

TUMWATER CITY COUNCIL WORKSESSION
MINUTES OF VIRTUAL MEETING
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CONVENE: 6:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Mayor Debbie Sullivan and Councilmembers Peter Agabi, Michael Althausen, Joan Cathey, Leatta Dahlhoff, Angela Jefferson, Charlie Schneider, and Eileen Swarthout.

Staff: City Administrator John Doan, Communications Manager Ann Cook, and Information Technology Manager Lance Inman.

CHANGES TO AGENDA: The Council Consideration item on 2023 Legislative Session Report was deferred to another meeting.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: **Mayor Sullivan recessed the meeting at 6:02 p.m. for approximately 15 minutes to evaluate the qualifications of an applicant for public employment pursuant to RCW 42.30.110(g). Action will follow the executive session.**

At 6:17 p.m. Mayor Sullivan extended the meeting another five minutes.

RECONVENE: **Mayor Sullivan reconvened the meeting 6:25 p.m.**

CONSENT CALENDAR: a. 2023-2028 Nisqually Jail Service Agreement

MOTION: **Councilmember Althausen moved, seconded by Councilmember Agabi, to approve the consent calendar as published. A voice vote approved the motion unanimously.**

COUNCIL CONSIDERATIONS:

CONFIRMATION OF APPOINTMENT AND APPROVAL OF EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT WITH LISA PARKS AS CITY ADMINISTRATOR: City Administrator Doan reported that with his pending retirement, the City announced the opening of the City Administrator position. The City contracted with a consulting firm to assist the City in the nationwide recruitment process that included a multi-day interview process involving different constituents, workgroups, labor unions, and the community. A public reception was hosted with all candidates with the Council and the public invited to participate. The Mayor proposes the hiring of Lisa Parks to serve as Tumwater's next City Administrator. Ms. Parks currently serves as the Executive Services Director for the Port of Olympia serving since 2021. Prior to her employment with the Port of Olympia, Ms. Parks served as a planner in private practice and served as the Executive Director for the Port of Douglas County in Eastern Washington for eight years and a Community Development Director in the City of Leavenworth and a Planner in Douglas County. Ms. Parks is a graduate of Eastern Washington University and is a member of a number of professional organizations.

City Administrator Doan said he worked with Ms. Parks on issues surrounding

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the pocket gopher as well as meeting with all candidates. He developed the employment contract in conjunction with input from Ms. Parks and recommended the Mayor consider the employment contract.

Ms. Parks said she is honored to be selected as Tumwater's new City Administrator. She thanked everyone involved in the selection process. She is excited to join a fantastic organization and is committed to working collaboratively with the Mayor, the Council, and staff, as well as the larger community as the City works through a myriad of challenges and opportunities. She thanked City Administrator Doan for his service for the last 13 years.

Councilmember Dahlhoff reported she received feedback from eight individuals. The Council also received feedback from the City's three unions with a request. She acknowledged her bias with the community members who contacted her as well as her bias as a current union member and her family's involvement and engagement with union employment for generations. With respect to the community, City staff, union members, and to the Council, she will vote against the motion.

Councilmember Althaus acknowledged the strong feelings about the proposed action, which likely is beneficial as it speaks to the future of the community. Those likely are the same goals shared by the candidate. Everyone has a vested and deep interest to ensure the community is thriving, supportive, and inclusive. He spent time on his decision and his vote, as well as considering the role of the Council in the process. The decision is not to be considered lightly. When the voters elected Mayor Sullivan, they elected an executive officer with the power to fill the vacancy when it became open at any point in time. This is likely a watershed moment for the Mayor and for the City moving forward. The process was constructed to provide input to the Mayor with the Council also providing input. The question before the Council is somewhat limited because the Council is not considering another candidate. His method of evaluation of the candidate included authorization of the contract and the salary and whether they are commensurate with the experience of the candidate. He believes that the package is fair and the compensation of \$169,000 per year is appropriate. Another issue is whether the contract provides adequate protections for the City in the event something unforeseeable happens and whether the Mayor's power of retention and dismissal is retained in the contract. He believes it is retained because the position is an at-will position. The contract provides for six months of severance pay should there be an unforeseeable separation. He reviewed the contract to determine whether terms were missing in the contract that should be included. He did not note any glaring omissions, errors, or provisions that he believes should have been corrected. The last evaluation is whether the candidate is qualified. It is not a question of whether he preferred another candidate, it is a question of whether the candidate meets the qualifications that were in the job description. Although the Council was not directly involved in the interviews of the candidates, the Council received all resumes

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and other materials and answers to questions. Based on those materials, he believes Ms. Parks is qualified based on her employment history. He used the four metrics to determine a decision and based on the answers, he believes the appointment is appropriate.

MOTION:

Councilmember Althaus moved, seconded Councilmember Jefferson, to confirm the Mayor's appointment of Lisa Parks as the City's next City Administrator and authorize the Mayor to sign the proposed Employment Agreement. A voice vote approved the motion. Councilmember Dahlhoff voted against.

Mayor Sullivan welcomed Ms. Parks and said she is looking forward to working with her.

Councilmember Agabi remarked that during the reception with the candidates, he asked each candidate why they applied for the position. He recalled his discussion with Ms. Parks about the changes occurring in Tumwater and how he was pleased with the prospect of a woman City Administrator. He welcomed Ms. Parks to the City while acknowledging that changes can often be difficult.

Ms. Parks conveyed appreciation for the conversation because she understands the gravity and seriousness of the decision and the responsibility of the position. She supports an open door policy and is appreciative of direct and transparent conversations about concerns, ideas, and successes.

Councilmember Cathey welcomed Ms. Parks and is glad to learn that she supports an open door policy. She appreciated City Administrator Doan's open door policy. Although she is sad City Administrator Doan is leaving, he was the right person to lead Tumwater for the last 13 years. She thanked him for his support to the Council and for his service in support of the City.

**COUNCIL TABLET
COUNCIL DEVICE
REPLACEMENT
DISCUSSION:**

Manager Inman briefed the Council on the proposal to consider replacement of the Council's iPads, which are four years old and were not conducive to hybrid meetings requiring the addition of another iPad for each Councilmember to view documents. Staff explored and is presenting two options of retaining two iPads with the addition of either an iPhone or Google phone or considering replacement with a single Windows laptop. The windows option enables the Council to view documents when participating in meetings virtually. The screen size is also larger. The City is moving to Microsoft hosted services for email and storage in the future. Another advantage of the laptop is remote access to assist the Council. Smart phones were also approved in the budget and can be ordered dependent on each Councilmember's selection.

The cost of each option is similar because of the need to use two iPads. It is likely the larger iPad will be retained to view documents with a new iPad for zoom. iPads have a longer battery life and hardware and software are more predictable.

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Manager Inman explained that for Councilmembers wishing to retain the iPad option, staff would replace the mini iPad with an iPad Pro.

Several Councilmembers shared that they prefer the mini iPad because they are more convenient when traveling.

The Council was advised to notify staff within the next week about their preference. Manager Inman added that if the preference is for an iPad option, an iPhone should also be ordered.

**MAYOR/CITY
ADMINISTRATOR'S
REPORT:**

**FUTURE OF HYBRID
AND VIRTUAL
MEETINGS:**

City Administrator Doan said the topic is a continuation of a previous discussion on hybrid, virtual, and in-person meetings. With the exception of Council worksessions and Council committee meetings that are held virtually, other meetings are hybrid meetings with both in-person and virtual options. He invited feedback on whether to continue the current practice or consider any changes.

Councilmembers shared their respective preferences and discussed the pros and cons of both virtual and in-person meetings. Discussion ensued on conducting worksessions via hybrid rather than virtually. Staff advised that the training room at the Fire Station would likely require some upgrades to support a hybrid meeting option. Staff confirmed they would develop a proposal for review by the Council at a future worksession.

**EXECUTIVE
SESSION:**

Mayor Sullivan recessed the meeting at 7:16 p.m. to discuss Real Estate Acquisition pursuant to RCW 42.30.110(1)(b) for approximately 15 minutes. No action will follow the executive session.

**RECONVENE &
ADJOURNMENT:**

Mayor Sullivan reconvened and adjourned the meeting at 7:38 p.m.

Prepared by Valerie L. Gow, Recording Secretary/President
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