

February 10, 2022

**Mayor Steve Sexton** called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance. Council members present: Bill Aslett, Keith Chaplin, Joe DeGloria, Rick DeGloria, Scott Green, and James Stavig. Staff present: Janice Burwash, Geoff Hawes, Brad Johnson, Leif Johnson, Sandra Kottke, Mike Luvera, Kristen Morrison, Marv Pulst, Jim Rabenstein, Travis Schwetz, Joseph Stewart, Robert Toth, and Greg Young.

**MINUTES:**

**Councilor Bill Aslett** noted a necessary correction to the minutes wherein they described **Councilor Green** having commented on minute corrections as it was **Councilor Bill Aslett** who made the correction.

A motion was made by **Councilors Bill Aslett/Scott Green** to approve, with changes as discussed by **Councilor Green**, the minutes of the January 27, 2021 City Council meeting. All in favor; motion carried.

**AUDIT OF BILLS:**

**Councilor Green** discussed City bills which included expenses from the combination of almost two full cycles and were reviewed by the finance committee along with Councilors **Keith Chaplin/J. DeGloria**. **Councilor Green** stated that software and subscription renewals account for many of the invoices at the beginning of the year. **Councilor Green** further discussed additional City expenditures including the fire department vehicle approved in February 2012 of \$34K, a large payment to PSE for \$54K, and the first payment of 2022 to Skagit 911 for Enhanced 911 serviced for approximately \$61K.

A motion was made by **Councilors Green/Joe DeGloria** to approve Accounts Payable invoices to be paid as of February 10, 2022 in the amount of \$474,602.99 and Payroll Expenses for Pay Period ending January 31, 2022 in the amount of \$534,521.40.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

A letter was received by City of Burlington staff. **City Attorney Leif Johnson** asked **City Administrator Greg Young** to present but reminded members of the public that they 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).

**Greg Young** stated that staff was still fact checking the document about a potentially hazardous tree and would follow up in the next council meeting. **Councilor Chaplin** requested for public comments, including letters, to be presented to Council before staff review. **City Administrator Young** clarified that it was unclear if the letter was intended for City of Burlington staff or City Council, as such, facts regarding easement and health of the tree were being investigated. **Councilor Chaplin** responded with interest to hear a report at the next Council meeting.

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**COUNCIL COMMENTS:**

**Councilor Scott Green** thanked **Mayor Sexton**, **City Administrator Greg Young**, and **Street Department Supervisor Travis Schwetz**. **Councilor Green** was alerted by a prominent business owner of an excess of trash and made calls and left messages with city staff. **Mayor Sexton** promptly visited the business owner and within hours of the issue alert Streets crews were cleaning up the refuse. **Councilor Green** expressed additional thanks to the City officers who were on duty to assure crew safety. Councilor Green stated a desire to return to Council Chambers so that Council members can be back face to face with citizens.

**Councilor Rick DeGloria** emphasized the need for Council to meet in person.

**Councilor Joe DeGloria** would also like to meet in person and proposed a hybrid meeting model made up of a combination of face to face and video conferencing technology for remote access options.

**Councilor Bill Aslett** asked fellow Councilors to take a close look at the data of Covid cases in local hospitals, and while he is equally interested to meet in person, he would like the Council to defer to healthcare experts and to continue to lead the city safely.

**Mayor Scott Sexton** acknowledged the Council members comments and expressed his own interest in the return to face to face City Council meetings but emphasized **Councilor Bill's** comment by sharing the challenges faced by the City's own encounter with Covid cases and the strain it put on front line workers.

**Councilor Joe DeGloria** extended a big thank you to **Chief Toth** and **Chief Rogge** for answering all of his questions during the Committee and Board Reports. **Chief Toth** extended an open invitation to all Council members to visit and tour the fire station.

**MAYOR'S UPDATE:**

**Mayor Sexton** bypassed the update as a result of the packed meeting agenda with presentations and new business items.

**PRESENTATION:**

**Finance Director Joe Stewart** presented financial data during the Skagit First Step Center Briefing. The Operating Fund had a Net total of \$61,690 due to good forecasting and keeping costs within budget. The Construction Fund had a Net total of \$403,006 but it is important to note \$400K of seed money will be transferred back to Fund 301 in 2022. **Councilor Joe DeGloria** asked if Council could learn more about the \$33,441 thousand of non-governmental grants and donations. **Finance Director Stewart** wanted to respect privacy of individual donors but explained that several private parties made contributions in varying amounts. **Councilor J. DeGloria** thanked those individuals and businesses for their generous contributions.

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**Olivia Hickerson, Interim Director for the Friendship House and Manager of the Skagit First Step Center**, reported on the cold weather shelter which ran from December 22, 2021 – January 21, 2022 serving 54 individuals. In the month of December the Center served 46 households, residents averaged 66 days, 29 Police Department (PD) drops, and 1,800 meals. **Olivia Hickerson** added that the Center assists with outfitting inhabitants with obtaining identification cards, SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) benefits, health benefits, and filling out applications with the housing authority. **Hickerson** provided 2021 stats: the center served 74 individuals, 100 PD drop offs (individuals, many were reoccurring), 14,000 meals provided, 3 residents found permanent housing placements. Other benefits at the Skagit First Step Center in 2021 include: 12 people qualified for food stamps, 3 people obtained phones, 11 residents were administered health insurance, and 4 individuals completed housing authority applications. **Councilor James Stavig** asked questions about several of the statistics, specifically why the numbers of permanent housing placements and applications are low. **Olivia Hickerson** explained how there is a couple of years waiting list for permanent low-income housing in Skagit County and some residents at the First Step Center are not interested in permanent housing. **Councilor Stavig** inquired if there is a waiting list for the First Step Center and whether there is a vetting process to be housed at the Center. **Olivia Hickerson** answered that there are 28 people on the waiting list but several of those people do not have contact information and the Center is low barrier entry and only require a referral from The Friendship House or Community Action to be housed. **Councilor Joe DeGloria** asked for clarification on PD drop-offs. **Hickerson** explained that the PD drop-offs are one night residents that countywide Police Departments can bring, and these individuals need to check out of the center by 9AM. **Councilor J. DeGloria** asked what happens to residents of the shelter that checked out of the center after their 90-day allotted stay. **Olivia Hickerson** shares with the council the complexity of limited low-income housing in the budget range of \$300-\$400 per month and few alternative low-barrier housing, therefore exiting residents are provided Motel vouchers or do return to homelessness if they do not qualify for Clean & Sober housing options. **Mayor Steve Sexton** responded to some statistics that were referenced by council members noting there was no specific expectations set with a purpose emphasis to serve as a PD drop-off location and temporary shelter. **Mayor Sexton** spoke about the .5% vacancy factor on multi-family units, the lack of availability of housing from the housing authority with a 2-4 year waiting list adding to the complexity of the problem. **Mayor Sexton** shared some of the positive 2<sup>nd</sup> step housing options that are being pursued by the City of Mount Vernon and the exploration of grant funding for developing an empty building on Pease Road into a future 2<sup>nd</sup> step housing option. **Councilor J. DeGloria** inquired if the shelter being built by Catholic Community Services was low-barrier entry. There was uncertainty what the exact requirements were for the new 2<sup>nd</sup> steps shelter by Catholic Community Services would be. **Councilor Stavig** asked if PD drop-offs could be at any time of day or night. **Olivia Hickerson** responded that they were allowed at any time of day. **Councilor Stavig** asked about ways in which the city could support the First Step Center and **Councilor Bill Aslett** inquired about staffing. **Hickerson** noted that 50% of the initial staff has been retained and that the missing component is available permanent housing options but the Center itself has exceeded expectations. **Mayor Sexton** added that there are a

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number of faith based organizations available to volunteer at the Center. Both **Mayor Sexton** and **Councilor Aslett** thanked **Olivia Hickerson** and the First Step Center staff.

**PROCLAMATION:**

No Proclamation.

**COMMITTEE & BOARD REPORTS:**

**Councilor Bill Aslett** discussed the Public Safety Committee meeting which held discussions of an increase in call and stolen car volumes and supply chain issues that are impacting deliveries of ordered equipment. The Chiefs have requested the Public Safety Committee to send agenda items 2 weeks prior to each monthly meeting to allow time for preparation, therefore if Council has questions they would like addressed please reach out to **Councilors J. DeGloria, R. DeGloria, or Aslett**.

**Councilor Jamie Weiss** presented the Parks & Recreation Committee meeting where the dog park project, Alpha Park improvements, park entry signage approvals, and boom truck order were discussed. **Weiss** added that there are supply chain delays for the irrigation hose but it should not impact the Skagit River Park's watering needs. **Councilor Weiss** reported that there are lots of outdoor focused events scheduled for the Summer and Fall and that a job offer was extended to a new Parks & Rec Specialist. **Weiss** noted the RCO (Recreation and Conservation Office) grant due March 1, 2022. The Parks and Rec advisory board is pursuing a million dollar grant that would add a playground to Rotary Park. **Councilor J. DeGloria** asked if there were any discussions pertaining to New Business Items #2, #9 or #11. These were not discussed according to **Councilor Weiss**.

**OFFICERS REPORTS:**

**Fire Chief Rob Toth** described the impacts of supply chain delays like in the case of the new pickup truck that took almost a year to receive, and the replaced vehicle may become a burn prop for Fire Department staff training.

**Finance Director Joe Stewart** presented year end reports with increases in revenues from both retail sales tax and occupation taxes and noted the general ledger is in great shape. **Councilor Joe DeGloria** asked how much money of the 2021 funds were attributed from 2020; **Stewart** offered to provide more details by email or call request.

**Finance Director Joe Stewart** presented the year end totals from December 2021 to prior year December 2020. Discussion was had with input from **Councilor's Green, J. DeGloria, Aslett, Stavig, Chaplin, Administrator Greg Young, Geoff, and Mayor Sexton**.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

No Unfinished Business.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

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No Consent Agenda items.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Encouraging Legislators to Review, Discuss, and Take Action on Police Reforms**

**Chief of Police Mike Luvera** described the purpose of the proposed resolution was to encourage and allow more dialogue to proposed legislature. **Chief Luvera** presented data to demonstrate the rise in 2022 crime rates; calls for service increased 51% from 800 – 1200 per month; **Luvera** shared accounts of officers experiences on duty that led to injury of officers. **Chief Luvera** noted recent changes in legislation that affect reasonable suspicion and probable cause and believes that changes in drug enforcement are linked to the increases of theft and burglary crimes. **Councilor Joe DeGloria** stated that he is in full support of the resolution and thanked the police force; **Councilor Stavig** echoed this statement with support of the resolution; **Councilor Green** asked if and when should the community get involved in this conversation about Public Safety; **Councilor Jamie Weiss** supported the resolution and encouraged community safety but did not fully agree with direct correlation between drug legislation and spike in crime; **Councilor Chaplin** commented that he supports healthy dialogue before rushed approval of legislation. **Mayor Sexton** added that **Chief Luvera** has done an impressive job of taking an active role in representing this resolution to legislators.

A motion was made by **Councilors Rick DeGloria/James Stavig** to adopt the attached resolution encouraging our State elected officials to review, discuss, and take actions as presented by WASPC. All in favor; motion carried.

**Resolution Formally Adopting Park and Rec Fees**

**City Administrator Greg Young** presented this resolution that had reached consensus in August but had not been passed as a formal resolution to adopt the new Parks and Recreation fees.

A motion was made by **Councilors Green/Weiss** to approve the resolution formally adopting Park and Rec Fees and authorize the Mayor to sign the agreement. All in favor; motion carried.

**Revising the 2022 Capital Improvement Plan CIP**

**City Administrator Greg Young** discussed the limitations of using Real Estate Excise Tax (REET) if they have not been allotted for in the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). As such, **Greg Young** proposed the necessary revisions needed to include emergency expense allotment of REET funds for Whitmarsh Road Improvements and replacement of the Library heat pump to the 2022 CIP. **Councilor Stavig** asked if future library beam improvements would also require revisions; **Councilor J. DeGloria** inquired if the CIP has been adjusted to use REET money for the general fund and from a previous year. **Young** explained how the CIP is designed as a flexible 6 year planning document to include

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both known and unknown expenses unlike a set annual budget; furthermore no budget adjustment is required unless all the money is spent from the 301 fund. **Mayor Sexton** added further insight having gained approval from the state auditor to confirm a similar use of REET funds for a roof replacement in a previous year.

A motion was made by **Councilors Stavig/Aslett** to approve the revision to the 2022 CIP by including both the Library Heat Pump and the rebuilding of a portion of Whitmarsh Road. All in favor; motion carried.

#### **Changes to Supplemental Development Standards (Chapter 17.70 BMC)**

A motion was made by **Councilors James/J. DeGloria** to remand the Planning Commission's recommendation dated January 19, 2022. **Mayor Sexton** polled the group

#### **Changes to Landscaping Standards (Chapter 17.80 BMC)**

A motion was made by **Councilors Bill Aslett/J. DeGloria** to remand the Planning Commission's recommendation dated January 19, 2022 and direct the Planning Commission to hold a workshop where concerns can be addressed.

#### **Development Project Briefing**

**Community Development Director Brad Johnson** briefed Council on a combination of small changes to development changes through routine projects. J. DeGloria commented ; Aslett observed how the Planning Commission standards keep places like Burlington Boulevard looking maintained.

#### **King Architecture Scope and Fee for Full Design of the Fire Hall Revisions**

**City Administrator Greg Young** reviewed the design contract submitted by King Architecture for Fire Hall renovations and proposed the potential funds could come from cash on hand or REET money, to be determined in a subdiscussion. Councilor DeGloria

#### **Dark Fiber Lease Agreement with NoaNet**

#### **Approval of SEEK Grant for Summer Breeze Program**

#### **Appointment of Edie Edmundson to Burlington Historical Preservation Commission**

#### **Approval of Parks and Recreation Donation and Memorial Policies**

#### **EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

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Executive Session

**ADJOURNMENT:**

**Mayor Sexton** adjourned the meeting at 8:37 p.m.

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Joseph Stewart  
Finance Director

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Steve Sexton  
Mayor