

**TUMWATER CITY COUNCIL MEETING
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CONVENE: 7:00 p.m.

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

Staff: City Administrator John Doan, City Attorney Karen Kirkpatrick, and City Clerk Melody Valiant.

SPECIAL ITEMS:

**SMALL TOWN
AMERICA CIVIC
VOLUNTEER
AWARD -
COUNCILMEMBER
SCHNEIDER:**

Councilmember Jefferson reported she submitted Councilmember Schneider's name for the award because of an article in the newspaper about Councilmember Schneider's volunteer efforts in the City of Tumwater. Councilmember Schneider volunteers to support both youth and seniors, as well as for the environment through various restoration and planting activities throughout the City.

Councilmember Jefferson cited some information in the award letter selecting Councilmember Schneider as a top 100 national winner of the *2021 Small Town America Civic Volunteer Award*. He was selected from nearly 700 nominees from 49 states. His service to the community is an inspiration to all and exactly what the organization promotes. The selection of Councilmember Schneider affords the community with an opportunity to receive a volunteer service software module to help organize and inspire others to be of service.

Councilmember Schneider said he was grateful and honored to receive the award. He acknowledged others who volunteer their time freely to making communities, the country, and the world a better place to live. He encouraged everyone to volunteer in the community. He thanked Councilmember Jefferson for her thoughtfulness for submitting his name for the award.

**PUBLIC
COMMENT:**

Mat Jackmond questioned the discrepancy involving the time limit for public comment. Mayor Sullivan explained that she set a time limit of 3 minutes for public comment. Mr. Jackmond advised that he submitted written comments and does not want his comments perceived as adversarial. The Ditch District has an obligation to its citizens and its constituents to do what is necessary. If the City is not willing to negotiate with the District he would like the Council and the City Attorney to review RCW 85.32, as the District has the right to make its citizens whole, which is what the District plans to pursue. As he emphasized earlier, he does not want the issue to be adversarial and wants to work with the City to resolve the problem. Councilmember Schneider lives in the area of the Pines neighborhood and understands the problem that occurred in January. He has 40 years of experience and USGS records. Together, the District and the City need to pursue

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resolving the issues. The City created the problem and water on City property directed to the drainage ditch needs to be addressed and paid for by the City because the City is responsible for City stormwater flows from subdivisions. Stormwater percolates into the ground under the site. Stormwater generated from the area around City Hall drains to the Black River and through the District. The two truck stops and the million square-foot warehouse are also going to create (drainage) problems. He is hopeful the Council understands the issue and considers the consequences.

Jacob Norton said he works in the sewer department as a maintenance worker for the City and is speaking to the City's new vaccine mandate. Throughout the past two years, the Operations Department has not slowed down. Employees came to work daily with boots on the ground and pushed through as City Hall shifted to working remotely and telecommuting. Operations did not stop or slow services for the City as there was always a need whether it was a broken water or sewer line, new services, meter reads, clogged pumps, or inspections. Employees worked through the pandemic prior to a vaccine and after it was developed. Approximately 30% of operations employees are currently unvaccinated and many of those employees, including him, do not intend to receive a vaccination. The employees made a choice whether it is religious, political, personal, or medical. They made a choice for themselves after reviewing and analyzing the data. Moving forward, the City has decided to adopt a vaccine mandate, a mandate that involves a drug that millions of Americans still do not agree with. The Teamsters Local 252 met with City officials to discuss issues and concerns about the vaccine mandate. After presenting various issues and concerns, City officials hired a lawyer to meet with the Teamsters Union to advise that the City is no longer interested in discussing anything related to the vaccine mandate. All unvaccinated employees will forfeit money from paychecks to pay for weekly testing. Unvaccinated employees will be the only employees required to wear N-95 or KN-95 masks. The rule was effective three weeks ago and not a single N-95 or KN95 mask has been issued. He has been told by management that he is wrong in his beliefs as the science is there. Going by that logic, vaccinated employees still spread COVID. He questioned the double standard with masking and testing. The Operations Department has had five employees test positive for COVID in the last five weeks. All positive tests were from vaccinated employees who are not required to wear N-95 or KN-95 masks or continue weekly testing. All vaccinated employees that were considered to have been exposed were not required to leave work or test, but instead were allowed to stay at work while unvaccinated employees were required to use personal leave or sick leave to self-isolate for five days even after receiving a negative test. The mandate has flaws and employees who have made a personal choice to receive the vaccination are rewarded with additional vacation time while employees who made a personal choice not to receive the vaccination are being forced to use

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their personal time and pay for the testing. While the amount of unvaccinated employees in the City may be the minority, the amount of support shared between vaccinated and unvaccinated employees is great. He understands speaking against the mandate puts his future with the City at risk. However, he and many other members of the Teamsters and the Police Guild believe the City is not listening. No one is opposed to the vaccine and they support anyone who wants to receive a vaccination. However, he has been informed that his is wrong because of his views. He expressed appreciation to the Council for allowing him to speak.

Councilmember Cathey commented that both speakers addressed matters of concern to her personally. As a member of the Council and as an elected official, she would like to learn more and discuss the issues during a worksession or during the Council's retreat.

**CONSENT
CALENDAR:**

- a. Approval of Minutes: City Council Worksession, January 11, 2022
- b. Approval of Minutes: City Council Joint Thurston County Commissioner Meeting & Regular Council, January 18, 2022
- c. Payment of Vouchers
- d. Reappointment of Regional Representative Chris Leicht to the Capital Area Regional Public Facilities District Board of Directors (CARPFD)
- e. Resolution No. R2022-004 – Surplus Items
- f. Intergovernmental EMS Contract

MOTION:

Councilmember Dahlhoff moved, seconded by Councilmember Swarthout, to approve the consent calendar as published. Motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Sullivan reviewed the items approved on the consent calendar.

**COUNCIL
CONSIDERATIONS:**

**SERVICE
PROVIDER
AGREEMENT WITH
TOGETHER! FOR
RENTAL HOUSING
ASSISTANCE:**

City Administrator Doan reported that last year, the City contracted with TOGETHER to provide rental assistance in the community. The program was funded through 1406 funds the City and county receive. The agreement stipulated 2020 1406 funds would be utilized by the receiving jurisdiction. Funds received in 2021 would subsequently be pooled and administered regionally.

City Administrator Doan introduced Sierra Abrams, Tumwater Community Schools Director. Ms. Abrahams updated the Council on the results of the 2020 program and presented a recommendation for consideration of an agreement with TOGETHER for another \$50,000 from the City's general fund, as well as reauthorizing another \$5,000 remaining in 1406 funds for a total funding amount of \$55,000.

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Funding last year prevented evictions and maintained housing for 41 families with 40 of those families residing within the Tumwater School District. Case managers in the schools worked with the families and provided other support services. One single adult receiving assistance was not connected to the school district. The average payment was \$1,200 for rent, deposit, or first/last month rent. Funding was leveraged with other grants matching up to \$25,000 of the City's funding.

Councilmember Althausen asked about the possibility of measuring or quantifying the effect the dollars have had on academic outcomes to document the full story of the value the program has provided to families. Ms. Abrams replied that in partnership with the schools, it would be possible to track attendance and other school metrics and directly tie those results to families served.

Councilmember Swarthout asked about the ability of families maintaining housing after receiving assistance. Ms. Abrams advised that the benefit of the Community Schools Program is the ability for school staff to continue the relationship and connection with families. Staff works with families to address some of the root causes and barriers in addition to helping them remain in housing.

Councilmember Dahlhoff asked whether there is any flexibility to adjust the amount of funding families receive. Ms. Abrams advised that many families often require continued support and the funding amount of \$1,500 was established through conversations between the City and TOGETHER! Last year, additional funding support was been provided from matching funds from other organizations. Councilmember Dahlhoff supported future conversations to provide a service that actually meets the needs rather than using a series of funding source to assist families.

MOTION:

Councilmember Dahlhoff moved, seconded by Councilmember Althausen, to authorize the City to enter into a Service Provider Agreement with TOGETHER! for the provision of Rental Housing Assistance in 2022. Motion carried. Councilmember Jefferson abstained as she serves on the TOGETHER Board.

**COMMITTEE
REPORTS:**

**PUBLIC HEALTH &
SAFETY:**
Leatta Dahlhoff

The next meeting is scheduled on Tuesday, February 8, 2022 at 8 a.m. The agenda includes updates from Tumwater HOPES and the Thurston County Prosecutor's Office.

**GENERAL
GOVERNMENT:**
Michael Althausen

The committee did not meet in December. The next meeting is scheduled on February 9, 2022 at 3 p.m.

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PUBLIC WORKS:
Eileen Swarthout

The next meeting is scheduled on Thursday, February 3, 2022 at 8 a.m. The agenda includes consideration to extend the property license with Single J Enterprises for an additional two years for the use of City property located south of 93rd Avenue and a review of proposed revisions to the City's Drainage Design and Erosion Control Manual.

**BUDGET AND
FINANCE:**
Debbie Sullivan

There was no meeting and no report.

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

Mayor Sullivan reported the Council's retreat is scheduled on February 11-12, 2022.

City Administrator Doan referred to Mr. Jackmond's comments regarding the Ditch District and water issues. Staff is currently researching the issues. Following completion of the review, staff will follow up with Mr. Jackmond.

**COUNCILMEMBER
REPORTS:**

Leatta Dahlhoff:

Councilmember Dahlhoff reported she attended 10 intergovernmental meetings since the last update. Thurston Thrives is reorganizing and removing elected officials from committee efforts with elected officials receiving updates every six months. Thurston Thrives is also working on renaming the new structure. Under consideration is *Pay to Play*, which she does not support because it does not speak to equity and inclusion. The organization understands the concerns and continues working on naming efforts.

The Tumwater Regional Fire Authority Planning Committee held a meeting on January 24, 2022 and is moving forward with three facilitators with different levels of expertise in facilitating organizing, managing, and budgeting. The committee established two subcommittees to focus on comparables for salaries of fire personnel and a Capital Asset Subcommittee to identify all current assets of both fire departments. The meeting time was changed to accommodate members.

Angela Jefferson:

At the last Thurston County Emergency Medical Services Council meeting, members discussed the status of ambulances added because of the pandemic. The ambulances are used daily and the state anticipates the federal government is more likely to end the emergency declaration in late spring or early summer. A new EMT internship program was launched to train and hire EMTs. Candidates are reimbursed as full-time EMT employees during the eight-week training program. The program was implemented in response to the high turnover rate during the last several years. The program has received 200 applications and many of

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the candidates are former military members or transitioning from military service. The Council was requested to respond to a proposal for new off-campus emergency facility in the City of Lacey comprised of a 15-20 bed multi-care facility. The Council elected not to forward a letter of support because of the timing as the Lacey City Council was scheduled to consider the proposal the next day.

On January 22, 2022, Councilmember Jefferson, Mayor Sullivan, and former Mayor Kmet met with a team from Tenino Stone Carvers to receive an estimate on the cost of refurbishing the gravestone of George Bush, one of the original founders of Tumwater. The headstone is in good condition; however, the headstone requires a thorough cleaning and repair to the top of the stone.

Councilmember Jefferson reported she recently met with members of the State Legislature and Executive Director of the Thurston County Food Bank to discuss food security and food distribution in the region and the increasing need for more food. Approximately 1,696 households have been served. Approximately 60% of those households are military families. During the meeting, Tumwater's community survey was discussed and the demographics of clients served by the food bank. Robert Coit, Executive Director, offered to provide an update to the Council.

Joan Cathey:

Councilmember Cathey recognized the month of February as *Black History Month* and conveyed concerns that progress appears to be declining and moving backwards since began teaching school 54 years ago. She believes at this juncture, the nation is in a worst place. Many of the books recently banned by many states and jurisdictions are books she used to teach American History. She emphasized the importance of honoring *Black History Month*.

Councilmember Cathey asked about the option of participating in the Council retreat virtually rather than in-person. City Administrator Doan advised that the current plan is an in-person retreat with department directors participating virtually during the segment on goal setting. The goal is ensuring a safe environment with all in-person participants fully vaccinated and wearing masks throughout the meeting.

Councilmember Cathey reported on her attendance to the Regional Housing Council (RHC) meeting.

The next meeting of the Solid Waste Advisory Committee is scheduled on Tuesday, February 2, 2022 followed the General Government Committee and Olympic Clean Air Agency meetings on Wednesday, February 3, 2022.

Eileen Swarthout:

At the January 24, 2022 Thurston County Climate Action Steering

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Committee meeting, members reviewed the long-term governance agreement and the 2022 work program. The proposal is scheduled for review by the Council during a worksession. Members received a briefing on the annual report on climate mitigation measures and a presentation from former State Representative Beth Doglio with Climate Solutions on different bills under consideration by the Legislature during the session. The discussion on carbon sequestration was deferred to the next meeting.

Councilmember Swarthout attended the Tumwater Regional Fire Authority Planning Committee meeting and plans to attend the Thurston Regional Planning Council meeting on Friday, February 4, 2022.

Michael Althausen:

Councilmember Althausen attended the Tumwater Regional Fire Authority Planning Committee meeting and viewed a recent Board of County Commissioners virtual meeting. The Commission approved the countywide Home Fund program affording a regional consolidation of housing funds for the benefit of the region.

At the last RHC meeting, members elected Councilmember Cox as the Chair and Thurston County Commissioner Mejia as the Vice Chair. An update was shared on the scattered sites work from direct outreach efforts to individuals who are living in vehicles parked off Ensign Road, Deschutes Parkway, and other local streets. The outreach generated information on the number of families assisted by those efforts and challenges administering the program. The work is very difficult and requires a commitment and many resources to ensure families receive necessary services to move them from their current situation to housing. Members also reviewed applications in response to the Request for Proposal as the first step for funding awards during 2022. Two main sources of funds include \$2.6 million for affordable housing and homelessness services and \$1.2 million in 2163 funds for coordinated entry, housing basis needs, cold and hazardous weather, and direct services. Councilmember Althausen recognized the work by Councilmember Cathey who participates as a member of the subcommittee of RHC reviewing applications for funding awards. Members received an update from the technical team addressing questions on the status of Olympia's Home Fund with respect to the new countywide Home Fund. The City of Olympia agreed to merge its program with the countywide program to afford one process with all funds combined. The City of Tenino opted out and created a Home Fund for approximately \$30,000 in annual revenue. Members discussed the future retreat focused on determining the relationship moving forward between the RHC and the Housing Action Team within Thurston Thrives.

Peter Agabi:

At the last meeting of the Thurston Economic Development Council (EDC) meeting, members approved new member appointments and

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discussed financial issues carrying forward from last year and ways to work efficiently without duplicating services. Members discussed budgeting for the organization.

Councilmember Agabi is attending his first meetings of the Public Health and Safety Committee on February 2, 2022, Transportation Policy Board on Wednesday, February 9, 2022, and Joint Animal Services Commission on February 10, 2022. On Friday, February 11, 2022, Councilmember Agabi is meeting with EDC Executive Director Michael Cade to learn more about his role on the EDC Board.

Charlie Schneider:

Siblings Strong, a non-profit organization representing siblings separated by foster care, adoption, or kinship care recently held its monthly outing at Ocean Five located in Gig Harbor. The three-hour event featured activities and hosts foster children at no charge. The camp has been hosted for over 12 years. Councilmember Schneider said he understands no foster children from Tumwater have attended the summer camp. The organization is working to include children from Tumwater.

Councilmember Schneider attended two Tumwater Youth Program events at Bush Middle School with 260 students participating and another event hosting 180 students. Thurgood Marshall Middle School in Olympia celebrated Martin Luther King Day of Caring by planting hundreds of trees along the Ralph Munro Trail.

Councilmember Schneider plans to attend the next Public Works Committee and the Tumwater HOPES meeting on February 9, 2022.

**EXECUTIVE
SESSION:**

Mayor Sullivan recessed the meeting at 7:58 p.m. to discuss collective bargaining pursuant to RCW 42.30.140(4)(b) for approximately 30 minutes. No action will follow.

**RECONVENE &
ADJOURNMENT:**

Mayor Sullivan reconvened and adjourned the meeting at 8:28 p.m.

Prepared by Valerie L. Gow, Recording Secretary/President
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