



# McCleary Regular City Council Meeting

Wednesday, November 8, 2023 – 6:30 PM

Zoom Virtual Meeting & City Hall Council Chambers

## Minutes

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### Call to Order/Flag Salute/Roll Call

Meeting called to order at 6:30 pm by Mayor Miller

### PRESENT

Councilmember Jacob Simmons

Councilmember Brycen Huff

Councilmember Max Ross

Councilmember Andrea Dahl

### Agenda Modifications/Acceptance

A motion was made by Councilmember Simmons and seconded by Councilmember Dahl to approve the agenda as modified, adding salary commission discussion to new business and moving item #5 after Item #6 so that if a new member is appointed, they can vote.

Voting Yea: Councilmember Huff, Councilmember Ross, Councilmember Dahl, Councilmember Simmons.

### Public Hearing:

#### 1. 2024 Preliminary Budget:

Mayor Miller opened the hearing at 6:32 p.m.

Councilmember Huff stated he spoke to Sergeant Bunch regarding the police vehicle purchase and the ability to use ARPA funds to purchase a replacement for the explorer. He noted that there may be a need to do a reduction in force and would like to see the number of employees from 2021 put back in place.

Public Comment on the hearing was provided as follows:

Monica Reeves stated she noticed there were increases to the mayor and councilmember salaries. She challenges the validity of the salary commission decision. She reviewed neighboring council and mayor salaries and the increases do not make sense. She asked council to decline the increases, noting that due to the actions of the mayor he should not be getting an increase.

Carri Comer echoed the request to not increase council or mayor salaries. She also asked the council to deny the program manager position as there needs to be a demonstrated need for the position.

The hearing was closed at 6:42pm.

### Public Comment – Agenda items:

Carri Comer stated she appreciates when the public can hear the council discussion on items and then ask questions or make comments throughout the meeting. Councilmember Huff states he likes feedback after discussion as well. Councilmember Ross stated he can agree to that for public hearings, but not every agenda item. Carri added that there could be a better balance, because once a decision is made comments are too late.

Jeff Geer got hit with a curveball when I saw an email from Jenna saying someone cannot be a volunteer firefighter and a council member. There has always been volunteer firefighters as council members and even a mayor. The City needs to figure this out. He asked why Joy Iversen resigned, he is pretty sure he knows.

### **Consent Agenda**

2. Accounts Payable October 16-31, 2023 Ck Numbers 52601-52657 totaling \$143,070.55

A motion was made by Councilmember Ross, seconded by Councilmember Huff and passed to approve the consent agenda as written.

Voting Yea: Councilmember Huff, Councilmember Ross, Councilmember Dahl, Councilmember Simmons.

### **Updates**

3. Staff Reports – Wastewater/Water, Police, Finance, Public Works, Light & Power and Fire

Andrew Pittman stated the Mayor and Clerk-Treasurer met with senior leadership from the Fire Department regarding budget items requested for 2024. He stated some of those items have been removed. He would have liked to have had a councilmember there so there was a better understanding of their requests. Mayor Miller stated the areas that were reduced are being requested through a grant process, so they are not completely removed, the City is looking into other funding sources.

### **New Business:**

Added item: Salary Commission Discussion:

Councilmember Dahl asked to repeal the commission. Councilmember Huff agreed. He stated while it is uncomfortable to discuss your own salary there needs to be a process in place. In a year where others are having to make budget cuts, it is not right to take an increase. There was no public notice of the meeting. Councilmember Ross stated the council discussed gifting the raise back to the city and not taking it at the budget workshop. Councilmember Dahl stated there should be other priorities for committees like the planning committee and civil service. Councilmember Simmons asked what staff member oversees the Committees. It was noted there was not a Clerk-Treasurer during the time of the meeting.

### **Old Business**

4. Interview of Councilmember Position No. 5 Candidates

The two candidates that supplied letters of interest for the vacant position were Keith Klimek and Odd Debakker. They each took turns providing information about themselves and answering council questions as follows:

Keith Klimek stated he has lived in McCleary going on five years. He stated he cares about the city and enjoys walking down the street saying hi to other members of the community. He volunteers for the food bank and is currently on the planning commission. He stated he regularly attends city council meetings and would be someone that anyone could feel comfortable talking to. He wants to see the city prosper.

Odd Debakker stated he has been in the community since 2008 and serving as a volunteer firefighter since 2010. He works as a Firefighter for the City of Seattle and wants the city to be prosperous. He wants to be more involved in public service from the decision making role. He has experience with budgeting and he has gotten his hands dirty and has a very good understanding of the constituency.

Councilmember Ross asked both candidates what priorities they would advocate for if they were selected.

Mr. Debakker stated he believes the city needs more affordable housing and more families to move into town. We need to have more people for a bigger tax base and can spread the expense across a larger base.

Mr. Klimek explained he learned from the recent meetings regarding the utility rates and the need to spread out the expense over more people, so growth of the city is important. He discussed the current budget issues and meetings he has attended to learn about the current shortfall in revenue. He believes the budget this year is important moving forward.

Councilmember Huff asked about the email regarding the firefighter serving on council and rules. Chris Coker, City Attorney, stated the City does not have a Resolution in place that allows a volunteer firefighter to serve on council. It is legal, the Council just needs to address it through Resolution. When asked to draft one he stated he would.

Councilmember Simmons asked if either member had time constraints for serving. Mr. Klimek stated he is visually impaired and does not work, so his calendar is open. Mr. Debakker stated he only works nine days a month for 24-hour shifts, so he is available as well.

### **Public Comment – City Business:**

Carri Comer stated she appreciates the cuts but is confused on how the city got here when just months ago the Mayor stated only 37% of the City funds had been spent. She stated the rate study did not look good for ratepayers. She made comments on the salary commission, IT position and website. She stated seven positions were added last year.

Jeff Geer discussed the staff reports and stated there was a major fail on 2<sup>nd</sup> Street from manhole flooding there was no direction. He made comments on the salary commission and their addresses. He stated they need to do what's best for McCleary.

Missi Olsen asked where the council was at with setting up a town hall. Voices need to be heard. She discussed the town hall held two months prior and noted there was good energy and interaction. She stated she would like to see McCleary grow and have more business.

### **Executive Session**

6. Executive Session – RCW 42.30.110 (1) (h) – Evaluate candidates for appointment to elective office. At 7:42 pm Mayor Miller moved out of regular session and into an executive session for 10 minutes under RCW 42.30.110 (1)(h). At 7:54 pm the Mayor moved back into regular session and announced no decisions were made.

Councilmember Ross stated there are two qualified individuals for the position. He asked to have the decision postponed to the next meeting in order to have more in depth discussions with each candidate. Council members agreed.

**Appointment of Councilmember Position No. 5** – no action taken, moved to the next meeting.

### **Ordinances and Resolutions**

## 5. Property Tax Ordinance (Ad Valorem)

Council asked to move this to the November 29, 2024 meeting in order to further review the material. The Clerk-Treasurer stated they must adopt an ordinance before the end of November.

### **Council Updates**

Councilmember Huff stated thanked to the community for the donations during the annual downtown trick-or-treat event for fill the cruiser. He stated there will be an event for veterans over the weekend.

Councilmemembr Simmons asked about the utility tax budget line item. Jenna Amsbury will look into the trends and what is in the budget for 2024. He asked about capital outlay in Light and Power, Chad Bedlington noted this is for the transformers. He noted the forklift was removed. There was discussion on the chiller for the sewer plant and why the item was not in the CIP.

Councilmemembr Dahl discussed internal employees versus contracted. She asked about a recent overpayment she was made aware of. Jenna stated she can discuss the issue after the meeting as it is a personnel/collective bargaining issue.

### **Adjourn**

Meeting adjourned at 8:09pm

Motion made by Councilmember Ross, Seconded by Councilmember Dahl.

Voting Yea: Councilmember Huff, Councilmember Ross, Councilmember Dahl, Councilmember Simmons.