

**MINUTES OF THE FOWLER CITY COUNCIL MEETING
MARCH 20, 2018**

Mayor Cardenas called the meeting to order at 7:03 p. m. Roll call was taken.

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

City Staff Present: City Manager/City Clerk Davis, Public Works Supervisor/Fire Chief Lopez, Interim Finance Director Sanchez, City Attorney Wolfe, Police Chief Alcaraz, Deputy City Clerk Burrola

The Flag Salute and Pledge of Allegiance were followed by the Invocation delivered by Father Adrian Kim, St. Lucy's Catholic Church, Fowler.

PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS

There were no public presentations.

CONSIDER REQUEST TO APPROVE YOUTH SPORTS FUNDING FOR FOWLER GIRLS SOFTBALL LEAGUE

This item was withdrawn and will be presented at a later date.

COMMUNICATIONS

City Manager Davis announced Assembly member Arambula will be sponsoring a Community Resource Fair in Panzak Park on April 3, 2018, 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. She also reminded everyone of the Easter Egg Hunt in Panzak Park this Saturday, March 24, 2018, at 1:00 p.m.

STAFF REPORTS

APPROVE PLACING MR. RANDY UYEDA AT STEP A OF THE FINANCE DIRECTOR/TREASURER RANGE OF THE CITY'S SALARY SCHEDULE

City Manager Davis introduced Randy Uyeda, appointed to the position of Finance Director/ Treasurer at the prior meeting. She requested approval to place Mr. Uyeda at Step A of the Finance Director/Treasurer range of the City's Salary Schedule, \$7423.54 per month.

Councilmember Rodriquez made a motion to approve placing Mr. Randy Uyeda at Step A of the Finance Director/Treasurer range of the City's Salary Schedule; seconded by Mayor Pro-tem Parra. The motion carried by unanimous voice vote: Ayes: Cardenas, Parra, Hammer, Kazarian, Rodriquez. Noes: None. Abstain/Absent: None.

The meeting recessed for a brief reception welcoming Randy Uyeda and thanking Interim Finance Director Carlos Sanchez for all his work.

DISCUSSION: IMPLEMENTATION OF A DISTRICT (SALES) TAX

Mayor Cardenas stated that he wanted to have a discussion on the option of implementing a sales tax increase, in view of the City's need for adequate revenue for public facilities and services. City Manager Davis noted that the City is growing, and the needs for parks, recreation, and other facilities, such as a new police station, are very evident. A district sales tax could provide a way to fund these needs for the benefit of the City and citizens. Interim Finance Director Sanchez summarized the staff report explaining how a district sales works, noting that it would be a component of the local transaction tax, such as with the County's Measure C or Zoo tax. The local tax is allocated to where the sale takes place, while a district tax follows the merchandise; where it is delivered and used. He stated that a 1% district sales tax has the potential to provide approximately \$953,000 per fiscal year.

A discussion ensued. Councilmember Kazarian commented that a proposed 1% district tax would bring the tax rate in Fowler to 8.975% which would make it one of two cities with the highest tax rate in Fresno County. This would go against creating a business friendly environment, and he stated that he is strongly opposed to such a tax. He asked that the Council first look at the budget and cut back on unnecessary spending, rather than taxing local businesses. Mayor Cardenas said that looking at the option is important, because needs for facilities and services are increasing, such as new restrooms for the park, and a new police station. Mayor Pro-Tem Parra added that other local cities have increased their sales tax up to 8.75%, or have implemented other types of taxes to provide funding. He added that there will be a large budget increase over the next several years due to the CalPERS discount rate, which is affecting all cities, including Fowler. A district tax could be used primarily for public safety, with some for streets and parks, and reserves. Councilmember Hammer noted that with the new regional medical facility and other developments, there will revenues coming that will help with needs, and the City should let that happen before considering a tax.

Councilmember Kazarian asked for direction from the Council that if there is not a majority in favor that the discussion would be ended, but if there was a majority interested, to first look at the budget and other avenues before a tax is considered. City Attorney Wolfe noted that a supermajority of the Council must approve the proposed tax resolution before it can be placed on the ballot. Mayor Cardenas stated that the matter is something that needs more thought, along with looking at the upcoming budget. Mayor Pro-Tem Parra requested that the Finance Department provide information at the next meeting on the expected increases due to the CalPERS discount rate, so that the City can prepare for the impact in upcoming budget years.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

City Manager Davis reported that City Engineer Dave Peters submitted the draft bid documents for the new fire station to USDA for review. Councilmember Kazarian asked that once approved by USDA, the bid documents could be sent to the Council.

There will be a meeting with the businesses affected by the Golden State Realignment project on April 19, 2018, followed by a community-wide public meeting on April 24, 2018.

PUBLIC WORKS REPORT

Public Works Supervisor Lopez circulated a report he compiled regarding well-site production. Well-site 8A is now online and running properly. He will be working on the Consumer Confidence Report (CCR) water report. It was asked that he look into correcting a misspelling of a name on a street sign: "Esralian" which should be spelled "Esraelian."

FINANCE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Interim Finance Director Sanchez reported that issues with the software are being resolved. Training is pending to learn the new report writing part of the software. Payroll has been upgraded and is now working smoothly also. The audit is still being worked on.

POLICE DEPARTMENT REPORT

Police Chief Alcaraz reported that there will be a traffic enforcement detail in April. He met with the superintendents of schools to set up an active shooter training for all the Fowler schools during the summer break. He hopes to work with other departments in this area for training.

FIRE DEPARTMENT REPORT

Fire Chief Lopez provided March Fire Department activity report.

CITY ATTORNEY'S REPORT

There was no City Attorney's Report.

CONSENT CALENDAR

The consent calendar consisted of: A) Ratification of Warrants - March 20, 2018; B) Approve Minutes of the City Council Regular and Special Meeting - March 6, 2018; C) Adoption of Resolution No. 2394, "A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Fowler

Adopting the Negative Declaration for the Fresno County Regional Active Transportation Plan”; D) Adoption of Resolution No. 2395, “A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Fowler Approving the Fresno County Regional Active Transportation Plan.” Councilmember Hammer made a motion to approve the Consent Calendar; seconded by Councilmember Rodriquez. The motion carried by unanimous voice vote: Ayes: Cardenas, Parra, Hammer, Kazarian, Rodriquez. Noes: None. Abstain/Absent: None.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mayor Cardenas reported that he had circulated cards which explained the rights of the immigrants if they were stopped and what they should say if detained, which was sponsored by the Latino Water Coalition. All Mayors who participated were given a monetary donation of \$2,500 for their city.

He mentioned the invitation to the upcoming SKF Barbeque on March 27, 2018, which is an employee recognition event. The ribbon cutting for the solar farm should be within the next month or two.

Mayor Pro-Tem Parra reported that he will be running in the election for California State Senate District 12.

Councilmember Hammer reminded everyone of the Recreation Commission Easter Egg Hunt on March 24, 2018 in Panzak Park at 1:00 p.m. There will also be a luncheon in celebration of John Grigsby’s 103rd Birthday on April 9, 2018 at the Senior Center starting at 10:30 a.m. He asked for a proclamation to be prepared declaring April 9, 2018 as John Grigsby Day. Spring Fest is set for April 28, 2018.

Councilmember Kazarian attended the multi GSA meeting.

Councilmember Rodriquez announced that on St. Patrick’s Day Jose Carlos Ramirez who has been an advocate for water in the central valley, won a world boxing title.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mayor Pro-Tem Parra made a motion to adjourn; seconded by Councilmember Kazarian. The motion carried and the meeting was adjourned at 8:33 p.m.