

**Snohomish City Council Meeting Minutes  
September 15, 2020**

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Mayor Kartak called the Snohomish City Council regular meeting to order at 6:00 p.m., Tuesday, September 15, 2020.

**COUNCILMEMBERS/MAYOR PRESENT**

Steve Dana  
Judith Kuleta  
Tom Merrill  
Donna Ray  
Linda Redmon  
John T. Kartak, Mayor

**STAFF PRESENT**

Debbie Burton, Finance Director  
Emily Guildner, City Attorney's Office  
Yoshihiro Monzaki, City Engineer  
Glen Pickus, Planning Director  
Captain Robert Palmer, Interim Police Chief  
Steve Schuller, City Administrator and Utility  
General Manager  
Nikki Thompson, City Attorney's Office  
Brandi Whitson, Administrative Assistant

**COUNCILMEMBERS ABSENT:**

Larry Countryman

***NOTE: Due to the COVID-19 declared federal, state and local emergency, and pursuant to Governor Inslee's Proclamations 20-05 and 20-28, the Snohomish City Council held its meeting via remote participation.***

**MOTION** by Merrill, second by Redmon to excuse Councilmember Countryman. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

2. **INTRODUCTORY REMARKS BY MAYOR JOHN T. KARTAK.** Mayor Kartak provided a statement regarding the necessity to conduct the remote meeting due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
3. **APPROVE AGENDA** contents and order.

**MOTION** by Merrill, second by Kuleta to amend the agenda by adding an Action Item to confirm Mayor's appointment of a Deputy City Clerk. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

**MOTION** by Redmon, second by Ray to approve the agenda as amended. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

4. **APPROVE MINUTES** of the September 1, 2020 regular meeting.

**MOTION** by Ray, second by Kuleta to approve the minutes of the September 1, 2020 regular meeting. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

5. **CITIZEN COMMENTS.** Mayor Kartak welcomed the citizens to the meeting and discussed the procedures for providing citizen comment.

Citizen Comments:

**Kari Mikesell** commented on negative activity at the Skate Park.  
**Morgan Davis** commented on staffing.

City Comments: Closed

6. **ACTION ITEMS:**

- a. **CONFIRM** Mayor's Appointment of a Deputy City Clerk *(added at beginning of meeting)*

Mr. Schuller advised, per legal counsel and according to Ordinance 2339, that in the absence of a City Clerk, a Deputy City Clerk should be appointed to perform certain duties of the City Clerk. Mayor Kartak would like to appoint Brandi Whitson, current Administrative Assistant, as a Deputy City Clerk.

Citizen Comments:

**Morgan Davis** commented on staffing.

Citizen Comments: Closed

**MOTION** by Redmon, second by Kuleta to CONFIRM the Mayor's appointment of Brandi Whitson as Deputy City Clerk. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

- b. **AMEND** Snohomish County Sheriff's Office Interlocal Agreement for Law Enforcement Services

Mr. Schuller and Ms. Thompson presented a revised agreement, based on direction by the City Council from the previous meeting. They noted that due to the bargaining unit for law enforcement, the agreement could not be worded "lieutenant or captain," but could only include one or the other. To date, law enforcement expenses were \$701,000 under budget, so there were enough funds to cover the additional cost in salary between a lieutenant and captain.

Councilmember Ray questioned the 15-day overlap should a new Chief be assigned. Ms. Thompson advised that was not discussed, but could be presented as a condition.

Council President Redmon asked if a variation of verbiage could be used, or if ranks had to be specifically mentioned. Ms. Thompson responded that "captain" or "lieutenant" needed to be specifically mentioned.

Citizen Comments:

**Melissa Leff**, in writing, supported appointing Captain Palmer as Police Chief.

**Morgan Davis** was concerned about the salary and impact on continuity of a captain.

**John L** voiced support of police services and Captain Palmer.

**Merritt Weese** did not support paying the increased salary for a captain.

Citizen Comments: Closed

Councilmember Merrill commented on reflections since the last meeting, and voiced his determination that considering current social turmoil, a more-experienced police chief was essential; the kind of experience that a captain would bring. Additionally, there was no guarantee a lieutenant would remain with Snohomish, as lieutenants could use the position to enrich their career, and perhaps continuity should be discussed for all officers.

Council President Redmon commented on longevity and the continuity a lieutenant may bring, and how would that affect the next contract. She suggested investing in

lieutenants as a means of retaining the same officers over time. She also remarked on the atypical process of the current appointment. Previously, Council was able to interview candidates and participate in the selection process. She wanted to ensure contract negotiations would involve input from Councilmembers and the community.

Councilmember Dana commented his only reservation with appointing Captain Palmer was the additional salary expense. He mentioned lieutenants were more likely to leave for other opportunities, but a captain may actually provide longevity and continuity as they were already at the top of their profession.

Councilmember Kuleta concurred with Councilmember Merrill's comments. She was concerned about community outreach and participation in the selection process. She was relieved to hear the budget could handle the additional salary, and agreed that a captain may have the experience to handle the social unrest that the nation was witnessing. She observed that anyone could leave employment at any time for any reason, so was it realistic to expect a lieutenant to remain any longer than a captain.

Councilmember Ray remarked that moving forward, the experience a captain brings to the position may be the best option for the City, but would expect discussions and reviews to take place during the contract renewal. She voiced her support of Captain Palmer, agreed the budget could handle the additional salary expense, and felt comfortable with the City's right of refusal in lieu of a 15 day overlap.

The Council discussed the possibility of Captain Palmer's removal as Chief, however remote, and whether there were enough captains in the Sheriff's Office to fill the vacancy. Ms. Thompson remarked that during contract negotiations, the City could request verbiage that a lieutenant be allowed, until such time as a captain was available.

Captain Palmer remarked on his commitment to Snohomish, and explained that captains do not receive overtime pay, unlike lieutenants, so the additional salary may be balanced by lack of overtime pay. He invited any of the Councilmembers to one-on-one discussions if they had any additional concerns.

**MOTION** by Dana, second by Merrill to AUTHORIZE the Mayor to appoint Captain Robert Palmer as Police Chief, and sign Amendment No. 3 to the Interlocal Agreement between Snohomish County and the City of Snohomish for the Provision of Law Enforcement Services. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

c. **AUTHORIZE** Mayor to Sign Letter with Republic Services

Ms. Burton requested Council input on a draft letter notifying Republic Services that the Council will not authorize a surcharge added to recycling service fees, based on Council's discussions at past meetings.

Citizen Comments:

**John L** disapproved of an additional surcharge.

Citizen Comments: Closed

**MOTION** by Redmon, second by Merrill to AUTHORIZE the Mayor to sign the letter presented and mail to Republic Services regarding the recycling surcharge requests.

Councilmember Merrill clarified for citizens that the letter was to notify Republic Services that the City was not accepting the surcharge.

**VOTE ON MOTION:** Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

d. Social Security Tax Deferral Option

Ms. Burton provided background on the tax deferral option, explaining the taxes would have to be repaid by April 2021, which would increase the tax deductions on opted-in employees, and increase staff workload to accommodate the deferrals. Staff recommended not opting in to the program, but as the issue related to salaries, the Council had final authority. Ms. Guildner advised that if the Council would like to opt in, a resolution would be drafted for Council consideration; however, if they wished to forgo the program, no action was necessary.

Citizen Comments:

**Merritt Weese** and **John L** both voiced disapproval of the program.

Citizen Comments: Closed

Council requested to move forward with the agenda, taking no action on this item.

e. **AUTHORIZE** the Mayor to Execute a Professional Services Agreement with Gray & Osborne for the Swifty Creek Storm System and Rainier Sewer Lift Station/Forcemain Improvement Projects

Mr. Monzaki provided background on the two projects and the scope of work proposed. The Swifty Creek Storm System project would include new storm pipe installation to manage flow and help alleviate potential flooding of surface streets. The Rainier Sewer Lift Station is a critical facility of the sanitary sewer system due to the large area that flows to the station. The station is aging and in need of a thorough evaluation for repair or replacement. Both of these projects could impact the Second Street Corridor project, and should therefore be completed first.

Citizen Comments: None

Citizen Comments: Closed

**MOTION** by Ray, second by Kuleta to AUTHORIZE the Mayor to sign and execute the Professional Services Agreement with Gray & Osborne, Inc., in an amount not to exceed \$94,375.00, including a Management Reserve, for the Pre-Design Analysis of the Swifty Creek Storm System and Rainier Sewer Lift Station/Forcemain Improvement Projects.

Councilmember Dana thanked Mr. Monzaki for his efforts and looks forward to resolving these issues.

**VOTE ON MOTION:** Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

7. **DISCUSSION ITEM:** Transportation Benefit District (TBD)

Ms. Guildner provided the staff report and brief background of the TBD. She pointed out that renewing the district would not increase the tax, but would extend the 0.2% tax already in place. She outlined the next steps should Council decide to reauthorize the program, which would involve a public hearing to amend the TBD ordinance, and placement on the ballot for the August 2021 primary election.

Mr. Monzaki recapped capital projects completed with TBD funds and future projects that would benefit from funds.

Citizen Comments:

**Merritt Weese** and **Morgan Davis** both spoke in support of the TBD tax.

Citizen Comments: Closed

Councilmember Dana commented on the projects the City has been able to accomplish with TBD funds, and supported extending the tax because it would not increase the amount.

Councilmember Merrill appreciated the foresight of previous Councils to set up the TBD based on sales tax and not car tab fees. Mayor Kartak concurred, as sales tax is a relatively small amount and reaches a wider base of people.

Mr. Schuller confirmed with Council they would like to move forward with steps to continue the TBD.

8. **CONSENT ITEM: AUTHORIZE** payment of claim warrants #73441 through #73520 in the amount of \$375,010.08, issued since the last regular meeting.

**MOTION** by Dana, second by Ray to PASS the Consent Items. The motion passed unanimously (5-0).

9. **OTHER BUSINESS/INFORMATION ITEMS:** None

10. **COUNCILMEMBER COMMENTS:**

Councilmember Kuleta met with the Youth Council, who is working on a campaign to encourage citizens to register to vote. She also met with Snohomish for Equity and spent some time with Captain Palmer. She complimented staff for their work on clearing the intake drain near Root Avenue.

11. **COUNCIL PRESIDENT'S ITEMS/REPORTS:** Council President Redmon referred to Ms. Mikesell's comments and urged her to contact the Mayor as he had invited her to do so.

To the community, she stated continuity in the Police Department is a concern and assured citizens that community outreach will be undertaken.

The City applied for a grant offered by the Kiwanis for playground equipment aimed at older teens. She encouraged all to vote for Snohomish.

A Town Hall on "Recycling 101" was scheduled for September 17, with additional details posted on the City's website.

Three Councilmembers will attend an equity and inclusion training with City staff on September 22.

She and Councilmember Dana will take part in “Coffee with a Councilmember,” on Facebook Live, October 8 at 3 p.m. Additional details will be posted on the City’s website.

The number of COVID-19 cases is going down throughout the county, currently around 44 per 100,000. If the number continues to drop to 25 per 100,000, schools will be able to open for in-person classes.

September is Suicide Prevention Month, and urged people to ask others if they need help and utilize several available resources.

12. **CITY ADMINISTRATOR’S COMMENTS:** Mr. Schuller mentioned applications will be received until October 2nd for those wishing to apply for the City Council vacancy. The preliminary schedule is for Council to review applications at a workshop on October 6, conduct interviews and make a selection on October 20, with the new Councilmember sworn in on November 3.

Mr. Schuller then updated Council on the City’s continuing commitment to equity training, with an all-staff training scheduled for September 22. Individual staff will attend additional trainings as they become available.

13. **MAYOR’S COMMENTS:** Mayor Kartak reported on meeting with the Historic Downtown Snohomish Business Association where they discussed events for the upcoming holiday season and COVID-19-related accommodations that could be made. The HDSA thanked Wendy Poischbeg for her efforts in obtaining outdoor seating for restaurants.

The Mayor requested Council feedback on the use of the City’s seal for a letter initiated by the County Executive’s Office from all Snohomish County cities to support and encourage Boeing to retain 787 manufacturing in Everett. The Council generally agreed, but appreciated to see the letter prior to making a final determination.

14. **ADJOURN:**

**MOTION** by Merrill, second by Ray to adjourn the meeting at 8:14 p.m. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

APPROVED this 6th day of October, 2020.

CITY OF SNOHOMISH

ATTEST:

---

John T. Kartak, Mayor

---

Brandi Whitson, Deputy City Clerk