



# Minutes of the Arlington City Council Meeting

Council Chambers  
110 East Third St  
July 2, 2018

**Council Members Present:** Mike Hopson, Jan Schuette, Debora Nelson, Joshua Roundy, Sue Weiss, Jessica Stickles, and Marilyn Oertle.

**Council Members Absent:** None.

**City Staff Present:** Mayor Barbara Tolbert, Paul Ellis, Kristin Banfield, Kristin Garcia, Sheri Amundson, Jonathan Ventura, James Trefry, Marc Hayes, Dan Cone, Dave Kraski, Drew Shannon, Linda Taylor, Rory Bolter, Seth Kinney, Ken Thomas, Chris Perisho, Alex Donchez, Chris Peterson, Joe Wakefield, Jason Brisson, and City Attorney Steve Peiffle.

**Also known to be present:** Maxine Jenft, Rich Senff, Nathan Senff, Sid Logan, Heather Logan, Terry Marsh, Neil Knutson, Karla Lowe, John Meno, Holly Sloan-Buchanan, Jim Rankin, Doug Schmidt, Craig Christianson, Keith Strotz, Barry Casteel, Phil Lane, Doug Buell, Karen Morse, Cristy Brubaker, Sarah Arney, Randy Tendering, Tim Dean, Jackson Dean, Lindsay Dunn, and Ron Swirtz.

Mayor Tolbert called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm, and the pledge of allegiance followed.

## **APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

Mayor Pro Tem Marilyn Oertle moved to approve the agenda. Councilmember Debora Nelson seconded the motion, which passed with a unanimous vote.

## **INTRODUCTIONS OF SPECIAL GUESTS AND PRESENTATIONS**

None.

## **PROCLAMATIONS**

None.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no one in the audience who wished to speak.

## **CONSENT AGENDA**

Marilyn Oertle moved and Councilmember Debora Nelson seconded the motion to approve the Consent Agenda which was unanimously carried to approve the following Consent Agenda items:

1. Minutes of the June 18 and June 25, 2018 Council Meetings and June 25, 2018 Work Session
2. Accounts Payable  
EFT Payments and Claims Checks #93990 through #94237 dated June 19, 2018 through July 2, 2018 in the amount of \$757,718.30.
3. Award of Apparent Low Bid for Haller Park Splash Pad

### **PUBLIC HEARING**

#### **Ordinances adopting Ambulance Utility Fee**

City Attorney Steve Peiffle briefly explained the Public Hearing process and administered the oath for testifying at the Public Hearing to all present.

With the use of a PowerPoint presentation, City Administrator Paul Ellis presented the proposed Ambulance Utility Fee, which is a \$15 per month per billable unit charge on businesses' and residents' unified utility bill to sustainably fund the City's EMS services.

The Public Hearing was opened at 7:27 p.m.

Scott Bigger, 17612 Topper Court, stated that he had concerns on the proposed ambulance utility fee and that charges should be assessed on those that use the system. He inquired why the city does not use volunteers in the fire department. He suggested getting out of the EMS business entirely and contract for the service.

Rich Senff, 20922 66<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE, stated that the research done by the staff and council is useless and a waste of time. The Mayor stated at the State of the City presentation that the city's revenues are fine and then the city introduces the ambulance utility fee. He noted that he will pay twice for this as a homeowner and a business owner. He opposes the fee. He believes the introduction of the fee is premature and the City should get the outlying districts to pay their fair share of the costs of the EMS service and they should also pay back what they owe.

John Meno, 20217 Old Burn Road, stated that he will also pay the fee twice as a homeowner and a business owner. He recognizes that we all need to pay our share of the system, he trusts that the council has done their homework, and supports the fee.

George Spencer, 18112 Woodbine Drive, stated that he is for public safety, but he believes the Council should not be making this decision. He requested the Council ask the voters to raise the EMS levy instead of adopting the ambulance utility and the fee. He feels that the adoption of the utility and the fee has the appearance of slipping a fee through.

Melissa Molthan, 8128 Vista Drive, stated she opposes the ambulance utility and fee and believes the citizens should vote on the matter. She also commented that the rate is steep for those hurting in our community.

Olympia Zuniga, 6601 206<sup>th</sup> Place NE, stated that she pays her taxes and insurance and she should not have to pay more for EMS service. She believes the rate will impact working

families and not those that currently use the system. She suggested the city explore increasing taxes on those that buy and sell marijuana and alcohol.

Darrel Wilson, 3617 186<sup>th</sup> Place NE #B, noted he is a retired firefighter from Los Angeles. He believes the city should do what Los Angeles does and use a private ambulance service to do transports. He suggested that the fire department should use smaller equipment for the size of town we are.

Barbara Larson, 4125 189<sup>th</sup> Place NE, stated that she is concerned that residents will become homeless if all governments continue to increase costs on the taxpayers. She asked the Council to rethink the ambulance utility fee and send it to a vote. She feels the fee will be too much on the elderly and those on fixed income.

Holly Sloan-Buchanan, 237 S. MacLeod, remarked that she is also on a fixed income. She looked at her utility bills since 2010 and noticed that the total increase in her bill has been just \$16 during this time. She is concerned about the delay in responding to calls and the constant mandatory overtime worked by the Arlington police. She believes this is a small price to pay for the high level of service we receive.

Randy Tendering, 212 W. Jensen, inquired if residents in Smokey Point will pay the proposed ambulance utility fee and how they would be billed.

Andrew Shannon, IAFF Local No. 3728 representing Arlington Professional Firefighters, stated that Arlington public safety departments have the lowest staff counts in the county and he is concerned about the increase in high density growth and call volume. The Local would like to see new firefighters hired from the general fund dollars that are freed up from day one and not wait until year three. The Local supports the fee in concept, but not in execution.

Mark DuBois, 17625 St. Andrews Court, requested that the Council put the matter to a vote. He stated that he supports our police and fire departments but wishes the City Council would provide him with the choice.

Andy Henderson, 19126 46<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE, stated he supports the City's police and fire departments. He would also like to see the matter go to the ballot for a vote.

Ron Swirtz, 207 N. Gifford, stated he is opposed to the fee. He believes that it should be a voted levy and not a fee approved by the Council. He was concerned of the timing of the public hearing, being so close to the July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday. He also believes the current rates for the city's utilities are too high.

Adam Ankenman, 305 E. Maple Street, stated that he had a number of questions regarding the ambulance utility fee: Will the city council respond to the questions asked at the hearing? What is more important to fund in the general fund? Where did the money go from the levy lid lift that was passed by the voters? Did the City take into account new growth? Does the proposed fee apply to areas outside of city limits that receive EMS services from the city? He suggested the city council reconsider its prior action to waive

secondary hook-up fees for accessory dwelling units and put these funds in the general fund to offset the gap in funding. He also inquired about how the funds would be accounted for or would they be comingled in the General Fund. He requested the Council put the matter to a vote of the citizens.

Phil Lane, 18016 Greywalls Drive, stated that the ambulance utility fee should be put before the voters and should not appear on a utility bill. He inquired about the low-income senior discount and was concerned about those seniors in the community that are living close to the poverty line.

Vicki Hadley, PO Box 382, Silvana, inquired about other cities like Covington, Maple Valley, and Lake Stevens that have EMS service and do not have an ambulance utility fee. She suggested that the city consider raising the sales tax on soda or sweets or some other mechanism to fund the gap.

Al Mattus, 7725 Kestrel Court, stated that he did not know that an ambulance service could be a utility. He requested that Council provide the voters the opportunity to choose. He inquired if the city had published the prior studies mentioned in Mr. Ellis' PowerPoint presentation.

Debi Spencer, 18112 Woodbine Drive, remarked that she sent a letter via email to the council explaining her concerns. She asked the Council to review every source of revenue to make sure the City is getting everything it can before it asks for more money. She stated that a lift of the EMS levy should be done. She also inquired about the potential annual increase in the utility fee as is proposed in the ordinance.

John Gilliland, 18410 Champions Drive, stated he is a strong supporter of police and fire in our community. He felt the letter sent to the residents was insulting; it spoke down to the readers. He stated the City should have attached the PowerPoint presentation to the letter to better explain the proposal. He also stated that the proposed fee should be voted on by the voters.

The Public Hearing was closed at 8:20 p.m.

At this time, Mr. Ellis answered Council questions.

After the close of the public hearing, Mr. Lane inquired about the funding for the Splash Pad and commented that the City should use that money to fund EMS services. Mr. Ellis responded to this statement by stating that no city revenues are being used to design and construct the Splash Pad at Haller Park. He continued that the sources of revenue are the Stillaguamish Tribe of Indians, Rotary Club of Arlington, Friends of the Splash Pad, and a grant from the State of Washington Recreation and Conservation Office.

City Council then continued their discussion of the proposed ordinances at length.

Councilmember Marilyn Oertle moved and Councilmember Mike Hopson seconded a motion to table action on the proposed ordinances to a future meeting. The motion passed 4-3, with Councilmembers Oertle, Hopson, Weiss, and Roundy voting for and Councilmembers Schuette, Nelson, and Stickles voting against.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Human Services Policy**

City Administrator Paul Ellis presented the request that the City continue work with the Multiple Agency Coordination Group (MAC) to continue accomplishments with human services, and continue the scope of work remaining between July and November as the MAC group completes its work.

Mayor Pro Tem Marilyn Oertle moved and Councilmember Jesica Stickles seconded the motion to approve the scope of work, and authorize the Mayor to sign the Professional Services Agreement for Human Services through November 30, 2018. The motion passed unanimously.

**Ordinance amending AMC 20.46 - Design; adopting Development Design Standards and Olympic Avenue Guidelines**

Community and Economic Development Director Marc Hayes reviewed proposed revisions to Arlington Municipal Code (AMC) Chapter 20.46 - Design, and requested council approval.

Councilmember Mike Hopson moved and Councilmember Debora Nelson seconded the motion to approve the ordinance relating to land use for AMC Chapter 20.46 - Design, and the Development Design Guidelines as referenced in Chapter 20.46, and authorized the Mayor to sign the ordinance. The motion passed unanimously.

**ADMINISTRATOR & STAFF REPORTS**

None.

**MAYOR'S REPORT**

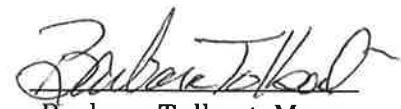
None.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

City Attorney announced that there would be no need for an Executive Session.

**ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 8:47 p.m.

  
Barbara Tolbert, Mayor