

MINUTES OF THE
SPECIAL MEETING – CITY COUNCIL
March 12, 2013

City Council Chambers, City Hall, 250 East L Street, complete proceedings of which are recorded on tape.

I. CALL TO ORDER:

Mayor Patterson called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

II. CONVENE OPEN SESSION:

A. ROLL CALL

Vice Mayor Campbell was absent. Council Member Strawbridge arrived at 6:03 p.m. All other Council Members were present.

B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Claire McFadden led the Pledge of Allegiance.

C. REFERENCE TO THE FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS OF THE PUBLIC:

III. ADOPTION OF AGENDA:

On motion of Council Member Schwartzman, seconded by Council Member Hughes, Council adopted the Agenda, as presented, on roll call by the following vote:

Ayes: Patterson, Schwartzman, Hughes, Strawbridge
Noes: (None)

IV. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT:

A. WRITTEN COMMENT

Two items received (copies on file).

B. PUBLIC COMMENT

1. Elizabeth d'Huart - Ms. d'Huart announced upcoming events at the Benicia Historical Museum.

2. Constance Beutel - Ms. Beutel discussed an upcoming Clean Tech Expo being put on by the Community Sustainability Commission (CSC).

V. BUSINESS ITEMS:

A. COMPLETION OF OPEN GOVERNMENT AWARENESS TRAINING AND ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT AND RULES OF PROCEDURE

Heather McLaughlin, City Attorney, completed the Open Government Awareness Training and Annual Review of the Code of Conduct and Rules of Procedure.

B. UPDATE OF STRATEGIC PLAN AND PRIORITY PROJECT LIST

Brad Kilger, City Manager, and Staff reviewed the staff report and a PowerPoint presentation.

Staff and Council would discuss items on the list, and periodically ask for public comment throughout the meeting.

Council Member Hughes and Staff discussed the collateral that is being used for the bonds for the solar projects.

Mayor Patterson discussed the STA and funds (\$250,000) that were approved for the Benicia Industrial Park Intermodal and freeway access improvements, and the improved status with the Benicia Industrial Park and the State with regards to the enforcement aspect.

Public Comment:

1. Constance Beutel - Ms. Beutel discussed the strategic item 'Community Health & Safety.' She asked Staff to look into purchasing portable solar panels for use during an emergency. She suggested the Climate Action Plan should be under strategic issue #2.

Council Member Schwartzman and Staff discussed the possibility of the sale of any of the City's property inventory, which could help with the current budget shortfall.

Mayor Patterson and Staff discussed the possibility of private/public partnerships (with regards to real estate property).

Council Member Hughes and Staff discussed the property off of East 2nd Street owned by Discovery Builders (Seeno). He suggested the City approach the builder to see if they have any plans to build there. It is a valuable piece of property that City could gain revenue from. The City is reliant on Valero for

income. If they were ever to shut their doors, the City would be in trouble. He would like the City to have another source of revenue.

Mr. Kilger stated he needed Council direction on what it wanted to do regarding the Seeno property.

Council Member Strawbridge asked to see the City's inventory list of assets. Staff confirmed they would present it to Council when it was completed.

Mr. Kilger stressed that any approach on the City taking initiative on a development project needed to be thoroughly discussed, as it shouldn't be undertaken unless there was a full consensus of the Council.

Mayor Patterson discussed past development projects that were successful. She clarified that there was consensus of Council and agreement in the community that the Seeno property should be developed. Anyone who wants to try and bridge the community relations gap with the developer is welcomed to do so.

Council Member Hughes discussed the need to identify revenue opportunities in the community.

Mr. Kilger discussed the need for Staff to have clear direction on what is expected and how it is to be approached prior to moving forward with any land use development. He discussed the current staffing constraints with regards to land use projects.

Mayor Patterson clarified that Council could fit the issue into the strategic plan and priority project list, have a focused discussion, and based on the information received, provide direction to staff. It would be a phased process, which would allow the City to get over the current hump of the budget situation.

Council Member Schwartzman suggested that with the City's current situation, the discussion on the above issue might be more appropriate for the formal strategic plan update in 2014.

Mr. Kilger suggested Staff and Council work on the current budget, he would give it some thought and talk to staff. Sometime after June (2013), staff will try to structure a discussion on the issue. Mayor Patterson confirmed that was the direction to staff.

Public Comment:

None

Council Member Hughes and Staff discussed the Tree Master Plan update.

Council and Staff clarified that each item in the Strategic Plan would not be discussed separately. The main projects were reviewed, and if Council had questions on the remaining items, they could submit them in writing to staff.

Council Member Schwartzman and Staff discussed when the financial update for the Solar Energy Project would be ready. Staff noted it would be presented at one of the upcoming budget study sessions. They discussed the progress of the boatyard cleanup, the upcoming IT upgrade, pension reform, and how the Affordable Healthcare Act will affect the City.

Council Member Strawbridge and Staff discussed the Downtown Retailer Attraction Plan and the Council Chamber Upgrade project.

Mayor Patterson and Staff discussed the issue of the scope of work for the broadband service for the Benicia Industrial Park.

Public Comment:

None

Council Member Schwartzman asked Staff for clarification on what their understanding was regarding use of the City's budget reserve funds (using 10%, 15% or 20%). Ms. Reid was not sure that Council discussed a set amount of reserves to use. She stated Staff would provide Council with options when they bring the proposed budget forward in June 2013. They will provide Council with the different scenarios and seek direction regarding the level of use of the reserves.

Mr. Kilger clarified that Council indicated at a previous meeting possibly utilizing 10-15% of the reserve funds. Staff understood that to mean that Council was open to the concept of using some reserves. Staff will provide the pros and cons and consequences of using the various levels of reserves. Mayor Patterson confirmed that was correct.

Mayor Patterson requested Staff provide Council with the criteria for setting up parameters of effectiveness and efficiency when looking at City services, and the rational basis for that. She would like to see a more in-depth/analysis of the value of the services that are provided by the citizens/volunteers (this should fit in to the 'next steps').

Mayor Patterson and Staff discussed the issue of public/private partnerships, and how they could benefit the City.

Public Comment:

None

Mayor Patterson and Staff discussed the vision for public participation in the budget process. Ms. Reid stated that the public would be included in the budget workshops and the Finance Committee meetings. Mayor Patterson asked Staff to use as many channels as possible to get the public involved in the budget process.

VI. **ADJOURNMENT:**

Mayor Patterson adjourned the meeting at 7:34 p.m.

Lisa Wolfe, City Clerk