

MEETING OF THE CITY OF CONNELL, WASHINGTON
CONNELL, FRANKLIN COUNTY, WASHINGTON

December 7, 2015

The regular semi-monthly meeting, of the Connell City Council was called to order by Mayor Blackwell at 6:00 pm in the City Hall and was opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Mayor Bruce Blackwell, Mayor Pro Tem Monty Huber, and Councilmember's: Rhonda Quinton, Kathie Silva, and Ray Minor. Councilmember Escalera arrived at 6:23 pm.

EXCUSED: Mayor Pro Tem Huber moved to excuse Councilmember Escalera. Councilmember Minor seconded motion. Motion carried unanimously.

STAFF: Attorney Dan Hultgrenn, City Administrator Jed Crowther, Public Works Director Larry Turner, Fire Chief Chris Schulte, Police Chief Chris Turner, and City Clerk/Treasurer Maria Peña.

VISITORS: Kathy Bingham, Franklin County Graphic; Citizens: Eddy Ochoa, Ken Sellereite, Pam Moon, Carol Lindner, John Lindner, Helen Tobin, Jaeniffer Kaiser, Regina Grassl, Manny Choi, Laurie Mandler, Melissa Kelly, Ryan Kelly, and Jeff Shawna.

CORRESPONDENCE

Mayor Blackwell received a renewal notice from the Washington State Liquor and Cannabis Board for Michael Jay's Family Restaurant.

Franklin County Planning and Building Department sent the city a notice of a Public Hearing for a subdivision.

Association of Washington Cities was offering a scholarship to high school seniors.

CONSENT CALENDAR

Motion: Councilmember Silva moved to approve the Consent Calendar as presented.

- a) Minutes of the Regular Council Meeting November 16, 2015
- b) Minutes of the Special Council Meeting November 24, 2015
- c) Check Register 12/1/2015 for \$2131.87
- d) Accounts Payable 12/7/2015 for \$74,990.77
- e) Payroll Register 11/15-11/20/2015 for \$55,574.33
- f) Payroll Register 11/30/2015 to 12/5/2015 for \$107,545.79

Councilmember Quinton seconded motion. Motion carried unanimously.

CITIZEN COMMENT/JNON-AGENDA ITEMS

SPECIAL PRESENTATION

Eddy Ochoa gave a presentation to Councilmember on Cannabis Business in Connell. He would like Councilmember's to lift the ban on Cannabis Business in Connell. Mr. Ochoa reviewed his opinion of the Economic Benefits, Tax Revenues that other entities were collecting, Tourism Benefits, Social Benefits, and Consequences of prohibiting Marijuana. John White asked if anyone had done anything to fix the issue with the pool. Was there going to be a pool in 2016?

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Rachael lived in the County but uses the pool frequently during the summer. She reminded the Councilmember's that you were voted in to represent the citizens of Connell and not City Staff. Stated many people that use the pool, don't even know the pool is closing for 2016. She urged Councilmember's not to adopt the budget if they don't understand the budget.

Jaeniffer Kaiser-Park Board President-when the Park Board recommended closing the pool - there was not solution to fund the pool for 2016. Public was disappointed that the pool funding was not expressed earlier. The city was not doing things to address pool problem.

Helen Tobin-wants anything done that could be possibly done to save the pool. Why the benefits to wages for staff employees was so high. She felt the Park Board was thrown under the bus. The public doesn't trust the City Employees with their money.

Regina Grassl- Feels the citizens were getting taken for a ride in regards to the levy. What is it going to take to keep that pool? Look at other places to cut in the budget. Layoff an officer and don't fill current maintenance worker position.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion: Councilmember Quinton approved agenda as presented. Mayor Pro Tem Huber seconded motion. Motion passed with a 4 to 1 vote. Councilmember Escalera voted not to approve the agenda.

PUBLIC HEARING –2016 Final Budget

Mayor Blackwell recessed the regular meeting at 6:34 pm and opened a Public Hearing for the purpose of considering the 2016 Final Budget

STAFF REPORT: First, the budget should ideally begin with a positive view of the value of city services provided. The City had made good strides in providing quality service and improving our focus and commitment. Budgeting also requires realistic allocation of resources, by acknowledging limits and constraints.

The Preliminary 2016 Budget and Budget Message were presented early-on in the public process. From the first overview, staff clearly made known substantial budgetary constraints in General Fund. City staff specifically sought input from City Council on their priorities, in order to manage the projected shortfall, because the city cannot fund everything in the preliminary budget.

Expenditures were scrutinized and cuts were considered within the context of cities main priorities. As a safeguard, city policies require that staff maintain certain minimum levels in reserve accounts. This proven approach anchors staff to core financial principles, and allows staff to tailor what the city does – to the resources that are available.

With limited city resources, it is always a challenge to budget wisely and to prepare for the future. It takes discipline to focus on the things that matter most, and the city many have to forego some good things. Choosing priorities doesn't mean that the city doesn't

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value current level of services; it means the city has to select what is most important. This is the right way to balance the City's budget. City Clerk/Treasurer Maria Peña stated each person benefits are different. City pays 100% of the employees cost of benefits. The city pays 75% of the dependants and the employee pays 25% of the dependants. What the City of Connell is paying for benefits for their employees is very comparable to other cities.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Mellissa Kelly-addressed the Mayor's priority list and didn't agree with it. Doesn't feel the pool is a luxury.

Helen Tobin-stated the City of Connell employees were receiving 60% benefits package when everyone else was getting 30%.

COUNCILMEMBERS COMMENT PORTION OF THE HEARING:

Councilmember Minor-would like to see the pool open but doesn't want to keep limping by to keep the pool open and asked citizen to find resources.

Councilmember Silva-didn't agree with closing pool-citizens were giving the information too late in the process to do something to save the pool. Silva asked about the employees benefits.

Mayor Pro Tem Huber had gone over 2016 budget numbers. He has a hard time taking a position away for a pool to open 65 days of a year. The city employee's benefits are the same as Franklin Counties. Have to remain competitive in the hiring market. Pool could be run more efficiently.

Councilmember Quinton -doesn't want pool to close. She would help look into other ways to fund the pool.

Councilmember Escalera-doesn't want the pool to close. City was in the same boat last year to fund the pool.

Mayor Blackwell closed the hearing and opened regular meeting at 6:59 pm.

ADOPTION OF THE 2016 BUDGET

The City's 2016 Final Budget was presented to Council for consideration and adoption. State law requires the legislative body to adopt the budget no later than December 31st. The Council has held the required number and types of public hearings related to the budget, and adopted an employee salary resolution and property tax levy ordinance for 2016. Ordinance No. 961-2015 was presented for adoption of the City of Connells 2016 Budget.

Councilmember Silva wanted a meeting to review 2016 Budget line by line as a Council.

Motion: Councilmember Silva moved to defer to a later date not later than December 31, 2015. Mayor Pro Tem Huber seconded motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion: Councilmember Quinton moved to set Special Council Meeting to go over the 2016 Budget line by line on December 15, 2015 at 6:00 pm. Mayor Pro Tem Huber seconded motion. Motion carried unanimously.

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TREE CITY USA PROGRAM

Ken Sellereite was leading efforts for the City to be part of the Tree City USA program. There were great benefits to the City with no cost to the City. Tree City USA was a nationwide program which has gained membership from 86 cities in Washington. Mr. Sellereite was asking permission from Councilmember's to proceed in the process to make the City of Connell a member of the Tree City USA Program. Consensus was for Mr. Sellereite to proceed.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

City Administrator –Jed Crowther

- 1) Art Worked Re-Siting
- 2) Housing Trust Fund Grant Award
- 3) Heritage Museum Grant Results

Public Works Director-Larry Turner

- 1) Snow kept public works busy
- 2) Had one storm drain plugged
- 3) Employees working on clean up and machinery

Police Department-Chris Turner

- 1) Meth dealer off street and in jail

City Clerk/Treasurer Maria Peña

- 1) Financial report were handed out for November

Fire Chief –Chris Schulte

- 1) Coyote Ridge fire inspections
- 2) Asked to review Federal legislation of wild land fires improvement act of 2016
- 3) Responder drill be done

MEETING RECESSED

At 7:20 pm Mayor Blackwell announced an executive session for 15 minutes to consider the minimum price at which real estate will be offered for lease or sale.

MEETING RECONVENED

Mayor Blackwell reconvened the Regular Meeting at 7:35 pm and the following was heard:

Motion: Councilmember Quinton moved to enter into an Agreement with Justin Taylor for the sale of the old pharmacy building (Block 21 lots 13-14 Franklin County) and authorize Mayor Blackwell to sign documents associated with the sale of such property. Councilmember Escalera seconded motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion: Councilmember Escalera moved to setting an asking price of \$50,000.00 for each lot of Short Plat 2015-18 Lot 2 and 3 near the tennis courts. Councilmember Silva seconded motion. Motion carried unanimously.

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MEETING ADJOURNED

There being no further business before the City Council of Connell, Mayor Blackwell adjourned the meeting at 7:37 pm.

ATTEST: _____
Rose Courneya, Deputy City Clerk/Treasurer

Bruce Blackwell, Mayor