

**MINUTES OF THE FOWLER CITY COUNCIL MEETING
JANUARY 21, 2014**

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

Councilmembers Present: Cardenas, Parra, Hammer, Monis & Simonian

City Staff Present: City Manager Elias, City Clerk Davis, Finance Director Wong, Police Chief Brand, City Attorney Cross, Fire Chief Lopez

The Flag Salute and Pledge of Allegiance were followed by an invocation given by Councilmember Simonian. Roll call was taken. There were no public presentations.

ADD SUBSEQUENT NEED ITEM TO AGENDA

Mayor Cardenas announced that a matter needing immediate action came to the attention of staff after the agenda was posted. At a recent COG meeting it was discussed that with Governor Brown's declaration of an emergency in California due to the severe drought, cities are being asked to adopt a resolution by January 30th, asking President Obama to make a Federal Emergency declaration. This will help open the way for financial assistance from the U.S. Government to the region.

Councilmember Simonian made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Monis, to add Resolution No. 2289, asking the President to make a Federal Emergency declaration, as Item C of the Consent Calendar. The motion carried unanimously: Ayes: Cardenas, Hammer, Monis, Parra & Simonian. Noes: None. Absent: None.

PRESENTATION MARK OLSON OF THE CITRUS PEST & DISEASE PREVENTION PROGRAM: ASIAN CITRUS PSYLLID

Mark Olsen and representatives from local agricultural agencies, gave a presentation on the Asian Citrus Psyllid, an insect that carries a virus that is deadly to citrus trees. Efforts are being made to educate the public on the pest, as it has devastated citrus groves throughout Florida and Southern California. There has been one detection of the insect in eastern Fresno County and traps are being set along with quarantine procedures. Prevention efforts are important, as the disease can create millions of dollars in loss for the local economy and loss of many jobs. He asked that information on the Psyllid be communicated to citizens, especially to those who have citrus trees.

COMMUNICATIONS

City Manager Elias circulated a copy of a letter of support from the City for Congressman Valadao's legislation to increase judgeships in the local court system, discussed at the prior meeting. He asked that the February 4, 2014 meeting be canceled, as there were no pending items of business. The consensus was to cancel the meeting.

STAFF REPORTS:

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

— Update on Proposed Reduction to Operating Hours at the Fowler Library

City Manager Elias spoke of a reduction to the Fowler Library's operating hours proposed by Fresno County Librarian Laurel Prysiazny, to help pay for a new mobile library project. A letter from the Council to the Fresno County Board of Supervisors (BOS) was drafted, expressing serious concerns and stating the importance of keeping the Library's hours of operation. The Friends of the Fowler Library group have also sent a letter opposing the hours reduction. City Manager Elias and the Friends group have set up a meeting with Ms. Prysiazny to discuss the issue, and will be present at the BOS meeting when the matter is brought to them for a decision.

PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR'S REPORT

City Manager Elias reported that the Manning Avenue Reconstruction project is underway. Staff received a price quote from Crystal Valley Decorating that offers the City a 50 percent discount to completely refurbish the Christmas tree. The logistics for transporting the tree to Oregon, where the company is located, is being discussed.

FINANCE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

— Mid-Year Financial Summary

Finance Director Wong gave a summary of revenues and expenditures from July through December 2013. General Fund revenues are at 39.5 percent, and expenditures are at 50 percent, of budget. Property tax revenue and vehicle license fees are expected to soon be received, which will bring the revenues more in line with expenditures. Sales tax revenue has increased 5.4 percent from the prior year. Utility Users Tax revenue is down from the prior year, possibly due to unseasonably warm temperatures over the past few months.

POLICE DEPARTMENT REPORT

Chief Brand said that the department is working on the online crime reporting system to add "house checks" to the selection, so that residents can ask for extra patrol while on vacation.

FIRE DEPARTMENT REPORT

Chief Lopez gave a report of emergency calls for calendar year 2013. A total of 36 fires, 637 medical calls, and 58 motor vehicle accidents were responded to during the year.

CITY ATTORNEY'S REPORT

City Attorney Cross said that the update to the Brown Act is complete, and copies of the workbook will be distributed by the City Clerk.

CONSENT CALENDAR

The Consent Calendar consisted of: A) Ratification of Warrants - January 21, 2014; B) Approve Minutes of the Fowler City Council Meeting - January 7, 2014; and C) Adoption of Resolution No. 2289, "A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Fowler Urging the President to Declare a State of Emergency Due to Unprecedented Drought Conditions." Councilmember Hammer made a motion, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Parra, to approve the Consent Calendar. The motion carried by unanimous voice vote: Ayes: Cardenas, Parra, Hammer, Monis, & Simonian. Noes: None. Absent: None.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mayor Pro-Tem Parra spoke of a recent water rally in Sacramento he attended to lobby for water needs in the region.

Councilmember Monis mentioned an upcoming book sale at the Fowler Library.

ADJOURNMENT

Having no further business, Mayor Pro-Tem Parra made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Monis, to adjourn. The motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 8:10 p. m.