

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE CITY OF CONNELL, WASHINGTON
CONNELL, FRANKLIN COUNTY, WASHINGTON
January 22, 2024

The Regular meeting of the Connell City Council was called to order by Mayor Lee Barrow at 6:00 pm in the City Hall and was opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Mayor Lee Barrow and Councilmember's: Joe Escalera, Shelly Harper, Preston Hart, and John White.

EXCUSED:

Councilmember Escalera moved to excuse Councilmember Pat Barrera. Councilmember White seconded motion. Motion carried unanimously.

STAFF PRESENT:

Fire Chief Ken Woffenden, Treasurer Teresa Steele, City Administrator Cathleen Koch, City Clerk Marissa Ortiz, Public Works Director Hallie Tuck, Police Chief Chris Lee, and City Attorney Heidi Ellerd.

ELECTION OF MAYOR PRO TEMPORE

Motion: Councilmember Escalera moved to appoint Councilmember Shelly Harper as Mayor Pro Tem. Councilmember White seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

<u>Name</u>	<u>Committee</u>	<u>Re/Appointed</u>	<u>Expires</u>
Mayor Lee Barrow	Hotel/Motel	1/1/2024	12/31/2024
Burl Booker	Hotel/Motel	1/1/2024	12/31/2024
Molly Kunkel	Hotel/Motel	1/1/2024	12/31/2024
Patrice Hebel	Hotel/Motel	1/1/2024	12/31/2024
Dale Kuehny	Hotel/Motel	1/1/2024	12/31/2024

CONSENT CALENDAR

Motion: Pro Tem Harper moved to approve the consent calendar as presented:

- a) Minutes of the Regular Council Meeting December 06, 2023
 - b) Accounts Payable 1/17/24 for \$384,028.92
 - c) Check Register 12/01/23 for \$401.37
 - d) Check Register 12/20/23 for \$77,721.44
 - e) Check Register 12/30/23 for \$89,345.86
 - f) Check Register 1/02/24 for \$161.05
 - g) Payroll Register 12/05/23-12/05/23 for \$50,178.39
 - h) Payroll Register 12/06/23-12/06/23 for \$63,611.96
 - i) Payroll Register 12/20/23-12/20/23 for \$49,079.11
 - j) Payroll Register 1/05/24-1/05/24 for \$115,154.49
- Councilmember Escalera seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion: Mayor Pro Tem Harper moved to approve the agenda as presented. Councilmember Hart seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

AHBL AGREEMENT AMENDMENT NO.3 & ON-CALL PLANNING SERVICES OR HIRING A QUALIFIED CITY PLANNER.

Through budget discussions, the City Council considered alternatives to the land use and planning services provided by staff and the City’s consultants. A draft Request for Proposal (RFP) for on-call planning services was presented for consideration. The City Council's decision was to advertise the RFP. The RFP was published in December 2023 with a deadline of January 12, 2024, for proposals for general planning on-call services. Meanwhile, the amendment was set up to extend the City's agreement through February 28, 2024, with AHBL's new fee structure. Staff attempted to negotiate a month-to-month agreement and AHBL was not interested since they must be able to plan staffing and workloads. Mayor Pro Tem Harper stated that she would like to hire an employee to provide planning services. Staff stated that it was crucial to keep in mind that if the City hired a professional planner, a consultant would still need to assist staff with work that they were not skilled or experienced in handling. Examples included changes to the Comprehensive Plan, changes to the Critical Areas Ordinance, floodplain administration, zoning code updates, policy development, or similar planning requirements. In addition, while some small cities have a combined planning and building position, it was not the norm for a qualified Planner to also serve as a Building Inspector or Official. The training and expertise were considerably different. Staff's recommendation was to continue the current arrangement that was implemented since 2018. This would enable the City to make adjustments as the volume of work shifted. Annual consultation costs for planning services from 2018 to 2023 were as follows:

YEAR	TOTAL AMOUNT SPENT	COMMENTS
2023	\$67,487	Continued 2022 & \$8,000 zero lot line funded by developer and approved by Council, Ace, Grocery & Others
2022	\$58,842	Continued 2021 & Solar, Comp Plan, Floodplain & Others
2021	\$47,661	Oasis, Summit Estates & Others
2020	\$51,387	2019 Services Continued
2019	\$33,950	Comprehensive Plan & Critical Areas Ordinance Updates (Some General Services)
2018	\$18,467	Comprehensive Plan Update

The years 2018-2019 included specialty services for updating the City's Comprehensive Plan and Critical Ordinances. Those services would be required even with an experienced Planner. The average cost for the last four years 2022-2023 even with additional expenses was \$56,344. While the cost of consulting services may be high, with the level of services that are required for Connell, the City would be in a better financial position if we continued to utilize consultant services. In the future, the City would need full-time staff to provide planning services, yet that approach was not recommended for 2024 or 2025.

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Motion: Councilmember White moved to approve Amendment No. 3 to Professional Services Agreement with AHBL to extend the city on-call general planning services agreement through February 28, 2024. Councilmember Hart seconded the motion. Motion carried. (3-1 vote)

ADOPT RESOLUTION NO. 2024-01 AMENDING THE 2023 SALARY SCHEDULE
City staff provided the proposed 2024 salary wage matrix for non-union employees for City Council's consideration. Several options and recommendations were created to provide the City Council with the ability to authorize what they considered the most appropriate option. The recommendation incorporated a COLA for all staff to keep up with rising costs and a market adjustment for those positions that were not keeping up with the market and comparable salaries.

Motion: Councilmember Escalera moved to adopt Resolution No 2024-01 increasing the 2023 salary schedule by 5%. No second.

Motion: Mayor Pro Tem Harper moved to adopt Resolution No 2024-01 increasing the 2023 salary schedule by 4%. Councilmember Hart seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

MEALS ON WHEELS - MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Mid-Columbia Meals on Wheels provided staff with a renewal contract to continue administering and implementing a senior nutrition site for the elderly at the Connell Community Center. The City of Connell provided use of space for the program Tuesday through Friday during the hours of 8:00 am to 1:30 pm.

Motion: Councilmember Hart moved to approve the Memorandum of Understanding between the City of Connell and Senior Life Resources, Mid-Columbia Meals on Wheels Program regarding use of space. Pro Tem Harper seconded the motion. Motion carried. (4-1 vote)

TIB AGREEMENT – 2024 CHIP SEAL PROJECT, W. CLARK STREET

Provided for the City Council's review and approval was the Transportation Improvement Board (TIB) Agreement for the 2024 Chip Seal Project, West Clark Street. The project would chip seal 5,700 feet of West Clark Street from SR 260 to North Columbia Avenue. The grant was for \$154,329, with a 5% city match of \$8,123.

Motion: Mayor Pro Tem Harper moved to approve the Transportation Improvement Board Agreement for 2024 Chip Seal Project, West Clark Street. Councilmember Escalera seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

City Administrator, Cathleen Koch –

Gave an update on the zero-lot line request, it was still in process. The subject matter was being prepared for review at a forthcoming Council meeting in February.

Reminded the Council the city's moratorium extension on large-scale energy would expire soon. A continued work plan was recommended.

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Police Chief, Chris Lee –

Reported a new House Bill Legislation was introduced, specifically affecting Police Departments in the manner you could enforce the law.

COMMENTS/NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Rick Jansen – thanked the City Council for approving the extension of the AHBL agreement during his zero-lot line request.

Bevon Davis – announced and invited the City Council to the Chamber Banquet on February 8, 2024.

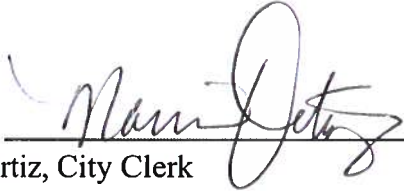
Kara Booker - distributed a letter regarding certain city codes and the review of a public employee.

Lauren Smith – added the reasons why the review of a public employee was necessary.

Mayor Lee Barrow – stated that the issue was not a business matter therefore it would not be placed on the Council agenda for discussion.

MEETING ADJOURNED

There being no further business before the City Council of Connell Mayor Barrow adjourned the meeting at 7:09 pm.

ATTEST: 
Marissa Ortiz, City Clerk


Lee Barrow, Mayor