

**MINUTES FOR GIG HARBOR CITY COUNCIL MEETING**  
**Monday, March 22, 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, Himes, Markley, Rodenberg, Woock and Franich











Staff / Attorney present: City Administrator Bob Larson, Chief Kelly Busey, Public Works Director Jeff Langhelm, City Clerk Molly Towslee, Assistant City Clerk Josh Stecker, City Attorney Kari Sand and Labor Attorney Sofia Mabee

Guests: Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Warren Zimmerman, Downtown Waterfront Association Board President Chuck Cuzzetto, DWA Executive Director Mary Desmarais, DWA Josh Sterling, Farmers Market Manager, Heidi Gerling, Ethan Nash and Michael Nash, Nash Consulting

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:**

**CHANGES TO THE AGENDA:**

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

1. City Council Minutes Mar. 8, 2021  [↔](#)
2. Receive and File: a) Welcoming City Proclamation;  [↔](#) b) Chamber of Commerce;  [↔](#)  
c) Visitor's Center Year End Reports;  [↔](#) d) Downtown Waterfront Association Year End Report;  [↔](#) e) Planning Commission Minutes Feb. 18, 2021  [↔](#)
3. LTAC/Parks Commission Appointments  [↔](#)
4. R-1203 GHAC Creative Endeavor Grant Awards  [↔](#)
5. Utility Revenue and Rate Studies – Professional Services Contract  [↔](#)
6. Interlocal Agreement – Pierce Transit  [↔](#)
7. Approval of Vouchers for May 22, 2021: Checks #94927 through #95031 and ACH payments in the amount of \$875,097.72.

MOTION: Move to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.  
Woock / Abersold – unanimously approved

**PRESENTATION:**


1. [Downtown Waterfront Association Year End Report](#) – Board President Chuck Cuzzetto opened the presentation by thanking the city for the continued support. He introduced Executive Director Mary DesMarias, Josh Sterling and Heidi Gerling who shared information on the way they successfully “pivoted” due to COVID-19, and how this affected programs and events this past year.

2. [Chamber of Commerce / Visitor's Center Year End Report](#) – Executive Director Warren Zimmerman explained that 2020 was traumatic for everyone. It was the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary for the Chamber and they were lucky to be able to celebrate before COVID-19 shut everything down. He shared an overview of how the Chamber continued providing services without volunteers. He also provided a history of the Visitor's Center Building from construction in 1961 until today.

3. [Parks Commission Certificate of Appreciation for Sara McDaniel](#) – Public Works Director Jeff Langhelm recognized Sara McDaniel for her seven years of service on the Parks Commission. Sara was a big part of the Parks Appreciation Day activities and she will be sorely missed. Councilmembers Denson and Markley praised Sara's involvement in the community.

**MAYOR'S REPORT:** [Welcoming City Proclamation](#). Mayor Kuhn read the document proclaiming the City of Gig Harbor as a Welcoming City that embraces all residents and visitors regardless of race, creed, or national origin; and strives for unity and harmony in our community.

[City Administrator Larson recommended](#) attending to New Business Item No. 1 at this time to allow participation by the consultant as he has another commitment. The Mayor concurred.

1. [Employee Engagement Professional Services Contract](#)  ↩. Mayor Kuhn shared that he worked with the contractor to lower the proposed fee from \$48,000 to \$43,000 to save the city money.

Labor Attorney Sofia Mabee presented this proposal with Nash Consulting as a follow up from the employee engagement survey conducted in the fall of 2020.

[Michael Nash](#) provided an overview of Nash Consulting's experience and qualifications and explained that their mission is to help organizations be as healthy as possible through a multi-faceted approach. Their primary focus is to help leaders and managers be as skilled as possible. He shared an overview of how they are proposing to implement this in Gig Harbor. [He addressed questions](#) about the extent of his knowledge of the survey results as the basis for the proposal, commitment to the process, and whether this process should be postponed until after the new administration is in place.

[The Mayor shared](#) his view that this would be better if we waited until it could be done in person, or as was suggested, in January. [Mr. Nash had to leave](#) the meeting at 6:28 p.m. Ethan Nash remained as Council continued their deliberation.

[Attorney Mabee](#) and Consultant Ethan Nash addressed questions on the contract cost and deliverables of the proposed program.

The Mayor opened the public comment period.

[Thomas Wick – Hunt Street](#). Mr. Wick agreed that it would be a waste of money until the new administration is in place. He said a consultant isn't going to help with what is needed: integrity, honesty, and transparency, which Gig Harbor lacking. He said the issues the city faces also impact the surrounding residents.

There were no further public comments. [Council Woock](#) commented on the basis for the scope of work and offered the following motion:

MOTION: Move to direct the Mayor to have the City Administrator form a committee with the City Administrator as the leader, include directors, supervisors, some employees, and Councilmembers Abersold, Markley and Rodenberg with the purpose of how to proceed with the consultant training program and report back to the full council no later than May the 24th.  
Woock / Rodenberg -

Mayor Kuhn voiced concern with the choice of these Councilmembers, the additional workload placed on staff, and council meddling in the day to day work. Councilmember Franich said there is no need to move forward with the contract as it was politically motivated.

Attorney Mabee was asked to clarify how the questions on the survey were compiled.

AMENDMENT: Move to amend the motion to appoint Councilmembers Himes, Franich and Abersold to that committee.  
Franich / Abersold -

Council continued deliberation prior to the vote on the amendment. Councilmember Markley said considering her candidacy for Mayor she will not accept the nomination to the committee.

The Mayor asked if Councilmember Woock would like to name another to her motion. Councilmember Denson agreed to serve and so Councilmember Woock offered to restate her original motion with the substitution. City Administrator Larson pointed out there is an amendment on the table that requires a vote at this time.

City Attorney Sands asked that council first vote on the amendment before considering any other amendments.

AMENDMENT: Move to amend the motion to appoint Councilmember Himes, Franich and Abersold to the committee.  
Franich / Abersold – roll call vote:

Abersold – aye; Denson – no; Franich – aye; Himes – aye; Markley – abstain; Rodenberg – no; Woock – no. Mayor Kuhn voted yes to break the tie. Motion passed.

The Mayor thanked Mr. Nash. Clerk Towslee reminded the Mayor that there still needed a vote on the original motion as amended.

MAIN MOTION AS AMENDED: Move to direct the Mayor to have the City Administrator form a committee with the City Administrator as the leader, include directors, supervisors, some employees, and Councilmembers Himes, Franich and Abersold with the purpose of how to proceed with the consultant training program and report back to the full council no later than May the 24<sup>th</sup>. Woock / Rodenberg -

Council continued discussion. Another amendment was placed on the table by Councilmember Woock to allow the City Administrator to choose which three councilmembers could serve on the committee. After a great deal of discussion, it was determined that this was an improper amendment and it was withdrawn.

There was further deliberation on the makeup of the committee. A suggestion was made to allow Ethan Nash to sign off at this time: 7:17 p.m.

[There was continued deliberation](#) on the improper amendment. Councilmember Franich disagreed that more amendments should be allowed and called the question.

**MOTION:** Call the question to stop the debate.  
Franich / Abersold – roll call vote:

Abersold – aye; Denson – no; Franich – aye; Himes – aye; Markley – no; Rodenberg – no; Woock – no. Motion failed 4-3.

Debate continued the improper amendment. [Attorney Sands](#) clarified that the amended main motion inserted Councilmembers Himes, Franich and Abersold.

**MAIN MOTION AS AMENDED:** Move to direct the Mayor to have the City Administrator form a committee with the City Administrator as the leader, include directors, supervisors, some employees, and Councilmembers Himes, Franich and Abersold with the purpose of how to proceed with the consultant training program and report back to the full council no later than May the 24<sup>th</sup>. Woock / Rodenberg – roll call vote:

Abersold – aye; Denson – no; Franich – aye; Himes – aye; Markley – no; Rodenberg – no; Woock – no. Motion failed 4-3.

**MOTION:** Move to direct the Mayor to have the City Administrator form a committee with the City Administrator as the leader, include directors, supervisors, some employees, and three Councilmembers chosen by the City Administrator with the purpose of how to proceed with the consultant training program and report back to the full council no later than May the 24<sup>th</sup>. Woock / Rodenberg –

[Council deliberated](#) on the fairness of these past motions and clarified how it became so confused. A point was made on the appropriateness of council serving on the committee.

**AMENDMENT:** Move to amend the motion to eliminate all Councilmembers from the committee chaired by the City Administrator.  
Himes / Abersold –

[The Mayor and Councilmembers shared their comments and concerns](#) on the motion and the amendment.

**AMENDMENT:** Move to amend the motion to eliminate all Councilmembers from the committee chaired by the City Administrator.  
Himes / Abersold – roll call vote:

Abersold – aye; Denson – no; Franich – aye; Himes – aye; Markley – no; Rodenberg – no; Woock – no. Motion failed 4-3.

**MAIN MOTION:** Move to direct the Mayor to have the City Administrator form a committee with the City Administrator as the leader, include directors, supervisors, some employees, and

three Councilmembers chosen by the City Administrator with the purpose of how to proceed with the consultant training program and report back to the full council no later than May the 24<sup>th</sup>. Wook / Rodenberg – roll call vote:

Abersold – no; Denson – aye; Franich – no; Himes – no; Markley – aye; Rodenberg – aye; Wook – aye. Motion passed 4-3.

[The Mayor voiced](#) disappointment that the Gateway’s premature release of an article led to this confusion and changed the vote.

[When asked for clarification on the votes](#), Attorney Sands explained that the outcome was decided by a majority of council that confirms the will of council. If Council wants to change the outcome it can be done with a motion to reconsider at a subsequent meeting.

[The Mayor called](#) a brief recess at 8:01 p.m. [The meeting reconvened](#) at 8:15 p.m.

**CITY ADMINISTRATOR’S REPORT:** [City Administrator Larson](#) provided a COVID-19 update on vaccination clinics, the eventual return of staff, reopening of the Civic Center and in-person meetings, and the second round of CARES funds. He offered to respond to questions.

Mr. Larson responded to comments about reopening too soon. He said that we are taking every precaution to ensure the safety of the employees and the public. He added that we have no jurisdiction over the opening of Municipal Court, but he is working with them.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS:**

[Peter Fraser – 3414 59<sup>th</sup> St. Ct.](#) Mr. Fraser voiced his support for installing sidewalks along both sides of 38<sup>th</sup> Avenue between Hunt and 56<sup>th</sup> Street.


[Marlene Druker](#), Roger Henderson, Nick Tarabochia, Doug Terrien, Tomi Kent Smith, Kari Heber, Ryan Fitzpatrick, Carlos Duboc, Max & Jame Belle, Katianna Hebden, Dave Blanding, Jeff Brune, Sue King and David Wittenberg signed on to a letter voicing disappointment that Council decided it’s not a priority to establish a Pedestrian and Cyclist Advisory Committee. They will continue to bring safety concerns to the attention of the City Council and Public Works Committee to improve safety.

[Thomas Wick – Hunt Street.](#) Mr. Wick shared concern that the city continues to allow the development uphill from his property without appropriate drainage. He said the offer to pay for a drainage study fell on deaf ears. He asked the Mayor and Council to take immediate action to issue a stop work order.



**OLD BUSINESS:** None



### **NEW BUSINESS:**

#### 2. [Public Hearing and First Reading of Ordinance – City Assumption of the Transportation](#)

[Benefit District](#)  [↩](#) Finance Director David Rodenbach provided a brief background of the benefit district, and explained that this action to allow Council to assume all functions of the district to simplify the process to collect and expend the funds, and provide for a more efficient operation. He addressed questions. This will return for a second reading and adoption at the

next meeting.

3. [First Reading of Ordinance Amending the 2021 Budget](#)   Finance Director David Rodenbach explained that salary ranges changed at the completion of the Police and Non-Supervisory Employees Union negotiations and Council approval of the contracts. The amended salary ranges will be adopted with this ordinance. He answered questions. This will return for a second reading and adoption at the next meeting.

4. [First Reading of Ordinance – Ancich Waterfront Overwater Structures](#)   Public Works Director Jeff Langhelm presented the background for this ordinance to adopt rules for the three overwater structures at Ancich Waterfront Park. He addressed Council questions.

The Mayor asked if there were any public comments.

[Thomas Wick – Hunt Street](#). Mr. Wick commented on the penalties and remedies section of the ordinance allowing the city to impose violations, but the city doesn't have any concern for the state laws.

There were no further comments. This will return for a second reading at the next meeting.

#### **COUNCIL REPORTS / COMMENTS:**

1. [Board & Commission Candidate Review Committee](#): Councilmember Abersold reported that the commission reviewed questions and then interviewed five applicants and make recommendations for the Parks Commission and Lodging Tax Advisory Committee.

2. [Public Works Committee](#): Councilmember Franich said they discussed the Art installation in the sidewalk at Harborview / Stinson and Impact Fees.

3. [Intergovernmental Affairs Committee](#): Councilmember Denson reported on the projects submitted for funding to Senator Cantwell and Senator Kilmer. She shared that the State budget has rebounded due to the stimulus dollars, but she is unsure of what that means for funding for the Sports Complex. She said they discussed transportation funding, the city's eligibility for the tax incentive program, the bill on the Open Public Meetings Act and the Tacoma Narrows Bridge toll limits.

[Councilmember Himes commented](#) on the number of open positions at the city and asked Council to keep that in mind and show restraint as additional tasks are given. This could result in delayed projects. Mayor Kuhn pointed out that eight of those are seasonal workers.

[Councilmember Franich](#) said he is pleased that we are on a timeline to get major goals done. He referred to the State budget and said revenues are up over 4% without the dollars the Federal Government is giving out. He then voiced disappointment with how New Business #1 turned out and the advice given by the attorney.

#### **ANNOUNCEMENT OF OTHER MEETINGS:**

1. City Council Special Meeting: Tue. March 23 at 12:00 p.m.
2. City Council Special Meeting: Thu. March 25 at 3:30 p.m.
3. Planning & Building Committee: Mon. Apr. 5 at 3:00 p.m.

**ADJOURN**

MOTION: Move to adjourn at 9:06 p.m.  
Franich / Woock – unanimously approved

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Mayor Kit Kuhn

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Molly Towslee, City Clerk