



**CITY OF HOQUIAM  
Council Meeting Minutes**

**March 25, 2024**

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**CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Winkelman called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Councilmember Brooks led the flag salute.

**ROLL CALL**

In attendance at the meeting were Mayor Winkelman and Councilmembers Brooks, Carlstrom, Davis, Hinchey, Larsen, Nelson, Pauley, Puvogel, Reid, Smith and Thornton. Absent from the meeting was Councilmember Anderson.

Staff in attendance were Police Chief Strong, Fire Chief Miller, City Attorney Johnson, City Administrator Shay and Council Secretary Wood.

**PUBLIC HEARING**

Assessment of Abatement  
Costs 2922 Sumner Avenue

Councilmember Puvogel moved to open the public hearing at 7:04 p.m. on the Assessment of Abatement Costs for the Demolition of building(s) located at 2922 Sumner Avenue. The motion was seconded and passed by voice vote. Mr. Shay stated this was the time for anyone to speak on the assessment. There were no comments and Councilmember Puvogel moved to close the hearing at 7:05 p.m. The motion was seconded and passed by voice vote.

Assessment of Abatement  
Costs 205 5<sup>th</sup> St.

Councilmember Puvogel moved to open the Public Hearing at 7:05 p.m. on the Assessment of Abatement Costs for Demolition of 205 5<sup>th</sup> Street. Mayor Winkelman asked if there was anyone wishing to speak. Councilmember Puvogel stated that this was for another fire and the building was demolished. There were no public comments and Councilmember Puvogel moved to close the hearing at 7:06 p.m. The motion was seconded and passed by voice vote.

**Presentation by Port of  
Grays Harbor**

In attendance representing the Port were Kayla Dunlap, Director of Public and Government Affairs, Gary Nelson, the current Executive Director of the Port, Leonard Barnes who will be the new Executive Director upon Gary's retirement at the end of the week, and our elected Port Commissioner, Stan Pinnack. Kayla made a presentation regarding current and future projects at the Port and their properties. The Port currently has 120 tenants. Bowerman Airport has Lifelight, hanger and aviation services and provides recreational access; there are many Port industrial properties which consist of manufacturing, disbursing, commercial and technology; the Westport marina provides for commercial and recreational



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fishing, manufacturing, processing and tourism; Satsop Business Park provides office space, manufacturing and energy businesses. The Port also provides public access and recreational activities at 28<sup>th</sup> St. landing, Aberdeen landing, the Westport viewing tower, Sterling Landing and Friends landing. The terminals provide for import/export and they also have their own navigation services. She reviewed some current and upcoming projects and ended by wishing Mr. Nelson well in his retirement. Gary Nelson spoke briefly to the Council and said it has been a pleasure living here in the City of Hoquiam and that it has been an honor to serve the Port and this community.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

Councilmember Brooks moved to approve items a and b on the consent agenda as presented. His motion was seconded. Those items appearing on the consent agenda were as follows:

- The City Council Minutes of March 11, 2024;
- The Regulatory Committee Report recommending approval and payment of claim check numbers 102776 through 102970 in the amount of \$939,814.36; claim auto pays and EFT number 697 through 701 in the amount of \$29,543.31; payroll check numbers 30753 through 30775 in the amount of \$214,364.59; payroll ACH and EFTs in the amount of \$509,841.72 and \$271,177.78 respectively; and that payroll and benefits for the month of March 2024 be approved and issued at the proper time.

The motion for approval of the consent agenda passed by voice vote

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Public Safety Committee –  
Flooring and Reduction of  
Speed Limit

The Public Safety Committee made a recommendation that Council approve a call for bids for the Police Department flooring replacement at the department and that Council also approve a reduction in the speed limit from 35 mph to 25 mph from Newell St. to Division St. Councilmember Reid moved for approval of the Committee report and her motion was seconded. A brief discussion on the flooring followed wherein Chief Strong stated that this would replace the flooring in the entire building. The motion to approve passed by voice vote.



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- Public Utilities Committee – Adopt a Drain Program – The Public Utilities Committee made a recommendation to the Council that the City partner with the Conservation District to pursue grant funding to formally join the Adopt a Drain program and in the meantime take advantage of the free services. The annual costs are estimated to be \$3,000. Councilmember Puvogel moved to approve the committee report and his motion was seconded. Staff stated that the Conservation District will pursue grant funds to cover this program. Following a brief discussion on drain locations, the motion passed by voice4 vote
- LTAC Committee – 2024 Funding – The Lodging Tax Advisory Committee made a recommendation that Council approve the following funding for 2024 events and projects: Hoquiam Beautification Team - \$5,000; Pushrods of Hoquiam - \$2,000; 7<sup>th</sup> St. Theatre - \$3,000; Logger’s Playday - \$4,000; PAWS of Grays Harbor - \$3,000; and GH Audubon Society Shorebird Festival - \$3,500. Councilmember Puvogel moved to approve the committee report and his motion was seconded. It was explained that this money comes to the city from lodging tax funds and can only be used for events and programs that will draw people/tourism to our community or on city facilities. This is a reimbursable grant to the recipients who must submit their receipts. Following a brief discussion, the motion passed by voice vote.
- Downtown Revitalization Task Force – The Downtown Revitalization Task Force made a recommendation to the Council that the City pursue private and public partnerships to promote the purchase, ownership and operation of certain properties in the community and that the Mayor and City Administrator be authorized to negotiate these purchases. A list of certain properties were included as follows: 702 Simpson, 1007 1<sup>st</sup> St., 706 Simpson, 523 Levee St., 403 7<sup>th</sup> St., 220 5<sup>th</sup> St., 2309 Queets Ave., 518 Simpson Ae., and the Druzianich Property in North Hoquiam. Councilmember Brooks moved to accept the recommendations from the revitalization task force and his motion was seconded. A brief discussion followed regarding restrictions/requirements that these properties must be utilized and operational. Mr. Johnson stated the City cannot put those types of restrictions/requirements on personal property. Staff did state that the properties must be maintained or code enforcement could address the concerns. Following further discussion, the motion passed by voice vote.



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**MAYOR REPORTS**

Mayor Winkelman reminded the community, council and staff about the Lunch with the Mayors program tomorrow (March 26<sup>th</sup>). The event is being sponsored by Greater Grays Harbor Inc. This is a good opportunity to see what is happening in the all of the communities.

Regarding the Task Force recommendations, the properties listed on their report are different types of properties, from residential to business type. Some communication has been received on the buildings. Revitalization Plan was taken very seriously. The city has the opportunity to take control of the future and what the citizens would like to see. He would like all to continue to support incoming businesses which will make a major impact to the future. At future meetings, the task force will come forward with progress and ideas. We have to invest in ourselves.

The Municipal Code is on line now on the city website.

Staff has met regarding the sound system and needed improvements. They are taking steps to find solutions to the problem.

Mayor Winkelman would like to schedule photos for the website and encouraged Council to look at a date for the Council retreat.

The City Easter Egg Hunt will be March 28<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. This effort is co-sponsored by the City of Aberdeen Parks, Twin Star Credit Union and the Lions Club. Doors open at 5:30 and the egg hunt will begin at 6:00 sharp.

**COUNCIL REPORTS**

AWC Webinar

Councilmember Carlstrom stated that AWC will be providing a webinar on Hijacking Hate Speech. Any city employee or council can sign up for it. It will be on April 5<sup>th</sup> from noon to 1:00 p.m.

Council of Governments

Councilmember Pauley attended the COG meeting. There will be a lot of DOT construction happening late spring and summer. He recommends people take a look at their schedule. They will be doing a lot work on the road going out to the beach. Also there will be some future changes to transit system. He also attended the GGHI business dinner and



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congratulated the businesses who received awards. Hoquiam Brewing received small business of the year.

Legal Services Agreement for  
Cosmopolis

Councilmember Puvogel brought up the contract that we had with Cosmopolis. Staff started that they were notified that we were ceasing legal services.

**LEGAL BUSINESS**

**Resolutions**

Abatement of 2922 Sumner

A Resolution confirming the report of the Building Department specifying the work done and the itemized and total cost of the work done to demolish and abate the building located at 2922 Sumner Avenue, Hoquiam, Washington; and ordering that the total charge shall be the amount of \$25,597.70 and further ordering that the charge shall be assessed against the property and recorded on the assessment roll of Grays Harbor County. Councilmember Puvogel moved to approve the resolution and his motion was seconded. Following a brief discussion, the motion passed by voice vote.

Abatement of 205 5<sup>th</sup> St

A Resolution confirming the report of the Building Department specifying the work done and the itemized and total cost of the work done to demolish and abate the building located at 205 5<sup>th</sup> Street, Hoquiam, Washington; and ordering that the total charge shall be the amount of \$13,123.76 and further ordering that the charge shall be assessed against the property and recorded on the assessment roll of Grays Harbor County. Councilmember Brooks moved to accept the resolution and his motion was seconded and passed by voice vote.

**Other Legal**

Ambulance Services Agree-  
ment Fire District 17

Included in the packet was an Ambulance Services Agreement with Grays Harbor Fire District No. 17. Councilmember Puvogel moved to authorize the city to sign the agreement. His motion was seconded and following a brief discussion on the service area that District 17 covers, the motion passed by voice vote.

Ambulance Billing Service

Included in the packet was a Business Associate Agreement between the City and System Design West LLC to provide ambulance billing services for the City of Hoquiam. It was explained that the company we previously used has transitioned over to this company. Councilmember Puvogel moved to authorize signature of the agreement and his motion was



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seconded. Following a brief discussion, the motion passed by voice vote.

**OLD BUSINESS**

Council Retreat

Councilmember Brooks moved to table this item until a future meeting. He would like to get more input from the council on dates and topics. His motion was seconded and passed by voice vote.

Watershed Committee

The Watershed Committee met and have selected Councilmember Smith as new chair. Mr. Shay stated that there are two timber sale bids currently out. The Committee will meet on April 22<sup>nd</sup> and have the City Forester attend.

Regulatory Committee

The Regulatory Committee met and will be bringing a report to the next meeting for the ambulance billing fee. They asked staff to prepare an ordinance for the same meeting.

SCBA Equipment

Councilmember Reid asked Chief Miller what the status of the SCBA equipment was. The Chief stated that fire personnel are doing more research before a decision is made.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Excuse Absent Member

Councilmember Puvogel moved to excuse the absent member. His motion was seconded and passed by voice vote.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Council moved to hold the 2<sup>nd</sup> comment period before the scheduled executive session. The motion was seconded and passed by voice vote.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Utility Bill

James Forester, 214 Garfield, stated he is confused about the water bill. They moved here from Federal Way and his bill is over \$300 every two months. They have watched neighbors move out because they can't afford it. Now another neighbor is living with no utilities because they have been turned off. It confuses him that he has to pay \$380 every other month and they are paying for an ambulance fee but if they use the ambulance it is still being billed to insurance. Mayor Winkelman encouraged him to reach out to the Mayor or Mr. Shay and they will provide some information.

Utility Bill

Kirsten Mirabal, 2411 Simpson, she has paid well into the economy as she has been here over 13 years. She referenced RCW 35.21.766 and nowhere does it say that you can hold one utility hostage over the support of another utility. The city



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should look at the books, starting with administration. Someone should be grant writing every day and look at other ways to fund some of this. You are the first step for the citizens. Recently talked about a new ambulance but you are biting off more than you can chew! The City cannot afford to go into debt at the expense of the citizens. You are wanting to buy something you can't afford. Need to show some facts and figures and this is not working. She is having to share her house with someone else to make ends meet. If this continues it is going to put her off the block as she won't be able to afford it. The City is buying more and can't handle what you have now, and it is being put off on the people. Everyone is tired of it.

Utility Bill

Keith Myer, 1702 Broadway Avenue, he has been here about two or three years now. Why is the water rate at a flat rate instead of based on use? When you live on social security it makes it difficult but he can do it. He does not understand why the ambulance system doubled between last month to this month. City of Aberdeen to City of Hoquiam. He would like to say that comparing Aberdeen to Hoquiam, Aberdeen is a mess and we don't see those problems here in this city.

Utility Bill

Lori Forester, 214 Garfield, everyone is struggling, even those who make pretty good wages. People are eating out of the food banks. What are we going to take away next. The two handicapped ladies in the house across the street from them have no water, no PUD, no gas. Their services have been turned off. People in this community are thinking about moving as they can't afford this. It has been a nightmare since they have been here.

Abandoned Houses and  
Utility Bill

Jodi Peterson, owner of the motorcycle shop at 525 Simpson. They have abandoned houses at 509 and 515 and they tried to contact owners to buy them it but have had no response. They are being broken into, people are staying there. Is there some way to let the owners know what is happening with their properties? They have upgraded their security system and have luckily never had a break-in but the properties need to be taken care of. Also, regarding their water bill. It was \$378 for shop and over \$400 at their home. Ambulance fee was \$38 and is now over \$70. When did this change, how did it change, if you want more businesses in the downtown, this is not going to



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work. The average cost for towns in Washington is \$70. Why is it so high here

Utility Bill

Mark Carriker, 613 27<sup>th</sup> St., asked the council to please listen and don't be deaf to what the people here are saying. The water bill is ridiculous and it keeps jumping and jumping. Has anyone here thought about a class action lawsuit to see what is going on? Where is all of this money going? He understands that council is looking at dividing up the ambulance fee, but that's not going to help.

Utility Bill

Franchesca Smith, 342 Wheeler Avenue, asked if the Council/staff can you go to bed at night while you took raises and the citizens all got hammered. These people are struggling. She argued with the people downstairs regarding the utility bill. Aberdeen pays \$157.51 and this bill is \$332 to \$381. This is disgusting. Why are we paying an ambulance fee and then getting it billed to insurance. She also had complaints regarding parking tickets.

Utility Bill

Jason Still, 1411 C St. Hoquiam, this seems to be the water bill hour. He is currently paying way more here than where he has lived before. It is exorbitant and it essentially looks like we are over paying by \$50 a month at least.

Dispute Resolution Center

Piriya Lindeen GH Public Health, stated that she appreciates that people are able to come and voice their concerns. She said that there will be another Dispute Resolution Center on Saturday April 13<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m. This is a place where people can voice their concerns on what a community needs and what can be changed. It is an opportunity to hear other people in a different setting. She stated to the council that one of the reasons they took their position is to help their neighbors. The event will be held at the Pearsall Building and anyone can attend. She thanked the Council and staff for listening to everybody – she is grateful that people have a platform to come to.

Utility Bill

Rob Gillies, 229 Eklund Avenue, people are here expressing concerns about getting by every day with basic needs. He challenges leaders to be more creative, these are lean times. He was glad to hear the report about acquisition of property/revitalization. There are so many regulations that



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nickle and dime them. Revenue comes from businesses, employment comes from businesses. The City needs to live within its means until more revenue comes in, the people in our community are hurting and struggling. The utility situation is like a cash cow for the city. He is going to talk to his neighbors and see what is going on.

Cross Country State Tournament

Paul McMillan, 119 M St, informed the citizens that the city council and Mayor do not get raises as they can't vote raises for themselves by law. Nobody on this council is getting rich off of this. Maybe the staff needs to send out a another brochure regarding what the fees are, as it seems that there is confusion on understanding what the ambulance stand by fee is. It is to have staff and equipment available seven days a week to assist anyone who needs them. Mr. McMillan also stated that the school district will be hosting the Cross Country State championship track meet on Thursday. There is a young lady on the team who has broken the school record by 20 seconds in the 1600m. Come down to the track and support her if you can.

Utility Bill

Roberta Wilson, 828 Chenault, she has been here since 2002. They had good jobs until COVID disrupted everything. They were able to pay bills with their wages. They have now retired. They have noticed bills going up. In 2018 their bill was \$252 08 and it is not \$409.16. It is affecting them. She knows that everyone here pays the water bill. Not only here for herself but everyone here. They saved their money to enjoy their retirement but are now they paying over \$200 a month just to the City. The groceries have gone up, gas has gone up, and electricity has gone up. She has been looking at the differences. They have less water consumption now but are paying more. They are doing what they can but they shouldn't have to. She doesn't agree with the ambulance fee being spread out, the fee needs to be lowered. Everyone needs water and are now being held hostage. Who is in charge of all these increases? This has to come to a head.

Utility Bill

Cindy Cuschieri, 825 2<sup>nd</sup> St., stated her water bill was harsh \$850 a month – how is she supposed to pay it. There was a recent chimney fire, everybody came, fire, ambulance, police! Maybe we don't need that many people going to a scene and it would save on the budget. She appreciates what everyone is doing but look at other ways instead of expecting the citizens



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to pay more. Food banks are being used all of the time now as everything has raised. Maybe the city needs to look at salaries and use that for the ambulance instead of more increases to the citizens.

**Utility Bill**

Naomi Obi, 912 Soule Avenue, she stated she was trying not to get emotional but she has lived here going on 25 years. Her water bill has gone up from \$171 to over \$400. She has a rain barrel outside to collect water to take care of their animals and plants. It makes her very angry, she loves Hoquiam as it is the best place to live. The bill is outrageous. She limits everything but this is mind boggling that they have to go through this. It hurts more now as she is out of work due to medical conditions and they are not a one family income and it is falling on her guy to try and take care of all of this.

**Utility Bill**

Robbin Emery, 911 Broadway, stated she hoped the City was happy. Did no one think this was going to affect people? The city needs to reconsider this and come up with a different plan. Do something there has got to be a way.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**Acquisition of Property**

Councilmember Puvogel moved to adjourn to executive session for 10 minutes to discuss the possible acquisition of property once the council chambers was cleared. His motion was seconded and passed by voice vote at 9:06 p.m.

**Reconvene in Regular Session**

Council came back to order in regular session at 9:37 p.m. Councilmember Hinchin made a motion to authorize the Mayor or City Administrator to negotiate the potential purchase of private or real property. His motion was seconded and the motion passed by a vote of 10 to 1.

**ADJOURN**

Councilmember Puvogel moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:38 p.m. His motion was seconded and passed by voice vote.

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BEN WINKELMAN – MAYOR

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TRACY WOOD – COUNCIL SECRETARY