenifer Howson updated Council on the Community Court program with **McCalla Evans** a Community Court Case Advocate sharing examples of her role in helping Community Court participants.

City Attorney Leif Johnson provided Council with a presentation giving an annual overview of the Legal Department with the services that the department provides including prosecution which included the team from Zachor, Stock & Krepps, lawsuits, public records with the department required to respond to any requests, council support like attending Council

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Meetings, claims of which 20 were filed in 2022, managing the risk pool like insurance coverages, and coordinating free training for risk management.

Kristen Morrison Human Resources & Administrative Manager shared with Council some statistics of the employment within the City of Burlington in which 2022 was a year of recruitment. Out of 150 City employees, 37 people were new recruits, which represents approximately 25% of staff. Kristen Morrison provided updates including the McGrath Survey Study that should have results to show Council in an upcoming meeting, and a new hiring platform, NeoGov, which should streamline the process of onboarding new employees but will be in initial investment of time to train on a new software.

Financial Results for City – November 2022

Joe Stewart Finance Director provided Council with data from November 2022 with nothing out of the norm with tax revenues remaining up and explained the process of November and December budgets delays due to an open enrollment period where there is a waiting period that must take place before closing the books.

NEW BUSINESS:

Future Use of Carnegie Library

City Administrator Greg Young noted this as placeholder Agenda Item depending on the progress made in the workshop. However, Council was not positioned to vote at that time.

Rebuild/Expansion of the Skagit First Steps Center – Olympia Capital Budget Request

Mayor Sexton presented materials for the Council to review and discuss pertaining to the First Steps Center. The **Mayor** shared that there will be an opportunity to meet with State Legislatures for possible funding asks and that the City of Burlington would like Council input on the project and design. **Weiss** inquired about an overall possibility of increased low-income housing in the City of Burlington along with **Chaplin** who asked about incentive programs for private developers. **Mayor Sexton** explained that the Rebuild/Expansion of the current First Steps Center is one project that are needed to address the immediate needs of the community but there could be many possibilities provided by private parties or non-profit organizations. **Greg Young** reminded Council that the City of Burlington would be asking Olympia for a Capital Improvement Grant to rebuild the First Steps Center which was the focus of the discussion.

There was additional conversation wherein the North Star Project, Burlington's homeless population, and possible solutions to homelessness were noted. **Councilor Stavig** asked about

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the funding source for the architecture design, and was informed of a County provided grant, and expressed concerns with the \$25 million dollar project budget. **Councilor DeGloria** also had objections to the cost of the project and questioned the role of the City to provide housing. Several Councilmembers including the **Mayor, Stavig, Chotzen,** and **Aslett** debated the idea of homeless shelters being beneficial or not in a community. **Councilor Chaplin** inquired on possible City measures like changing municipal code, **Councilor Aslett** reflected on municipalities providing affordable housing over putting money into jails and prisons, **Councilor Weiss** shared statistics that state affordable housing is the number one way to escape a poverty cycle. **City Administrator Greg Young** observed that the dialogue of Council reflects a similar conversation being had across America with everyone seeking solutions for the homeless population of our society.

ADJOURNMENT:

Mayor Sexton adjourned the meeting at 10:06 p.m.

Joseph Stewart
Finance Director

Steve Sexton
Mayor