

Oak Harbor City Council
Special Meeting Minutes
June 1, 2022

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Severns called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

This was both a physical meeting location and a virtual meeting. The meeting was viewable live via YouTube at www.youtube.com/cityofoakharbor or could be viewed on Channel 10/HD 1090.

ROLL CALL

City Council Present:

Mayor Robert Severns
Mayor Pro Tem Beth Munns
Councilmember Tara Hizon
Councilmember Jim Woessner
Councilmember Bryan Stucky
Councilmember Shane Hoffmire
Councilmember Dan Evans
Councilmember Eric Marshall

Staff Present: Videoconference

City Administrator Blaine Oborn
Finance Director David Goldman
Fire Chief Ray Merrill
Building Official Ginger Pennington
City Administrator Executive Assistant Macalle Finkle
Communications & IT Manager Sabrina Combs
City Clerk Julie Lindsey

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

MAYOR

Mayor Severns announced that before beginning today, he wanted to share with heavy heart that the City was notified this morning that a member of City staff had passed away. The City grieves the loss of our co-worker, our friend, and valued member of our City family. Staff and Council have been notified. Mayor Severns asked that all please recognize and have grace for the impact on our staff. Flags at City facilities have been placed at half-staff. On behalf of the City, Mayor Severns offered deepest condolences to our colleague's family and loved ones. Any further information will be shared by the family as they see fit, and we respect their privacy in this difficult time. Mayor Severns asked all present to observe a moment of silence in the employee's honor.

ACTION ITEM

- a. Public Safety Level – Fire Service Levy

Fire Chief Merrill and Finance Director Goldman presented the item, with contributions from City Administrator Oborn.

City staff provided an overview of the Fire Service Levy request to the community, outreach process to engage with the community about the potential Fire Service Levy, and the feedback staff received from the public during the nearly four-week outreach process.

Chief Merrill reported the need for a second fire station to serve growth in the City's south and southwest quadrants was identified sixteen years ago in the 2006 Strategic Plan. Since then, the City has annexed an additional 216.12 acres and increased in population, causing the greatest gap in services to be in those quadrants. 24% of Oak Harbor homes are not within a 4-minute response time for fire service.

Staff is proposing a satellite station be constructed in the south/southwest quadrant of the City, with 24/7 staffing and increasing firefighting staff. The City also needs to replace two 24-year old pumper fire engines with a new quint and ladder truck with multifunction capability to carry 2-6 firefighters.

Chief Merrill explained the outreach process included two open houses with tours of Fire Station 81, creation of a service area map for North Whidbey, booth outreach at the Holland Happenings community event, social media engagement posts, a financial analysis update, and an opportunity for the public to share feedback through an online and hard copy survey form.

Additional presentations were made to Council during Council Workshops on August 25, 2021 – Public Safety Needs Analysis Presentation, January 26, 2022 – Public Safety Funding Presentation, and the May 3, 2022 City Council Meeting - 2021 Annual Report from the Oak Harbor Fire Department.

Chief Merrill noted the 147 responses from the public feedback forms were 82% supportive. The primary concerns among those who opposed a potential levy were regarding costs.

Director Goldman reviewed the costs of the potential levy. He explained the maximum statutory limitation is 3.20850 % and the resulting amount the City could request. Director Goldman reviewed the levy tax, bond rate options, staffing options and financial impacts based on an average property owner. The estimated levy amount would be \$4,605,452.65. Director Goldman reviewed the individual components, including the projected levy lid lift and excess levy. The average property owner would see a \$26.16 increase per month.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment outside of the feedback forms was received from the public and no members of the public were in attendance at the special meeting.

Chief Merrill, Director Goldman and City Administrator Oborn responded to questions from Council. Staff sought direction from City Council regarding whether or not they want staff to move forward with placing the Fire Service Levy on the November 8, 2022 General Election ballot. The deadline for having the ballot item to Island County is August 2, 2022.

Councilmembers Marshall, Evans, Hixon, Hoffmire, Stucky, Woessner and Mayor Pro Tem Munns provided their respective comments and questions.

Motion: Following an extensive discussion, Councilmember Hoffmire moved to authorize City staff to proceed with creating a ballot measure for the November 8, 2022 General Election for a Fire Service Levy to increase the level of service the City of Oak Harbor Fire Department provides to its

residents, including building a second fire station in the southwest area of the City, increasing minimum staffing per day, replacing two 24-year old pumper engines with a new quint and a ladder truck, and the purchase of necessary protective gear and tools for staffing. Councilmember Hizon seconded the motion. The vote on the motion carried unanimously.

Staff will coordinate with the Interim City Attorney to create the necessary ordinance and on the necessary ballot language, as well as the narrative for the Voters Pamphlet.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, Mayor Severns thanked all for their participation and adjourned the special meeting 3:06 p.m.

Certified by Julie Lindsey, City Clerk