



SUMMARY OF THE MINUTES TOWN COUNCIL

Thursday, May 8, 2025 – Council Chambers – Morning Study Session

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Jackson called the special session of the Town Council to order at 9:10 a.m.

ROLL CALL

Councilmembers: Steve Hushebeck (Position No. 1), Richard Geffen (Position No. 2), Anna Maria de Freitas (Position No. 3), Mason Turnage (Position No. 4) remote, and Barbara Starr (Position No. 5) remote.

Mayor Rayment Jackson, Town Administrator Denice Kulseth, Finance Director Bethany Berry (remote), and Town Clerk Jennifer Krembs.

FLAG SALUTE

Mayor Jackson conducted the flag salute.

STUDY SESSION TOPIC

Stormwater Continued

At 9:11 a.m., Mayor Jackson welcomed Public Works Director Jesse Douglas-Seitz to lead the stormwater study session continued from May 5, 2025. Douglas-Seitz shared the Town received a grant to prevent claims from insurance provider Association of Washington Cities. The funds were used to purchase a camera to support and visualize the conditions of the Town stormwater system. Streets and Parks Department Supervisor Justin Nibler used the camera to investigate stormwater issues on Rose Lane. Stormwater changes were observed relaying stormwater to the stormwater pond. It is unclear what modifications have been made to the original plans. More investigation is needed to confirm the proper infrastructure is in place. Douglas-Seitz requested time to allow the Streets and Parks Department to identify possible solutions to remedy the stormwater issue.

Capital Transportation Improvement Projects Continued

At 9:20 a.m., Douglas-Seitz continued the discussion from the March 27, 2025, study session on Capital Transportation Improvement Projects. The Transportation Improvement Board (TIB) grant process for funding starts June 1, 2025. Douglas-Seitz shared the road preservation and improvement projects completed since the June 6, 2025, approval of the six-year TIP for years 2025-2030. He explained the Public Works process used to monitor projects and determine road improvement priorities. Town Administrator Kulseth was thankful for the monitoring process as it serves as a resource when improvement funding becomes available; the spreadsheet provides valuable data that helps prioritize qualified transportation improvement projects. In July of 2023, the TIB came to Friday Harbor to survey, evaluate, rate, and advise on future improvement projects; maps corresponding with TIB recommendations were shared. Douglas-Seitz provided an overview of pavement rating changes, street classifications, traffic volume, and tools used for road evaluation and explained Federal grant requirements for funding transportation improvement projects.

Douglas-Seitz requested Council direction on which transportation improvement project to prioritize: Nichols Street or Grover Street. He presented opportunities and challenges for improvements on Nichols Street. Considerations include increased parking capacity, driving directionality, driveway improvements, vegetation possibilities, pedestrian-focused crossings, sidewalk possibilities, project integration with Brickworks, and utility improvements. Councilmember de Freitas was agreeable to the pedestrian-friendly opportunity that Nichols Street offers. Douglas-Seitz said right-of-way would need to be addressed and, if the project is funded through the Federal Highway Administration, force of eminent domain would apply and a right-of-way specialist would need

to be contracted. Other funding opportunities work differently but still require time to complete right-of-way acquisition. Due to poor weather conditions from October to March, construction would take place April through September with the street closed to traffic.

RECESS

At 10:08 a.m., Mayor Jackson called for a five-minute recess.

STUDY SESSION CONTINUED

At 10:13 a.m., Mayor Jackson reconvened the study session. Douglas-Seitz continued his presentation on Nichols Street using a map to point out variations in the current pavement, potential sidewalk improvements, parking possibilities, and potential pedestrian walkways to transition into Sunshine Alley; vegetation would be included in the design from Argyle Avenue to A Street. Traffic studies would be required to inform the design.

Councilmember Hushebeck suggested eastbound traffic flow might be more beneficial. Mayor Jackson inquired if a Sunken Park parking structure could be included. Douglas-Seitz referred to the priorities for the community; it would be two different projects, but future projects could be considered in the initial design. The majority of the redesign would address Nichols Street from Argyle Avenue to A Street with minor improvements from A Street to C Street. Councilmember Turnage was in favor of eastbound traffic and more vegetation. Councilmember Starr concurred and was in favor of the pedestrian friendliness of the potential project.

Douglas-Seitz shared Grover Street conditions noting the crooked nature of the current road and topography from Argyle Avenue to Hunt Street. Improvement opportunities include the possibility of curbs, gutters, sidewalks, alternative paving to prioritize pedestrians, and better connectivity to Argyle Avenue. The big challenges would include navigating significant utilities and the alignment of the street. Only half of the project would be eligible for TIB funding; additional time would be required to secure grants or other funding sources. If seeking Federal funding, Grover Street would need to be reclassified. Douglas-Seitz explained some of the utility challenges and implications of future developments regarding the current sewer pump station versus implementing a new gravity system. Community Development Director Ryan Ericson explained a new development will come before Council that would be serviced by a gravity system; the applicant has requested increased density with 49 units off Hamilton Ranch Road. He confirmed that any developer would be responsible for infrastructure including a gravity system for sewer and that any development over 30 units requires an additional entrance and exit. Council expressed frustration with the lack of development on the annexed Buck property located at the end of Grover Street. Kulseth addressed the annexation Development Agreement (DA) explaining that, if it was to be renegotiated, the Home Trust and Buck property owners would bear the expense of connecting to Town sewer. Town typically does not annex land without being able to provide utilities. Councilmember Starr inquired about pump versus gravity systems. Douglas-Seitz explained that pump systems are expensive to maintain, but funds to build a gravity system are not currently available. Transitioning to a gravity system at Pump Station No. 4 is preferred as it would be more cost effective. A map of the Grover Street area was shared to explain potential improvements, right-of-way, parking, current utilities, sidewalks, topography, driveways, and potential easements needed. Councilmember Hushebeck suggested there might be room off the elementary school fields for a parking lot. Douglas-Seitz requested Council direction on which street project to prioritize on the 2026 TIP. Councilmember Starr recommended Grover Street. Councilmembers Turnage, Hushebeck, Geffen, and de Freitas agreed. Douglas-Seitz will bring forth the TIP next month to set the Town's transportation improvement priorities. Douglas-Seitz commented securing funds will need to be an ongoing effort and thanked the Council for their time.

ADJOURNMENT – Hearing no further business and no objection, Mayor Jackson adjourned the meeting at 11:21 a.m. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 15, 2025, at 12 noon.

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These minutes were approved by motion of the Town Council . The original document is retained by the Clerk in the Town Council's permanent records. Attest : Jennifer Krembs, Town of Friday Harbor Clerk