

**MINUTES**  
**CITY OF STEVENSON COUNCIL MEETING**  
**October 17, 2024**  
**6:00 PM, City Hall and Remote**

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**1. CALL TO ORDER/PRESENTATION TO THE FLAG:**

Mayor Anderson called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and led the group in reciting the pledge of allegiance.

**Attending:**

Elected Officials:

Mayor Scott Anderson; Councilmembers Dave Cox, Michael Johnson, Pat Rice, Lucy Lauser, Chuck Oldfield.

**City Staff:**

Community Development Director/ Interim City Administrator Ben Shumaker, Public Works Director Carolyn Sourek, City Clerk/Treasurer Anders Sorestad.

**Guests:**

Mid-Columbia Economic Development District Senior Project/Mobility Manager Kathy Fitzpatrick, Columbia Gorge Tourism Alliance Network Director Emily Reed, and Skamania County Senior Services Program Manager Sophie Miller; Skamania County Undersheriff Tracy Wyckoff.

**Public attendees:**

Mary Repar; Cara Owen, others unidentified

**2. PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

Mary Repar commented on the Skamania County Economic Development Council.

**3. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA:**

**Item 4. d)** from the consent agenda was removed at the request of Councilmember Cox to allow for further discussion.

**4. CONSENT AGENDA:** The following items were presented for Council approval.

- a) **Water Adjustment** - Michael and Tamara Sullivan (meter no. 809150) requested water bill adjustment of \$675.34 for a water leak, which they have since repaired.
- b) **Approve Skamania EDC Contract in the Amount of \$29,125** - The contract with Skamania Economic Development Council for general economic development services in the amount of \$29,125 was presented for council approval.
- c) **\*Approve Wallis Engineering Contract in the Amount of \$265,530.54** - In September, the Council approved this contract subject to WSDOT approval. WSDOT requested changes to some contract language which have been made. The

Scope and Fee remain the same. The signed contract was presented for Council ratification.

- e) **Authorize DNR Contract in the Amount of \$48,600-** The grant contract with the Department of Natural Resources for Utility Conflict Canopy Preservation (Undergrounding) Plan in the amount of \$48,600 was presented for council authorization for the mayor to sign once DNR has approved the scope of work.
- f) **\*Minutes** of the September 19th regular meeting and September 26th special meeting.
- g) **\*Approve appointment of Ray Broughton as Fire Chief**, effective 1/1/2025- The volunteer membership recommended Mr. Broughton's appointment on 10/7/2024. Skamania County Fire District #2 approved the recommendation on 10/14/2024. Before the Mayor can make the appointment, the Council must approve.

**MOTION** to approve Consent Agenda items a-c and e-g was made by **Councilmember Lauser**, seconded by **Councilmember Johnson**.

Voting aye: **Councilmembers Cox, Lauser, Johnson, Rice, Oldfield**

Ray Broughton was congratulated on his appointment as Fire Chief.

- d) **\*Approve SGR Contract in the Amount not to exceed \$28,900** - The contract with Strategic Government Resources for Executive Recruitment Services was authorized in September. The contract language was amended. The scope remains the same. The fee remains NTE \$28,900 plus actual travel costs over and above the contractual allotment. The contract was presented for council ratification.

**Councilmember Cox** questioned some details on the contract pertaining to costs.

**MOTION** to ratify contract with SGR for recruitment services not exceed the total amount of \$28,900 was made by **Councilmember Johnson**, seconded by **Councilmember Lauser**.

Voting aye: **Councilmembers Cox, Lauser, Johnson, Rice, Oldfield**

#### **5. SHERIFF'S OFFICE REPORT:**

- a) **Sheriff's Report** - The Skamania County Sheriff's report for activity within Stevenson city limits for the prior month was presented by Undersheriff Wyckoff for council review. Councilmembers had questions on staffing levels and what the .3% tax measure the Sheriff's Office has on the ballot would fund.

#### **6. PRESENTATIONS FROM OUTSIDE AGENCIES:**

- a) **Regional Transit Presentation** - Mid-Columbia Economic Development District Senior Project/Mobility Manager Kathy Fitzpatrick, MCEDD/Columbia Gorge Tourism Alliance Network Director Emily Reed, Consultant, and Skamania County Senior Services Program Manager Sophie Miller presented on current projects and enhancements to local and regional transit services and networks.

## 7. PUBLIC HEARINGS:

- a) **Proposed 2025 Budget Hearing** - Staff presented the 2025 proposed budget for public comment and council discussion. Public Comments will be addressed in the next budget iteration.

### Public Hearing Opened at 6:55

>Mary Repar commented on the benefits of green scaping and downtown beautification. She also suggested having golf carts be available for passengers from cruise ships to help increase access to local shops and businesses.

### Public Hearing Closed at 7:00

#### Council discussion:

The Council discussed issues regarding possible efficiencies, understanding the various revenue sources that provide staff wages or other discretionary costs, potential changes a new city administrator may identify, and tourism related items.

**Mayor Anderson** advised with the staff stretched thin, the budget was balanced as requested, but there may be amendments in the near future to adjust the budget.

**Anders Sorestad**, Deputy Clerk Treasurer provided information on the authorized use of the tourism (TAC) funds.

**Ben Shumaker**, Interim City Manager noted until a grant is received it is not budgeted as part of revenue. He stated any changes to the budget would be relayed to the Council and reported a budget workshop is scheduled for November 14, 2024.

#### Additional Public Comment Received

>Cara Owen, General Manager at Skamania Lodge commented on tourism funds and events that encourage tourist visits.

>Mary Repar commented about carbon offsets as potential revenue sources.

## 8. COUNCIL BUSINESS

- a) **Transportation Benefit District Establishment-First Reading** - Staff presented and explained resolution 2024-444 regarding the sales tax ballot measure for the Stevenson Transportation Benefit District for council discussion and consideration.

The funds raised through the increase in sales tax will be dedicated to the street fund, allowing current general fund moneys now supplementing the street fund to instead be applied to the sewer fund to reduce the amounts charged to ratepayers. The anticipated amount to be generated was clarified to be \$270,000 per year over a ten-year period.

**MOTION** to adopt resolution 2024-444 providing for a ballot proposition to be submitted to the qualified electors of the city on February 11th, 2025 to authorize a sales and use tax to fund street repairs, pedestrian safety, snow plowing, reduce sewer utility rates and generate revenue by establishing a .3 of 1% sales tax rate within the Stevenson Transportation Benefit District, ending after 10 years, generating approximately \$270,000, per year, pending city attorney's final approval was made by **Councilmember Oldfield**, seconded by **Councilmember Johnson**.

Voting aye: **Councilmembers Lauser, Cox, Johnson, Oldfield**.

Voting nay: **Councilmember Rice**

**Interim City Administrator Shumaker** shared the next steps are to verify the dollar amount to be raised, submit the resolution to the county auditor, and appoint members to serve on committees both for and against the measure.

#### **9. INFORMATION ITEMS:**

- a) **Contracts Awarded Administratively** - The report on contracts, purchases, and change orders over \$10,000 approved administratively over the past month was attached.
- b) **Financial Report** - The Treasurer's Report and year-to-date revenues and expenses through the prior month were presented for council review.
- c) **Planning Commission Minutes** - Minutes were attached from the Stevenson Planning Commission meeting of September 2024.

#### **10. CITY ADMINISTRATOR AND STAFF REPORTS:**

- a) **Ben Shumaker, Community Development Director/ Interim City Administrator provided the following updates:**
  - i. Staffing shortages are affecting City Hall workloads.
  - ii. He is working on grant reporting, and a review of costs associated with current technology subscriptions.
  - iii. The special Council meeting scheduled for October 24th has been cancelled.
  - iv. A new interlocal agreement between the fire department and the city is being developed.
  - v. An amended Critical Areas Ordinance is required by the state DNR, and he is working on that with other localities in Skamania County.
  - vi. Undergrounding of utilities is moving forward. The Scope of Work with Department of Natural Resources is being finalized.
  - vii. Building permit applications are low. The next phase of the Chinedere development is expected to pick up soon.
  - viii. Outreach plan for public comments regarding the sewer ordinance has not been developed yet.
- b) **Carolyn Sourek, Public Works Director provided the following updates**
  - i. EPA is requiring all public water purveyors to survey their supply lines to learn if lead is present in the service lines. Random samplings are continuing to determine what percentage is lead free. A high % found will require additional sampling.

- ii. PFAS (perfluoroalkyl or polyfluoroalkyl substances) testing is also on going for the water system.
- iii. The Waste Water Treatment Plant-electrical work is being done. Two pump stations are operating. Cascade Station is being worked on.
- iv. Re-surfacing of streets is complete, reimbursements now being requested.
- v. First Street Project is well underway. The Overlook is taking shape.
- vi. Street tree replacement will take place beginning in November.
- vii. Sidewalk panels identified as a trip hazard have been replaced.
- viii. Trunk or Treat will be held on Second Street, which will close for the event through an insurance partnership with the Chamber and Stevenson Downtown Association.
- ix. The former City sweep truck sold at auction. A dump truck was recently purchased for \$15,000 from County surplus.
- x. Chinedere Subdivision was sent a letter regarding needed infrastructure timelines.
- xi. A second roofing bid for the public works lower shop came in at \$28,000, less than the original bid.

#### **11. VOUCHER APPROVAL**

- a) **\*September 2024 payroll and October 2024 AP** checks have been audited and were presented for approval. September payroll check 18108 totaled \$155,530.01, which included EFT payments. September 2024 AP checks 18109 thru 18167 totaled \$420,429.59, which included EFT payments. The AP check register with fund transaction summary was attached for review.

**MOTION** to approve the Vouchers as presented was made by **Councilmember Lauser**, seconded by **Councilmember Oldfield**.

Voting aye: **Councilmembers Lauser, Oldfield, Cox, Johnson, Rice**

#### **12. MAYOR AND COUNCIL REPORTS:**

**Ben Shumaker, Community Development Director/ Interim City Administrator** reminded everyone of earthquake preparedness.

**Councilmember Rice** requested an update on several items from previous executive sessions. He was informed there would likely be an executive session in the next month.

**Councilmember Cox** asked for further clarification regarding the .3% ballot measure and what the funds would be used for.

#### **13. ISSUES FOR THE NEXT MEETING:**

- a) Attached is a list of items staff is working on for future meetings.

**Councilmember Oldfield** asked to have a discussion on Russell Street parking and briefly considered placement of deer crossing signs on city streets.

**Councilmember Lauser** asked for a discussion on Senate Bill 6231.

**14. ADDITIONAL PUBLIC COMMENT:**

>Mary Repar commented on carbon credits as possible revenue sources, existing public knowledge of employee salaries, and suggestions regarding temp workers. She thanked Public Works staff for meeting with Melissa Elliot, a landscape architect.

>Cara Owen asked how to reference and locate agenda items. She also suggested the Council consider the effects on businesses needs if City staff numbers are reduced.

**15. ADJOURNMENT - Mayor Anderson** adjourned the meeting at 8:37 p.m.

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Scott Anderson, Mayor

Date