

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

PRESENT: Mayor Debbie Sullivan and Councilmembers Peter Agabi, Joan Cathey, Leatta Dahlhoff, Angela Jefferson, Eileen Swarthout, and Kelly Von Holtz.

Excused: Councilmember Michael Althausen.

Staff: City Administrator Lisa Parks, City Attorney Karen Kirkpatrick, Finance Director Troy Niemeyer, Transportation & Engineering Department Director Brandon Hicks, Police Chief Jon Weiks, Communications Manager Jason Wettstein, City Clerk Melody Valiant, and Deputy City Clerk Tracie Core.

SPECIAL ITEMS:

JOINT ANIMAL SERVICES UPDATE: Sarah Hock, Executive Director, Joint Animal Services, updated the Council on recent activities and programs offered by Joint Animal Services.

Joint Animal Services provides a multitude of different programs supporting pets and people within the community. Accomplishments during 2023 include:

- Opening of the medical suite at the animal shelter completing over 600 spay and neuter surgeries by the end of December 2023 and 1,000 surgeries by June 2024.
- Advocacy efforts in support of House Bill 1424 for sale of dogs and cats in pet stores and Senate Bill 1234 to strengthen language for seizures of animals from neglect or cruelty cases to clarify owner rights and rights of seizing agencies.
- Animal Services created a position of Positive Outcomes Coordinator. The position focuses on transfer partners, the Community Cat Program, and the Foster Program. Within one year of establishing the position, Animal Services increased its transfers by 77% and doubled the number of foster homes and animals in foster, as well as quadrupled the number of community cats participating in the program.
- System statistics include a 20% increase from 2022 intakes. Most of the intakes were cats.
- Animal Services continues to increase the number of animals adopted through the facility, increasing transfer partners, and experienced a slight decrease in return to owner primarily because of efforts in the community to prevent animal intakes.

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Field response increased. Tumwater experienced an increase of 36% over 2022. Calls continue to increase each year.

Ms. Hock shared information on some cases from last year involving cat hoarding of 157 cats from one house with positive outcomes for all 157 cats thanks to transfer partners, fosters, and people willing to adopt. A large cruelty case involved cock fighting in unincorporated Thurston County last year of 63 chickens of which 40 were roosters that had been used for fighting. Positive outcomes were achieved for all 63 animals. The last case involved removal of dog from a home for neglect. However, the home was of the ex-husband who had taken the animal as punishment in a domestic violence case. When the ex-wife learned of the seizure, she drove across five states from Oklahoma in 48 hours to retrieve her dog.

Shelter improvements over the last several years include a major sewer replacement in 2023 spanning over half the facility to replace original piping and a major kennel repair in the dog adoption area replacing all kennels from 1996. Typically, kennels are replaced every 10 years. Animal Services also completed a capital facilities plan in conjunction with the City of Lacey's capital facilities plan. The City's consultants indicated the animal shelter facility was the second worst building within the City of Olympia. The facility is not operating at full capacity, as the building is incapable of full capacity nor would any repairs to the building be sustainable. The estimated cost to repair the building is \$1.2 million for maintenance of the building to remain operational in 2025.

This year, a space needs assessment is scheduled with the hiring of Animal Arts, a company specializing in building animal shelters and veterinary clinics. The company is completing an assessment based on the findings of the capital facilities plan to define a new shelter in terms of size and capacity necessary for the programs offered and the number of staff positions over the next 20-40 years. Potential sites have been explored by working with jurisdictional partners and reaching out to the Port of Olympia, Olympia School District, and many other potential partnerships to identify a location. Location is important because of the service area. The intent is to locate a property no less than a 15-minute travel time within the Lacey city limits to remain in the service call area.

Councilmember Dahlhoff asked about the possibility of working with community members enrolled in Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion Program for treatment who have pets. She asked whether the new

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space could house those pets until the owner completes a treatment program. Ms. Hock said it likely would entail a combined effort involving fosters because housing within the facility is not optimal. It is a possibility to consider; however, it would require organization and funding. Currently, the shelter lacks fosters to support the shelter's foster program. The shelter offers an emergency housing program for those facing an emergency, such as being admitted to a hospital or arrested who have a pet requiring care. The shelter provides a four-day hold to enable them or their family some time to resolve the issue.

Councilmember Cathey recalled her service on the Animal Services Commission and her avoidance of visiting animals in the shelter, as she would likely have adopted many pets. She complimented Ms. Hock on her service and the work she does in support of animals.

Councilmember Swarthout expressed support for the construction of a new shelter facility and recalled the involvement of her children visiting the animal shelter and walking dogs housed in the shelter.

**TUMWATER RETAIL
& TOURISM VISITOR
CENTER:**

Chris Sieg reported he is the new Career and Technical Education (CTE) Director for the Tumwater School District. He and his colleague Dave Perreira opened the new Tumwater Retail & Tourism Visitor Center earlier in the day. Mayor Sullivan and Councilmember Swarthout attended the opening ceremony. The new center is a partnership between the Tumwater Area Chamber of Commerce, City of Tumwater, and the Tumwater School District. The facility serves as a retail center and a visitor center; however, most importantly it serves as the primary workbase learning experience both virtually and physically for all students in the Tumwater School District.

When businesses or organizations join the Chamber, membership fees support a foundation funding Tumwater Works, a youth employment program focusing on students who are experiencing a deficiency in school credits or who live in low-income households by providing them with work experience and earning high school credits and college credits. The program supports teachers and students by displaying and selling student work at the retail center. The focus is on workbase learning for students by bringing into the classroom industry to create opportunities for students. The program is student-lead in partnership with the community to enable students to participate, work, and lead.

Mr. Perreira explained the pathways for hospitality and tourism in the State of Washington and in the Tumwater area. The Center is focused

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on partnerships with several community non-profits to guide students through a program in a face-to-face brick and mortar visitor center. The program collaborates with Experience Olympia and Beyond with its certified tourism ambassador program. Unfortunately, the VCB no longer sponsors the program. Instead, the Center is working with partners to add a destination specialist program, which is similar to the ambassador program. Adding that component will enable students to become certified as a destination specialist. The goal is to bring the visitor center back to Tumwater. At the Tumwater Falls Fest, a booth will feature Tumwater Councilmembers to enable students to meet members of the Council to share information.

Mr. Sieg said the program is unique as it brings a partnership of three organizations within the community of Tumwater. It also presents an opportunity for three organizations working together to benefit students. The school district estimates approximately 350 students participating in the program by the end of August through workbase learning in partnership with the chamber.

Councilmember Jefferson asked the speakers about their affiliation with the school district. Mr. Seig explained that he and Mr. Perreira are employed by the school district. He serves as the Director of CTE overseeing 40 staff members offering hands-on classes to provide students with work experiences. CTE bridges the gap between industry, careers, and school. Many people believe the partnership between the school district and the Chamber of Commerce in a virtual and physical hub at the Retail and Tourism Visitor Center is unique. The site benefits the community as it serves as a visitor center.

Councilmember Jefferson asked about the potential of the school district collaborating with colleges for advanced degrees at SPSCC or St. Martin's University. Mr. Seig explained that students enrolled in the Tumwater Works Program are able to work to build work skills or participate as an intern to pursue a career pathway and receive work site learning credits. The credits are also dual college credit. CTE is a way for students to achieve a goal of either direct employment, post secondary certification, or a degree.

Mr. Seig responded to questions and explained how as a member of the Chamber of the Commerce Board he proposed the concept in terms of what makes the Tumwater Area Chamber of Commerce unique to other chambers. They met with the Chamber, Thurston Economic Development Council, and the Thurston Chamber of Commerce to develop the concept for availability throughout the

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region for those organizations willing to partner. Any student can sign up to participate through the Tumwater Works Program and choose their work experience or pathway they want to pursue with different partners the program will eventually include. The program has many partners, sponsorships, and grants. The next step is initiating the program. The program will be marketed to all students. The Tumwater Works Program is a pilot program with criteria established to identify and work with students that in most need. The program will work with school counselors and recruit students to participate in the program. The program would not be marketed or targeted to students in need or low-income to avoid stigmatizing the program. In Tacoma he initiated a similar program with Tacoma Mayor Strickland. The program was not marketed to attract low-income students while being proactive and intentional in outreach to those students.

Councilmember Jefferson recommended scheduling an update to the Council in one year to share data on the status of the program.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Taylor Warner said she recently moved to Tumwater Hill and is employed as an electrician and has a son. She recently attended the open house for the community to provide feedback on the Comprehensive Plan Climate Element. She appreciated the ideas offered for Tumwater. The attendance was fantastic by members of the community who demonstrated a high level of concern. As a mother of a son who is certain to live through far more instability than she has lived through and whose entire generation is profoundly struggling, the meeting meant much to her as people were taking the problem seriously. She was more inspired by community members than by the City. The quantity of resources Tumwater is channeling towards climate work is respectively not commensurate with the scale of the climate emergency. She sensed that the City has insufficient staff working on climate or that the City is prepared to take drastic steps to protect community members by spending resources on climate as if it was the highest priority. The community is lucky to live in a place that is relatively insulated from the worst impacts of climate change. Nevertheless, the community is not isolated from economic, social, and political crisis but will suffer because of climate inaction. As temperate as the Pacific Northwest may be, people in the community will die as a direct consequence of the climate crisis as many in the state did during the heat dome in 2021. Everyone is living in a unique moment when federal grants are available for cities to take action on climate. Olympia residents can upgrade homes with heat pumps without adding financial burden to already burdened families. The heat pumps are funded by the American Recovery and

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Reinvestment Act (ARRA). During heat waves or intense wildfire smoke, heat pumps and air filtration systems protect against death. Tumwater could provide them. She believes a World War II scale mobilization response is necessary for climate change. If the Council believes a World War II scale mobilization against climate change is important, she asked why the Council has not worked on a plan for full electrification. She met people at the open house who understand the stakes and are giving all they can to solutions. However, she is worried the City sees climate as a political box to check instead of an imminent existential threat unparalleled in human history. She wants her home city to be a place that sets the standard. The City has the opportunity to serve as a model for other cities on what truly meaningful climate action looks like. She urged the Council to hire more employees, pursue grants, and develop a plan for full electrification. She would be willing to work on a project of that scale and historic importance as an electrician.

Dave Nicandri said he was a member of the Council from 1977 to 1987. Earlier in the day, a City crew was working on Tumwater Hill pruning trees and cutting limbs extending over streets and sidewalks obstructing traffic. Some of the trees were as tall as 200 to 300 feet and looming over houses. None of the trees were cut down but pruned back. When the issue arose with the Davis-Meeker oak tree, he spoke with an attorney specializing in tort law who indicated that if the City was so concerned about the tree, the City should post a sign warning everyone to proceed at their own risk, as the sign would mitigate most risk to the City. He commended the City for taking the prudent step to minimize risk by posting a sign advising people to proceed at their own risk. As someone who is interested in preserving and who admires the tree, he believes installation of the sign was a prudent step to minimize risk. He added that he always enjoys the community presentations, such as animal services and the new retail and visitor center.

Pamela Hansen, P.O. Box 14521, Tumwater, offered comments on several issues. She forwarded the Council pictures of Historical Park during the recent drawdown of Capitol Lake exposing the pipe entering into the river from the park. The court date is Friday, September 6, 2024 for setting the bond amount for the oak tree. She supports a small bond amount of approximately \$200 instead of a higher amount, as the group advocating for preservation of the tree cannot afford a higher bail. A reasonable bond should be established to ensure the tree would not be removed until all issues have been resolved. Finally, she recounted a recent incident involving her

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parking at a local retail establishment. She observed a person on a bicycle move away from a person in a wheelchair that appeared to be recently hospitalized because of he was carrying two hospital bags. He was pushed in his wheelchair to bushes behind the retail establishment. While sitting in her car she observed the man pushing the wheelchair approach her car on the passenger side who tried to open the door. He then leaned on her car. She was able to notify Tumwater Police who responded to the scene. She was informed the police provided the man with a meal and actions to ensure his safety. She thanked the Tumwater Police Department and Pilot Truck Stop. It was an unfortunate situation the man should not have experienced. If the situation was patient dumping, the incident should be addressed with the hospital because space at Interfaith Works was available to house the individual.

- CONSENT CALENDAR:**
- a. Approval of Minutes: City Council, June 4, 2024
 - b. Approval of Minutes: City Council, August 20, 2024
 - c. Payment of Vouchers
 - d. Resolution No. R2024-014, Surplus Property
 - e. Right of Entry Agreement with Jason Herrera for Belmore Street Property
 - f. Israel Road and Linderson Way Pedestrian and Bicycle Improvement Project – Fiber Optic Agreement with WSDOT, Amendment No. 16
 - g. 2023 Pavement Maintenance Project with Miles Construction – Increase Change Order Authority
 - h. Audit Engagement Letter

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

Mayor Sullivan reviewed the items approved on the consent calendar.

COUNCIL CONSIDERATIONS:

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT FTE ADJUSTMENTS AND NEW POSITION: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR:

City Administrator Parks reported the proposal was reviewed by the Budget and Finance Committee with a recommendation for approval by the Council.

The proposal pertains to the difficulty of recruiting and filling the vacant Economic Development Program Manager position. Staff has been managing an increase in workload associated with the

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Brownfield grants, which was assumed by Director Matlock and the Community Development Department. Former Economic Development Manager, Austin Ramirez, successfully obtained grants and began initiating consultant agreements prior to leaving the City. The consultants have begun work on the project. Additionally, the Executive Department is experiencing some resource constraints in time and capacity to work on a variety of different projects important to the City.

Staff developed a strategy to address the issues with two components requiring Council action. The first is filling an existing vacant position of Assistant City Administrator and moving oversight and management of the City's economic development programs to the position in addition to oversight of boards and commissions, legislative policy tracking, strategic initiatives, and other tasks to assist in alleviating resource issues within the Executive Department.

The second component is creating and filling a new Economic Development Coordinator position rather than the Economic Development Manager position. The position would be a technical, mid-level career position supporting the Assistant City Administrator in different economic development programs with an emphasis on the work associated with the Brownfield grants.

The third component is to confirm the FTE count within the Executive Department.

Hiring of the Assistant City Administrator position does not require Council action. It was important to share information in the overall context and strategy with the Council. The position reports directly to the City Administrator and would be a member of the management team with economic development oversight. The position would also provide policy and legislative coordination with the City's lobbyist, oversight of various programs and boards and commissions, stipends for boards and commissions, and ensuring appropriate staffing support for commissions and boards. The salary range is Grade 76.

The Council is requested to approve creating the new Economic Development Coordinator position as a direct report to the Assistant City Administrator. The position supports all economic development activities to include the Brownfield redevelopment projects as the primary focus. The proposed salary range is Grade 54.

The Executive Department includes five positions comprised of the

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City Administrator, Executive Assistant, Communications Manager, and two Community Engagement Specialists. In early 2024 when Mr. Ramirez left he recommended with Director Matlock's concurrence that the Economic Development Manager position should move to the Executive Department. The recommendation is to affirm the total number of FTEs in the Executive Department would be seven.

The request to the Council is to approve the new position of Economic Development Coordinator at Grade 54 and confirm the total FTEs assigned to the Executive Department as seven.

Councilmember Jefferson asked for reasons reclassifying the position would help attract candidates to fill the position and challenges encountered by the City to recruit candidates to fill the position. City Administrator Parks said reclassifying the position with economic development oversight would attract a wider range of candidates and broaden the pool of applicants capable of not just economic development but working on many other City programs. Recruitment of Austin's position has been a struggle similar to other City positions often attributed to the competitiveness of salaries. The City pursued an extensive recruitment process receiving approximately seven qualified applications with two residing in the state and five residing in other states. Staff interviewed two applicants from the state and offered the position to a candidate currently working for the state. The applicant elected not to accept the position. The second applicant had also accepted another position with another entity. During the process of re-evaluating alternatives, staff collectively discussed the proposed strategy and agreed to pursue the strategy to replace Austin's position as well as including much of the work he had identified prior to his departure. He identified the need during his exit interview for the position to be responsible for the Brownfield redevelopment project.

Councilmember Dahlhoff said she was aware of another applicant who resides in the local area who applied for the position and never received a response from the City. City Administrator Parks explained that the recruitment attracted more than seven candidates, but other candidates did not meet the minimum qualifications for the position. Seven candidates were qualified for the position. Councilmember Dahlhoff asked whether the recruitment process includes a step to notify applicants that they did not meet the minimum qualifications, as the applicant received no response from the City despite sending an email and calling the City several times. City Administrator Parks advised that she would follow up with Human Resources to inquire about the process for responding to

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applicants. Councilmember Dahlhoff noted that no response to an applicant conveys that the City never responds to applicants. City Administrator Parks affirmed she would follow up with staff to review best practices for notifications to applicants.

Councilmember Swarthout asked whether staff intends to pursue an executive search process to recruit candidates for the Assistant City Administrator position. City Administrator Parks said recruitment of the position would be similar to other department management positions. Human Resources implemented a proactive approach to recruitment and advertising strategies for different positions. The recruitment process will be lengthy to ensure the right candidate is selected.

MOTION;

Councilmember Swarthout moved, seconded by Councilmember Von Holtz, to establish a new position of Economic Development Coordinator with a 2024 salary range of \$6,049 to \$7,368 (Grade 54), and confirm the departmental FTE count for the Executive Department as seven positions. A voice vote approved the motion unanimously.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY:

Peter Agabi

The next meeting is scheduled on September 10, 2024 at 8 a.m. The agenda includes a discussion on the Police Strategic Growth Plan.

GENERAL GOVERNMENT:

Michael Althaus

The next meeting is scheduled on September 11, 2024 at 8 a.m.

PUBLIC WORKS:

Eileen Swarthout

The next meeting is on Thursday, September 5, 2024 at 8 a.m. The agenda includes a discussion and recommendation for a grant agreement with the Department of Ecology for the Pioneer Park Restoration Project Amendment 1 and an Interagency Agreement with Washington Department of Commerce for State Home Electrification and Appliance Rebates Program.

BUDGET AND FINANCE:

Debbie Sullivan

There was no report.

MAYOR/CITY

City Administrator Parks reported the Public Health and Safety

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**ADMINISTRATOR'S
REPORT:**

Committee meeting on September 10, 2024 includes an additional presentation from the Fire Department on the department's staffing model and the process the department utilizes to fill different positions.

Budget workshops are scheduled for the Council over the next several work sessions. The meetings are proposed as a hybrid meeting similar to the joint meetings with the Planning Commission earlier in the summer. Budget work sessions are scheduled on September 10, 2024, September 24, 2024, and October 8, 2024. Other agenda items are included on the agendas.

The Israel Road project has commenced and is moving forward with paving. The Linwood project is also in progress between Lake Park Drive and Susitna. The project will add sidewalks requiring the removal of some trees.

Councilmember Cathey asked that staff check on the effectiveness of the audio and microphone systems during the budget workshops, as it was difficult to hear participants attending in-person. City Administrator Parks confirmed she would follow up with IT staff.

Councilmember Cathey complimented and thanked City Administrator Parks for providing the Council with Friday updates.

Mayor Sullivan attended the Intercity Transit Authority meeting on August 21, 2024. Members adopted an advisory committee stipend program effective January 2025. The Citizen Advisory Committee is comprised of 20 members. Members received an update on the State Rodeo bus competition. Intercity Transit has been awarded the Grand Champion for seven consecutive years. At the last event, Intercity Transit was awarded second place in overall maintenance and the 35-foot coach category, and third place for the body over chassis category.

**COUNCILMEMBER
REPORTS:**

Eileen Swarthout:

Councilmember Swarthout reported on her attendance to the Climate Open House at the ASHHO Cultural Community Center in Tumwater. She appreciated the number of community members in attendance and staff's participation. She also attended the Thurston County NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) meeting and the grand opening of the Tumwater Retail & Tourism

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Visitor Center.

Leatta Dahlhoff: Councilmember Dahlhoff is scheduled to attend the Emergency Coordination Center Workshop, Thurston County 9-1-1 Administration Board meeting, Thurston County Opioid Task Force meeting, and Tumwater Public Health and Safety Committee and General Government Committee meetings.

Kelly Von Holtz: Councilmember Von Holtz is attending the next Intercity Transit Authority meeting as the alternate and the Public Health and Safety Committee meeting.

Angela Jefferson: At the last meeting of the Thurston County Emergency Medical Services Council, members discussed the EMS Gala scheduled on September 28, 2024 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at Indian Summer Golf Course. Members discussed the need to move to a larger classroom because of the increased number of students. The plan is to move to the HR Training Room at the Thurston County Courthouse complex. The ratio of EMT instructor volunteers should be 6:1. Today, more volunteers are necessary with pay as the primary issue. To attract more instructors, the Council is considering either a salary or stipend to attract more instructor volunteers. Planning for a future EMS conference is to be determined.

Joan Cathey: Councilmember Cathey thanked and acknowledged Manager Medrud for his role during the last Regional Housing Council meeting. He guided the conversation on the Black Housing Initiative. She plans to attend the Wednesday, September 4, 2024 Solid Waste Advisory Committee meeting.

Peter Agabi: Future meetings include Joint Animal Services Commission, Tumwater Public Health and Safety Committee, Transportation Policy Board, and the LEOFF Disability Board.

ADJOURNMENT: **With there being no further business, Mayor Sullivan adjourned the meeting at 8:15 p.m.**

Prepared by Valerie L. Gow, Recording Secretary/President
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