

Oak Harbor City Council
Special Meeting Minutes – Council Retreat
January 8, 2026

This meeting was video recorded. Due to technical difficulties with off-site recording equipment, only the first hour and twenty-eight minutes of the meeting audio recorded and therefore the meeting was not posted to YouTube following the meeting.

WELCOME

Call To Order - Mayor Wright called the special meeting – City Council Retreat to order at 9:06 a.m. The special meeting was held as previously noticed, in Room A308 at the Whidbey Island Campus of Skagit Valley College, 1900 SE Pioneer Way, Oak Harbor, WA 98277.

City Council Present:

Mayor Ronnie Wright
Mayor Pro Tem Tara Hizon
Councilmember Bryan Stucky
Councilmember Eric Marshall
Councilmember Christopher Wiegenstein
Councilmember Barbara Armes
Councilmember James P. Marrow
Councilmember Sandi Peterson

Staff Present

City Administrator Sabrina Combs
Deputy City Administrator David Goldman
Public Works Director Steve Schuller
Parks and Recreation Director Brian Smith
Community Development Director Stacie Pratschner
Human Resources Director Emma House
Police Chief Tony Slowik
City Engineer Alex Warner
Grants Administrator Wendy Horn
Communications Officer Magi Aguilar
Executive Services Coordinator Macalle Finkle
City Clerk Julie Nester

Also in attendance: City Attorney Hillary Evans
of Kenyon Disend, PLLC

1. MAYOR

a. Welcome

Mayor Wright welcomed all in attendance. He noted he was very proud of the executive team and all they do on a daily basis. He called on Communications Officer and special meeting facilitator Aguilar who noted all could help themselves to coffee, water, and snacks, including popcorn provided by Councilmember Stucky. Communications Officer Aguilar led introductions beginning with newly hired Community Development Director Pratschner.

Community Development Director Pratschner thanked all for the warm welcome and a wonderful first week. She stated she was looking forward to working with the Council, the Planning Commission, and the Mayor and City Administrator Combs. Director Pratschner noted she had been a planning director for many years and provided her background information. She noted the team at the City is great and she was excited to be here.

b. Vision and Values

Mayor Wright outlined his vision and values as follows:

- Inclusion – Taking all into consideration.
- Who We Are – We are a community and have a sense of gratitude. Our community comes together. We need to quit paying attention to the minority on social media and continue to move Oak Harbor forward.
- What We Are About – The City went through a period of little forward thinking for quite some time. We've been working to correct this and are hiring great people, like Staci, as well obtaining the Police Regional Training Facility, and having better relationships with City partners than has been the case in decades, including synchronization with the Oak Harbor School District, Island County, and others.
- Where We Are Going – I have high expectations and want to deliver for our community. My door is always open to all, including the Council, City Directors and employees, and citizens.

Mayor Wright included the following from his vision:

- Community – Manage growth while maintaining our small-town charm and connections to who we are – a community of neighbors that care for one another.
- Partnerships – Strengthen community partnerships to grow our community, increase tourism, improve our economy for local businesses, and increase workforce housing.
- Diversity and Inclusion – Welcome everyone to our community. Learn about our differences and appreciate what makes us special.

Mayor Wright included a listing of his priorities and focus as City leaders:

- Emergency Services
- Affordable Housing
- Local Partnerships
- Increase Childcare
- Support Naval Air Station Whidbey Island
- Government Transparency

Communications Officer Aguilar noted that Mayor Wright had lunch yesterday with the City's quarterly employee award winners and it was nice to hear about the positive things in their workplace. Mayor Wright will be continuing the Wright Blend, Community Catch-up, and other activities. She noted these activities were not so much about the quantity of people attending, but rather the quality of communications with and from the community.

Upcoming dates:

- January 30, 2026 – Wright Blend – 10:00 a.m. at the Clean Water Facility Interpretive Center. Deputy City Administrator and Finance Director Goldman will be sharing information about the City's budget and budget process.
- February 27, 2026 – Wright Blend at Regency on Whidbey.
- Community Catch-ups – These are an opportunity for the City to partner with other entities such as the School District, I-COM, or highlight City departments, such as the Public Works Department, that have been held so far.

2. LEGAL

a. Governance Review – City Attorney Hillary Evans

City Attorney Evans provided the Council with a review of Council Governance as follows:

- Council Rules – Copies of which were provided. The Council Rules of Procedure were last amended on July 24, 2024.
- Roles – The City of Oak Harbor has a Mayor/Council, also known as a strong Mayor, form of government in which the City is the legislative body and the Mayor is the CEO and is responsible for staff and City Hall and City facilities and operations.
- Conduct – When appearing before others, Councilmembers must speak in terms of the majority Council opinion. If a Councilmember wishes to state their separate opinion, they should clearly state that it is their own personal opinion and is not stated as representing the Council majority.
- Council Meeting Responsibilities -
 - Attendance
 - Preparation
 - Decorum
 - Refraining from interruption
 - Adhering to Roberts Rules of Order

Public Records Act (PRA) Refresher –

Attorney Evans explained that Washington State is among the strongest in regard to the Sunshine Act and the transparency of public records. A public record is defined very broadly and can include any writing or communication in any form. As City Councilmembers there is a need to be cognizant of the difference between a request for information as opposed to a request for a public record. Attorney Evans advised the Council to refer requests to the City’s Public Records Officer (PRO) who works closely with her office. She noted there is a big difference between production and disclosure. The PRO’s job is to determine and manage a request and, when appropriate, create an exemption log for any redacted information. Searches for requested records must be documented to ensure all data is collected.

Attorney Evans noted she would be happy to provide the Council with records retention training. She recommended the Councilmembers only use their City provided devices for any City business or correspondence and to not copy any information from their City device to a personal device. She advised that if an item regarding the City were to come to a Councilmember’s personal device they should not respond and should forward it to their City device and then delete it from their personal device.

Attorney Evans explained that the Councilmembers are required to assist in searches for public records as requested by the PRO. It is the City’s job to assist the requestor.

Attorney Evans reviewed the very few common exemptions allowed by the PRA She explained there is no general privacy exemption and reminded the Council to remain concise in public emails and reviewed the costly penalties for non-compliance.

Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA) Refresher –

Attorney Evans reviewed the following:

- What is a meeting? – When a quorum gathers together. The intent of a “meeting” is for City business. Be aware of any appearance of a quorum when participating in an activity in the capacity of being a Councilmember and notify the City Clerk of your intention to attend. Do not “reply all” to emails that include other members of the Council. This can be construed to be a serial meeting.
- What is an action? – When a majority of the Council gathers to discuss any agency business.

- Social Media – Attorney Evans advised the Council to leave this to the professionals, such as the Communications Officer. If participating, Councilmembers should have personal versus professional accounts. In terms of public records, consider how these are preserved and how to search them. If you think an item should potentially be saved, screenshot it and send it to the City’s PRO.
- Ethics – Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 43.23 outlines ethics for elected officials. The City Council adopted a Code of Ethics and Conduct Policy and Procedure via Resolution 24-09 on March 19, 2024 and a subsequent Reaffirmation of the City Council’s commitment to its rules of Ethics and Conduct via Resolution 25-05 on February 18, 2025. Councilmembers should avoid any appearance of conflict with these policies. Attorney Evans noted that standards of ethics can include anti-harassment and conduct upon leaving the City. Remedies may include admonishment or reprimand by the Council.

Mayor Pro Tem Hizon thanked Attorney Evans for her presentation and requested a copy.

Communications Officer Aguilar noted Public Records Officer (PRO) Bradley was also happy to provide training. Mayor Wright observed that PRO Bradley was currently also overseeing records for the Oak Harbor Police Department for the time being and was very busy. Communications Officer Aguilar requested that if PRO Bradley sends a Councilmember a request and more time is needed to complete it that they please let her know.

3. COMMUNICATIONS

a. Staff Morale – Communications Officer Aguilar

Communications Officer Aguilar reported that the Employee Survey Committee was working on what they saw as trends, and positive, neutral, or negative comments from the recently completed 2025 Employee Survey.

She requested members of the Council read aloud some of the staff comments provided in the survey that were categorized as “Hopeful”.

As was reported to Council, the Employee Survey Committee is made up of members from various departments:

- Phillip Esqueda from Public Works
- Angela Braunstein from Fire
- Emma House from Human Resources
- Craig Lamas-Cole from Parks and Recreation
- Kim Schmal from Finance
- Magi Aguilar from Executive Administration

The Committee has met twice to analyze the survey results.

Communications Officer Aguilar asked the Council for their input on how the Hopeful comments made them feel.

Councilmember Marrow, Mayor Pro Tem Hizon, and Councilmembers Peterson, and Stucky provided their respective questions and comments.

Councilmember Marrow observed that people are reticent to be critical.

Mayor Pro Tem Hizon voiced her gratitude for the staff who show up and do the work.

Councilmember Peterson noted that prior to her election some people told her they weren't taking the survey as they felt it was not safe. They thought the incentives were not okay and felt staff were pressured to take the survey.

Councilmember Stucky felt the responses could be different between departments.

Public Works Director Schuller noted he had been with the City for four (4) years and cited the improvement in morale as wonderful and also the staff perception of the City Council. Director Schuller observed that of his 52 staff, two thirds were relatively new to their positions and that he had seen a culture change in Public Works.

Councilmember Wiegenstein inquired if there was any place where a staff member could make an anonymous comment.

City Administrator Combs explained there is an online ethics comment form and also the Mayor's comment box in the lobby of City Hall and online.

Councilmember Wiegenstein noted he thought change is good, but that not all people think that change is good.

City Administrator Combs observed that the City has seen a transition in which staff feedback is welcome and there has been a shift in staff feeling more comfortable in expressing themselves. She noted Executive Services Coordinator Finkle did a good job of finding time on she and Mayor Wright's schedule to meet with employees when they request it.

Mayor Wright noted that you are never going to make everyone happy and that a culture shift takes time. There was a toxic atmosphere when he first came into office and that change, and the perception of change doesn't happen overnight. It takes time to build trust with people.

Councilmember Stucky inquired about exit interviews with employees leaving the City.

Human Resources Director House explained there is an option to do an exit interview and the majority will do so online or in-person.

Councilmember Stucky noted it would be nice to receive a summary of these exit interviews. Human Resources Director House noted she could do so although she usually looks at them to see what Human Resources can improve upon.

Councilmember Armes observed the City is making what she termed monumental changes and that not all are comfortable with change but change needs to be made. She noted staff don't always understand why when change is made and the community doesn't always understand change.

Mayor Wright reported that some twenty (20) or more year employees are very happy. He stated that outside of public safety, employee morale and satisfaction are one of his top priorities and are taken very seriously.

Communications Officer Aguilar noted in the Council packet were other categories: Unheard or Unequal, Trust and Communication Matter, It Depends Where You Work, Stress, Workload, and Retention are Real, and noted comments regarding food as And Yes, Food Came Up. She noted that Executive Administration can't come up with solutions unless we know what is going on. She reviewed a question from the survey regarding the City Council that asked if employees felt supported by the Council. 36.7% said yes, with 52% responding neutral. She asked what actions the Council are taking or could take to make staff feel supported.

Councilmember Marshall observed the Council's role is not to engage staff. He noted as policy makers the Council shouldn't have interactions with the staff on a day-to-day basis.

Communications Officer Aguilar noted one example of where this would be appropriate was if the City posted about a project completed by staff or an upcoming project to praise staff for their work.

Councilmember Wiegenstein observed that he does not comment on social media.

Councilmember Stucky noted that when Council makes decisions they need to acknowledge the impact on staff, and to identify the tangible impacts on staff, if they are negative, and to acknowledge that.

Mayor Pro Tem Hizon observed that Council should be aware of the time spent by staff on presentations for Council meetings. As an example, she noted staff may bring an item to the Council for review and discussion as many as four or more times with no comments, but once that item is brought to the Council for a vote the Council now has tons of questions and that work by staff is undermined or must be redone.

Communications Officer Aguilar suggested Councilmembers could hold scheduled office hours at City Hall and they could also attend events such as Wright Blend, and if doing so, should let the City Clerk know in advance.

Police Chief Slowik noted that about a quarter of staff watch the City Council meetings.

Mayor Wright acknowledged Councilmember Stucky's comment about acknowledging staff, noting that saying thank you goes a long way. Mayor Wright noted staff presented information at fourteen (14) Council meetings regarding a Business & Occupation (B&O) Tax and the Marina. He stressed that much of the work needs to be done in the Council workshops.

Councilmember Peterson inquired about having a "Department of the Month".

City Administrator Combs and Mayor Wright noted these are already scheduled throughout the year.

Communications Officer Aguilar noted Council attendance at events was also a way to support staff, and to again, let the City Clerk know in advance of any planned attendance.

City Administrator Combs noted the City also recognizes Parks & Recreation Month, Public Works Month, and others by proclamation throughout the year.

Mayor Pro Tem Hizon stated she remembered there being more proclamations in years past in which the Councilmembers would have more participation but believed these may have been scaled back to reduce the length of meetings during Mayor Bob Severns' terms as Mayor. She noted proclamations are selected by the Mayor and that she would like to see more of them.

City Clerk Nester noted the City currently makes about ten proclamations per year.

Communications Officer Aguilar observed it was great to see Council members at all-staff events and that the intention of them attending goes a long way.

Councilmember Armes noted there are some things that Councilmembers don't always see in their email. She noted it would be nice to see Councilmembers at the upcoming Marina Tenant Meeting

on January 16, 2026 from 6-7 p.m. She noted the Marina is struggling and that Harbormaster Henry is going above and beyond in pulling that community back in and helping them to be less separated.

Councilmember Wiegenstein observed that calendar invitations are helpful and that he sees the ones that the City Clerk places on the Council calendars. He noted this includes ribbon cuttings and noted having a civic events calendar would be helpful too.

Councilmember Marrow noted that in regard to the employee survey, he would like to know why some answered as they did.

Communications Officer Aguilar observed tomorrow is Law Enforcement Appreciation Day. She also noted that the City archives social media and City cell phone data.

Break – Mayor Wright called for a ten-minute break at 10:40 a.m. The retreat resumed at 10:50 a.m.

4. CITY ADMINSTRATOR

a. Looking Ahead

City Administrator Combs led a discussion of three topics:

- Council Calendar Changes
- Advisory Boards
- Community Events

Council Calendar Changes – At their November 5, 2025 meeting, the Council approved their calendar for 2026. At that meeting and in the weeks since, some Councilmembers have brought up a desire to discuss potential changes to include additional meetings.

Presently, the Council holds regular meetings on the first and third Tuesdays of each month at 5:30 p.m. and workshops on the fourth Tuesday of each month at 1:00 p.m. with the exceptions being in the months of June and July during which just one regular meeting and one workshop are held.

City Administrator Combs noted the Council's first meeting in August is as a rule moved to the following evening as that first Tuesday is always designated as National Night Out in support of law enforcement, fire, and other first responders, with an event held at Windjammer Park. Councilmembers have pointed out that moving the Council meeting in this manner causes a conflict with the Oak Harbor Summer Concert Series, which are performed on Wednesdays in August. In November, the Council's first meeting is moved to the following day in honor of Election Day.

Councilmember Wiegenstein inquired whether the Council could go a month without approving accounts payable vouchers.

Deputy City Administrator and Finance Director Goldman explained this could be done but was not the best practice. Councilmember Stucky and Mayor Pro Tem Hizon believed a regular meeting was needed each month, but suggested removing the first meeting in August entirely, leaving one regular meeting and one workshop in that month.

Councilmember Peterson inquired about the time for National Night Out. Chief Slowik noted that event is held from 4:00-8:00 p.m.

Councilmember Armes observed that the problem with doing away with meetings was that the City had such a busy agenda and often had huge meeting packets. She noted it behooved the Council

to keep the schedule as is without eliminating meetings or to consider adding meetings, although this puts an extra burden on the staff.

Mayor Wright stated he would like to see an extra workshop added each month and felt this would help Council meetings to be shorter, with the majority of discussion occurring in workshops.

Councilmember Armes observed the Council Calendar had been kept the same way forever but the City is growing and the Council needs additional time to work on and consider items. She noted the Anacortes City Council meets weekly.

Mayor Wright noted that the Anacortes City Council does 90% of their work in committees and then presents it to the rest of the Council.

Councilmember Stucky stated he was all in favor of more meetings and observed the Council all have different levels of engagement. He reiterated the need for monthly meetings and was no in favor of having a month without meetings. He noted he plans his vacations around Council meetings and felt the public has the right to look the Council in the eye. Councilmember Stucky stated he would support more workshops and thought the more frank discussions and real work should be done in workshops.

Councilmember Marrow noted the business of the United States House of Representatives is all hammered out in committees. He stated he would favor increasing the number of meetings but was not sure about doing so during the summer observing the potential affect on staff. He noted he is retired and ready to do a sixty (60) hour work week.

Mayor Wright noted there are seven (7) Councilmembers so it would not be a problem if one of them occasionally needed to miss a meeting. He noted he would be taking some vacation time in September and Mayor Pro Tem Hizon would chair the meetings in his absence.

Councilmember Stucky noted that per the Council Rules, the Council are technically not required to attend workshops, which he felt was ridiculous.

Councilmember Wiegenstein noted he would be in favor of more workshops but observed more people viewed the Council meetings as compared to the workshops.

City Administrator Combs noted that as discussed, at times we rehash in regular meetings what was already presented and discussed in a workshop, and this delays the process.

Mayor Pro Tem Hizon stated she would support adding a workshop and keeping all on Tuesdays with the exception of the first meeting in August, which is August 4th in 2026, that should be moved to accommodate National Night Out.

Councilmember Wiegenstein inquired whether the August 4th meeting could be held earlier in the day or on Thursday of that week instead of a Wednesday.

Councilmember Peterson noted the Council has elected obligations. She suggested starting at 6:00 p.m. and inquired about the amount of time needed at the National Night Out event.

Councilmember Marshall observed the Council could not be shifting their schedule around every community event. He stated he would be the dissenting voice to adding another workshop, citing the impacts for those who work and additional time requirements for the staff. He stated he would prefer the Council hold an additional workshop as an option only and not schedule them unless

needed. Councilmember Marshall noted he would be fine with having two (2) regular Council meetings every month and one (1) workshop.

Councilmember Arnes noted that yes, people do work. She observed that when those elected decided to run for the Council they needed to be aware their life would be altered. She noted the many items on the Council schedule, including the work in progress on the Comprehensive Plan, infrastructure, and so on, as what each had signed up for. She noted she had taken three (3) days off last year but acknowledged she was retired with not a lot of things to do.

Mayor Wright observed that workshops are not as labor intensive for staff and were more a matter of staff carving out time during the workday to present work they were already doing. He noted most cities have more meetings than the Oak Harbor City Council does.

Councilmember Wiegenstein inquired how many cities the size of Oak Harbor hold evening Council meetings.

City Attorney Evans noted that all do.

Councilmember Wiegenstein noted he would prefer to keep workshops in the afternoons.

Councilmember Stucky suggested the Council add a second Tuesday workshop from 1:00-4:00 p.m.

Councilmember Marrow inquired if it would be better for one of the workshops to be held in the evening. All said it would not.

Mayor Pro Tem Hizon noted her concern about additional staff time.

City Administrator Combs observed a meeting/workshop/meeting/workshop schedule would give staff more time for presentations to the Council.

Councilmember Marrow stated he favored adding an extra workshop each month.

City Administrator Combs noted staff will revise the Council calendar to add an extra workshop on the second Tuesday of each month and would bring this back to the Council for consideration at their January 20, 2026 regular meeting.

City Clerk Nester requested clarification regarding whether this change would apply to the months of June and July in which there is currently one (1) regular meeting and one (1) workshop.

Mayor Pro Tem Hizon observed the reason for holding only one (1) meeting in June is to accommodate the Association of Washington Cities Annual Conference that is held during the third week of June. She explained the holding of one (1) meeting in July was to accommodate Council and staff vacation time.

Councilmember Marshall suggested the Council could hold two (2) regular meetings in June and not hold a June workshop.

Councilmember Wiegenstein and Mayor Pro Tem Hizon inquired whether it would be better to hold two regular and two workshop meetings throughout the year.

City Administrator Combs noted that with the City's new agenda software, departments are supposed to be adding their items in advance.

Councilmember Marshall stated he would continue to push for the move of the first regular meeting in August to Wednesday to accommodate Council attendance at National Night Out and to move the first regular meeting in November to Wednesday to observe Election Day.

City Administrator Combs noted the greater consensus she was hearing from the Council was to hold two regular meetings and two workshops each month and still accommodate the move to Wednesdays for National Night Out and Election Day.

Advisory Boards – City Administrator Combs reviewed the purpose of City advisory Boards, Commissions and Committees, their training and staff training, and their roles and staff roles. These Boards, Commissions and Committees were created to serve in an advisory capacity. They do not set policy, which is the Council’s responsibility, but do review work products and provide for community engagement. She noted a member of the Council serves on each advisory Board, Commission, or Committee as an ex-officio.

- Recognition - City Administrator Combs noted Mayor Wright would like to do more in recognition of those serving, including certificates of appreciation.
- Training – Mayor Wright will be attending meetings this year to talk with Advisory Boards about their roles in the City.
- Nepotism – City Administrator Combs noted this had come up at the January 6, 2026 Council meeting following discussion of and revision to the nepotism clause to include all elected officials in the Employee Policy Manual section 2.11 – Personal and Family Relationships (nepotism), which was adopted by the Council at their December 16, 2025 regular meeting. This was brought up during the January 6, 2026 consent agenda item for re-appointment of Advisory Board, Commission, and Committee members for 2026. Currently one (1) person serving on the Parks and Recreation Commission and one (1) person serving on the Civil Service Commission could be affected if it were determined their service could be subject to this clause. The application form for Boards, Commissions, and Committees includes a question of whether the applicant is related to anyone employed at the City, including as a contractor or vendor, or serving on City Council or on another board/commission/committee. The Council tabled the re-appointments at the January 6, 2026 meeting in order to hold further discussion at this retreat.

City Administrator Combs noted language about nepotism could be added to Oak Harbor Municipal Code, Section 2.65.005 and language regarding nepotism could be added to the governing documents for Boards, Commissions, and Committees. This has been reviewed with the City Attorney.

Councilmember Marshall noted he had brought up the question at the January 6, 2026 meeting not to have this be about the person or persons but for the discussion to be about the policy.

Councilmember Peterson asked for a reading of the current City code.

City Administrator Combs explained there is no language regarding nepotism in the City code. The Council adopted Employee Policy Manual contains language on nepotism, but not the City Code.

Councilmember Peterson observed the staff person serving as the Civil Service Secretary is the grandson of someone appointed to the Civil Service Commission. She noted she had a long discussion of this relationship with the Commission member, who had disclosed this prior to their initial appointment.

City Attorney Evans noted staff would like to have direction on this and noted it was not entirely common, especially in a smaller city versus a larger city. She explained some cities do have a nepotism policy that says that a City Councilmember cannot appoint a family member. She noted

most of the Council's appointments are to advisory Boards, Commissions, and Committees with some having additional rules, such as who may serve on the Lodging Tax Advisory Committee based on whether they are a collector or receiver. Attorney Evans observed the Council should be aware there may be conflicts within a Board, Commission or Committee and work that out. She explained that while the Council knew who the members are and could consider where their input is coming from, she could provide examples of language added to code from other cities depending on what the Council wished to accomplish and requested more information.

Councilmember Wiegenstein asked what the worst-case scenario could be.

Councilmember Marshall explained the Employee Policy Manual had made him question this. He observed the City of Kirkland has some specific language about nepotism and noted he has seen locally where two family members participate on the same Boards. He stated at some point this should be acknowledged in our town of 25,000. Councilmember Marshall observed that right now, the Council could vote to deny an appointment, but on what grounds. He found this problematic and asked if the Council should create a policy.

Attorney Evans noted that the City of Kirkland has one sentence that says a City Councilmember shall not appoint a family member to a Board, Commission or Committee.

Councilmember Stucky observed that the City of Kirkland has a weak-mayor system which is different from the City of Oak Harbor. He stated he did not think the ex-officio from the Council should serve on the same board as a family member. He noted we are begging people to serve on these advisory boards. He stated he favored guardrails but did not agree with saying no family members could serve and was not fine with that.

Councilmember Armes agreed. She noted as was the case with very few people running for City Council, there were very few applying to serve on an advisory board. She noted these were advisory boards only with the Council taking their opinions.

Councilmember Peterson inquired if a family member serves on an advisory board should the Councilmember not vote.

Councilmember Stucky explained that no Councilmember should serve as ex-officio on the same board as a family member and should not vote on their appointment. He did not see the concern for this since these boards are advisory only.

Councilmember Marrow noted the size of a city, large or small, does not matter, citing Chicago as an example of where some families take over. The felt there ought to be some policy.

Police Chief Slowik observed the Civil Service Commission is not an advisory board and that they make their own decisions.

Human Resources Director House noted there is also a staff liaison on all Boards, Commissions, and Committee and that staff person reports on any potential concerns or conflicts.

Councilmember Marshall stated he would prefer to have a blanket policy that is defensible and not arbitrary.

Police Chief Slowik noted the person serving on the Civil Service Commission is exceptionally qualified.

Councilmember Marshall observed it was better not to take appointments on a case-by-case basis.

Councilmember Stucky noted the Boards, Commissions and Committee are advisory only.

Councilmember Marshall noted he was concerned with the optics.

Councilmember Peterson noted at times members or the Council recuse themselves on other matters, and that if she had any concerns about a vote, she would recuse herself.

Councilmember Wiegenstein noted the State doesn't really have anything specific on the subject either, and that he would like to see options and a potential direction.

Councilmember Marrow stated that he supported Councilmember Marshall's position but noted that having no policy was essentially a policy.

Mayor Wright observed that the Council had tabled the 2026 re-appointments and that direction was needed.

City Attorney Evans noted that the City of Kirkland's policy is a strict prohibition. She suggested the Council could determine that no Councilmember serve on the same advisory board as a family member and could recuse themselves from voting on any appointment of a family member. This could be placed on a future agenda.

Councilmember Wiegenstein asked whether the Council could approve the re-appointments as presented at the January 6, 2026 meeting and then make a change to add that policy moving forward.

Councilmember Stucky observed this would work for those seeking re-appointment, however there are many people serving that are halfway through their terms.

Councilmember Wiegenstein suggested there could be a grace period.

Mayor Pro Tem Hizon noted that all present here today were involved for a reason, so it would not be a surprise if a family member had similar values. She stated she would hate to disqualify and entire group of volunteers because they are related to her or to another Councilmember and would not support a blanket policy against any being able to serve. Mayor Pro Tem did agree that any serving should not be on the same advisory board as a member of Council serving as the ex-officio, and that Councilmembers should recuse themselves from voting on the appointments of family members.

Councilmember Stucky asked whether if approved, this would apply to those who are in the middle of their terms.

Mayor Wright stated he would not seek to do that.

Councilmember Wiegenstein noted he is one of twenty-two (22) grandchildren and agreed with Mayor Pro Tem Hizon.

City Attorney Evans asked how broadly the Council would want to define "family"? Would this apply to spouses, children, and so on?

Councilmember Stucky noted this was not defined in the Employee Policy Manual. He noted he would favor that a family member not serve on the same board or boards as a Councilmember.

Councilmember Peterson noted if the Council was to provide direction today, and vote at the next Council meeting, how would that hold anything up?

Councilmember Wiegenstein observed what if the Council did nothing, moved forward with what re-appointments they have, and kept the status quo until further study at a workshop.

Councilmember Stucky noted there were three (3) Parks & Recreation Commission members at the January 6, 2026 Council meeting that were ready to be re-appointed and questioned how this affected their morale as volunteers.

City Attorney Evans suggested the Council could approve the slate of re-appointments as presented at the January 20, 2026 meeting and then have the topic on the January 27, 2026 workshop for further discussion, with a potential vote on a nepotism clause at the February 3, 2026 meeting.

Councilmember Peterson asked why not just provide a direction to change this? She asked whether two weeks would matter in delaying the re-appointments.

Councilmember Marshall noted most of the advisory group meetings would need to be cancelled with potential for lack of a quorum.

Councilmember Peterson noted that in that case this clause would not apply to this group of re-appointment applicants, but when the Council votes on potentially adding the clause in February, those new applicants going forward would be affected.

All acknowledged that as a correct understanding. Mayor Wright stated staff will cancel the advisory board meetings for the remainder of this month until the re-appointments are voted on for approval on January 20, 2026.

2026 Community Events – City Administrator Combs noted that City staff assist the Council with their participation in two (2) parades each year, Holland Happening, and Fourth of July. She thanked the Stucky's for decorating a City truck for the Councilmembers to ride in, and thanked City Videographer Tim Shelley for driving it in the parades. Staff coordinate providing the vehicle and signage.

Councilmember Stucky observed that his spouse did most of the decorating of the truck.

City Administrator Combs noted what is needed from the Councilmembers is confirmation of their attendance as this assists staff in coordinating with the event planners and ensures any required Notice of Attendance is issued. If members of the Council wish to participate in other community events, she advised them to let the City Clerk know in advance so that she can determine if a Notice of Attendance is warranted for the perception of a possible quorum.

WORKING LUNCH – 12:00 Noon

5. DEPUTY CITY ADMINISTRATOR

a. Budget Games – Deputy City Administrator and Finance Director Goldman explained there are tactics viewed as budget games that appear in local governments and reasons why they exist, including the scarcity of resources, competition for funding, and the practice of empire building, among others. Budget games also play a part in determining risk as people have different perceptions of what constitutes risk and how that relates to providing services or handling unplanned expenses.

Deputy City Administrator and Finance Director Goldman led a Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) activity using cards provided for this purpose. He provided varying scenarios and asked the Councilmembers and staff to determine which card matched the scenario.

Scenarios included:

- King – The Padding Play in which you ask for more than you really need. This acts as a form of insurance against unknown costs.
- Queen – The Crisis Card – The threat that something bad will occur if funding is not provided.
- Jack 1 – Selling the Sizzle – Long on flash but short on substance and frequently includes techno babble, over confidence and over-stating of outcomes and expressing bias.
- Jack 2 – The Pet Project Play – Stretching the truth to make the project seem a priority and giving it a halo effect.
- Jack 3 – Influence Operation – An example would be a Director going outside of the Council to influence a Councilmember before a vote is taken.

Others included:

- Mandate Masquerade – Exaggeration or fabrication of facts or outcomes.
- Silent Windfall – Keeping silent about budget errors
- Client Heart Tug – “Do it for the children” with a presentation that only lists the pros and not the cons for a project.
- Waiting Game – Can obscure a department’s real needs.
- Foot in the Door Financing – Starting small to get a project going, then adding more to it.
- Return on Investment Ruse – Over promising of revenues.
- Blend and Extend – Disguising new programs in existing programs.

Deputy City Administrator and Finance Director Goldman reviewed the GFOA’s “Playbook Counterplays” with an emphasis on reducing and mitigating negatives and aiding in waste elimination. He explained general and specific ways to counter budget game ploys including providing broad targets, linking program revenue where applicable, and emphasizing results as well as examining the assumptions, and asking questions to find less costly options.

Deputy City Administrator and Finance Director Goldman reviewed the timeline for the City’s 2027-2028 biennial budget, which starts today with the discussion of the Council’s goals and priorities. He explained that having consistent and detailed direction from the Council aided in the success of the budget process.

Deputy City Administrator and Finance Director Goldman explained he will be providing a budget calendar for the Council and City Leadership and will include a budget timeline, a budget primer for newly elected Councilmember Peterson, a short video on municipal finance, and the preliminary six (6) year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). Staff will conduct workshops on the budget leading up to September. In October the Mayor will present his abridged preliminary budget. In November Council will consider the preliminary budget adoption and hold public hearing on the budget, including public hearing on property tax levies, and then will consider budget adoption.

Councilmember Stucky asked if a biennial budget was more common than an annual budget.

Deputy City Administrator and Finance Director Goldman explained that every state is different. In Oregon and Washington biennial budgets are more common. He noted it takes a lot of effort to put the budget together and that in the second year of the biennial budget staff are making more updates based on policy and so on. He noted that all at the City have a role to play in creating the budget and doing so with trust and transparency. This includes having data to show our work and how costs are determined, the benefits, any ongoing expenses and revenues.

6. TEAM BUILDING ACTIVITY

a. Word Shuffle – Executive Services Coordinator Finkle led the activity, which provided both the Council and staff with a series of single words with which to make five-word sentences. Example of those created included, “Stronger Communication Improves Staff Morale” and “Food, Like Pizza, Motivates Staff.”

7. CITY COUNCIL PRIORITIES

- 2026 Legislative Priorities
- Review Current
- Department Priorities – these were included in the Council Packet but were not discussed individually at this retreat.
- New 2027-2028

Communications Officer Aguilar and Executive Services Coordinator Finkle noted that the Council had requested additional time at this year’s retreat to review and discuss Council priorities, so the last two and a half hours of the scheduled time would be dedicated to that.

Legislative Priorities - Executive Services Coordinator Finkle noted the Council had already adopted their 2026 Legislative Priorities and provided the Council with a copy. No discussion was requested regarding these adopted priorities. A copy is attached to these minutes.

Review of Current Priorities – Executive Services Coordinator provided copies of the Council’s adopted 2025-2026 Over-Arching Priorities and the individual priorities for each sub-section. These were shown along with whether these had been accomplished or are in progress. A copy is attached to these minutes.

New 2027-2028 Priorities – Communications Officer Aguilar led a white board exercise and asked the Council and Directors to write their top priorities on green notes and their secondary priorities on yellow notes and place them under the following eight (8) over-arching goal and priorities categories:

- Public Involvement
- Promote/Implement Housing Action Plan
- Increase Police Engagement
- Employee Morale/Staffing and Workloads/Equity
- Roadway Projects
- Park Maintenance
- Repair Utility Infrastructure
- Water Storage and Supply
- Connecting Downtown and Marina

Communications Officer Aguilar reviewed the responses for each of the above.

Public Involvement –

- More communication with the public such as monthly articles in local newspapers.
- Broader and more predictable meetings
- Public awareness of crime and risks here
- More unified council presence and possible Council office hours
- Continual good relationship with Naval Air Station Whidbey Island (NASWI)
- Address Homelessness and discuss addiction for real and measurable results.
- Work with the legislature on constraints and the need for better laws from Olympia.

Promote/Implement Housing Action Plan –

- Improve traffic flows and street development
- Design/Engineering for increased population and rezoning
- Facilitate Housing Action Plan through streamlined permitting and inspections.
- Adoption of the 2025-2045 Comprehensive Plan and periodic updates.
- No to low barrier transitional housing.
- Encourage density and mixed use.

Increased Police Engagement –

- Public Safety through vehicle traffic and human and drug trafficking enforcement
- Work with Island County on stronger behavioral health programs and facilities.
- Mental Health and behavioral staffing.
- Police Department – House Bill (H) 2015 funding changes =-Contract for our DCR's – Representative Paul is looking at cancelling the contract with the County and going out for a new contract for crisis responders.
- Revenue sharing from the new Island County Criminal Justice 0.1% Sales Tax collected within Oak Harbor.
- Emergencies – teaching residents about having proper supplies on-hand.
- Increasing Public Awareness
- Police Station Feasibility Study
- Improve Emergency Communications.
- Increasing proactive law enforcement.
- Public awareness of crime risks.

Employee Morale –

- Provide frequent awards/recognitions
- Professional development and continuing education opportunities for the Council and the staff
- Increase Councilmember public presence
- Cross training.
- Enterprise Resources Plan (ERP) implemented for all departments
- Mindfulness

City Administrator Combs noted there is an element where the administration works on framing what information to send to staff and to the Council. She provided an example of an incident at the Oak Harbor Marina and decision made from a communications standpoint to support and to minimize the impact on staff. She asked that Councilmembers always check in with Communications Officer Aguilar if they have heard a rumor and refer any response through her to ensure consistent and accurate communications.

Chief Slowik noted an example was the multi-agency response on January 1, 2026.

Communications Officer Aguilar noted one point of contact assures that the Administration Team is all in communication.

City Administrator Combs noted she and Communications Officer Aguilar, and the Mayor will sometimes split the list of those to communicate with, including the Council, to say what we know and what we don't know, and to communicate additional information when more is available.

Communications Officer Aguilar noted that Councilmembers can inadvertently cause a different narrative which equals more work for the staff, with the potential for needed corrections, etc., and provided examples of when this has occurred.

City Administrator Combs explained that the Administration wants to get in front of potential speculation and provide consistent messaging and communications.

Councilmember Peterson noted it would be better for Councilmembers to say, "I don't know" or refer them to Communications Officer Aguilar. She noted that Councilmembers could say they do not have any comment or do not have all the information and tell those inquiring to contact Communications Officer Aguilar.

Councilmember Marrow noted the Councilmembers greatly appreciate having an awareness of any issues.

Councilmember Wiegenstein noted that Communications Officer Aguilar should say to Councilmembers that "This is the City's concentrated response" in communicating with them rather than tell them what to do.

Communications Officer Aguilar noted that all communications shared by the Councilmembers need to be mindful. She observed that gossip pages are not the City's narrative and asked the Council to please send her any questions.

Roadway Projects –

- SE Pioneer Way – Redo Pioneer Way from Downtown to Harbor Point.
- Midway Boulevard Improvements (Design).
- Roadway Infrastructure – continue planned implementation of improvements.
- Realize and firm plans to increase traffic capacity on or about SR20 near Safeway
- Increase safety with traffic circles

Public Works Director Schuller noted the City plans to do a major repair of Pioneer Way when the weather is better. He noted Main Street is a separate project. Staff have a vision of connecting SR20 into the downtown area.

City Administrator Combs noted improving communications about that roadway.

Councilmember Stucky agreed and noted the Councilmembers could put out "we're aware of it" and post planning on social media.

Communications Officer Aguilar explained she is trying to get residents accustomed to going to the City's website and clicking links for information provided there.

City Engineer Warner explained the City is working with the Washington State department of Transportation (WSDOT) in several areas, an example of which is the roundabout at Fakkema Road. WSDOT agrees with the need to make changes to Swantown Road to SR20 but notes their construction costs have doubled..

Councilmember Marrow noted an enlargement of that roadway is needed and traffic was a frequently backed up.

Public Works Director Schuller observed that revenues from state gas taxes were not as expected, and this was a matter for the legislature to figure out.

City Administrator Combs noted the Council's legislative priorities would be shared with legislators in Olympia and in Washington, D.C. over the next few weeks with specific topics included. She noted she and Mayor Wright also talk with Island County and the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) to continue to push for roadway projects and improvements with legislators.

Councilmember Wiegenstein referencing local complaint sites online and observed a need to do a better job of communicating and to provide answers as quickly as possible.

Mayor Wright noted he did not advocate for engaging with those online posts.

Communications Officer Aguilar noted there have been comments made online that are derogatory to staff.

Councilmember Wiegenstein believed that regular updates can alleviate or help with that.

Parks/Maintenance -

- Sports Complex
 - Find interim solutions for fields
- Lighted Turf Fields
 - Fort Nugent Field Lights
- Recreation Center Development
- Creative Uses
- Community Engagement
- Windjammer Park Completion
 - Playground, Lagoon, Windmill
- Park Programming
- Universal Design Playground
- Improve Scheduled Park Maintenance
- Develop Pickleball, Tennis, Basketball answers, design and implement
- Memorial Stadium
 - Move School District Bus Barn to Public Works

Councilmember Marrow noted he did not want to wait until a sports complex is complete to implement fixes to courts.

Public Works Director Schuller observed the reasoning behind potentially moving the bus barn is to provide additional sports area for both the school district and City use of Memorial Stadium.

Councilmember Marshall noted this was part of a bigger conversation with Citizens for Better Schools with a design concept to purchase a larger complex to include Oak Harbor Elementary, a sports complex, etc.

Councilmember Peterson asked whether the City could put school buses on City property.

City Administrator Combs responded yes but explained that idea was on pause for now while waiting on school district planning. Mayor Wright noted it would be an interlocal agreement. Attorney Evans stated it would be considered an exchange of consideration.

In reference to the subject of a windmill, Mayor Wright noted this was a Rotary Club project. City Administrator Combs explained the City has to go through the pre-application and application process.

ess for all aspects of the proposed windmill.

Mayor Pro Tem Hizon suggested the addition of a Community Partnership category.

Break – Mayor Wright called for an approximate ten (10) minute break at 2:23 p.m. The special meeting- Council retreat resumed at 2:34 p.m.

Repair Utility Infrastructure –

- Utility and Transportation Comprehensive Planning
- Marina Dredging and Breakwater
- Inflow and Infiltration Sewer Correction Program
 - Supported by U.S. Representative Larsen
- Construction for water transmission line reserve

City Engineer Warner explained that water, sewer, stormwater, transmission, and master planning were all in process. As regards inflow, he explained that it is a \$2 million project with no public match and is under permitting and design. The Navy will be encouraged to contribute for any water transmission line repair or replacement.

Deputy City Administrator and Finance Director Goldman explained that the Navy contributes \$250 a month towards future repairs or replacement. The Navy uses between 35-40% of the water that is received from the City of Anacortes.

Mayor Wright observed there are long range plans to replace these lines in the next five (5) years. This has been delayed due to the need to complete construction projects first. The City is working with the WSDOT.

Deputy City Administrator and Finance Director Goldman noted from the Deception Pass Bridge to Oak Harbor is approximately six (6) miles. The City of Anacortes is working on their portion of the transmission lines and has a formula for costs.

Public Works Director Schuller noted concern for growth. He noted new housing and conservation have been flat for ten-fifteen (10-15) years. The City of Anacortes' plant at the Skagit River in Mount Vernon has a lot more capacity. The refineries are the biggest customers, and this keeps the costs down. He observed that the City of Anacortes is on what will be their fourth Public Works Director in five (5) years and also has a new Mayor.

Mayor Wright reported that the City has had frank conversations with the City of Anacortes and that they are not gouging the City of Oak Harbor. He noted the need to look at long range planning.

Public Works Director Schuller noted the work done on the City's Well No. 9.

Councilmember Peterson inquired whether there was any concern about any of the tribes cutting off the water supply.

Mayor Wright responded no and observed at least one of the tribes is also an Anacortes customer.

Water Storage & Supply –

- Enough, Consistent, Protected
- Plans for back-ups/emergency events
- Create more water redundancy
- SE 4th Street and Glencoe Watermain Replacement and Pavement Overlay

Councilmember Armes noted the City is fixing Well No. 9 and asked if there were plans to create more wells in the future.

Public Works Director Schuller noted staff will spend time in 2026-2027 coming back to the City Council with conversations about long range strategies.

City Engineer Warner noted that of all the City utilities, the water supply was his top priority.

Connecting Downtown & Marina –

- Complete Dredging and Replace Breakwater as soon as possible
- Marina Upland Development
 - RV Park
- Downtown Retail Occupancy Issue
- Water Taxi
- Identify with the Council specific tools to implement from the Waterfront Vision to Action Plan
- Waterfront District Master Plan
- Public/Private Partnership on downtown City-owned property

Councilmember Marrow observed the empty storefronts and noted it was difficult to find retailers to fill the vacancies.

Councilmember Armes noted the work to connect the downtown area more with the Marina, including the on-call service from Island Transit. She noted the upcoming Marina Tenants Meeting was about providing information and finding out what the tenants want.

Mayor Pro Tem Hizon asked whether the note about a public/private partnership was the same as or separate from the Bayshore/Pioneer corner. Public Works Director Schuller stated it was the same, and the note was about connecting them as it could serve as redevelopment of both the Marina and the downtown.

Community Development Director Pratschner noted there were three (3) actions to implement the specific goals of the Vision to Action Plan. Mayor Pro Tem Hizon noted the City and Council sometimes struggle with how to translate their wish list into actionable and measurable items.

Other –

- Fire/Emergency Medical Services (EMS)
- Port District
- New City Campus (City Hall/Police Station)
- Pioneer/Bayshore Corner Development
- Encourage Technology Improvements to Enhance Workplace Productivity
- Recreation Center and Sports Fields
- Emergency Situations
 - Self sufficiency and teaching residents how EMS works and about having proper supplies on hand
- Address Homeless / Drug Addition with the Legislature
 - Real, comprehensive, measurable results
- Code Work
 - Zoning to implement Comprehensive Plan
 - Flood – Community Rating System (CRS)
 - International Residential Code (IRC) and International Building Code (IBC)
 - Implementing Missing Middle Housing

Regarding Fire/EMS, Councilmember Wiegenstein noted the need to keep a list of items to improve on as we go. Mayor Wright noted staff were already addressing this by providing something tangible to share with the public. Councilmember Wiegenstein noted this needed to continue.

Councilmember Marrow noted the need to share any improvements and finding other cost-effective measures such as the EMS services interlocal agreement with Whidbey Health.

Regarding a new City campus, Mayor Pro Tem Hizon noted the need for planning. She observed the City has been saving funds for this but just being aware of the need was not enough.

City Administrator Combs reported staff are having conversations and looking at research but there were other higher priorities. She noted the City has begun earmarking funds for replacement costs of these facilities but was far behind.

Chief Slowik noted some funds were included in the budget for 2026.

In regard to Code improvements, Community Development Director Pratschner observed staff discussion of the need to enhance flexibility for some municipal code subjects, including on-going tree regulations.

Deputy City Administrator and Finance Director Goldman noted the code should address trees of the right size being in the right place, and not be specific only to Garry Oak trees.

Councilmember Wiegenstein observed that such tree regulations can cause barriers to construction.

Councilmember Armes noted many Garry Oak Trees are not maintained.

Deputy City Administrator and Finance Director Goldman observed such trees can cause a right-of-way liability and noted the Washington Cities Insurance Authority (WCIA) is asking cities to mitigate liability.

Parks and Recreation Director Smith noted this was among the items in the Urban Forestry Plan that staff will be bringing to the Council later this year.

Refining Council Priorities

Administrative Services Coordinator Finkle led a brief discussion of the process for defining the Council's over-arching priorities, noting staff can review those provided today and bring them back to the Council with any additional information.

Mayor Pro Tem Hizon noted every Council retreat has been a little different, and that sometimes an entire day has been spent only discussing Council priorities with it often taking more than one sitting to get through.

Councilmember Peterson observed the discussion today could be considered the 20,000-foot level.

Councilmember Marshall noted that the last time the Council met regarding their priorities, they numbered them and tallied each of their top ten (10).

City Administrator Combs noted it was nice to have the subheadings and groupings and to see where items connect with the budget. She noted this provides the opportunity to take the list and

think about it. Deputy City Administrator and Finance Director Goldman agreed, reiterating that this was the first step in the budget process.

Mayor Pro Tem Hizon thanked staff for providing specific actionable items from Council priorities.

Next Steps

City Administrator Combs explained staff will document and bring the list of priorities to a workshop for Council review, along with the City's current projects list.

Councilmember Marrow observed a desire for actionability and narrowing down the priorities to achieve a list to provide actionable results.

Mayor Pro Tem Hizon noted the need for both short- and long-term goals to examine when looking back at these in two (2) years at what we may have accomplished. She questioned are these the Council's categories because of those priorities or vice versa. She inquired whether staff wanted the Council to vote on priorities today.

Mayor Wright explained that staff will put the priorities noted today on a spreadsheet and bring it back to the Council for further discussion at a workshop, following which they can be narrowed down for a vote. He noted the Council's 2025-2026 overarching priorities are listed on the City's website.

Mayor Pro Tem Hizon voiced appreciation that the categories were presented as more tangible as opposed to at a higher, more generic level in the past.

Communications Officer Aguilar requested that the Council please let staff know anything in terms of feedback.

Councilmember Marrow also appreciated the tangible results, the retreat structure and having a check list.

Councilmember Marshall noted he didn't see anything listed regarding a Multi-Family Tax Exemption (MFTE).

Councilmember Wiegenstein noted that Oak Harbor's population is not yet large enough for that implementation. Community Services Director Pratschner agreed.

Councilmember Marshall inquired if the City was still paying a consultant to work on MFTE. Mayor Wright observed that work was done in the past. City Administrator Combs noted this could be addressed as a layer in the future with discussion of workforce housing.

COUNCIL TRAINING

Mayor Wright led a brief discussion of upcoming calendar events and opportunities for Council training.

Association of Washington Cities – City Action Days in Olympia January 21-22. Mayor Wright noted generally in the past that the Mayor, the City Administrator and sometimes one or two Councilmembers attended. He noted he has asked Grants Administrator Horn to attend this year. The registration date may have passed.

Association of Washinton Cities (AWC) – Annual Conference in Spokane June 23-26. Mayor Wright noted more Councilmembers generally attend this annual meeting.

National League of Cities (NLC) - Congressional Conference in Washington D.C. March 16-18. Mayor Wright noted that instead of attending the NLC conference, he, City Administrator Combs, and Grants Administrator Horn were planning a trip to Washington D.C. in February. He explained that attending with more than a small delegation is cumbersome for getting into the Capitol and the Pentagon. Deputy City Administrator and Finance Director Goldman will attend the NLC conference.

Deputy City Administrator and Finance Director Goldman reviewed the Council's budget for travel. Councilmembers are budgeted for \$1,200 per each Councilmember for in-state travel and conference attendance. A total of \$15,000 for all Councilmembers is budgeted for out-of-state travel and conferences. He noted out of state travel has averaged between \$3,000-4,500 in the past few years.

Mayor Wright noted the allotment for Council conferences and travel will be revisited in the next 2026-2027 budget cycle. He noted that Mayor Pro Tem Hizon and he were both working on their Advanced Certificate of Leadership. He asked those who wanted to attend the above listed events to please email him.

Councilmember Wiegenstein stated he would like to attend the AWC Annual Conference.

Councilmember Stucky noted those going to Washington D.C. should be those with the most knowledge of the City. He favored Mayor Pro Tem Hizon and maybe someone newer and not two newer people.

Mayor Wright noted Mayor Pro Tem Hizon was always his first choice as she has both the knowledge and experience in these meetings in Washington D.C.

Councilmembers Armes and Marrow voiced their agreement with Mayor Pro Tem Hizon attending.

Councilmember Peterson noted she has connections in Washington D.C. She explained she had some political ins and that there were people who would take her call. She stated she would appreciate going.

Mayor Pro Tem Hizon noted the need for Council to pay better attention to these dates and to let the Mayor and staff know.

Mayor Wright noted he was not dictating or mandating for any Councilmember to attend any of these events.

Deputy City Administrator and Finance Director Goldman noted that the City of Oak Harbor is featured in the latest issue of the AWC magazine.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, Mayor Wright adjourned the special meeting at 2:38 p.m.

Certified by Julie Nester, City Clerk