

**MINUTES OF THE FOWLER CITY COUNCIL MEETING
FEBRUARY 21, 2017**

Mayor Cardenas called the meeting to order at 7:00 p. m. Roll call was taken.

Councilmembers Present: Cardenas, Hammer, Kazarian, Rodriquez, Parra

City Staff Present: Interim City Manager/City Clerk Davis, Police Chief Brand, Public Works Director Weisser, City Attorney Wolfe, Fire Chief Lopez, Finance Director McDonald, City Engineer Peters

The Flag Salute and Pledge of Allegiance were followed by an invocation given by Mayor Pro-Tem Parra.

PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS

Gabriel Viveros, a representative for Congressman David Valadao, introduced himself to the Council and provided contact information.

COMMUNICATIONS

Interim City Manager Davis announced that the groundbreaking ceremony for the Valley Children's/Adventist Health regional medical facility will be held on Friday, March 24, 2017 at 10:00 a. m. Also mentioned was the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life event at Fowler High School on April 1-2, 2017.

STAFF REPORTS

UPDATE FROM CITY ENGINEER ON FORMATION OF A GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY AGENCY (GSA)

City Engineer Peters gave background information on the State's mandate for agencies to form a GSA by June 30, 2017, to help maintain groundwater sustainability. Each groundwater basin area within the California is tasked to form a GSA. The GSA must then develop a Groundwater Sustainability Plan (GSP) for future projects aimed at conserving and retaining groundwater. Mr. Peters said that Fowler is located in the Kings Groundwater Sub-Basin.

City managers and staff from the cities of Fowler, Selma, Parlier, Sanger, and Kingsburg have been meeting to discuss the formation of a GSA. Consolidated Irrigation District (CID) has proposed to be the lead agency for the GSA, with the cities invited to join, and CID will develop the GSP. CID's proposed agreement allows for city representation on CID's technical committee in developing a GSP. However, the language in CID's agreement does not give the cities voting rights, and gives CID the authority to set limits on groundwater pumping. Thus far, CID has been unwilling to negotiate on those matters. As a result, the cities are discussing implementation of a JPA agreement to join together to form their own GSA. CID, Fresno County and the Del Rey and Caruthers Community Service Districts have been invited to join. As an alternative, Mr. Peters said that Fowler could form its own GSA, but there would be challenges in doing so because of the tasks and funding requirements involved. The cities are still negotiating with CID, and updates will be provided on the progress.

DISCUSSION: STARTING A CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Interim City Manager Davis said that at the prior meeting it was directed that a discussion topic on starting a Chamber of Commerce be placed on the agenda. Background information was given on how the City has supported the Chamber of Commerce in past years, along with the Chamber's functions and events they sponsored. The Council discussed ways to convey to the business community the importance and value of their involvement in starting a Chamber. The consensus was to work on scheduling an event or business mixer in the future, and invite the business community and individuals interested in forming a Chamber.

DISCUSSION: CITY MANAGER RECRUITMENT

The Council discussed the recruitment of a permanent city manager, and the advantages and disadvantages of doing either an in-house recruitment, or contracting with a professional search firm. It was suggested that the current police chief recruitment be concluded before an active city manager recruitment begins. The Interim City Manager will begin researching costs to use a professional recruitment firm and provide an update.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

— Adoption of Resolution No. 2363 - Credit Card Policies and Procedures

Interim City Manager Davis said that she and the City Attorney have worked to update the City's credit card use policy to provide clearer and more comprehensive procedures. Resolution No. 2363, before the Council for adoption, set forth the updated policies and procedures. The updated policy included: that the City Council, City Manager, and Department Heads are the authorized officials to be issued a credit card for City business expenses; that receipts or invoices must be provided to support all credit card charges and include a brief description of the business purpose and the budget account code corresponding to the charge; and that expenses charged on the City credit cards must be for approved budgeted items only. The policy stated that before any purchase is made, cardholders should verify that the funds are available in his or her budget to cover the expense, and that the purchase is within the cardholder's purchase

authorization level.

It was discussed that the City Council does not routinely need to use a credit card. Councilmember Kazarian stated for the record that he was against issuance of credit cards, and that the City has a policy in place for the Council to seek a cash advance or use their personal credit card and turn in receipts for reimbursement. It was suggested that the policy include items for oversight and transparency, such as by having a summary report of credit card usage provided to the Council at regular intervals. The consensus was to bring back a policy with the revisions discussed.

Update: Police Chief Recruitment

Interim City Manager Davis gave an update on the police chief recruitment. A number of qualified applications have been received since the last report. She recommended moving forward with review and selection for interviews. If it turns out that the candidate pool is not adequate, the City may wish to hire an interim chief and consider working with a recruitment firm to conduct a search for a permanent chief.

PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Public Works Director Weisser circulated a water production report for 2016. He is currently researching how best to rehabilitate Water Well No. 8, possibly with the use of a chemical treatment that will help open the plugged perforations within the casing.

FINANCE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Finance Director McDonald gave a mid-year financial summary from July 1, 2016 - January 31, 2017. General Fund revenues were at 55.5 percent, and expenditures totaled 58.3 percent, of budget.

POLICE DEPARTMENT REPORT

Chief Brand commented on a recent news report of a California police officer being shot and killed in the line of duty, noting the alarming increase of such occurrences for public safety.

FIRE DEPARTMENT REPORT

Chief Lopez gave a statistical emergency call and training report for January 2017. He has scheduled the firefighters for five different training sessions with the Fresno County Fire District.

CITY ATTORNEY'S REPORT

No report was given.

CONSENT CALENDAR

The Consent Calendar consisted of: A) Ratification of Warrants - February 21, 2017; B) Approve Minutes of the City Council and Planning Commission Special Joint Meeting -

February 7, 2017; and Minutes of the City Council Meeting - February 7, 2017; C) Approve Letter of Support for Congressman Valadao's H.R. 23, the Gaining Responsibility on Water (GROW) Act of 2017. Mayor Pro-Tem Parra made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Rodriguez, to approve the Consent Calendar. The motion carried by unanimous voice vote: Ayes: Cardenas, Parra, Hammer, Kazarian, Rodriguez. Noes: None. Abstain/absent: None.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mayor Cardenas attended the S.S.J.V. Division of the League of California Cities general membership meeting in Selma, noting that Mayor Pro-Tem Parra was appointed as a State League Director at the event. The Mayor also reported that he presented a Certificate of Recognition from the City to St. Lucy's Catholic Church Pastor, Father Theo, who is leaving his post.

Councilmember Hammer attended a Recreation Commission meeting where they set the dates for annual events.

Councilmember Kazarian commented on the League Division meeting where a climate investment workshop was the main topic.

CLOSED SESSION

The meeting adjourned at 8:56 p. m to a closed session pursuant to Government Code Section 54956.8 - Conference with Real Property Negotiators: Property: 130 S. 6th Street, A.P.N. 343-171-09. Agency Negotiators: Jeannie Davis. Negotiating party: Kevin Draughon and Rodney Hayes. Under Negotiation: Price, terms. The meeting reconvened to open session at 9:09 p. m. with no reportable action taken.

ADJOURNMENT

Having no further business, Councilmember Hammer made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Rodriguez, to adjourn. The motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 9:10 p. m.