

November 25, 2008

CALL TO ORDER:

Mayor Brunz called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., with the Pledge of Allegiance. Council members present: Aslett, Bensen, Doyle, Loving, Montgomery and Valentine. Staff present: Aarstad, M. Anderson, Martin, Sheahan, Stafford, Thrumer and VanWieringen.

Attending the meeting in place of **City Attorney Thomas** was Attorney Craig Cammock.

A motion was made by **Councilors Doyle/Aslett** to excuse **Councilor Edmundson** from tonight's meeting. All agreed. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Councilor Doyle noted a correction to the minutes on page 5; one ordinance number was omitted and another ordinance number was incorrect. **Councilor Aslett** noted a correction to the minutes on page 5 regarding the original allocation of taxes to be used for the street fund was 75% and the current expense fund was 25%. A motion was made by **Councilors Aslett/Bensen** to approve the corrected minutes of the November 13, 2008 Council meeting. All agreed. Motion carried.

AUDIT OF BILLS:

Councilor Montgomery presented the bills. A motion was made by **Councilors Montgomery/Aslett** to approve vouchers 54062 – 54149 in the amount of \$129,064.14. All were in favor. Motion carried.

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|------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Current Expense | \$ 70,805.40 |
| Current Expense Cumulative Reserve | 3,711.63 |
| City Street | 23,479.79 |
| Parks & Recreation | 6,550.28 |
| Cemetery Fund | 165.06 |
| Local Capital Improvement Fund | 354.76 |
| Sewer Fund | 23,997.22 |
| Total | \$ 129,064.14 |

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

There were no public comments.

OFFICER REPORTS:

REQUEST TO TRANSFER FUNDS TO CURRENT EXPENSE FUND FOR TWO PREVIOUSLY AUTHORIZED POLICE OFFICER POSITIONS.

Police Chief VanWieringen noted that the most recent candidate for Police Officer has been accepted for the January 2009 academy. He noted there are two other viable candidates that may be accepted to the academy in early 2009. He requested that funds be moved to the Police Department for the two additional positions. **Finance Director Thrumer** stated that the funds for the two additional positions (\$175,000) are in the Ending Net Cash fund and need council approval to be moved to the Current Expense Fund. **Councilor Aslett** stated that Burlington may now see the shift from losing staff to other law enforcement agencies to having no trouble filling positions as other agencies are having to down-size due to budget constraints. **Councilor Loving** stated he was in favor of moving forward with filling these positions and getting them enrolled at the academy. **Councilor Aslett** asked **Finance Director Thrumer** about sales tax revenue in September 2008. **Finance Director Thrumer**

November 25, 2008

stated that we are \$75,000 behind the same month in 2007. **Councilor Aslett** asked council to really take a hard look at revenue and spending; difficult times are ahead in the next few years. **Councilor Bensen** asked about revenue since the implementation of the Streamlined Sales Tax. **Finance Director Thramer** stated that we should know the affects by December 31, 2008. A motion was made by **Councilors Loving/Bensen** to approve transfer of funds from ending net cash to the current expense fund for two additional police officer positions. Voting in favor were **Councilors Bensen, Loving, Valentine, Doyle and Montgomery**. Voting against was **Councilor Aslett**. Motion carried.

Fire Chief Anderson reported the department statistics for October 2008 as well as year to date through October. He stated that preliminary approval has been given for the grant to purchase breathing apparatus. The grant would fund \$132,000 (less \$4,500.00 that will be paid by Burlington). He also noted the Pierce Apparatus has a break problem that has been repaired although the truck won't be back in service until his department staff does some serious road testing. Other fire departments have had similar problems with similar trucks.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Martin stated that Washington State Department of Transportation is planning to repair the State Route 11 (Chuckanut Drive) overpass in February and March 2009. Bids for the project will be opened December 17, 2008. He noted that during this construction there will be additional traffic on Burlington Boulevard and other City side streets and roads in the area. WSDOT plans to attend a Burlington city council meeting in January to present details of the construction.

Finance Director Thramer announced that State Legislator Norma Smith will be here for a visit and encouraged council members to attend (please let him know if planning to attend). He noted that Senator Mary Margaret Haugen will visit Burlington on December 8, 2008; he invited council members to attend this meeting as well. He noted that these will be important meetings and an opportunity to make our pitch for State funding in 2009.

Finance Director Thramer stated that a two tenths of one percent sales tax will go into effect April 1, 2009. The sales tax amount will then be at 8.2%.

Finance Director Thramer stated that October sales tax numbers have continued to drop. To date, sales tax revenue is down about \$95,000, which is about 8.8% less that the same period of 2007.

Finance Director Thramer distributed information regarding the possibility of setting a policy regarding disputed claims. This policy would give authority to the Finance Director to adjust any claims up to \$100 and up to \$500 with the approval of the Mayor. Any amount above \$500 would be brought to council for approval. He asked council to review the information and offer any suggestions. He will bring a resolution setting a policy to a future council meeting for approval.

City Administrator Aarstad asked for council members to return their committee requests to him by tomorrow.

City Administrator Aarstad requested an additional item be placed on the agenda under New Business. (Amendment to agreement with Skagit EMS for use of Burlington Fire Station for EMT's.)

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

2009 BUDGET AND SALARY ORDINANCE.

Finance Director Thramer stated that a public hearing regarding the 2009 proposed budget was held at the November 13, 2008 City Council meeting. He noted the only change to the ordinance since the public hearing was the addition of a new position title (Assistant City Engineer). **Councilor Loving** stated that he is not in favor of the proposed 2009 budget if it includes changing the work schedule of the full-time firefighters to allow 24-hour shifts. He noted that a proposal was brought to the budget committee to introduce 24-hour shifts incorporating full-time firefighters along side volunteers. The proposal would have added

November 25, 2008

\$84,000 to the budget. This idea was rejected by the committee as too expensive. He understands that the Mayor has now come up with an alternative 24-hour shift schedule that he claims will incur no additional costs to the budget. He stated that this schedule is not reflective of what was discussed in the budget committee meeting. **Mayor Brunz** noted that this proposal is within the proposed budget and would be implemented on a three-month trial basis. He stated the proposed schedule should not incur additional costs and may actually save money. If during or after the trial period staff determines there are in fact additional costs and no savings, then the fire department will resume the current schedule. He noted that if the budget is approved tonight, it could be amended at a later date (following a public hearing). **Councilor Montgomery** asked for additional clarification of this issue. **Councilor Loving** stated his concern is to allow the full-time firefighters to begin 24-hour shifts. This is not part of their current bargaining agreement. The suggestion was brought up during the 2009 budget meetings, but not met with approval by the budget committee. He does not believe that the number of calls attributed to fires justify having 24-hour on site coverage at the fire station by paid personnel. **Mayor Brunz** noted that no funds have been added to the budget for this proposed plan. He re-stated that the 24-hour shift schedule would be tried for 3 months and if it didn't work they would go back to the current schedule. **Councilor Loving** stated he didn't think it is fair that a volunteer would be paid \$2.50/hour to be on duty side by side with a full-time firefighter who is getting paid \$33+ per hour. **Mayor Brunz** noted that at a recent meeting, the volunteer officers were in favor of this plan. He believes that if this plan works, the City may not need Fire District #6 to respond from the Bay Hill station to calls within the City limits and thus save money. **Councilor Aslett** noted that this seems to be something that has come up at the last minute. **Mayor Brunz** restated that this will be a trial for up to 90 days. If it doesn't work, the fire department would go back to the current schedule. He noted that the overnight volunteer firefighter will be paid \$2.50 per hour for being on standby at the station. If called out, the volunteer would be paid \$11.00 per hour during the call-out period. **City Administrator Aarstad** discussed the cost per call and negotiations with Fire District #6. He noted that the fire district charges the City \$175.00 each time their truck responds to calls within the City limits. **Mayor Brunz** clarified that he has presented a budget for council approval; it is up to the Mayor to run the city within the approved budget. **Fire Chief Anderson** clarified the initial proposal to the budget committee versus the current proposal to cover the department 24 hours a day, seven days per week using volunteers and full-time paid firefighters working together. **Mayor Brunz** asked Mr. Eddie Tjeerdsma if he had any comments to add regarding the meeting with the Volunteer Firefighter Officers regarding the proposal for 24-hour coverage. Mr. Eddie Tjeerdsma stated that the meeting went well and whatever the City Mayor would like, the volunteers would comply. He noted that this proposal still has to be finalized and approval by the entire volunteer association. **Mayor Brunz** noted that the additional \$87,000 originally proposed for this plan has been removed. An alternative schedule was created to provide 24-hour coverage with no additional costs. A motion was made by **Councilors Valentine/Aslett** to adopt the proposed 2009 Budget and Salary Ordinance. Voting in favor were **Councilors Valentine, Aslett and Montgomery**. Voting against were **Councilors Bensen, Loving and Doyle**. The motion failed. The budget will be considered again at the next Council meeting on December 11, 2008.

SENIOR SERVICES CONTRACT FOR 2009.

City Administrator Aarstad stated that at the November 13, 2008 council meeting, council recommended keeping the Senior Services contract to a 3% increase for 2009 rather than the 5% requested. This agreement from Skagit County Senior Services reflects a 3% increase for 2009. A motion was made by **Councilors Aslett/Montgomery** to approve the 2009 agreement with Skagit County Senior Services. All were in favor. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS:**LEVEE CERTIFICATION PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AGREEMENT WITH PACIFIC INTERNATIONAL ENGINEERING, PLLC.**

Public Works Director/City Engineer Martin stated that this professional services contract with PIE for \$621,320 will provide the initial technical evaluation, and the foundational geotechnical and topographic information necessary to determine how best

November 25, 2008

to proceed with the levee certification project. This initial work will proceed sequentially, with decision points based on previous work so that no work is repeated. It includes a large up-front investment in geotechnical investigations and precise topographic mapping data, which we believe will save money later. He noted that the contract period is two years. Funding for 2009 is budgeted at \$500,000 and will come from the Drainage Utility fund. A motion was made by **Councilors Bensen/Doyle** to approve the professional services agreement with Pacific International Engineering, PLLC, in the amount of \$621,320. All approved. Motion carried.

AMENDMENT TO 2008 BUDGET & SALARY ORDINANCE #1648 SECTION IV: SALARY SCHEDULE.

Finance Director Thrasher stated that due to the departure of **Assistant Public Works Director/City Engineer Harmon**, the decision has been made to not fill his position and to reclassify **Engineer I Dempsey** to the position of Assistant City Engineer. Mr. Harmon's last day with the City will be December 2, 2008. Mr. Dempsey will be reclassified effective December 1, 2008. A motion was made by **Councilors Aslett/Valentine** to amend the 2008 Budget and Salary Ordinance #1648 to include the new position of Assistant City Engineer. All agreed. Motion carried.
(Ordinance #1664)

LODGING TAX REQUEST "VISIT SKAGIT VALLEY" CAMPAIGN.

City Administrator Aarstad stated that the Chamber of Commerce along with hotels, retailers, and restaurants and other Chambers from throughout Skagit County will work in conjunction with county events to encourage visitors from Vancouver B.C. to the Seattle area to increase tourism during the months of February, March, April, May, September, October, November and December. The request is for \$10,000 in support of this campaign. He noted that all Lodging Tax Committee members have reviewed the proposal and the majority is in favor of this request. A motion was made by **Councilors Aslett/Doyle** to approve the request for \$10,000 of 2009 Lodging Tax Funds for this campaign project. All agreed. Motion carried.

CANCELLATION OF THE DECEMBER 25TH CITY COUNCIL MEETING.

City Administrator Aarstad stated that the second regular council meeting of December is scheduled for December 25, 2008 which is a City holiday. He asked if council would be in favor of cancelling this meeting. A motion was made by **Councilors Aslett/Montgomery** to cancel the December 25, 2008 City Council meeting. All agreed. Motion carried.

ADDENDUM TO AGREEMENT WITH SKAGIT EMERGENCY MEDICAL COMMISSION FOR USE OF BURLINGTON FIRE STATION FOR EMERGENCY MEDICAL TECHNICIANS.

City Administrator Aarstad stated that this addendum is to adjust the fees for utility costs for 2009. This is done annually so that the fee charged to EMS is based on actual costs of utilities. The effective date of the addendum is November 1, 2008 – October 31, 2009. A motion was made by **Councilors Bensen/Valentine** to approve the addendum to the agreement with Skagit EMS. All agreed. Motion carried.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

The Mayor and Council Members adjourned to Executive Session at 8:08 p.m. for the purpose of discussing land acquisition. The Mayor and Council Members returned from Executive Session at 8:31 p.m.

A motion was made by **Councilors Aslett/Montgomery** to not go forward with purchase of two parcels of property from Burlington Northern Rail Road for use as a park in downtown Burlington. Voting in favor were **Councilors Aslett** and **Montgomery**. Voting against were **Councilors Bensen, Loving, Valentine** and **Doyle**. Motion failed. Negotiations for purchase of these parcels will continue with Burlington Northern Rail Road.

COUNCIL CHAMBERS

CITY HALL

BURLINGTON, WA

November 25, 2008

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 8:34 p.m. by **Mayor Brunz**

Greg Thrumer
Finance Director / City Clerk

Ted Montgomery
Mayor Pro Tem