

MEETING OF THE CITY OF CONNELL, WASHINGTON

CONNELL, FRANKLIN COUNTY, WASHINGTON

October 23, 2006

The regular semi-monthly meeting, of the City Council of the City of Connell was called to order by the Mayor at 7:30 pm in the City Hall and was opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Mayor Gary Walton, Mayor Pro Tem Ron Boyer, Councilmembers Jim Klindworth, Kent Mosbrucker, Rhonda Quinton and Monica Pruett.

STAFF: City Attorney Terry Tanner, Police Chief Rick Rochleau, Public Works Supervisor Larry Turner, Public Works Maintenance Sterling Joyner, Court Clerk Sheila Cerna, Accounting Clerk Jeannie Norstedt, Planning/Building Clerk Jed Crowther and Deputy City Clerk Treasurer Maria ChavezPeña.

VISITORS: Scott Frakes; Rodney Norstedt; Molly Kunkel; and Kathy Bingham, Franklin County Graphic.

CORRESPONDENCE

- 1) WA State Liquor Board: Liquor license renewal for Tapia's Bakery & Market at 303 S. Columbia. No objections were heard.
- 2) WA State Liquor Board: Special Occasion Liquor License for the Chamber of Commerce for November 11, 2006 at the Connell Community Center. No objections were heard.

CONSENT CALENDAR

*Motion:* Councilmember Mosbrucker moved to approve the Consent Calendar as listed:

- a) Minutes of the October 9, 2006 Regular Council Meeting
- b) Minutes of the October 16, 2006 Special Council Meeting
- c) Warrant Register of October 11, 2006 for \$600.00
- d) Warrants for October 23, 2006 for \$62,168.78
- e) Payroll for October 23, \$84,247.72
- f) Motion to adopt Ordinance No. 812, second amendment to the 2006 Budget
- g) Motion to adopt Ordinance No. 814 setting Ad Valorem Property taxes for 2007

Councilmember Boyer seconded motion. Motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor Walton made the following changes to the agenda:

Agenda Item No. 13. Facilitator Contract for Council Retreat – Tabled  
Addition of an Executive Session to discuss a Personnel Issue and the Police Department.

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*Motion:* Councilmember Klindworth moved to approve the agenda as changed. Councilmember Mosbrucker seconded motion. Motion carried unanimously.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

PUBLIC HEARING – COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG)

Mayor Walton opened the Public Hearing at 7:38.

The purpose of the public hearing was to review community development and housing needs, inform citizens of the availability of funds and eligible uses of the state Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), and receive comments on proposed activities, particularly from low and moderate income persons residing within the Connell city limits.

Mayor Walton provided a staff report.

The grant would provide for new water lines, sewer lines, streets and curbs in the Sportsman Addition. Some of the water lines did not meet fire code regulations as they were 4 inches instead of 6.

The hearing was opened to comments from the public.

Deputy Clerk/Treasurer ChavezPeña provided Community Development Block participation handouts in English and Spanish to all community members who were present and to the Council.

There being no comments from the public Mayor Walton opened the hearing to comments from the Council.

Councilmember Klindworth inquired as to how the City had ranked for the 2005 grant application and how much the City was applying for.

Mayor Walton advised that the City had only missed it by about 5 to 6 points.

The 2005 grant request had been over \$670,000, the figure for the 2006 grant request had not been received yet. The CDBG grant was a 100% grant.

Mayor Walton closed the Public Hearing at 7:45 pm.

NORTH END WATER MAIN – PROJECT CLOSE OUT

Mayor Walton provided that the closeout forms had been received to close out the North End Water Main project.

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*Motion:* Councilmember Pruett moved to approve and to have the Mayor sign the Certificate of Substantial Completion for Pegram Construction Inc. Councilmember Quinton seconded motion. Motion carried unanimously.

*Motion:* Councilmember Mosbrucker moved to authorize the Mayor sign the Notice of Completion of Public Works contract. Councilmember Pruett seconded motion. Motion carried unanimously.

*Motion:* Councilmember Quinton moved to approve payment of Pay Estimate No. 4 to release retainage to Pegram Construction Inc in the amount of \$34,887.55 once all proper paperwork was received. Councilmember Pruett seconded motion. Motion carried unanimously.

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION – WEB SITE

Mayor Walton advised that he had looked into other cities that were also providing something similar for their businesses.

Molly Kunkel reported that the Connell Downtown Development Association was ready to move ahead. The businesses would pay \$100 set up fee for a web page and then a \$25 yearly fee to maintain the web page.

*Motion:* Councilmember Pruett moved to authorize the CDDA develop web pages for the businesses through the City's web page. Councilmember Quinton seconded motion. Motion carried unanimously.

STAFF BENEFITS DISCUSSION

Deputy Clerk Treasurer ChavezPeña provided Council with information on medical benefits as paid by other cities and their employees along with salary ranges and with number of employees. Medical benefits information was also provided for state employees.

Deputy Clerk Treasurer ChavezPeña thanked Councilmember Klindworth for inviting employees to comment on the benefit discussion and expressed that employees were fortunate to have their medical benefits paid for and that change was hard. It had been hard on employees when the medical plan changed and employees had to pay more for medical in deductibles and more out of pocket cost, employees also lost all orthodontist coverage and all preventative care. The City of Connell was in the middle compared to other cities when it came to having employees pay for medical coverage, Deputy Clerk Treasurer ChavezPeña commented that she would hate to see benefits reduced more then they already had been.

Councilmember Mosbrucker provided that the recommendation of the Finance Committee was that the City cover employee medical benefits 100% and that the employee pick up 10% of the benefit portion for dependents. Worst case scenario would be \$92 per month.

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Councilmember Pruett explained that the COLA would still offset the cost although the employee would only be receiving about a \$13 increase. The Finance Committee had not decided on rates for the next few years.

Councilmember Boyer expressed that at ConAgra employee contributions were between 23% and 30% and that he was paying about \$500 a month for benefits. The Finance Committee had done a lot of research on cost share and was trying to be fair.

Sterling Joyner, Public Works Maintenance, inquired and was informed that the 10% cost share was across the board for all city employees even executives. Mr. Joyner also inquired as to how the 3.8% COLA was decided about.

Councilmember Pruett responded that City Clerk Treasurer Eckman had provided the Finance Committee with a range from 3 % to 4.3 % and the Finance Committee went with the average.

Mr. Joyner noted that offering a benefit package was a way of keeping good employees and that as the City was going through a growth spurt that they may find it necessary to look at the benefit package when hiring additional employees. Mr. Joyner also suggested looking into other options for benefits for the future.

Mayor Walton commented that he paid \$400 a month for his insurance at Centurytel, if employees wanted to opt out they would receive \$50 to go towards an insurance of their choice. On some of the boards Mayor Walton sat on the employee would pay 50% of the increase in the cost of the premium, they were also losing employees.

Councilmember Mosbrucker noted that there was extensive work in considering the cost share by employees as he had spent a significant amount of time in researching this material and that there was consideration given in keeping the cost share at 10% when compared to private industry where they were paying \$400 to \$800. Consideration was also given in keeping it at 10% instead of going to 15% or 20% right away as well as the fact that they were not trying to overly burden employees of the city.

Further discussion would be held at the Budget meeting on October 30<sup>th</sup>.

**DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION – TOP COATING FOR MURALS**

Mayor Walton reported that the CDDA submitted a request for funding to provide for a preservation coating of the murals. The amount requested was \$311.18.

Councilmember Boyer commented that the Connell Downtown Development Association should be applauded for their efforts.

*Motion:* Councilmember Pruett moved to authorize the City pay for the coating of the two murals in the amount of \$311.18 plus tax. Councilmember Boyer seconded motion. Motion carried unanimously.

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COMMITTEE / DEPARTMENT REPORTS

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT – Public Works Supervisor Larry Turner

- 1) Winterizing

POLICE DEPARTMENT – Police Chief Rick Rochleau

- 1) Had two escape from the Boot Camp, they were captured and taken to the juvenile facility.
- 2) The trailer was picked up.
- 3) Had been contacted by Daniel Smith in regards to the Winterfest for December 14<sup>th</sup>, would be closing Columbia Ave from Ash to Elm from 5 to 6 pm.

MAYOR’S REPORT – Mayor Garland Walton

Attended a Good Roads Association meeting where a Senator discussed taking away the STP money from all cities to be used for state projects and state patrol.

MEETING RECESSED

Mayor Walton recessed the meeting at 8:38 to go into executive session for approximately 20 minutes to evaluate qualifications of an applicant and to review the performance of a public employee pursuant to RCW 42.30.1101g.

Mayor Walton extended the executive session at 9:04 for another 10 minutes.

MEETING RECONVENED AND ADJOURNED

There being no further business to be heard before the City Mayor Walton adjourned the meeting at 9:22 pm.

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
Maria T. ChavezPeña, Deputy Clerk-Treasurer

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Garland D. Walton, Mayor