

MINUTES FOR GIG HARBOR CITY COUNCIL MEETING
Monday, January 25, 2021 – 5:30 p.m.

Due to public health concerns, this meeting was held remotely.

CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL:

Mayor Kuhn called the meeting to order and called roll. Those present: Councilmembers Abersold, Denson, Franich, Himes, Markley, Rodenberg and Woock.

Staff present: City Administrator Bob Larson, Community Development Director Katrina Knutson, Chief Kelly Busey, Public Works Director Jeff Langhelm, Building Official Paul Rice, Wastewater Treatment Plant Superintendent Darrell Winans, Tourism/Communications Director Laura Pettitt, City Clerk Molly Towslee, Assistant City Clerk Josh Stecker, and City Attorney Daniel Kenny.

Guests: Mayor Kim Roscoe, City of Fife, Ryan Wheaton, Pierce Transit Director of Planning and Community Development, and Alexandra Mather, Government Relations Administrator

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

CHANGES TO THE AGENDA: Mayor Kuhn said that he would speak to the Maritime Gig Parade under the Mayor's report. No changes made.

CONSENT AGENDA:

1. Approval of Council Minutes a) January 11, 2021
2. Receive and File: a) Harbor History Museum Year End Report; b) Catholic Schools Week Proclamation; c) 4th Quarter Finance Report; d) Parks Commission Minutes Dec. 2, 2020; e) City Council Study Session Jan. 7, 2021; f) Intergovernmental Affairs Committee Jan. 6, 2021
3. Burnham Drive Half-Width Roadway Improvements Ph. 1 Design and Permitting – Contract Amendment #1/David Evans and Associates
4. Appointment of City Council Standing Committees
5. Approval of Vouchers for January 25, 2021: Checks #94498 through #94622 and ACH payments in the amount of \$794,147.20

MOTION: Move to approve the Consent Agenda as presented
Himes / Markley – unanimously approved 7-0

PRESENTATION:

1. [Wastewater Treatment Plant Outstanding Performance Award](#) - Public Works Director Jeff Langhelm announced that the Washington State Department of Ecology has once again awarded the city with a Wastewater Treatment Plant Outstanding Performance Award for the continued high performance of the treatment plant. This is the 13th year in a row they've receive the award. He praised the efforts of Darrell Winans and the WWTP Crew as well as support staff from Engineering, Operations, Administration and Elected Officials.

[WWTP Superintendent Darrell Winans](#) thanked everyone for the support and reported that they are in line for the 2021 Award as well. He recognized the employees' dedication during this past year and shared a slide show of the crew in action.

[The Mayor and Councilmembers](#) voiced their appreciation for the efforts of Darrell and all the WWTP Crew.

2. [Pierce Transit Bus and Trolley Update](#) – Fife Mayor Kim Roscoe introduced herself as the city's representative on the Pierce Transit Board or Commissioners. [Ryan Wheaton](#), Pierce Transit Director of Planning and Community Development and Alexandra Mather, Pierce County Government Relations Administrator answered questions and shared information about routes, buses, ridership, van pools, the seasonal trolley, and upcoming changes to service. Everyone agreed to work together to address service concerns with the County and State Legislators.

MAYOR'S REPORT:

1. [Catholic Schools Week Proclamation](#). Mayor Kuhn read the proclamation and reported he would visit the school and present the proclamation to the students on February 2nd.

2. [Appreciation for Council](#). The Mayor recognized Councilmembers for all their hard work and all the things that have been accomplished during this past year despite all the challenges.

3. [Maritime Gig Parade](#). At the Chamber meeting tomorrow morning, Mayor Kuhn said he would like to ask them to consider changing the date of the parade to the 21st of August instead of the 28th of August to avoid competing with the busiest weekend of the year before school starts and Labor Day weekend.

4. [COVID-19 Vaccinations](#). Mayor Kuhn announced that we have been working with the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department to schedule a drive-through vaccination this weekend at Chapel Hill Church for Phases 1A and 1B-1. More event information will be posted in the next few days. This is just the first of many events to get our citizens vaccinated.

CITY ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:

1. [Harbor Hill Maintenance Association No. 1 Report](#). City Administrator Bob Larson provided an overview of the recent meeting of the association that oversees the water detention facility southwest of Costco, and the city's role as a property owner in the group.

2. [City Clerk's Intent to Retire](#). Mr. Larson shared that City Clerk Molly Towslee has submitted her intent to retire on June 10 after 30 years of service.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS:

[Marcie & Dan Smith](#) said they appreciate the tabling of the discussion of changing our current form of government. They need more time to become educated on the pros and cons of such a drastic move. They don't want to miss out on council and community input for this important consideration.

[Carolyn Berg](#) voiced opposition to the drastic proposal to change the strong mayor form of government. She suggested council spend more energy working on obtaining the Covid-19 vaccine for the citizens and work together for a safe, calm, and healthy city.

[Lita Dawn Stanton](#) shared concern for the misleading message of mismanagement of the city and the goal to change the form of government by Councilmember Woock. She explained why changing from a Strong Mayor form of government is a bad idea. There is a lack of broad

public input because of the pandemic. She asked council to reject this proposal and to take action to make sure the public is not misled with biased messaging.

[Angela Sisney](#) said she is opposed with moving forward with a change in government at this time. She referenced the recent employee survey, saying this should no way form a bias for changing our city government which transcends just one mayor. She is wary of a government with a Council unchecked by a Mayor. A change in form is monumental and should not be rushed. It requires public education and participation. She urged council to "hit pause" until the public is on the other side of the pandemic.

[Cindy Lumsden](#) asked for support for the current strong mayor form of government. She shared concern that the idea to change came from social media and the Peninsula Gateway and is vindictive and misguided. Because of the pandemic, many people who should be heard are not able to testify in person. She asked that we pull together and work hard to get through another stressful year.

[Linda Pitcher](#) voiced support for the decision to table further discussion of the form of city leadership until there is adequate time for public input and debate. She said our elected officials are there to represent the people; not decide for them. She asked council to defer initiatives that polarize our community and to contribute productively to the healing we all desperately need.

No one from the caller list raised their hand to speak, and the public comment portion of the agenda was closed.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. [Second Reading of Ordinance – Updates to Title 15 Building and Construction](#). Building Official Paul Rice provided an overview including an amendment to the effective date to reflect the state's adoption date. He answered questions.

No public comment.

MOTION: Move to adopt Ordinance 1451 Amending GHMC Title 15 as amended.
Woock / Himes – unanimously approved 7-0

NEW BUSINESS:

[Election of Mayor Pro Tempore](#). Mayor Kuhn shared his recommendation for the nomination of Councilmember Spencer Abersold to serve as Mayor Pro Tempore for 2021. There were no public comments.

MOTION: Move to nominate Councilmember Spencer Abersold to serve as Mayor Pro Tempore.
Markley / Woock – unanimously approved 7- 0

STAFF REPORT: None.

COUNCIL REPORTS / COMMENTS:

1. Public Works Committee: Tue. Jan. 12. Councilmember Franich reported that they discussed the sidewalks on Borgen Boulevard and the repairs to the lift at Ancich Waterfront Park. Public Works Director Jeff Langhelm answered questions on the status of repairs.

2. Boards and Candidate Review: Tue. Jan. 19. Councilmember Woock shared an overview of the positions that need to be filled on the Planning Commission, the Salary Commission and the Lodging Tax Advisory Committee and the resulting recommendations that will come before Council for approval at the next meeting.

3. Intergovernmental Affairs: Mon. Jan. 25. Councilmember Denson said that the committee received updates on State and Federal Budgets including: The Gig Harbor Sports Complex, the addition of transportation projects, multi-family tax exemptions, Open Public Meetings Act, and police immunity. Reports on the Federal level included upcoming grants for transportation projects and other opportunities. Councilmember Markley added information on the proposed changes in telecommunication regulations. Mayor Kuhn is going to testify at the hearing on Thursday on the transportation portion.

Councilmember Abersold announced that the Peninsula High School Key Club, in conjunction with the Gig Harbor Kiwanis is holding a fund raiser for clean water in Africa called The Thirst Project this Saturday at the Galaxy Theater. There will also be a Baby Diaper Drive for Eastside Baby Council the same day, same location.

Councilmember Woock recognized Chief Busey and others for brining the vaccine to Chapel Hill this coming weekend. Chief Busey added that more information would be coming from the Health Department tomorrow and registration goes live on Wednesday.

Councilmember Himes spoke on Senate Bill 5189 – American Dream Home for affordable housing for those with 80% less than median income. It exempts permit fees and impact fees and provides builders a 4% tax credit. He stressed that we need clarification on the effects of this bill. Community Development Director Katrina Knutson will investigate this further and share information with all Council.

Councilmember Markley reported on the Gig Harbor Key Peninsula Suicide Prevention Council and reminded everyone that there is a 30-minute training video available on how to speak to someone in crisis. She encouraged anyone who is interested to contact her. Councilmember Abersold will announce this on the KGHP radio station.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF OTHER MEETINGS:

1. Mayor and Council Retreat – Wed. Jan. 27 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
2. Planning / Building Committee: Mon. Feb. 1 – 3:00 p.m.

ADJOURN

MOTION: Move to adjourn at 7:24 p.m.
Franich / Himes – unanimously approved



Mayor Kit Kuhn



Molly Towslee, City Clerk