

February 26, 2009

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, Edmundson, Loving, Montgomery and Valentine. Staff present: Aarstad, Buckholz, Martin, Sheahan, Thomas, Thramer, VanWieringen and Windsor.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A motion was made by **Councilors Doyle/Loving** to approve the minutes of the February 10, 2009 Council meeting. All agreed. Motion carried.

AUDIT OF BILLS:

Councilor Aslett presented the bills. A motion was made by **Councilors Aslett/Edmundson** to approve vouchers 54740 – 54877 (with the exception of #54845) for a total of \$270,333.13. All were in favor. Motion carried.

Current Expense	\$ 98,495.54
Current Expense Cumulative Reserve	21,296.22
City Street	64,951.99
Hopper Construction Fund	42.50
Parks & Recreation	4,378.34
Cemetery Fund	194.22
Parks & Recreation Reserve	15,959.80
Sewer Fund	35,928.61
Sewer Cumulative Reserve	8,236.84
Storm Drainage Utility	20,849.07
Total	\$ 270,333.13

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Ms. Tasia Oliva, Fidalgo Street, Anacortes, spoke regarding the Christ the King Church parking issue in Burlington. She believes that the churches location in Burlington takes up a lot of parking during their activities. These situations impact surrounding businesses. She would like the church to find a different location where they could provide adequate parking for the attendees. She noted the church provides small group activities throughout the week, not just on Sunday's. **Mayor Brunz** stated that the Christ the King parking issue will come before City Council at the March 12, 2009 meeting.

Dr. Paul Creelman, 702 S. Burlington Boulevard, stated that having Christ the King Church located in downtown Burlington is a great asset to the City; it brings people into downtown. He noted that efforts are being made to accommodate the church's need for parking. He stated that the parking spaces in Burlington aren't owned by the business owners, but rather the community. He would not be in favor of the church moving to a different location outside the City; we want to draw people to downtown, not drive them away.

Mr. Steve Sexton, Planning Commission member, noted that the Planning Commission recommendation for parking for Christ the King Church will come before City Council in March.

OFFICER REPORTS:

Public Works Director/City Engineer Martin reported on the recent trip to Olympia to meet with state legislators. He stated that the group had some very good meetings that included discussions regarding a proposal to partner with others to replace the Burlington

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Northern Rail Road Bridge (over the Skagit River). He discussed the efforts to obtain federal funding and approvals. He has invited a County representative to accompany the Mayor and him to Washington D.C. next month to participate in the discussions regarding flooding issues and federally funded stimulus projects. **Mayor Brunz** noted that Skagit County Commissioner Dahlstedt may be available to attend the meetings in Washington, D.C.

Finance Director Thramer reported on the City financial condition as of February 25, 2009. He noted that December 2008 sales activities resulted in a very poor month. This was due in part to the long winter snow storm just prior to the holidays and the recent downturn in the economy. He is anticipating sales tax revenues for all of 2009 will be \$6,200,000, which would be down about one million dollars from 2008 sales tax revenue.

City Administrator Aarstad stated that this information will be presented to department heads at their next meeting. He noted that council and staff discussed these issues at the council/staff retreat last fall. He suggested a meeting in March (perhaps first thing in the morning) of council members and department heads. The purpose would be to discuss goals and projects prioritization for 2009 in light of the economic downturn.

City Administrator Aarstad stated the City staff met with Ric Boge, the Skagit Council of Governments Resource Conservation Advisor. He's hopeful we will find ways to reduce energy consumption in the City, thus saving money.

City Administrator Aarstad distributed a copy of a letter that has been sent to Skagit County Fire District #6 noting that the City's most recent offer was the last offer. He stated that **Councilor Loving** has been working with Fire District #6 to get equipment returned to the Burlington station. **Mayor Brunz** noted that **Interim Fire Chief Staheli** has put together a list of fire equipment housed at the Burlington station that belongs to Fire District #6. Should the contract between the City and the Fire District not continue beyond March 31, 2009, this list will become important.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION:

Ms. Consuelo Guandique, Skagit County Farm Workers Solidarity Committee of Skagit County, made a presentation regarding their planned parade from Burlington to Mount Vernon on Sunday May 3, 2009. She noted that the farm workers march was started twenty-one years ago by a local farm worker who had been involved with the struggle by Caesar Chavez in California. The first march involved 50 persons; it has grown to more than 1,500 participants. She noted that they coordinate the event with the Burlington Police Department and Mount Vernon Police Department. She stated all who work on this project is done by volunteers. The march is always the first Sunday in May. She noted that the reason for the march is to advocate for farm worker health and safety. The issues 21 years ago were to ask for hand washing facilities, portable toilets within walking distance (in the fields), timely breaks from work, and safe times to return to fields following spray of insecticides and pesticides. This year's parade will be May 3, 2009.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE COUNCIL ACTION: PURCHASE OF ADDITIONAL SNOW/ICE EQUIPMENT.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Martin noted that during his discussion with City Council in February, he was requested to provide an accounting of the amount spent hiring outside help to assist with snow removal during the December 2008 storm. He stated that the contracted snow removal expenses totaled \$18,728.65. He presented a list of proposed new equipment and vehicles with the focus on additional snow/ice removal, although the vehicles would be useful for other types of City emergency. He noted that the Street Fund has adequate money budgeted to purchase these vehicles and equipment. Total cost for the Street Fund to purchase recommended vehicles/equipment is \$42,850.

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Councilor Aslett suggested we hold off purchase any of this equipment until later in the year, perhaps after we have a better picture of the revenue trend. **Councilor Loving** suggested we should be prepared for the next storm event and purchase of the equipment would be wise to do at this time. This equipment would allow the City to be prepared for the next event and the equipment could be used along with other equipment the City has on hand. **Street Supervisor Windsor** noted funds over the last 20 years have not been spent and have been building up in the equipment reserve fund. If the City is looking at other ways to save money, he suggested that snow be removed from only the arterials and not any of the side streets or driveways. Citizens would be responsible for snow removal in their driveways and sidewalks. **Councilor Aslett** suggested there probably won't be a snow storm until late next fall or early winter, thus there is not a reason to purchase equipment right now. **Councilor Bensen** stated his opinion that the City should purchase the equipment as an insurance policy for future storms. The cost of the equipment will only go up if we wait. A motion was made by **Councilors Doyle/Valentine** to approve the list of snow/ice removal equipment in the amount of \$42,850. **Councilor Edmundson** asked when the equipment would be purchased. **Public Works Director/City Engineer Martin** stated the purchases won't take place until probably July. Voting in favor were **Councilors Bensen, Loving, Valentine, Doyle, Edmundson,** and **Montgomery**. Voting against was **Councilor Aslett**. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS:

INTERLOCAL SERVICES AGREEMENT WITH CITY OF MOUNT VERNON FOR RECIPROCAL LIBRARY BORROWING.

Library Director Buckholz stated that since January 2008, the City has been involved in a one-year pilot project which allows Burlington residents to apply for a library card at the Mount Vernon City Library (and vice versa). The focus of this project has been to offer our resident library cardholders access to a wider variety of library materials, including nearly triple the number of library items available to Burlington residents. In return Mount Vernon residents receive access to our strong collection of newer materials, and the benefits of using our beautiful new facility. This agreement recognizes that many people live in one City but work and/or shop in another and this gives them increased options for library service. She noted that data from the pilot project shows that Burlington residents checked out more than 6,500 items from the Mount Vernon City Library in 2008. Mount Vernon residents checked out more than 15,000 items from the Burlington Public Library (which is approximately 7% of our total circulation). The few minor issues with this project have been easily resolved, there is little impact on our staff workload, and the agreement has provided added value to our tax payers. She stated that this agreement provides for a three-year review. A motion was made by **Councilors Montgomery/Aslett** to approve the permanent Interlocal Services Agreement with the City of Mount Vernon for Reciprocal Library Borrowing. All agreed. Motion carried.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

There was not an Executive Session.

ADJOURNMENT:

A motion was made by **Councilors Valentine/Doyle** to adjourn the meeting at 8:05 p.m. All agreed. Motion carried.

Greg Thramer
Finance Director / City Clerk

Edward J. Brunz
Mayor