

CITY ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

City Council Meeting of October 19, 2020

Councilmembers –

Your agenda for Monday night is as follows:

NOTE: The October 19, 2020 City Council meeting will be held remotely utilizing video conferencing technology in compliance with Stay Home, Stay Safe requirements restricting public gatherings, including civic activities. However, this is still an open public meeting as defined by the Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA). The City will be using Microsoft Teams to livestream the council meeting. Members of the public do not need to download anything to view the proceedings. **Click on this [link](#) to join the live event (regular meeting) at 6pm Monday, October 19th – one hour later than the normal 5pm start.**

Note (2): Beginning at 5pm, prior to the regular City Council meeting, the Council will hold the second of several budget workshops. **Click on this [link](#) to join the live event (workshop) at 5pm Monday, October 19th.** These workshops are intended to provide the Council and the general public with a further understanding of the budget process in general, and to discuss elements and individual funds within the budget, prior to consideration and adoption of the budget in December.

The October 19th workshop will focus on the General Fund, which is the general operating fund for the City. The General Fund is the most visible and one of the most dynamic of all City funds – and is often the fund that the Council and general public thinks about when considering the City's budget. As the General Fund covers a wide range of revenues and expenditures, both the October 19th and November 2nd workshops will focus on this fund. The October 19th workshop will focus on the "00" series of funds¹, including Current Expense (001), General Fund Contingency Reserve (002), Facilities Capital Reserve (003), Leoff 1 Retiree (004), Solid Waste Utility Tax (005), and Pioneer Pavilion Community Center Operations (007).

Generally speaking, and consistent with other budget workshops, the Council will not be asked to commit to any final decisions on Monday, but as indicated, the General Fund is more dynamic than many of the City's other funds, and is thus more-subject to modifications and the overall policy goals of the Council.

The public is welcome to review the materials in advance of the meeting. All materials relating to the 2021 budget can be found on the city website here: <https://www.cityofferndale.org/finance-department/budget-documents/2021-budget-2/>. Please remember that at this point the budget remains in draft format, and is subject to further modification.

Item A, Public Comment. In compliance with Stay Home, Stay Safe restrictions, and consistent with new guidelines established for public meetings through the OPMA, in-person public comment is limited to those meetings when a public hearing is on the agenda. For those meetings, the Council Chambers will

¹ Including, in the opinion of the City Administrator a missed opportunity to use Fund 007 for something other than Pioneer Pavilion Community Center Operations – an important fund, but one which has ~~nothing~~ little to do with secret agents or cool gadgets.

be open to the public. Those who wish to offer a comment in person will be required to wear a face mask and observe social distancing requirements. -Comments may also be submitted by emailing City Clerk Susan Duncan at susanduncan@cityofferndale.org. Comments received prior to 4:30pm Monday, October 19th will be included in the meeting record.

Item B, Consent Agenda. Including approval of October 5, 2020 Council meeting minutes, authorization of October 5, 2020 payroll, Bid Award: Complete Streets, Approval of September 2020 Claims, Approval: PRTAB Appointment.

- *Bid Award, Complete Streets:* The Public Works Committee has placed on the consent agenda a bid award totaling, with contingency, \$236,000 to Larry Brown Construction, Inc., the low bidder for the project. The project would construct pedestrian enhancements at the intersections of Alder Street at First Avenue, Second Avenue, and Third Avenue. The intersection of Thornton Street and Maureen Drive, and Vista Drive and Seamount Drive will also be upgraded with crosswalk and sidewalk ramp improvements, as well as the installation of Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacons (RRFB). Storm drain modification will be completed as necessary in tandem with the pedestrian improvements.
- *Approval - Parks, Recreation, and Trails Advisory Board (PRTAB) Appointment:* The Finance and Administration Committee has placed an appointment to the PRTAB on the consent agenda. Mayor Hansen has appointed Corrine Siegel to Position 4 of the PRTAB.

Item C, Capital Projects Update: Public Works Capital Projects Manager Katy Radder will provide an update on current and future City capital projects.

Item D, Support of Ferndale School District Levy: The Ferndale City Council will consider a resolution supporting the Ferndale School District Levy. The two-year School Programs and Operations Levy would replace an existing, higher levy that will expire in December. The proposed levy, if approved, would replace the existing \$2.17 per \$1,000 of valuation levy with a new \$1.50 per \$1,000 of valuation levy. If approved, the levy would pay for a variety of staff, technology, supplies and class sizes, extracurricular opportunities, and more. If rejected, the District has indicated that additional staff and programming cuts or eliminations will be necessary, and that some class sizes will increase.

Item E-H: Mayor, Council, Department, and Committee Reports.

Item I: Executive Session – RCW 42.30.110(i) – Litigation that has been specifically threatened to which the agency, the governing body, or a member acting in an official capacity is, or is likely to become, a party. No action is expected to be taken following the Executive Session. City Attorney Dannon Traxler will join the Executive Session.

Final Thoughts – City Facilities

Councilmembers –

As we will not have our normal trick or treating this year, what follows is essentially a grab bag of final thoughts.

- *School's Back (partial/phased re-opening)!*: Next week the Ferndale School District will be welcoming kindergarteners and students needing additional support back for in-person learning, subject to the choice of each family. The District, working with officials from the Whatcom County Health Department and other school districts, will continue to monitor the situation within the classroom and the community, and may modify the schedule or learning environment as necessary. Let's all welcome the Class of 2034 to their first in-person learning experience in public schools, and hope that soon all classes, including the Class of 2021, are able to join them for in-person learning in a safe and sustainable environment.
- *School's Out (for our two newest police graduates)!*: Officers Shelby Brown and Collin Sutton graduated from police academy on October 16th. They have done well and met the necessary requirements for certification, and we are proud of their accomplishments. After taking a few well-deserved days off, they will begin their field training later this month. Congratulations to Officers Brown and Sutton! The Police Department has also extended an offer to Jake Leland, who is currently an officer for the City of Anacortes. Officer Leland will be filling a vacant position within the police department that had remained unfilled for most of 2020. Leland will initiate field training in early November. Welcome aboard, Officer Leland!
- *Playground Re-Openings*: The City, in consultation with health experts and other local cities, re-opened its playgrounds on Friday, October 16th. Playground users should mask up, give six feet of space whenever possible, and wash hands frequently. The City will continue to monitor the situation and may modify rules or close the playgrounds once again, based on COVID-19 spikes in the community and compliance with requirements.
- *Halloween*: Halloween will be very different this year, as trick or treating is discouraged as a high-risk activity by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). Instead of their usual Downtown Trick-or-Treat, the Ferndale Chamber of Commerce, will be sponsoring an event on Friday, October 30th called "Whatcom Trip or Treat." Participants can drive to local businesses in costume and receive candy. This is another great way to celebrate the season and get out of the house while exploring local businesses from across the county.

For the day of Halloween (October 31st), the City is hosting an interactive Halloween decorating contest, and all Ferndale residents are invited to participate in our "City of Frightdale"! There are two ways to participate; you can sign up ahead of time at www.cityofferndale.org/frightdale to put your house on our map of spooky locations across the city OR you can travel around on Halloween night, using the map, and score all the different spooky locations. The top scoring houses receive gift cards from Woods Coffee, and if you rate five or more houses, you are entered into a drawing to win Woods gift cards. All the details, including the spooky map, will be available at www.cityofferndale.org/frightdale

- *Pedestrian Safety*: Although there will not be trick or treaters on the streets, we encourage drivers, bicycles and pedestrians to also be aware of the changing seasons especially in the morning and evening. The increasing hours of darkness, cloudy or rainy days, and dark clothing

can make it difficult to see bicyclists or pedestrians. We encourage all motorists to drive with their lights on, to avoid use of cell phones or other distractions when driving, and for pedestrians and bicyclists to observe the rules of the road, cross at crosswalks, and to wear bright or reflective clothing.

- *Business Sustainability Fund:* Next week, the Ferndale Chamber of Commerce will launch an effort to assist local businesses in identifying and implementing steps to remain resilient in the face of COVID. The Chamber, utilizing CARES Act funds granted by the City, will be working closely with businesses to transition to business models necessary to sustain indoor, outdoor, online, and/or contactless operations during the Fall and Winter months. The Chamber will be accepting applications beginning the week of October 19th, with the application window closing October 30th. The Chamber will provide additional information, and links to the project, beginning next week.
- *Election Season:* We are, of course, in election season. This year's election is important for any number of reasons and involves candidates and measures that will have a significant impact at all levels. Perhaps the most important local decision relates to the school programs and operations levy, as the community will decide whether to replace an existing levy that will expire in December.

Ferndale residents should have received or will shortly receive their ballots for the November general election. Please go to VoteWa.gov if you want to check on the status of your ballot (mailed, turned in, etc) or to request a replacement ballot. Ballots may be returned via mail (no need for postage!) or by placing the ballot in a designated ballot drop box, including the one adjacent to City Hall at 2095 Main Street.

- *COVID is Still with Us:* We are all still faced with a global pandemic, and our ability to re-open some of our schools, playgrounds, and other activities depends significantly on our combined ability and desire to be responsible and safe. The Whatcom County Health Department reminds us that many of the recent spikes in cases are the result of small social gatherings, and throughout the pandemic, the Ferndale area's case rates have remained high compared to the regional average and well above the state goal. For the last two weeks, Ferndale has averaged 42 cases per 100,000 people, which is above the 25 case per 100,000 state goal. This information is available for all to see at <https://www.whatcomcounty.us/3427/COVID-19-Data>.

As the Health Department reminded us, "No matter how good you've been this year or how much you love your friends and family, you should still keep your group size small this fall and winter. Because COVID-19 doesn't care how good you've been, and COVID-19 doesn't love you, your friends, or your family. COVID-19 only loves excuses."

So please – mask up, keep your gatherings small – and together, we can ensure we all make it healthy and strong to the holiday season.

See you Monday – Jori