

Town of Twisp Council Minutes – 9/22/2020

Mayor Ing-Moody called the video conference meeting to order at 5:32 p.m.

Council Members present via phone/video: Aaron Studen
Mark Easton
Alan Caswell
Hannah Cordes
Hans Smith

Pledge of Allegiance:

Council Member Caswell led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Additions/Deletions to the Agenda:

N/A

Public Comment:

The following comment was received in writing and read aloud by Mayor Ing-Moody.

Attn: Mayor Soo Ing-Moody, Town Council Members
Ref: Canyon Street TranGo Bus Stop/SR 20 Project

We have contacted the local business and property owners in the area of the project and have found that the none of them want or approve of the project. We also found that some business owners were not even aware of it.

These businesses are as follows: Valley Hardware and Do It Center, Hank's Market and Mini Market, Cascade Pipe, Methow Valley Chiropractic, Miki Eiffert, Loup Loup Ski Rental, Ulrich's Pharmacy and The Trimline Salon.

It's very evident that the best interest of the Town is not being taken into consideration and what the people want. The council is not representing the people. This project needs to be totally revisited and the council need to contact the property owners and truly see what they want and not the desires of the mayor. Thank you for your time and consideration and entering this into Public Comment.

Mark & Leone Edson
Twisp, Washington

Mayor-Ing Moody stated that the letter from the Edsons provides a blatant disregard for the truth and is a misrepresentation of the facts. She clarified that both she and / or Director Denham had met with various owners named in the letter. She said all owners were aware of the project, with most of them having attended an open house for the project in November 2019 at the Twisp Valley Grange when the engineer was in town to answer any questions that the public might have had. At that meeting, Mayor Ing-Moody said that she spoke with several individual business owners and listed the conversations she had with each of those present. As a result of that meeting, Director Denham had been in contact with a few of the owners after the meeting, including having had extensive negotiations with the owner of the Trimline Salon who had been compensated through an agreement for the purchasing of land. Director Denham

stated that he spoke with each business and was able to address any concerns. He said part of the corner of Canyon was altered to help enable a safe turning for trucks at Cascade Pipe. He stated that the Trimline Salon owners were part of a property acquisition for this project and they were happy with the transaction and seemed in favor of the project. Mayor Ing-Moody stated that the Town of Twisp has even gone out of its way to be very transparent in the decisions that were made for this project, including holding a special public meeting, which is not typically done, to share the plans for the project well in advance and refutes the idea that the Town is not acting in the interest of the public, when in fact it is only acting in the best interest of the public as this project addresses a safety concern at a transit stop along an increasingly busy section of highway, where someone had already been hit while trying to cross the road.

She expressed that the letter was particularly disturbing, not only because the statements were untrue, but also general in nature with the intent appearing to have the sole purpose of undermining and eroding public trust; no statement has ever been made regarding any substantive particulars of the project needing to be addressed. At such a divisive time, it is more important than ever that the facts be stated, she said. Council Member Studen agreed and thinks it might be a good idea to establish a policy where public comment does not allow for someone to speak on behalf of another party as a proxy, without their written and signed permission. He noted that it has recently happened twice where an individual has spoken for a third party to misinform the Council. The Mayor stated that it would be up to Council as to how they wished to handle public comments at Council meetings in the future and that a policy could be put in place if desired. Council Member Caswell said that he attended the November meeting and remembers there being a few people present who were opposed to the project, but that the Palms from Cascade Pipe were in agreement, especially since they altered the original design on their corner. He asked if the new owners of Cascade Pipe had been contacted about the project? Denham stated that he has not been in contact with the new owners. Caswell also asked if there had been any follow-up with an email that WSDOT had received from Mary Bean? Mayor Ing-Moody stated she incidentally had spoken with Mary Bean right after WSDOT had received the email and Mary had made no mention of it to the Mayor. The strange thing about that email which was forwarded to her from WSDOT is that the email claimed to WSDOT that a bench was sitting in the middle of the highway which would "kill someone". After WSDOT looked at the plans again and consulted with the Town it was realized that there was no such proposal and may have simply been an attempt to thwart the project itself. Interestingly, Mayor Ing-Moody said that the email seemed to come from Mary Bean but was not signed Mary Bean. Studen added that as a former owner of a retail business, slowing down traffic benefits businesses and helps draw in more customers. Council will be revisiting the idea of implementing a policy prohibiting the submission of third-party comments. Mayor Ing-Moody stated that she will work with staff to provide the Council potential language at their next meeting.

Mayor's Report:

Mayor Ing-Moody reported she attended the recent Twisp Chamber of Commerce virtual lunch where she spoke about the Town's current projects. She said that the Broadband Action Team (BAT) had a letter written in support of rural broadband. She said she filmed a PSA for Okanogan County Public Health last week. She also said she had a Finance Committee meeting and has been having finance conversations with Department Heads heading into budget season.

Staff Reports:

Director Denham stated that Okanogan County had equipment issues when starting the chip seal for the North Town Project. He said it went OK in the end. He said that there is still some fine tuning that will need to happen. He said that he has not decided if they will sweep the street or not before Winter. The project is almost ready to install water services on SR20 and bring the new water line into service.

He also said that Varela is ready to apply for Department of Ecology funding for the Wastewater Facility. He thinks the draft application should be ready for review and approval at the next Council Meeting. Council Member Smith said it sounds like Denham has made a decision to limit the scope and apply with value engineering. Denham said he is not sure if Ecology will fully fund the project and we will probably be able to get funding from USDA for construction and design.

Commission/Committee/Board Reports:

Council Member Smith attended the Public Works meeting where they discussed a few items. He said it sounds like there is a need to apply to Dept of Ecology for a facility sewer upgrade. He said there are issues plaguing the facility. He wanted to congratulate Director Denham on being awarded again this year for "Outstanding Wastewater Treatment Plant". He said that the facility is hitting its life expectancy and it would be great to be able to upgrade the facility with Denham being here as the expert. Council Member Smith also reported on the Finance Committee meeting he attended. He said at the last update it felt good looking at the end of 2nd quarter revenues we've received while limiting expenditures. He said the Town continues to perform well with expenditures staying under budget. He said they continue to watch sales tax revenue, as they don't know what summertime spending will look like yet. He said they are anticipating a 10%-20% decrease in revenue shortfall. He stated that although the Town is in a stable position with reserves it would be prudent to reflect the expected downward trend in revenues in the 2021 Budget during these uncertain times. He said they would like to target a 20% reduction in the General Fund. Council Member Easton stated he agrees with Smith's summary and repeated that he would like to continue to be conservative in spending. Mayor Ing-Moody said that although 20% decrease is an initial projection, the number could still change as we see how where revenues come in during the next couple of months. Regardless, department heads are aware of the potential to tailor projects and programming accordingly to enable a balanced budget, as required by law. She stated that she has started working with staff to make the necessary initial cuts in the realization that if we don't cut enough now, we will have a more difficult job of cutting more at a later date. Prudent planning in advance is preferred over reacting to a greater emergency down the road.

Council Member Easton reported that he attended the Watershed meeting. He said they discussed the structure of the organization and whether the Foundation and the Council should combine. He stated that he provided the Town's position that as it stood now the Town is in favor of keeping them separate. Commissioner Andy Hover was in attendance and stated that he would like to first talk to the Mayors of Winthrop and Twisp to further discuss before moving forward. Easton said the next steps are to meet with a facilitator to see how to move forward. They would like all members to review the bylaws, Water 2060, and the Mission and Purpose. He said he appreciates the Mayor's work on this. He also attended the Twisp Chamber of Commerce's virtual lunch in which the Mayor attended to give a state of the Town and answer any questions. He felt it was a great success with great presentations.

Mayor Ing-Moody reported that she attended the Okanogan Council of Governments (OCOG) meeting. She said they continue to work with SCJ Alliance on the backroads study and that SCJ will be continuing with obtaining community input for relevant GIS markings. She reported that the Council decided to allocate any unused administrative funds (due to remote meetings) to the project which will help get a little more work accomplished than originally anticipated. Emergency management, local DOH, and Sheriff's office were all in attendance as well as other Mayors and officials to discuss emergency communication issues that were happening during the recent fires. She said it continues to be an ongoing problem in our area for cell phones and internet outages during times of emergency that need to be address. She said Chief Budrow stayed overnight to man the 911 phone line one night when it wasn't being properly routed to dispatch to ensure that any local emergency may have still been handled.

OLD/NEW BUSINESS:

Discussion/Action: SR20/Canyon Street Bid Award – Rudnick & Sons, LLC:

Mayor Ing-Moody once again noted what Council Member Caswell was referring to when he mentioned an email from Mary Bean as it pertained to this project. The Mayor said that WSDOT had apparently received an email regarding the project from a citizen and notified her and PW staff. The email stated a concern that the Town was putting a park bench in the middle of opposing lanes of traffic on SR20. The Town confirmed with WSDOT that there had never been any plan to put a park bench in the middle of the road. Both WSDOT and the Town were perplexed by the email and considered it a false claim of concern and have further not received any credible concerns related to the project moving forward. Given the late season for construction, Director Denham stated that they do not intend to issue a notice to proceed until early next year.

Council Member Smith would like to point out that the public comment received did not appear to point out any flaws in the project, but rather that they just didn't like it. He thinks it is a great project and is a benefit to the residential communities that will help ensure a safe crossing of the highway. He also said he is glad to see a good bid within the budget.

Council Member Smith moved to approve the SR20/Canyon Street bid award to Rudnick & Sons, LLC as presented. The motion was seconded by Council Member Caswell and passed unanimously.

Discussion/Action: Resolution #20-666 Federal Award Policy:

Mayor Ing-Moody stated it is required to have a policy to accept Federal Awards.

Council Member Smith moved to approve Resolution #20-666 Federal Award Policies as presented. The motion was seconded by Council Member Easton and passed unanimously.

Consent Agenda:

- Accounts Payable/Payroll
- Minutes – 9/10/2020

Vouchers audited and certified by the auditing officer as required by RCW 42.24.080, and those expense reimbursement claims certified as required by RCW 42.24.090, have been recorded on a listing, which has been made available to the Town Council. The following voucher/checks are approved for payment by a majority vote on this 22nd of September 2020.

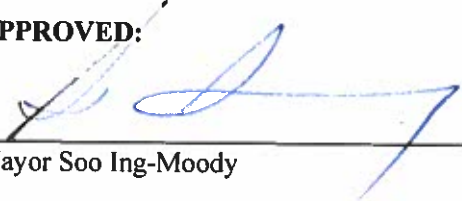
Payroll	EFT# 1829-1835	7680.00	9/15/2020
Accounts Payable	Warrant # 35711-35733	413055.86	9/22/2020
Accounts Payable	EFT # 1872	683.00	9/22/2020

Council Member Smith moved to approve the consent agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Council Member Caswell and passed unanimously.

Adjournment:

There being no further business to come before the Council, Mayor Ing – Moody adjourned the meeting at 6:46 p.m.

APPROVED:



Mayor Soo Ing-Moody

ATTEST:



Clerk/Treasurer Randy Kilmer

