

CITY OF BURLINGTON, WA

March 24, 2022

Mayor Steve Sexton called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance. Council members present: Bill Aslett, Keith Chaplin, Joe DeGloria, Rick DeGloria, Scott Green, James Stavig and Jamie Weiss. Staff present: Janice Burwash, Don Erikson, Leif Johnson, Sandra Kottke, Mike Luvera, Kristen Morrison, Marv Pulst, Jim Rabenstein, Steve Riggs, Travis Schwetz, Robert Toth, and Greg Young.

MINUTES:

A motion was made by **Councilors Bill Aslett/Joe DeGloria** to approve the minutes of the March 24, 2021 City Council meeting. All in favor; motion carried.

AUDIT OF BILLS:

Councilor Green presented City finances; expenses of note included software updates and enhanced 911 for Fire & PD.

A motion was made by **Councilors Green/J. DeGloria** to approve Accounts Payable invoices to be paid as of March 24, 2022 in the amount of \$265,262.46 and Payroll Expenses for Pay Period ending March,15 2022 in the amount of \$762,371.77.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

There were 7 inhabitants of the City of Burlington who spoke at the Council Meeting with an additional letter read for a resident not in attendance for the same subject matter. Citizens residing in the neighborhood near the corner of Hazel and Regent Street expressed concern for their safety and well-being due to disruption in this neighborhood and numerous encounters with trash, theft, noise, violation of city code, or verbal assault. Members of the public reported repeated police visits to their neighborhood.

One presenter shared encounters with potentially homeless population members that involved entering a private work building and physical altercation. Another citizen requested additional Speed Limit signage added between George Hopper & Pease Road.

Chief of Police Mike Luvera acknowledged the concerns of safety and the frustration that the presenters had. **Luvera** explained the State Legislation that prohibited arrests based on possession of drugs but asked those gathered to continue making calls or filing reports. **Mayor Sexton** shared that 4 drug houses had been put out of operation in the last several years. **Councilor James Stavig** thanked the community members and shared his own story of bringing a similar concern before Council several years ago and was impressed by the neighborhood's display of collective action. **Chief Luvera** continued to speak with the gathered group of Burlington residents outside while Council proceeded.

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Members of the public may submit comments or questions by mail to City Hall at 833 S. Spruce Street, ATTN: Greg Young, or by email to badministration@burlingtonwa.gov. Contact information for all the City Departments is available at www.burlingtonwa.gov.

COUNCIL COMMENTS:

Councilor Bill Aslett was proud to share his WWW apparel with Council.

Councilor Joe DeGloria commented about a damaged power pole that may require replacement.

MAYOR'S UPDATE:

No Mayor's Update.

PRESENTATION:

No Presentation.

PROCLAMATION:

No Proclamation.

COMMITTEE & BOARD REPORTS:

Councilor Keith Chaplin shared updates from the Public Works meeting with the Oak Street project coming to a closure and the Library truss project moving forward.

Councilor Bill Aslett observed the road conditions in the George Hopper Rd. areas are starting to show wear. **Councilor Chaplin** requested a map and project outline of the forecasted road improvement projects.

Marv Pulst reported on a tree maintenance project requested by a Burlington resident, wherein the City cannot take action because it is privately owned.

OFFICERS REPORTS:

Public Works Director Marv Pulst updated the Council on the incoming tide of Federal Infrastructure Grants opportunities, requirements include Engineering Analysis. The City of Burlington applied for a grant last year that was not rewarded. Due to issues with the clarity of the phone connection, **Councilor Bill Aslett** requested for **Marv Pulst** to write up a short memo to send to Council for reading.

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UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

No Unfinished Business.

CONSENT AGENDA:

No Consent Agenda.

NEW BUSINESS:

Pin Piling Agreement for Library Truss Repair

Public Works Director Marv Pulst presented to Council the bid collected for the library roof trusses in need of repair. The estimated cost is \$50K which qualifies as a "capital improvement" under fund 301. Burlington Public Library will be closed approximately 2 weeks once the work begins.

Councilors Chaplin/Weiss made a motion to approve the construction agreement with MM Piling and Construction and authorize the Mayor's signature. All in favor; motion carried.

Interlocal Agreement with BE School District

City Administrator Greg Young presented the Interlocal Agreement proposal on behalf of the Parks and Recreation Department. This agreement would create a partnership between the City and School District wherein each party can use the other's facilities without rental charges. **Greg Young** believes the streamlined paperwork will offer easier overlap with the School District ushering in a new period for recreational opportunities and cross-pollination. **Councilor Stavig** was surprised there was not already an Interlocal Agreement with the School District in place and thanked **Christi Kinney** for initiating one.

Councilors Bill Aslett/Rich DeGloria made a motion to approve the Interlocal Agreement between the Burlington Edison School District and the City and authorize the Mayor to sign. All in favor; motion carried.

Letter of Understanding (LOU) with IAFF Local 411 Regarding Paramedic Staffing Levels

City Administrator Greg Young in collaboration with **Fire Chief Rob Toth** shared the proposed split-staffing agreement letter to address the Minimum Staffing requirement needed for the Union Agreement. **Greg Young** noted the 24-48 hour shifts that result in a disruptive amount of overtime if staff are required to remain on duty. The City worked cooperatively with the Union to arrive at the split staff model. This LOU agreement would be short term with an expiration date of December 2022. **Councilor Stavig** asked for clarification; is the short staffing a result of vacations or sick leave or all around shortages. **Greg Young** stated that it is a combination of both with the necessary overtime situation occurring with the staff shortages bottleneck.

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Councilor Green inquired if this could be a Liability issue. **Fire Chief Toth** shared the main liability is the burnout of the workforce if they continue to be forced into working overtime but the split-staff model is not a source of liability. A full staff of Paramedics would be 9, the City currently has 3. **Councilor Weiss** asked if there could be ramifications with the timeline, for example if the Union wanted to continue with the split-staff agreement. **Chief Toth** responded that all parties involved want this situation to be resolved as soon as possible with a return to Emergency Vehicles being operated with 2 Paramedics. **Bill Aslett** thanked the Union for working with the City to find a solution.

Councilors Scott Green/Bill Aslett moved to approve the Letter of Understanding between the City and IAFF Local 4111 and authorize the Mayor to sign. All in favor; motion carried.

Police and Fire New Hire Bonuses

City Administrator Greg Young introduced a proposed new hire program developed in conjunction with the Chiefs of Police and Fire departments. In response to an acute shortage of qualified staff across the nation, the City has struggled to find and hire First Responders - particularly Patrol Officers and Paramedics. The City hopes for this to be a short term solution and are simultaneously working on a retention program negotiating updated Union contracts. **Councilor Green** raised concerns about the type of candidates a signing bonus might attract and that an incentive program is not addressing the root problem of First Responder shortages; **Green** also recalled the initial signing bonus being approximately \$7,500K and was surprised by the leap to \$30K. **Councilor Stavig** had reservations about the added vacation perks and was opposed to the \$30K signing bonus as he felt the figure was too high. **Young** explained that Burlington is trying to find an appropriately attractive draw for candidates to address this emergent problem. **Councilor Bill Aslett** referenced the room full of Citizens that spoke with Council at this very meeting as an example of the issues due to low numbers in Law Enforcement. **Mayor Sexton** emphasized that the bonuses also make business sense, the bonus is less expensive than Law Enforcement academy. **Councilor Chaplin** expressed his support of this Resolution and added that he hoped it would ensure high quality applicants. **Chief Luvera** spoke to Council explaining that in his 5 years in the City's employment only 10 of the starting staff remained out of 27.

Councilors Green/Chaplin moved to approve the Resolution adopting the Police and Paramedic New Hire Bonus Program and authorize the Mayor to sign. Six in favor, Councilor Stavig opposed; motion carried.

New City Procurement Code Chapter 2.84

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City Administrator Greg Young presented a new City Procurement Code guideline to Council. Discussion was had; wherein **Councilor Stavig** would have preferred a workshop with Council input on the new procurement processes and for more Council involvement in expense approvals; **Councilor Green** sees this as an improvement for City staff simplicity and clarity; **Councilor Aslett** believes this could help give Department heads tools with accountability and established trust; **Councilor J. DeGloria** also requested a workshop and disagrees with the Council not approving all sizable expenditures but appreciates the document downsizing from 24 to 3 pages long; **Councilor Chaplin** added that he would like things discussed on the CIP to come back before Council prior to final approval. **Aslett** was pleased with the ease of the new document and noted that it is important for Council to be accurate when outlining budgets and **Chaplin** sees the budget as a guide but that will need revisions. There were conversations about establishing trust between City Councilmembers and City Staff, having more conversations about expenses and the order of approving larger spending, and increasing transparency on plans versus actions. **Mayor Sexton** wanted the Council to know that many City department heads were apprehensive to present projects or expenses to Council. **Streets Department Supervisor Travis Schwetz** emphasized that it seems like there is a lack of trust from the Council for City Staff to do their jobs. Several Councilmembers requested more workshops, possibly with additional City Staff in attendance, to discuss this new Procurement Process Proposal. **Councilor Chaplin** asked for some example projects to demonstrate the procurement process in action. **City Administrator Greg Young** noted that Council could contact him with any workshop topics or requests.

No action was taken by Council. Discussion was tabled for a future workshop.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

No Executive Session.

ADJOURNMENT:

Mayor Sexton adjourned the meeting at 9:25 p.m.

Joseph Stewart
Finance Director

Steve Sexton
Mayor

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