

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

July 5, 2016

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 Huber, and Councilmember's: Rhonda Quinton, Kathie Silva, Joe Escalera, and Ray Minor.

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

**VISITORS:** Kathy Bingham, Franklin County Graphic; Wendy Dowell, Pool Committee; Del Krumm, Lamb Weston; Citizens: Gail Eilmes, John Eilmes, Ruth Perkins, Cliff Perkins, John White, Rosalie Dowell, Jamie-Terry-Taylor Utecht, Alleda Arnold, Able Pena, Ron Lawler, Jaeniffer Kaiser, Jennifer Walker, Helen Tobin, Garland Walton, Regina Grassl, Pat Barrera, Tamara Millage, John & Carol Lindner, Estevan Pena, Milysha Castaneda, Leeandro Chavez, Rosa Chavez, Blanca Molker, Maria Tejada, Francisco Chavez, Adriana Mendoza, Bertha Todd, Jame Todd, Tristion Smith, and Leigha Cope.

CONSENT CALENDAR

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

- a) Minutes of the Regular Council Meeting June 20, 2016
- b) Check Register June 29, 2016 for \$45.18
- c) Check Register July 1, 2016 \$224.71
- d) Accounts Payable July 5, 2016 for \$46,149.76
- e) Payroll Check Register 6/30-7/5/2016 for \$84,221.47

Councilmember Quinton seconded motion. Motion carried unanimously.

PRESENTATIONS FOR COUNCILMEMBERS

Del Krumm spoke on behalf of Lamb Weston not to raise the utility tax to fund the pool. Lamb Weston currently pays its fair share of taxes. They believe the pool should be funded on the current taxes received by the City or service user fees. Increasing the utility tax would have a negative effect.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

**Motion:** Councilmember Quinton moved to approve the agenda as presented. Councilmember Minor seconded motion. Motion carried unanimously.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

HOTEL/MOTEL ALLOCATIONS

Hotel Motel Committee met on June 23, 2016 and reviewed an application for the additional expenditures of \$2,500 from Hotel-/Motel Funds in the 2016 Budget. The

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Hotel Motel Committee recommended an expenditure of \$1,800 to Chamber of Commerce for the fireworks display.

**Motion:** Councilmember Minor moved to approve expenditure of \$1,800 from the Hotel/Motel Fund to the Chamber of Commerce for the 4<sup>th</sup> of July display. Councilmember Silva seconded motion. Motion carried unanimously.

### POOL DISCUSSION

A Pool Committee met on June 27<sup>th</sup> and the members welcomed the idea of opening the pool this year with no slides, no heat, and limited guards. City Clerk/Treasurer Maria Peña looked into the city's budget to see how much it would cost to run a pool within these parameters and if there was money in the budget

Mrs. Pena found that revenues were coming in slightly over projected, at the end of June. The city's expenditures are slightly under projected. On the expenditure side of it, one reason the city was under budget is due to the fact that the city had not hired a police officer to fill the vacant position that was left open when Sergeant Thorson resigned in January. The city can reallocate these savings to be used to operate the pool for this summer without needing a budget amendment or needing to take money out of the city's ending reserve.

**Motion:** Councilmember Silva directed staff to reallocate funds in the General Fund to operate the swimming pool. Councilmember Escalera seconded motion. Motion carried unanimously.

### UTILITY TAX-ELECTRICITY

Councilmember's had discussed preparing a utility tax ordinance. By state statute, an increase above current 6% utility tax would require a voter proposition approval. An increase from 6% to 7% would generate approximately \$60,000. The largest business Con-Agra Lamb-Weston would be paying over half of the increase to support recreational activities within the city. Of the extra \$60,000 that would be generated with the tax, Con-Agra Lamb-Weston would pay an estimated \$31,610 based on last year's usage. Impact would also be on other large electricity users. Staff did not recommend putting utility tax on the ballot.

Councilmember's held discussion and the following was heard:

- 1) Look at other funding options
- 2) Wait and put on the next ballot cycle
- 3) Not a good idea for attracting business to Connell
- 4) Lamb Weston has been in Connell for years
- 5) Important for council to understand all its options
- 6) Look into running the pool more efficiently

### CITY ADMINISTRATOR CONTRACT

Mayor and Councilmember's discussed a suitable transition for the City Administrator position. Mayor Blackwell proposed a direct appointment of Maria Peña to serve as City Administrator. City Council concurred with the appointment and directed that a contract be prepared. A contract was being presented to Councilmember's for approval. Council held discussion.

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**Motion:** Councilmember Escalera moved to approve Employment Agreement between the City of Connell and Maria Peña. Councilmember Quinton seconded motion. Motion carried unanimously.

**E-CIVIS RENEWAL CONTRACT**

The City utilized a grant locator service which was now up for an annual renewal. The service provides weekly update notification for finding grants. Council deferred renewal at this time. No action taken.

COMMITTEE / DEPARTMENT REPORTS

**CITY ADMINISTRATOR – Jed Crowther**

- 1) Met with Community Action Connections on service they provide

**POLICE DEPARTMENT – Police Chief Chris Turner**

- 1) 4<sup>th</sup> of July went well
- 2) Ford explorer getting ready for staff to use

**FIRE CHIEF- Chris Schulte**

- 1) Fireworks went well
- 2) Attended a discussion on fire preparedness for the 2016 fire season

MEETING RECESSED

Mayor Blackwell recessed the regular meeting at 6:45 pm to go into Executive session for 15 minutes to discuss with legal counsel representing the City litigation or potential litigation to which the City, or a city council member or employee is, or may be, a party; to consider the minimum price at which real estate will be offered for lease or sale; and to plan or adopt the strategy or position to be taken by the City during the course of any collective bargaining, professional negotiations, or grievance or mediation proceedings, or reviewing the proposals made in the negotiations or proceedings while in progress.

MEETING RECONVENED

Mayor Blackwell called the regular meeting back to order at 7:05pm.

CITIZEN COMMENT/NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Gary Walton- spoke on behalf of City Clerk/Treasurer Maria Peña being the City Administrator and organizing a Park & Recreational District. City may cut back on the park maintenance. Thanked Councilmember's for their work.

Regina Grassl- wants employees laid off in the winter time to save money and would like to see the pool back in the budget next year. Look farming out the police job to the county.

Wendy Dowell-represents the pool committee and was working with the city on the pool issue. Concerned with how long it takes to get a pool district into place. She stated the pool draws people to town. Mrs. Dowell wants pool discusses to be a long

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term issue and not just a one year issue. Look at the pool long term not short term.

Tamara Millage- was part of the pool committee and wants the pool to have a permanent funding source for pool

Helen Tobin- Thanked Mayor Blackwell for the \$60,000 for the pool. Complained that the city staff was receiving a 2% cola each year and does the city really need to hire another officer. Does the city have to hire another staff member?

Jennifer Walker- talked about the pool budget and the park budget. Mrs. Walker would like city to utilize eagle scouts and high school seniors to do project within Connell.

Pat Barrera-stated State workers received a 1.7% raise this year. Hold vacancies instead of filling vacancies. Citizens voted in the councilmember's to represent them and do what the citizens want. Mrs. Barrera was not in favor of the utility tax.

Tristan Smith-wants the pool open and the city only needs one park

Ruth Perkins-provided a memo to councilmember's and asked Mayor Blackwell to stop using profane language. Mrs. Perkins was asking the Mayor to behave more professionally.

Mayor Blackwell stated he was tired of being attacked. The citizens do not have to vote him in as the mayor in the next election.

Councilmember Escalera agreed with Mrs. Perkins that the mayor should be more professional

Councilmember Minor stated the citizens don't give the mayor credit for the things that the mayor has done that are good for Connell.

John White- never discusses any issues and would like each councilmember's to have their own opinion.

Valerie Turner-asked about the pool funding and sale tax opinions

Alleda Arnold -told citizens in the room to get involved and run for council instead of picking on the current mayor and councilmember's. Would like to see the pool

### CITY COUNCIL CLOSING REMARKS

- 1) Look at running the pool more efficiently
- 2) Glad to hear there was a pool community formed
- 3) Good ideas have been presented to councilmember's

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**Motion:** Councilmember Quinton moved to authorize an extension of a land sale of city plots to SETAD Investment to the closing date of July 15, 2016 at 3:00 pm. Councilmember Escalera seconded motion. Motion carried unanimously.

MEETING ADJOURNED

There being no further business before the City Council of Connell Mayor Blackwell adjourned the meeting at 7:57 pm.

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
Rose Courneya, Deputy Clerk-Treasurer

\_\_\_\_\_  
Bruce Blackwell, Mayor