

Oak Harbor City Council
Regular Meeting Minutes
November 19, 2013

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Scott Dudley called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

INVOCATION/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Pastor Dams of the Bridge Christian Fellowship gave the Invocation and Mayor Dudley led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Present:

Mayor Scott Dudley
Mayor Pro Tempore Danny Paggao
Councilmember Rick Almborg
Councilmember Jim Campbell
Councilmember Tara Hizon
Councilmember Beth Munns
Councilmember Joel Servatius

Staff Present:

City Administrator Larry Cort
Finance Director Doug Merriman
Development Service Director Steve Powers
Public Works Director Cathy Rosen
Assistant City Attorney Nikki Esparza
City Engineer Joe Stowell
City Clerk Valerie J. Loffler
Police Chief Ed Green
Fire Chief Ray Merrill

Councilmember Severns was excused.

HONORS AND RECOGNITIONS

Employee Recognition

City Engineer Joe Stowell recognized Civil Engineer Brad Gluth for 10 years of dedicated service to the City of Oak Harbor and presented him with a fleece jacket. Mr. Stowell related the value of Mr. Gluth's contributions. He coordinates all traffic issues, possesses valuable WSDOT experience, and reviews development plans and provides comments in a professional manner. He's a certified stormwater manager, a great communicator, and he's also a community volunteer.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion: Councilmember Almborg moved to add an Executive Session to discuss pending litigation. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Campbell and carried unanimously.

Councilmember Hizon moved to approve the agenda as amended. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Almborg and carried unanimously.

CITIZEN COMMENT PERIOD

Bob Hallahan urged Council to lead the way and adopt policies to limit climate change.

CONSENT AGENDA

- a. Minutes of the Regular City Council meeting held November 6, 2013
- b. Approval of Accounts Payable Voucher No. 156083 in the amount of \$391.53; Voucher Nos. 156084 through 156273 in the amount of \$1,482,197.82; and Voucher Nos. 156274 through 156283 in the amount of \$563.01
- c. Motion to authorize the Mayor to sign the Contract with Whidbey Island General Hospital for EMS Service 2014-2015
- d. Motion to authorize staff to proceed with advertisement to bid for two booster pumps
- e. Motion to excuse Councilmember Bob Severns from the regular council meeting of November 19, 2013

Motion: Councilmember AlMBERG moved to approve Consent Agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Servatius and carried unanimously.

STAFF AND COUNCIL COMMENTS

City Administrator Dr. Larry Cort reported City trucks were on Pioneer Way putting up lights, and Marathon registrations hit 2,000.

Mayor Scott Dudley reminded staff and Council about the special meeting scheduled for November 25th at 10:30 a.m. to discuss Navy participation in the Wastewater Treatment Plant project. In addition, a meeting with Senator Bailey and Representative Smith has been scheduled for Tuesday, December 3rd, at 2:00 p.m.

He also announced the Rotary Club will be putting up holiday lights on November 30th. He asked citizens to donate their time, effort and money for the 3,600 meals that will be served at the North Whidbey Community Harvest.

Mayor Dudley also noted that John Pendleton, commercial photographer and longtime community supporter, provided the new artwork in the Council Chambers. Mr. Pendleton has recently shifted his focus to the capture of local Whidbey life and events.

Councilmember Beth Munns encouraged participation in the public meeting on the OLF.

Councilmember Tara Hizon announced a blood drive. She also expressed her appreciation for the firefighters who assisted with the water leak in her apartment.

Councilmember Servatius wondered about inserting a flyer with a list of resources in the utility bills to inform the community about teen suicide awareness and prevention.

Mayor Dudley recognized Cub Scout Troop 4099 in the audience.

ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

Resolution 13-29: 2014 Legislative Priorities

City Administrator Dr. Larry Cort provided a staff report.

Resolution 13-29 A Resolution of the City of Oak Harbor Relating to 2014 Legislative Priorities

Motion: Councilmember Servatius moved to adopt Resolution 13-29. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Campbell and carried unanimously.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Resolution 13-12: Relating to Elected Officials Participation in Group Medical, Dental and Vision Plans

Mayor Scott Dudley provided the staff report. He stated current participation costs \$53,444.88 and eliminating eligibility is a way to cut expenses.

Criston Skinner spoke in opposition telling Council they deserve to be eligible for medical benefits and to not sell them short or buy into the argument that public service should be valued any less.

Skip Pohtilla also spoke in opposition encouraging Councilmembers to keep their eligibility. Even though the position is labeled part-time, they're always on the clock 24/7.

Councilmember Servatius spoke in support of keeping the benefits. He also pointed out that Councilmembers are considered regular part-time employees and the City pays their premium. The Mayor is treated as a full-time employee and benefits are available and paid at 75 percent for his family.

In addition, Councilmember Servatius stated council members shouldn't be allowed to participate in the high deductible/health savings plan (HDHP).

Councilmember Munns cited her concerns about making public service a privilege and not open to anybody.

She also asserted that citizens are concerned with communication, not the salary and benefits of council members.

Councilmember Paggao stated he fully supports providing health benefits to elected officials.

Councilmember Almborg disclosed that no one has ever told him he doesn't deserve a salary and medical benefits. The citizens expect hard work and efficient use of city resources.

Councilmember Hizon spoke in support of offering medical benefits to council members; it's voluntary and is available only for the elected official and not their family. She also agrees the HDHP should be off the table for elected officials.

Motion: Councilmember Almborg moved that no elected official be eligible to participate in the City's High Deductible Health Care Plan; and for the other health care plans, elected officials shall pay for their dependents they elect to have on the City's plan. Further, staff shall bring forward a new resolution reflecting this motion for Council review and possible approval at the December 3, 2013, council meeting.

The motion was seconded by Councilmember Munns and carried unanimously.

Elected Officials Salary Review

Mayor Scott Dudley reported there were two ways to reduce their salaries. Council could repeal the ordinance establishing the Salary Commission and reduce salaries, or they can re-populate the Salary Commission to review the salaries.

Criston Skinner told Council he didn't think they should be concerned about salaries; most citizens believe they're underpaid. He believes Council should move onto more important matters.

Skip Pothilla agreed with Mr. Skinner. He also pointed out that council isn't compensated a great deal, but by eliminating the salary, you're making the position "elitist."

Councilmember Hizon stated she would prefer for the Commission to have the discussion.

Councilmember Almberg stated the survey indicates the sum of health care and salary is equal to what most other cities of equal size provide for compensation. He would like to focus on other priorities.

Councilmember Paggao shared the history about why the mayor's salary was so high noting that it was difficult to attract people to run for Mayor. He believes the Salary Commission should review the ordinance instead of Council.

Councilmember Campbell explained he uses his salary for mileage and travel expenses to meetings. If the salary goes away, a lot of people wanting to run for office may not be able to afford to drive to Mount Vernon twice a month. He doesn't want anyone to be eliminated from the opportunity to run for office.

Councilmember Munns stated her salary goes back into the community, and there are more important things on the agenda.

Councilmember Servatius agreed with his peers that energy should be invested elsewhere.

Councilmembers discussed the definition of "emergency" and whether or not Council salaries were causing a financial hardship.

Councilmember Hizon suggested moving onto other more important priorities.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 7:20 p.m. Mayor Dudley announced an executive session to discuss pending litigation for 25 minutes.

The meeting reconvened at 7:52 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion: Councilmember Almberg moved, seconded by Councilmember Campbell, to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 7:52 p.m.

Valerie J. Loffler, City Clerk