

REGULAR MEETING OF THE CITY OF CONNELL, WASHINGTON
CONNELL, FRANKLIN COUNTY, WASHINGTON
February 21, 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, Pat Barrera, Shelly Harper, Preston Hart, and John White.

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.

CONSENT CALENDAR

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

- a) Minutes of the Special Council Meeting February 01, 2024
- b) Minutes of the Regular Council Meeting February 07, 2024
- c) Accounts Payable 2/21/24 for \$94,525.44
- d) Check Register 2/01/24 for \$317.90
- e) Payroll Register 2/05/24-2/05/24 for \$118,638.15

Councilmember Barrera seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion: Mayor Pro Tem Harper moved to approve the agenda with an amendment:

(Added Memo #12a – Basin Disposal Fuel Surcharge).

Councilmember Hart seconded the motion. Motion carried (4-1 vote).

ORDER OF BUSINESS

PROPOSAL FOR 2024 ICMP AND SOIL MONITORING

Valley Science and Engineering had completed the city's annual crop management plan the past several years. A proposal for soil sampling, the preparation of the City of Connell's 2024 Irrigation and Crop Management Plan as required in the City's State Wastewater Discharge Permit was presented for review. The estimated cost was \$13,500.00 which was a \$450.00 increase from the previous year.

Motion: Mayor Pro Tem Harper moved to approve the contract with Valley Science and Engineering. Councilmember Hart seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

WATER SERVICE ORDINANCE DISCUSSION

A discussion was held between staff and the City Council regarding water leak adjustments, waive a one-time late fee per calendar year and late fees. Staff submitted the recommendation to include a leak adjustment clause in the water regulation. The provision proposed a method for

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customers to request adjustments in instances of documented water leaks on their property. The provision would also provide criteria for eligibility, a thorough documentation process, and a method to determine the adjustment based on the amount of water loss. According to feedback from previous meetings regarding late fees, staff proposed implementing a late fee waiver in the water service regulation.

Consensus of the Council was to implement a one-time late fee waiver for a calendar year and adding a water leak adjustment with specific limitations. Staff would prepare an ordinance and return it at the next meeting for the Council's review.

WATER & SEWER LATE FEES

City Treasurer Teresa Steele presented four resolutions, each one had a different impact and aimed to create a balance between the citizens' needs and the operation of the water and sewer utilities. Council members engaged in a discussion and answer session with city staff regarding water and sewer late fees.

Motion: Councilmember Hart moved to adopt Resolution No. 2024-02 to eliminate the interest on overdue accounts and implement a standard \$25 delinquency charge. Councilmember Escalera seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

ZERO LOT LINE DEVELOPMENT

AHBL Planners were instructed to draft several proposed code amendments to the zoning and subdivision code. One of the proposed amendments included a proposal to permit townhomes. After a series of public hearings and deliberations, staff were instructed to bring the townhome-related items to the Council. The Planning consultants developed the draft code based on practices and then modified and improved the draft code following input from the City Council and the Planning Commission. The proposal was supported by several goals of the City's Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan contained a Housing Element and allowed townhomes in higher density zoning districts to be incorporated as a strategy to meet local policies. Other objectives in the Housing and Land Use elements supported the proposal.

Motion: Councilmember Barrera moved to adopt Ordinance No. 1038-2024 amending Title 16 Subdivisions and Title 17 Zoning of the Connell Municipal Code related to townhomes/zero-lot line developments. Councilmember Escalera seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

ENCLOSURE OF TRASH CONTAINERS DISCUSSION

The City Council received feedback from concerned citizens regarding trash enclosure requirements, which were outlined in the Connell Municipal Code (CMC) 17.19.100. This item was brought forward for the Council's discussion to examine how to move forward. City staff conducted site inspections throughout the town to determine if the enclosures were in some of the locations expected. Some enclosures existed, and others did not exist. The City could decide to enforce the ordinance all throughout Connell, however it was not implemented over the years, even though it had been in place since 1997. Grandfathering all locations in Connell was an option as they existed, with or without garbage enclosures. The Council could also repeal the code, removing trash enclosures.

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Staff did not recommend repealing since there were benefits to requiring trash enclosures such as:

- Beautification
- Ensure they are 20 feet from any residential area
- Location for the garbage company to pick up
- Space designations for containers free from obstructions
- Trash contained
- The discouragement from dumping or rummaging through the garbage
- Help keep animals out of trash
- Prevent containers from being picked up and tossed around

The Consensus of the council was for staff to prepare an ordinance to repeal the section and return it at the next meeting for their evaluation.

ON-CALL PLANNING SERVICES

At a previous Council meeting the City Council approved Amendment No. 3 with AHBL to extend their on-call planning services until February 28, 2024, and continue searching for a long-term replacement. City staff was in contact with Brandon Mauseth of SCJ Alliance to obtain a proposal for on-call planning services. He provided a sample Statement of Qualifications from 2022, as well as a 2023 billing rate schedule as an example of what their firm would offer. SCJ's rates exceeded what AHBL charged. Staff searched through MRSC's Small Works Roster for firms that posted their Statement of Qualifications (SOQ) to indicate they were interested in providing services. Several of these sample documents from the search were provided for Council's review. The recommendation was for the City to still contract with AHBL and later approve a contract with another firm or individual.

Motion: Councilmember Hart moved to authorize the Mayor to enter into the City's standard professional services agreement with AHBL for on-call planning services with a termination date of December 31, 2024 and continue seeking other consulting firms to augment the City's on-call planning services. Councilmember Barrera seconded the motion. Motion carried (3-2 vote).

BASIN DISPOSAL FUEL SURCHARGE

Basin Disposal proposed a 1.6% fuel surcharge for the billing invoices for the months of March and April 2024 as fuel prices continued to rise. The current fuel surcharge was 2.88%. For the Council's consideration the new proposed fuel surcharge and rate sheet was provided. Staff recommended that the fuel surcharge be approved at the 1.6% rate and any future increases would be considered separately.

Motion: Councilmember Barrera moved to approve a surcharge of 1.6% be added to garbage bills for the months of March and April 2024. Mayor Pro Tem Harper seconded the motion. Motion carried (4-1 vote).

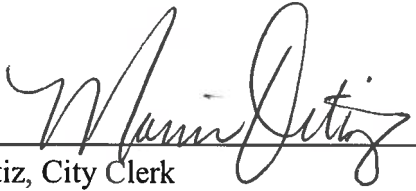
DEPARTMENT REPORTS

City Treasurer, Teresa Steele – Informed City Council that an individual made a donation to customers utility late fees.

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MEETING ADJOURNED

There being no further business before the City Council of Connell Mayor Barrow adjourned the meeting at 7:43 pm.

ATTEST: 
Marissa Ortiz, City Clerk



Lee Barrow, Mayor