

**MINUTES OF THE FOWLER CITY COUNCIL MEETING
JANUARY 20, 2015**

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

Councilmembers Present: Cardenas, Parra, Hammer, & Monis

Councilmembers Absent: Simonian

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

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

PRESENTATION FROM FOWLER UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT: “TALK, READ, SING” CAMPAIGN

Lori Gonzales, Director of Educational Services for Fowler Unified School District, presented a new campaign being adopted locally and nationwide, called “Talk, Read, Sing.” The objective is to make known the importance of early language development to a child’s educational success. Research has shown that young children need frequent language-rich interactions, especially by the time they are 3 years old. Many children in Fresno County are not getting the language interaction they need to be successful in school and life. The campaign will help remind parents to have language interactions with their children at every opportunity by using posters, banners, and television and radio messages. Community leaders, local law enforcement, and educators are being invited to a press conference on January 22, 2015 at Malaga Elementary School to launch the campaign. She asked that the Council approve a resolution in support, noting that Fowler will be the first city in Fresno County to adopt the “Talk, Read, Sing” campaign.

Mayor Pro-Tem Parra made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 2313, “A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Fowler, Fresno County, Proclaiming the Importance of the Talk, Read, Sing Campaign.” The motion was seconded by Councilmember Monis, and carried by unanimous voice vote: Ayes: Cardenas, Parra, Hammer, & Monis. Noes: None. Abstain: None. Absent: Simonian.

COMMUNICATIONS

City Manager Elias asked to postpone the City Council and Fowler Public Financing Authority special meeting for the 2013-14 Fiscal Year audit presentation, as more time is needed to evaluate them. He recommended setting a meeting with staff, the Finance Committee, and the auditor to discuss the findings, and bring the audits back to the Council at a later date. The consensus was to postpone the audit presentation.

STAFF REPORTS:

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

— Approve Proposal from Townsend Group for Grant and Legislative Advocacy Services

City Manager Elias recommended approval of an agreement with the Townsend Public Affairs Group for grant writing and legislative advocacy services. Staff considered proposals from three different firms at similar costs, but Townsend's is the only one that includes legislative advocacy services. The firm has an extensive record of success in securing funding for numerous agencies. Townsend representatives Chelsea Vongehr and Richard Herman spoke about their services.

Mayor Pro-Tem Parra made a motion to approve the proposal from Townsend Group for grant and legislative advocacy services, and authorize the City Manager to execute the agreement after the City Attorney's review, not to exceed \$2,500 per month. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Hammer, and carried by unanimous voice vote: Ayes: Cardenas, Parra, Hammer, & Monis. Noes: None. Abstain: None. Absent: Simonian.

— Discussion: Animal Control

City Manager Elias said that at the last meeting, the Council discussed a letter received from a resident expressing concern about dogs roaming at large, and asked staff to provide more information on the matter.

Public Works Director Weisser spoke about information he received from surrounding cities on how they handle their animal control, and will summarize it into a written report for the Council. In the past year, the City impounded 50 dogs into the City's shelter facility on Peach Street, with 23 going to the City's contracted service provider - PAWS animal rescue, and 17 returned to owners. The shelter currently has 10 dogs, as the PAWS facility is currently unable to take in any more dogs.

City Manager Elias said that animal control tasks greatly impact the Public Works and Police Department staff's time in catching the dogs, housing them, and transporting them to outside facilities for further disposition. Chief Brand said that he checked with Police Departments in surrounding cities, and \$80,000 is the average cost for staffing and other expenditures for animal control.

Krystle Rivera, City Account Technician and operator of PAWS, said that her facility is currently at full capacity with 150 dogs. She spoke of the high cost of caring for and housing the growing number of at-large dogs, and the importance of urging citizens to spay and neuter their pets.

The Mayor asked that discussion on the topic continue, with the goal of finding solutions. City Manager Elias stated that updates on the status of animal control will be placed on the agenda as an ongoing item. Staff will also work on sending out a public notice in the water bills to remind pet owners about the City's animal regulations.

Discussion: Blossom Trail Opening Ceremony – February 6, 2015

City Manager Elias said that staff is working with the Fresno County Convention and Visitor's Bureau on the upcoming Blossom Trail Opening Ceremony in Fowler, since the Chamber of Commerce conveyed they are unable to help. The event will be held on February 6, 2015 at Simonian Fruit, and the City is sending out invitations and assisting with preparations.

PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Public Works Director Weisser said that ADA compliant concrete paths leading to the restrooms are being installed in Panzak Park, along with expanding the concrete area in front of the stage. A new concrete ADA compliant crosswalk ramp has been installed at the Veterans Monument.

FINANCE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

— Financial Summary: July - December 2014

Finance Director Wong gave a financial report for the first six months of the fiscal year. Revenues were at 39.6 percent and expenditures were at 57.8 percent, for the period. He showed a comparison of sales tax revenue from the prior year, with revenues coming in approximately \$100,000 higher in the current year.

POLICE DEPARTMENT REPORT

Chief Brand gave a statistical report showing a total of 185 arrests made in calendar year 2014. A comparison from the prior year showed an increase in robbery and theft. He stated that this may become a trend due to Proposition 47, which has reduced some of these crimes to the misdemeanor level.

FIRE DEPARTMENT REPORT

Chief Lopez circulated a Fire Department report that showed a total of 830 calls, training sessions, and public events attended in 2014.

CITY ATTORNEY'S REPORT

City Attorney Cross said that staff is working on a water rate study to present to the Council at a future meeting, in preparation for a water rate increase.

CONSENT CALENDAR

The Consent Calendar consisted of: A) Ratification of Warrants - January 20, 2015; and B) Approve Minutes of the Fowler City Council Meeting - January 6, 2015. Mayor Pro-Tem Parra made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Monis, to approve the Consent Calendar. The motion carried by unanimous voice vote: Ayes: Cardenas, Parra, Hammer, & Monis. Noes: None. Abstain: None. Absent: Simonian.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mayor Cardenas recommended appointment of Patric Jones to a vacancy on the Recreation Commission. Councilmember Hammer made a motion, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Parra, to approve the Mayor's appointment of Patric Jones to the Recreation Commission vacancy - term expiring June 30, 2016. The motion carried by unanimous voice vote: Ayes: Cardenas, Parra, Hammer, & Monis. Noes: None. Abstain: None. Absent: Simonian.

Mayor Cardenas attended an S.K.F. meeting where the Board reorganized and he was appointed as the Chairman. He was also appointed as Chairman of the Consolidated Mosquito Abatement District Board.

Mayor Pro-Tem Parra attended a LAFCO Board meeting, where he was appointed as Vice-Chairman. He mentioned an upcoming SSJV Division of the League of California Cities meeting in Reedley, where the topic will be Proposition 47.

Councilmember Monis reported that Cornerstone Theater recently auditioned local residents to perform in their upcoming community play.

ADJOURNMENT

Having no further business, Mayor Pro-Tem Parra made a motion, seconded by Councilmember Hammer to adjourn. The motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 9:16 p. m.