

**MINUTES OF THE FOWLER CITY COUNCIL MEETING
JULY 21, 2020**

Mayor Cardenas called the meeting to order at 7:01 p. m. Roll call was taken.

Councilmembers Present: Cardenas, Hammer, Kazarian, Rodriquez and Parra (via Telephone)

City Staff Present: City Manager/City Clerk Davis, City Attorney Wolfe, Finance Director Uyeda, Police Chief Alcaraz, Public Works Director Dominguez, Fire Chief Lopez, City Engineer Peters

PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS

Patric Jones, Fowler resident, asked when the City food giveaway located at 206 E. Vine Avenue started and how long the event will continue to take place. Yvonne Hernandez, Recreation Coordinator, said the food give away is every Tuesday evening at 6:00 p.m. and is posted on social media. It is a drive thru pick up only, masks are required and social distancing is enforced. The Worship Center provides about 250 to 300 boxes of fresh produce every week to distribute to the community. The food give away will continue until they are no longer able to provide goods. Councilmember Kazarian asked if this is an official City food giveaway even though it is organized by the church. City Manager Davis said although the Worship Center is providing the goods it is being distributed by the City's Recreation / Senior Coordinator and City staff who are helping to provide it to the community. Ms. Hernandez said the church provides a food give away during the day, at the Worship Center, and those that cannot attend the food give away during those hours are provided an opportunity during afterhours.

Susie Rico-Vasquez, County of Fresno Department of Public Health, provided information on the Cal Walks virtual workshop that was hosted on June 30, 2020. The purpose of the workshop is to improve walking and biking in the City and to create a community driven vision that would feed into the General Plan. She said a total of 25 were in attendance during the online workshop. Danielle Claybon, Public Health Advocate, highlighted some areas that need some improvements and provided some ideas.

COMMUNICATIONS

No communications.

STAFF REPORTS

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

COVID-19 Update and Discussion

City Manager Davis provided an update on current COVID-19 cases in the City; there are 92 confirmed cases, 47 recovered, 34 under investigation, 1 death, leaving 47 open cases remaining in the City. The Fresno County Public Health department had been in contact with Ms. Davis twice a week providing updates and discussing various scenarios, but with the overwhelming number of cases they have been in contact once a week.

Yvonne Hernandez, Recreation Coordinator, provided information on promoting a Grab-and Go Farmer's Market. She said food vendors and produce vendors would provide access to healthy produce and food items while minimizing social distancing in a "open air" setting. The market would continue to provide and operate safely in the best interest of public health. All Fresno County Health Department guidelines would be enforced. No entertainment would be provided. Mayor Cardenas asked Ms. Hernandez how other cities are handling their Farmer's Market during this pandemic. Ms. Hernandez said some cities are limiting their hours of operation. Food vendors and produce vendors are distanced apart and there are foot markings to encourage social distancing. It is encouraged that the customer point out what they would like to purchase and the produce vendor will bag the items and hand the item to them. The consensus of the Council is to discuss this further at the next Council meeting with having the Farmer's Market event begin in August.

Ms. Davis said through the Planning Department, the City applied for a LEAP grant. The grant is for \$65,000 which can be used towards the General Plan updates. She also mentioned that the City applied for direct allocation of CARES funding which will be approximately \$80,000. Through the Coronavirus Relief Fund, the CARES Act provides for payments to State, Local, and Tribal governments navigating the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak.

Ms. Davis said the Maxco project is completed and will be issued a Certificate of Occupancy sometime this week.

She said the new fire station is near completion and should be finished by the end of this month.

Ms. Davis said the Panzak restroom project is going out to bid next week; it will take a few weeks to get the bids in. The City currently has CDBG funding for FY 2020, 2021 and 2022 of \$45,000 that will be going towards this project.

She said the City is issuing outdoor seating permits; applications were also delivered to the businesses in the Form Base Code area. The City has designed an outdoor seating area for patrons in the alley way between the Fowler Donut shop and CVS Pharmacy. Councilmember Kazarian said he spoke with Planning Consultant, Dawn Marple and inquired about the ability to add to the outdoor seating ordinance that would allow the patio dining to possibly have a street closure on Merced Street between 6th and 7th Streets or a partial street closure to allow for additional patio seating. He expressed that if the restaurants were allowed to only having the sidewalk seating it would limit the amount of tables and seating allowed in that area. With additional patio seating it would provide the social distancing space in a controlled environment that the restaurants would still be able to monitor that all safety protocols are followed. He said he spoke with the City Attorney prior that if it is possible to use the existing ordinance and have the support of the Council in a cost sharing agreement with each restaurant. He spoke about some ideas he had for patio seating areas. A discussion took place on the hours of operation, concerns on the flow of traffic, materials and the best way to help the local restaurants stay in business. The consensus of the Council is to bring it back for further discussion to the next Council meeting.

Discussion/Direction on the New EV Charging Station for the City

City Manager Davis said the City was awarded an EV Charging Station at no cost through the FCRTA and wanted to discuss where a good location would be to have this placed.

Public Works Director Dominguez said the City was one of a handful of other cities that was awarded for the new EV Charging Station. The City currently has a charging station at the library's parking lot and would like to have another one placed at Donny Wright Park. It was agreed by the Council to place the charging station at Donny Wright Park.

PUBLIC WORKS REPORT

Public Works Director Dominguez said the water quality report will be mailed out to the residents of Fowler soon. He said the sidewalk repair program is coming along and they have repaired some major areas of sidewalks within the City.

FINANCE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Finance Director Uyeda provided information on the FY 2020-2021 Interim budget. Due to the Corona Pandemic, Finance requested at the last Council Meeting held on June 16, 2020 that the FY 2019-20 Budget be used as the Interim Budget for FY 2020-21 until additional revenue information is received in the second quarter. Finished capital expenditures would be removed but open capital projects would remain.

In addition to the FY 2020-2021 carry forward budget, it is requested that a 2% COLA be added on top of the attached budget effective August 1, 2020. Public Works, Police, and Fire departments are also requesting a limited number of budget items that staff wishes to discuss and add to the interim budget and bring back to the Council for approval.

Councilmember Kazarian asked Mr. Uyeda about the school facilities agreement. A discussion took place on the utilization of the funds.

POLICE DEPARTMENT REPORT

Police Chief Alcaraz said he has spoken with the City Manager and Finance Director in proposing to hire a Police Lieutenant for the department which should not add any additional funding costs to the current budget. He said two sergeants will be retiring in the beginning of August and this will eliminate him from having to reclassify anyone. With the calls for service increasing and the fast growth of the community this will benefit the City.

FIRE DEPARTMENT REPORT

Fire Chief Lopez said the department has been extremely busy with service calls. He is currently working with City Manager Davis and Finance Director Uyeda on the Fire departments budget and items needed for the new fire station that will be opening soon. A list of items was provided to Mr. Uyeda such as lockers, equipment racks and appliances for the station.

Chief Lopez said the department is taking extra precautions during COVIDS service calls. Councilmember Parra provided information on the current testing at United Health Center in Fowler, which will take about 9-days for results due to the limited amount of testing kits. The United Health Center in Selma allows results to be received quicker, as soon as 72-hours.

CITY ATTORNEY'S REPORT

No report was given.

CONSENT CALENDAR

The consent calendar consisted of: A) Ratification of Warrants – July 21, 2020; B) Approve Resolution No. 2472 “A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Fowler Concerning Local Transportation Purpose Funds Extension (Measure “C” Extension)”; C) Authorize the Finance Director to Open Another New City Bank Account for the deposits and Disbursements Related to CARES Act Funding; D) Approve Sidewalk Repair Contracts: Salvador Alatorre – 206 N. 6th Street; Sandra Vartanian – 214 S. 5th Street; Alejandro Caravantes – 216 S. 5th Street; David Wong – 209 S. 5th Street.

Councilmember Kazarian made a motion to approve the consent calendar, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Hammer. The motion carried by roll call vote: Ayes: Cardenas, Hammer, Kazarian, Parra, Rodriquez. Noes: None. Abstain: None. Absent: None.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mayor Cardenas attended a Consolidated Mosquito Abatement teleconference meeting. One of the topics is the Board will consider an option to replace and upgrade the District's automotive fleet with a leased vehicle plan through Enterprise Fleet Management.

Councilmember Kazarian provided an update on a virtual domestic violence Q & A he organized with Fresno County District Attorney, Lisa Smittcamp and Fresno County Victim Advocate, Sarah Barton in order to provide additional resources to the City of Fowler and the surrounding communities. It was posted on the City's website as well as other cities websites. Mayor Cardenas commended Councilmember Kazarian for organizing this event and providing resources to the community.

Councilmember Parra attended a League of California Cities meeting.

He provided an update on the recent purchase of the grange building purchased by United Health Center. United Health Center will build a new building instead of utilizing it as a parking lot.

Councilmember Rodriquez commended Councilmember Kazarian for organizing the virtual Q & A on domestic violence and providing resources to the community and other surrounding communities.

CLOSED SESSION

The meeting adjourned to a closed session at 9:01 p.m. Conference with Legal Counsel – Anticipated litigation: Significant Exposure to Litigation Pursuant to Paragraph (2) and (3) of Subdivision (d) of Gov. Code Section 54956.9 – One potential case.

The Council took the following reportable action in closed session:

Motion by Councilmember Rodriquez, seconded by Councilmember Parra, and approved 5-0, to approve the settlement of the Department of Fair Employment and Housing (DFEH) complaint by Cameron Phillips in the amount of \$10,000.

The Council reconvened into open session at 9:15 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Having no further business, Councilmember Rodriquez, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Hammer to adjourn. The motion carried and the meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.