

**MINUTES OF THE FOWLER CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING
JANUARY 22, 2013**

Mayor Cardenas called the meeting to order at 7:00 p. m.

Councilmembers Present: Cardenas, Hammer, Parra & Simonian

Councilmembers Absent: Monis

City Staff Present: City Manager Elias, City Clerk Davis, Public Works Director Weisser, Police Chief Brand, City Attorney Garza, Fire Chief Lopez, City Engineer Peters

The Flag Salute and Pledge of Allegiance were followed by an invocation given by Jason Lopez of the Fowler Baptist Church. Roll call was taken. There were no public presentations.

COMMUNICATIONS

City Manager Elias reminded the Council of the upcoming Employee Appreciation dinner event.

STAFF REPORTS:

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

— **Discussion: Future Improvements - Merced/10th Street Intersection**

City Manager Elias said that several months ago, the Council discussed options for traffic control at the Merced/10th Street intersection, including a roundabout, signalization, or raised median islands. City Engineer Peters was directed to further investigate the alternatives and seek funding for the cost of the improvements.

City Engineer Peters gave a video presentation and showed a scale model of the proposed roundabout design. When he applied for a Highway Safety Improvement (HSIP) grant with data for installing traffic signalization, the application did not qualify due to the cost exceeding the benefits. He then submitted criteria for a roundabout, which was successful, receiving high scores for safety. The HSIP grant award of \$758,000 is enough to fund the entire project.

A discussion ensued on the merits of a roundabout as compared to traffic signalization. Two CalTrans representatives spoke in favor of a roundabout, noting that they slow traffic down, reduce delays, and reduce the frequency and severity of vehicle and pedestrian accidents.

Fowler resident Jim Bass and Fowler Postmaster Mary Anne Ward stated concerns that the roundabout would not be large enough to accommodate interstate trucks, and that roundabouts are too difficult to maneuver. Chief Brand commented that if traffic signals

were installed instead of a roundabout, it would create a problem with traffic back-up near the highway exits.

The Council discussed that truck access is very important to businesses within the City, and suggested that a cone test be conducted to determine whether a roundabout can accommodate larger trucks. The consensus was to perform the test and bring the matter back for a decision on moving forward with the HSIP grant award. Mr. Peters noted that modifications can be made to the size of the roundabout, if necessary.

— **Discussion: Provide Direction Regarding the Construction and Funding for a New Headquarters Fire Station**

City Manager Elias explained that plans have been developed for a new fire station, at an estimated cost of \$1.4 million. Direction is needed on whether to proceed with a U.S.D.A. funding application to cover approximately \$1 million of the cost. The City would use accumulated Utility Users Tax and other funds to cover a portion of the cost.

City Engineer Peters showed renderings of the proposed 8,400 square foot building, to be located at 5th and Main Streets. The drawings showed a two story building with five bays for parking emergency vehicles, large spaces for training and meetings, storage areas, and rooms that can easily be modified as the Fire Department grows.

After a discussion, the Council directed staff to move forward with the process to build the new fire station headquarters.

— **Discussion on Modifying Requirements of the Fowler Chamber of Commerce Funding Agreement**

City Manager Elias stated that at the last meeting he provided a copy of the expired Fowler Chamber of Commerce funding agreement for their review. The agreement calls for the City to provide \$20,000 in annual funding to support Chamber activities. He asked whether they wish to continue with the agreement as written, or to modify it with the addition of defined and measurable goals, or making some activities reimbursable. He mentioned that several nearby cities do not provide, or have greatly reduced, funding to their Chambers. He also said that some of the Fowler Chamber's reports had not been received timely, as specified in the agreement.

Chamber President Craig Mellon spoke of the many activities the Chamber conducts throughout the year, including monthly business mixers, ribbon cutting ceremonies, Citizen of the Year banquet, The Big Fresno Fair booth, and marketing campaigns using social media such as Facebook and Groupon. Board member Mary Anne Ward stated that the Chamber does deliver the required reports in a timely fashion, and the City should let them know if a report is not received on time.

After a discussion, the consensus was to bring the Chamber funding agreement to a future meeting for discussion and possible modification.

PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Public Works Director Weisser reported that he is researching automatic water meter reading systems. Also, Woodside Homes is re-paving Temperance Avenue and it will be closed until the first week of February.

FINANCE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

No report was given.

POLICE DEPARTMENT REPORT

Chief Brand reported that the officers will be participating in mutual aid training, conducted by the Fresno County Sheriff's Department. The Police Department will be hosting a tobacco retailer education workshop the following week.

FIRE DEPARTMENT REPORT

Fire Chief Lopez reported that to date there have been 57 emergency calls for January. He is working with the school district to provide emergency training information for the students.

CITY ATTORNEY'S REPORT

City Attorney Garza mentioned that Lozano Smith has staff who daily monitor new legislation affecting cities, to help them provide timely information to their clients.

CONSENT CALENDAR

The Consent Calendar consisted of: A) Ratification of Warrants - January 22, 2013; B) Approve Minutes of the Fowler City Council Special Meeting - January 8, 2013; C) Award of bid for the 6th/7th Street Alley Reconstruction to Serna Construction, Inc. in the total amount of \$62,068.00; and D) Adoption of Resolution No. 2267, "A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Fowler Approving Development Fees for 2013." Mayor Pro-Tem Parra made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Simonian, to approve the Consent Calendar. The motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mayor Cardenas reported attending a conference concerning sanitation districts, and a Consolidated Mosquito Abatement District meeting.

Mayor Pro-Tem Parra stated that he was chosen to fill a vacancy on the League of California Cities Board of Directors.

ADJOURNMENT

Having no further business, Councilmember Hammer made a motion, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Parra, to adjourn. The motion carried, and the meeting adjourned at 10:10 p. m.