

MEETING OF THE CITY OF CONNELL, WASHINGTON
CONNELL, FRANKLIN COUNTY, WASHINGTON
October 18, 2023

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, Pat Barrera, Shelly Harper, Katrina Kunkel, and John White.

STAFF PRESENT:

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

CONSENT CALENDAR

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

- a) Minutes of the Regular Council Meeting September 20, 2023
- b) Minutes of the Regular Council Meeting October 4, 2023
- c) Accounts Payable 10/4/23 for \$168,965.08
- d) Check Register 9/25/23 for \$404.94
- e) Payroll Register 9/20/23-9/20/23 for \$112,449.56

Councilmember Kunkel seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion: Councilmember Kunkel moved to approve the agenda as amended: (*Added Memo #9 – Executive/Closed Session and Memeo #9A – Discuss the AHBL Contract*). Councilmember White seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

PUBLIC HEARING – 2024 REVENUE SOURCES AND AD VALOREM PROPERTY TAXES

Mayor Barrow recessed the regular meeting at 6:03 pm and opened a Public Hearing for the purpose of considering the 2024 Revenue Sources and Ad Valorem Property Taxes.

STAFF REPORT:

City Treasurer Teresa Steele presented detailed projections for the 2024 proposed preliminary budget.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None heard.

COUNCILMEMBERS COMMENT PORTION OF THE HEARING:

None heard.

Mayor Barrow closed the hearing and opened the regular meeting at 6:11 pm.

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AD VALOREM PROPERTY TAXES

The discussion was held on whether to increase a 1% in property taxes. The increase would amount to approximately \$5,770.00. City Treasurer Teresa Steele prepared details to help the City Council consider the 1% property tax increase. Steele explained that the city's assessed valuation was currently \$267,394,573 and the levy rate was estimated at \$2.11 per 1,000 of assessed value. It was stated that if the City Council decided to take the 1% property tax increase with the current assessed value, the levy rate would still have a decrease of around 7 cents per \$1000. In the previous year, the city experienced a decrease of 29 cents per \$1000. Other important factors in considering the 1% property tax increase included the current state of the economy. Although the inflation rate was down from 9.1% to 3.4%, the economy continued to experience difficulties. Staff recommended the City Council approve a 1% property tax increase to maintain the inflation rate.

The consensus of the Council was to move forward and bring back a finalized ordinance for adoption at the next City Council meeting.

MEETING RECESSED

Mayor Barrow recessed the regular meeting at 6:23 pm to go into Executive Session:
(10 minutes)

Per RCW 42.30.110 (1)(i) - To discuss legal counsel representing the agency matters relating to agency enforcement actions and or potential litigation.

At 6:31 pm Mayor Barrow extended the executive meeting by 10 minutes.

MEETING RECONVENED

Mayor Barrow called the regular meeting back to order at 6:43 pm.
No action taken.

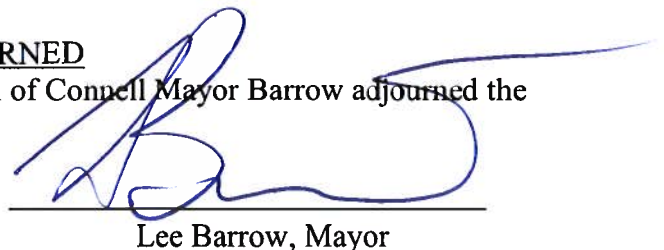
DISCUSSION ON THE AHBL, INC CONTRACT

Councilmember Harper requested a discussion on the professional services agreement between the City and AHBL, Inc., the consultants for land use and planning services. Harper analyzed the expenses over the course of four years and read the totals out loud. After her review of the agreement, she stated that the City could terminate it upon seven days of written notice. Council members held discussions on their views on what could be done differently. City Administrator Cathleen Koch stated that based on the City Council's discussions, a request for proposals could be issued around the area for other consultants. She added that AHBL served as consultants in most of the Franklin County area.

MEETING ADJOURNED

There being no further business before the City Council of Connell Mayor Barrow adjourned the meeting at 7:34 pm.

ATTEST: _____
Marissa Ortiz, City Clerk



Lee Barrow, Mayor