

CITY OF BURLINGTON, WA

March 23, 2023

Mayor Steve Sexton called the City Council Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance. Councilmembers present: Bill Aslett, Keith Chaplin, Anna Chotzen, Scott Green, James Stavig, and Jamie Weiss. Staff present: Brad Johnson, Leif Johnson, Mike Luvera, Marv Pulst, Jim Rabenstein, Travis Schwetz, Joe Stewart, Rob Toth, and Greg Young.

A motion was made by **Councilors Chaplin/Aslett** to excuse **Councilor Joe DeGloria** from the March 23, 2023 City Council Meeting. All in favor; motion carried.

MINUTES:

A motion was made by **Councilors Green/Aslett** to approve the March 9, 2023 minutes. All in favor; motion carried.

AUDIT OF BILLS:

Councilor Scott Green updated Council regarding the Audit & Finance meeting with a few expenses of note: \$13K Annual Fee to Government Jobs Inc., \$24K for New Snow Plow, \$48K to SRV Construction for Sewer Project, and \$248K for the Fire Department Renovation.

A motion was made by **Councilors Green/Aslett** to approve Accounts Payable invoices to be paid as of March 23, 2023, in the amount of \$550,316.84 and Payroll Expenses for Pay Period ending March 15, 2023 in the amount of \$829,282.06. 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 there had been no concerns about the new moratorium from potential Cascade Mall buyers.

COUNCIL COMMENTS:

Councilor Bill Aslett commented on a railcar derailment, with **Mayor Sexton** adding that the City of Burlington looked into the process of clean up which was being handled according to the Department of Ecology guidelines.

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COMMITTEE & BOARD REPORTS:

Councilor Jamie Weiss recapped the Parks & Rec Board meeting that included a discussion about the CIP and the possibility of converting Maiben Park Volleyball courts into Pickleball courts.

Councilor Scott Green gave an overview of the Public Works meeting with the Dog Park 98% complete and irrigation equipment ready to go along with 2 seasonal employees hired.

OFFICER'S REPORTS:

Public Works Director Marv Pulst updated Council on the Skagit Street Signal project that is funded by 2 grants, one of which had to be extended. **Pulst** shared some history and latest developments with the BNSF project of the Rail bridge over Skagit River which will be a collaborative project between the cities of Mount Vernon and Burlington, the Dike Districts, and BNSF. **Pulst** shared that the Public Works department had been contacted by CABT: Coalition Against Big Trucks that was lobbying to keep the long haul truck regulations rather than allow for heavier loads and extended lengths with discussion following wherein Council had question about the data of increased weight limits versus reduced traffic and the potential the impacts on or limitations of infrastructure.

Police Chief Mike Luvera updated Council on the release of the Cops grant that the CoB will be working to apply for. **Luvera** reported on a backlog of training options for Police Academy in the State of Washington with the soonest training starting in November, for example, an officer could be hired in the month of April but it could take 16 months for that officer to be on active duty. There are currently two academies in the State in Spokane and Burien and Skagit is exploring the idea of becoming a satellite academy location.

City Administrator Greg Young gave three updates: the dog park is will have a grand opening set to be on a Friday, there would be a walk on agenda item during the Council Meeting, and with the cancellation of the CIP workshop there would need to be a rescheduling.

PROCLAMATION:

No Proclamation.

PRESENTATION:

2023 Tulip Festival Poster

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Cindy Verge with the Skagit Valley Tulip Festival shared updates on the annual Tulip Festival and the new poster. Some noteworthy topics include: a Paccar open house event, an in-person Gala, an additional fourth Tulip garden to visit, the opening of borders post-Covid that would allow for Canadian visitors, and a new enhanced visitor experience with a digital media interactive “passport program” that included over 70 venues and encourages electronic check in to collect points and win prizes.

2022 Year in Review – Fire & EMS

Fire Chief Rob Toth presented to Council a Firehall construction update with Phase I now complete and provided a quick overview of 2022 statistics. There was a pause to answer some questions about processes from Council such as the impact of a patient’s insurance or if hospitals deny patients. **Chief Toth** shared some challenges and accomplishments of the department in 2022 which ranged from staffing shortages to 13 newly hired and trained employees, equipment challenges to ordering a new ambulance, and the highlight of a hard earned WSRB rating of a 4. On the horizon for the department is to reoccupy the newly remodeled station, preparation for an EMS Levy (Interlocal agreement), and transitioning the department to more full-time positions.

Mayor Sexton reminded Council of the walk on Agenda Item. A motion was made by **Councilors Aslett/Chotzen** to add the Renewal of Indigent Defense Contract with Mountain Law to the Agenda as an INTRODUCTION/DISCUSSION item. All in favor; motion carried.

PUBLIC HEARING:

C-1 Large Parcel Development Moratorium

Mayor Sexton opened the Public Hearing. No comments. **Councilors Aslett/Weiss** made a motion to close the Public Hearing. All in favor; motion carried.

INTRODUCTION/DISCUSSION:

Nuisance Abatement Properties

City Attorney Leif Johnson opened the discussion with Council with the City of Burlington looking for guidance on how to navigate properties within the City that are currently or might become problematic. A lengthy conversation was held in which it was identified that no two properties or situations were the same and there were explanations provided by **Community Development Director Brad Johnson** about specific properties in question and information regarding leans and property taxes. There are currently processes in place for the City to take actions following the nuisance abatement code that generally solves any situations, however for

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the unique situations the City will ask for Council input on how to proceed. The action plan for the primary property under discussion was for the CoB to communicate with the property owner with the Council in copy, and for Brad Johnson to put together a report & timeline of events to provide Council.

Renewal of Indigent Defense Contract with Mountain Law

City Administrator Greg Young shared that there had been a 3-month extension of the previous Mt. Law contract to allow for time to renegotiate the contract and consider alternative options. The City of Burlington sought outside counsel consultation that determined that continuing the shared contract with the Cities of Mount Vernon and Burlington for Indigent Defense Services with Mountain Law was sound. Council had questions about the backlog of cases and the impact of increased costs on the ARPA funds. **Mayor Sexton** noted that the topic will return as an action item at the next Council Meeting.

ACTION ITEMS:

Interlocal RE: Burlington Contribution to Martha's Place

Mayor Sexton presented the previously discussed topic to Council by sharing the allocations of \$500K from the City of Mount Vernon and Sedro Woolley estimated to give \$100K. **Mayor Sexton** explained to Council that the money provided by the Cities would help the County to reallocate more to the NOFA fund. **Councilors Chotzen, Chaplin, and Stavig** had reservations about the length of the contract and wanted to have a report or option to revisit the contract after a few years. Mayor Sexton noted the 5-year contract was proposed to help with long term planning.

A motion was made by **Councilors Chaplin/Weiss** to amend the contract to read "The term of this agreement shall be from July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2025; with a continuation until June 30, 2028 with City Council approval." Councilors Chotzen & Stavig in favor, Councilors Aslett & Green opposed. Motion carried.

With that amendment in place, **Councilors Chaplin/Chotzen** moved to approve the interlocal agreement with Skagit County authorizing the annual contribution from the City of Burlington 1590 fund to Skagit County to fund operations, maintenance and services at Martha's Place. Councilors Weiss, Aslett, Stavig in favor and Green opposed. Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT:

Mayor Sexton adjourned the meeting at 10:02 p.m.

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Joseph Stewart
Finance Director

Steve Sexton
Mayor