

March 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, James Stavig and Jamie Weiss. Staff present: Janice Burwash, Don Erickson, Geoff Hawes, Brad Johnson, Leif Johnson, Sandra Kottke, Mike Luvera, Kristen Morrison, Marv Pulst, Jim Rabenstein, Travis Schwetz, Robert Toth, Sara Ward, and Greg Young.

**MINUTES:**

A correction was made to minutes to change the name from Brad Aslett to Brad Johnson in the last paragraph on page 5.

A motion was made by **Councilors Bill Aslett/Joe DeGloria** to approve the minutes of the February 24, 2021 City Council meeting. All in favor; motion carried.

**AUDIT OF BILLS:**

**Councilor Green** discussed City finances; of note was a rebar invoice that signifies the opening of Whitmarsh Road. **City Administrator Greg Young** was thanked for his contributions to the meeting and will provide the committee with answers to new questions.

A motion was made by **Councilors Green/Chaplin** to approve Accounts Payable invoices to be paid as of March 10, 2022 in the amount of \$287,066.35 and Payroll Expenses for Pay Period ending February 28, 2022 in the amount of \$534, 925.74.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

No public comments were submitted.

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 Bill Aslett** thanked the City crews for the work that led to the opening of Whitmarsh Road.

**Councilor Keith Chaplin** initiated discussion with a request for all CIP expenses coming before council prior to approval; the code states anything greater than \$300K requires approval whereas in practice Burlington usually discusses spending with the Council. In depth discussion was had by the council with input from **Councilors Stavig, Chaplin, Green, Aslett, J. DeGloria** along with **Mayor Sexton, City Administrator Young**, and **City Attorney L. Johnson**. **City Administrator Young** shared the creation of an updated bidding primer that would both streamline Burlington's procurement process and organize it into a flowchart for easier use based on other municipalities procurement processes and state law. This bidding primer would be a replacement of the City's current 24 page document; it will be presented to Council for input at an upcoming meeting.

A motion was made by **Councilors Chaplin/J. DeGloria** to add item number 10 to the agenda on March 10, 2022 to discuss the CIP expenses coming before council. 6 in favor, 1 opposed; motion carried.

**Councilor Joe DeGloria** learned from the newspaper that Governor Inslee visited the First Steps Center and requested for Council members to receive significant news of this level directly.

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**Mayor Sexton** stated the Governor had approximately 20 minutes for a stop and that all of the press was organized by the Governor's staff.

**MAYOR'S UPDATE:**

**Mayor Sexton** announced the visit of the Governor to the First Steps Center as previously noted. **Mayor Sexton** stated there has been initial Skagit County collaborative conversations to spend 1590 funds starting in January 2022. Countywide meetings led to the proposal of a wider pool of funding for Mental Health & Housing to be evaluated in addition to the 1590 funds totaling somewhere in the \$16 million range. The current focus of the planning meetings are to form the decision making body and develop a technical advisory committee. **Mayor Sexton** shared that the Skagit First Steps Center had a \$200K deficiency in the operations budget despite a tightly run operation and the County Commissioners pledged \$550K from the AARP funds this year and \$550 next year to fill in this budget gap. All three County Commissioners have been called by **Mayor Sexton** and thanked for their support.

**Councilor Keith Chaplin** had a constituent question regarding the Raspberry Ridge housing that has been vacant. **Mayor Sexton** clarified that it is strictly temporary farmworker housing.

**PRESENTATION:**

**Executive Director Cindy Verge** of the Skagit Valley Tulip Festival presented marketing materials including a poster and brochures for Council approval and outlined upcoming events including a virtual Gala.

**PROCLAMATION:**

No Proclamation

**COMMITTEE & BOARD REPORTS:**

**Councilor Bill Aslett** shared updates from the Public Safety meeting with challenges in hiring for Fire and Police Departments specifically to fill EMT and Police Officer positions. A quick survey showed Burlington second from the bottom of the payscale. There is an academy partnership with Mount Vernon High School that could result in a future applicant pool.

**Councilor Jamie Weiss** presented the Parks & Rec meeting updates with upcoming events at the skating rink, installation of new park signs, surveyor work at the Dog Park, and communication with BNSF about Alpha Park.

**Public Question:** Are there adult Parks & Recreation leagues? **Councilor Weiss** confirmed that there will be adult leagues forming, and **Mayor Sexton** added the information would be available by calling the Parks & Rec department or looking online.

**OFFICERS-REPORTS:**

**City Administrator Greg Young** referenced the sales tax in Council packets; January and February sales tax revenue is steady and off to a good start for 2022. **Kristen Morrison, Human Resources & Administration Manager**, announced that the City of Burlington received the Well City Award which reflects a 2% savings totalling approximately \$30K. The City has a vacancy number of about 20 permanent and 8 seasonal positions with around 142 total employees. **Director of Public Works Marv Pulst** shared the herculean effort by the Streets, Parks, and Sewer crews to complete the Whitmarsh Road project; a tight weather window required additional workers. Both **Mayor Sexton** and **Councilor Stavig** expressed gratitude for those extra teams' quick response to help complete the 15-16 truck loads of concrete pouring.

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**UNFINISHED-BUSINESS:**

**2022 Update to the 2019 Non Represented Salary Survey**

**Greg Young** and **Kristen Morrison** presented the content in the agenda item report and asked the Council to approve the 2022 salary survey. **Greg Young** noted the 2022 survey would allow for better understanding of market forces, would help retain current employees, and inform the 2023 budget. A robust discussion was held between City Staff and Council members wherein some concerns listed included: cost of survey compared to cost of overall salary increase; cost of salary increases on taxpayers; consideration of city government employee benefits such as health insurance and vacation leave; inflation salary increases; current unfilled positions in City staff. **Councilor Stavig** requested a .pdf copy of the salary reports conducted to be delivered to Council members.

**Councilors Green/Aslett** made a motion to proceed with the non represented salary survey. 4 approved, 3 opposed; motion carried.

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

No Consent Agenda.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Creation of the 1590 Fund #104**

**City Administrator Greg Young** presented to Council the request to create a fund to house 1590 money, the 1/10th of 1% sales tax allotted for Homelessness and Mental Health. This would be a separate fund to account for a new pot of money that has emerged.

**Councilors Chaplin/Aslett** moved to approve the creation of the 1590 Fund #104. All in favor; motion carried.

**Discussion Item - Solar Power for City Hall**

**City Administrator Greg Young** welcomed **Friday Celia-Zoellner** from Fire Mountain Solar who presented 3 solar power options with accompanying figures to Council. In Washington State, because of the way RCW are written, there is no longer a requirement for solar energy to be net metered. Option 1: is the most expensive and not fully exempt from sales tax but there is a possibility of 75% refund from the state. Option 2: is the same system but slightly downsized so it can take into account the net metering and sales tax exemption. Option 3: is a grid system with no back up capacity. **Greg Young** shared that despite the large size of the City Hall roof surface there is not enough solar space to generate all of the energy needs of the building operations. 3 different firms came in with Engineers and all firms came in with quotes in a similar price range. The purpose of this discussion item was to conceptualize the scope the city might be interested in pursuing solar energy in light of upcoming program applications and grant opportunities. Council engaged the presenter with a lively discussion and thorough questions ranging along the topics of local production incentives, loss of energy efficiency over time, warranty of solar equipment, cost/benefit analysis, grant funding opportunities, and forecasted tech changes in battery life. Per inquiry from **Councilor Stavig**, **Greg Young** shared that the idea to explore solar power energy was expedited during emergency preparedness and risk management assessments of the City operations linked to protocols implemented for the Coronavirus Pandemic.

**Overview of Upcoming Federal Infrastructure Grants**

**City Administrator Greg Young** outlined upcoming grant opportunities for infrastructure improvements from the Trillion Dollar Federal Infrastructure Bill that consists of 3 categories: Road, Bridges, etc.; Clean Energy and Power; Resilience (i.e. cyber security). For example, Brick

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& Mortar projects such as the Fire Station remodel would not qualify. **Director of Public Works Marv Pulst** has put together preliminary information to apply for some of the Roads and Bridges grants, but is dismayed by the steep competition faced by small municipalities. As registration opens up for webinars City Staff will attend meetings. **Marv Pulst** noted that grant matching requirements will most likely vary, but at present not all requirements are outlined. Small municipalities often are disadvantaged because of the grant match requirements and lack of professional grant writers. **Councilor Joe DeGloria** requested to see some grant writing attention allotted for state broadband security and to look into collaboration opportunities with BNSF for a Railroad Bridge project. **Councilor Stavig** advocated for consultants to be considered for grant writing projects. **Councilor Weiss** would encourage the cybersecurity piece of City resilience to be thoroughly inspected.

#### **ALS Contract Amendment**

**Fire Chief Rob Toth** presented to Council a contract amendment to allow reimbursement for mutually beneficial items throughout the county. The discussed contract is for video rendiscopes with newer technology and a routine upgrade. All agencies in the County EMS Advisory Committee gathered, the county sought bids, and sourced the ALS contract.

**Councilors Chaplin/R. DeGloria** moved to approve this Amendment and authorize the Mayor to sign the ALS Contract. All in favor; motion carried.

#### **Patrol Vehicle, Equipment and Installation Purchase \$66,000**

**Police Chief Luvera** came before Council to ask for the purchase of 1 patrol car instead of 3 cars, per evaluation of the current fleet. **Councilor Joe DeGloria** thanked **Chief Luvera** for the consideration of taxpayer dollars by evaluating the need for replacement vehicles instead of routine replacement on a 4 year rotation. **J. DeGloria** added that this cost savings would be taken into account in future budget allotment meetings.

**Councilors Aslett/Chaplin** made a motion to approve the purchase of the quoted Patrol Vehicle, Equipment and Installation. All in favor; motion carried.

#### **Agreement with Gray and Osborn, Inc. For Engineering Services for Design and Limited Services during Construction for Sanitary Sewer Replacement - Norris St. Alley**

**Don Erickson Sewer Department Supervisor** asked Council to consider replacement of several hundred feet of sewer line replacement. This contract will finalize preliminary drawings from 2009. This project has remained incomplete based on the priority of sewer line replacement needs. **Councilor J. DeGloria** inquired on cost savings associated with revisiting an old design with the same firm versus new design costs. **Councilor Weiss** questioned the root cause of the issues with this line; which was a concrete pipe installed in 1940's with several cases of recurring failure and stress to the sewer system.

**Councilors Green/J. DeGloria** made a motion to approve the agreement with Gray and Osborne Inc. and authorize the Mayor to sign. All in favor; motion carried.

#### **Discussion Item - Progress Report on Council 2021 Must-Do List**

**Greg Young** followed up on the Council Retreat, in which three categories were outlined: Must, Should, Could. The Progress Report presented to council is from the 10-Item Must Do list. **Councilor Weiss** emphasized the concern for his constituents on the topic of the Railroad Quiet Zone. **Mayor Sexton** shared that **Brian Dempsy, of the Public Works Department**, is gathering information on the Railroad Quiet Zone and a progress report will be provided during a future Council Meeting. **Councilor Chaplin** added that the flood control measure was noteworthy considering the timing of Council retreat and regional flooding. **Councilor Stavig** asked for more

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information regarding the Transportation Benefit District (TBD). TBD's are funds, based on sales tax revenue or license fees, used for 10 years that must be approved on a ballot vote. TBD's can be spent on anything linked to transportation, even residential neighborhoods such as bike lanes, sewer drains, sidewalks, etc. It is a powerful tool for Council to spend City funds in smaller residential neighborhoods. **Councilor Chaplin** would like to see the list of residential neighborhoods to be addressed. Neighboring municipalities of Mount Vernon, Sedro Woolley, and Anacortes all have TBDs for Council reference.

**Appointment of Edie Edmundson to the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board**

**Greg Young** introduced Edie Edmundson, prior Councilmember, to join the Parks & Rec Advisory Board. This appointment would complete the Board membership.

**Councilors Chaplin/Green** made a motion to approve the Mayor's appointment of Edie Edmundson to the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board. All in favor; motion carried.

**Revising the 2022 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)**

**Greg Young** asked Council to consider adding the sagging beam expenses in Burlington City Library to the 2022 Capital Improvement Plan in order to allot REEP funds for the project. **Councilor J. DeGloria** recalled the estimated cost to be around \$20K and requested clarification for the increased cost of \$50K. **Marv Pulst** shared that the project has been uncharted territory and the early cost estimate was only approximate. The contractors working on this project will most likely start this project early April. **Councilor Weiss** asked for an update on the aesthetics of the library with added posts.

**Councilors Stavig/Weiss** made a motion to approve the revision of the 2022 CIP to include the library roof beam sag mitigation project. All in favor; motion carried.

**Discussion Item - CIP Expenses Reviewed by Council**

**Councilors Chaplin/R. DeGloria** moved to table the discussion to the next council meeting on March 24, 2022. All in favor; motion carried.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

**City Attorney Leif Johnson** recited the following: pursuant to RCW 42.30.140 this Executive Session will be called in compliance with RCW 42.30.140. Collective bargaining sessions with employee organizations, including contract negotiations, grievance meetings, and discussions relating to the interpretation or application of a labor agreement; or (b) that portion of a meeting during which the governing body is planning or adopting the strategy or position to be taken by the governing body during the course of any collective bargaining, professional negotiations, or grievance or mediation proceedings, or reviewing the proposals made in the negotiations or proceedings while in progress. The session is OPMA exempt pursuant to RCW 42.30. The Executive Session will last approximately 30 minutes, extended as necessary; no action taken at the conclusion of the session. After a 5 minute break the session began at 10:25 p.m. Session adjourned at 11:35 p.m.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

**Mayor Sexton** adjourned the meeting at 11:35 p.m.

CITY OF BURLINGTON, WA

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Joseph Stewart  
Finance Director

Steve Sexton  
Mayor