

MINUTES OF THE
SPECIAL MEETING – CITY COUNCIL
JUNE 15, 2009

The regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Benicia was called to order by Mayor Elizabeth Patterson at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, June 15, 2009, in the City Council Chambers, City Hall, 250 East L Street, complete proceedings of which are recorded on tape.

ROLL CALL:

Present: Council Members Hughes, Ioakimedes, Schwartzman, and Mayor Patterson

Absent: Vice Mayor Campbell (arrived at 7:19 p.m.)

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Mike Alvarez led the pledge to the flag.

FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS:

A plaque stating the Fundamental Rights of each member of the public is posted at the entrance to the Council Chambers per Section 4.04.030 of City of Benicia Ordinance No. 05-6 (Open Government Ordinance).

OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT:

WRITTEN:

Various items submitted (copies on file).

PUBLIC COMMENT:

1. Kimble Goodman – Mr. Goodman discussed the upcoming ‘Benicia Town Race’ bicycle race that will be held in Benicia on 6/27/09.
2. Lee Wilder Snider – Ms. Wilder Snider discussed an upcoming fundraiser Arts Benicia will host on 6/27/09 titled ‘An Evening with Manuel Neri.
3. Gene Doherty – Mr. Doherty discussed an upcoming rally on 6/21/09 to garner support for the Benicia State Parks, the State’s recent vote to eliminate funding for State Parks, the proposed annual increase to vehicle license fees to assist with maintaining State Parks, and the draft copy of a brochure for the Benicia State Parks.
4. Elaine Hornitz, Benicia Ballet and Theatre – Ms. Hornitz discussed the Benicia Ballet’s upcoming presentation of Giselle on 6/27/09.
5. Toni Haughey – Ms. Haughey announced the Benicia Historical Museum’s upcoming concert on 6/27/09.

BUDGET WORKSHOP:

Presentation of Fiscal year 2010 and 2011 Budgets:

Jim Erickson, City Manager, reviewed the ‘Workshop Overview’ section of the PowerPoint presentation titled ‘Budget Workshop No. 2.’ The following topics were reviewed:

- Budget situation update
- Discretionary projects update

- ❑ Community survey top investment priorities
- ❑ Community Survey
- ❑ Proposed Tier I Projects (funded – updated)
- ❑ Alternative to Staff recommendation
- ❑ Street projects proposed

Vice Mayor Campbell and Staff discussed the order the Tier I projects were listed.

Council Member Ioakimedes and Staff discussed the criteria for ranking projects (one size does not fit all).

Council Member Hughes and Staff discussed possible grant dollars that might be available for the Library Basement Project and what the limitations of the grant money might be. Applications might be available the first part of July. Determinations on the applications should be available in the fall.

Mayor Patterson discussed whether there would be penalties for the grant if the City were to move forward with obtaining bids.

Council Member Hughes discussed whether the City approving the budget for the project would affect the chances of being approved for the grant for the Library Basement Project.

Mayor Patterson discussed concerns regarding waiting to move forward with the Library Basement Project and possibly losing the bid proposal, the need for a realistic schedule for the project, and working Congressman Miller's office on the 'earmarks' (the City felt like it did not get a balanced share).

Rob Sousa, Finance Director, reviewed a PowerPoint presentation titled 'Community Grants' (copy on file). The following topic was reviewed:

- ❑ Community Grants

Anne Cardwell, Administrative Services Director, reviewed the following topic:

- ❑ Human Services Grants
- ❑ Arts Grants

Council Member Hughes and Staff discussed how the percentages of requested amounts were decided.

Council Member Schwartzman and Staff discussed the funding totals listed in the staff report (page IV-A-34).

Council Member Ioakimedes discussed the criteria for funding, and the request for a copy of the funding criteria.

Amalia Lorentz, Economic Development Manager, reviewed the following topic:

□ Economic Development

Mayor Patterson and discussed the funding for Benicia Main Street.

Council Member Schwartzman and Staff discussed the breakdown for funding for Benicia Main Street.

Council Member Ioakimedes discussed the cost of fireworks for the Fourth of July Celebration.

Public Comment:

1. Ruth Workman – Ms. Workman discussed moving the Library Basement Project up in priority and the importance of moving forward with the project.
2. Dan Smith – Mr. Smith discussed the City keeping its promise to the Scouting programs to provide housing for, support for discretionary funding for the Arts and Culture Commission, support for the BIP Technical Assessment, concerns regarding City departmental budget increases, and a recent column written by Rick Ernst regarding the City's budget.
3. Lee Wilder Snider – Ms. Wilder Snider discussed the Benicia Arts and Culture Commission's desire to get moving, and the proposed funding for the Human Services and Arts Fund Board.
4. Keith Jordan, BUSD – Mr. Jordan thanked the City for its support for BUSD's Special Friends Program. He discussed the Second Step Program and the District's desire for future funding (if available) for other services such as crisis prevention and intervention, a student forum on substance abuse, etc.
5. Susan Street – Ms. Street discussed the need to fund the Waterfront Park, funding for Arts Benicia, non-structural City Hall improvements, the dormitory improvements at the Fire Department, City staff salaries, City investments, and interest the City could earn on the 8% the State borrows.
6. Maria Teresa Matthews, Families in Transition – Ms. Matthews requested \$30,000 per year for Families in Transition. The proposed 5% reduction would affect families they could help.
7. Ann Hansen – Ms. Hansen expressed appreciation for the City's past support of the Benicia Historical Museum, the museum's decreased donations, its increased operating costs, and the museum's need for at least the same level of funds it has received from the City in the past.
8. Cherry Moore – Ms. Moore discussed her wish that the City continue to provide funding for Arts Benicia.
9. Pat Hall – Ms. Hall discussed the need for continued funding for Arts Benicia.
10. Mary Eichbauer – Ms. Eichbauer discussed funding for the Library Basement Project, the proposed cuts to the Library's budget, and various services the Library provides for the community.
11. Mary Frances Kelly Poh, Community Action Council (CAC)– Ms. Kelly Poh discussed CAC only writing grants for what it needed, CAC's need for the full amount of funding requested, the growing need in the community, staffing cuts at CAC, and the need for the City to increase the funding for CAC.

12. Gene Doherty – Mr. Doherty discussed the need for funding for tourism, and the top survey priorities listed in the staff report,
13. Kimble Goodman – Mr. Goodman spoke in support of funding the Library Basement Project, and funding for the Benicia Historical Museum.
14. David Galligan, Benicia Historical Museum– Mr. Galligan discussed the need for funding for the Benicia Historical Museum.
15. Stan Houston – Mr. Houston discussed funding for Benicia Community Arts, the grant application process, how the funding cuts would negatively affect Benicia Community Arts, and possibly having to put the music component on hold due to funding cuts.
16. David Lindsay – Mr. Lindsay spoke in support of the City fully funding the tourism program.
17. Christina Strawbridge – Ms. Strawbridge discussed tourism, and the need for more funding for tourism.
18. Duane Oliveira – Mr. Oliveira discussed the discretionary projects ranking form, the need for more funding for tourism, tourism needing to be ranked higher on the list, and the need for the City to invest money in tourism.
19. Bonnie Silveria – Ms. Silveria discussed the need for funding for Benicia Main Street.
20. Marilyn Bardet – Ms. Bardet discussed the need to finish the Library Basement Project and the Community Center, the Valero VIP funds, becoming a green community, what the \$150,000 is being used for with the Commanding Officer’s Quarters, the need for funding for tourism, the Waterfront Park, and the need for full funding for CAC.
21. Rick Ernst – Mr. Ernst discussed the City’s revenues and expenses, funding Tier I – III projects, the \$1.3 million being borrowed by the State, and the City’s current investments.
22. Bob Nelson – Mr. Nelson discussed funding for tourism and funding for Arts Benicia.
23. Jon Van Landschoot – Mr. Van Landschoot discussed the need to fund tourism.

Mayor Patterson called for a 5-minute break at 9:41 p.m.
The meeting resumed at 9:53 p.m.

Mayor Patterson stated that the budget meeting would be continued. However, she wanted to spend some time answering the questions that were asked during the meeting.

Mr. Erickson discussed the concerns raised by public speakers regarding staff salaries, current employment contracts, staffing being the City’s number one resource, non-structural improvements at City Hall (ADA improvements, health and welfare issues, the issue of ‘discretionary’ projects, recreation centers, the City’s non-enterprise resources, and the 8% (\$1.3 million) cut in property taxes.

Mr. Alvarez discussed the funding for the Commanding Officer’s Quarters.

Council Member Schwartzman discussed the 8% cut by the State.

Vice Mayor Campbell and Staff discussed the 8% cut by the State, the City possibly trying to sell its accounts receivables as it did in the past with the VLF money, the State's credit rating, the City's hiring freeze, the possibility of promotion freezes and the fiscal effects vs. the morale effects that would have.

Council Member Ioakimedes and Staff discussed whether property values had bottomed out, Cal PERS, which department would be staffing the Arts and Cultural Commission, and whether the 8% from the State would be a loan or a cut.

Council Member Schwartzman and Staff discussed re-categorizing some of the VIP funds, possibly using some of those funds for energy improvements at City Hall (which would in turn free up some funds for other things), possibly cutting Council's stipends by 5%, possibly cutting back on Council travel and meals, how dental insurance costs were down, whether Council needed to vote on reorganization of Public Works/Community Development, and reconfiguring and backfilling some of the groups that spoke tonight.

Vice Mayor Campbell discussed the redefining the VIP funds to address energy and water conservation. He requested Staff obtain an estimate on what it would cost the City to maintain the State Capital Building and the State Park (each site separately). He discussed Council using some of the City's reserves because it could get better deals for some of the building projects at this time.

Council Member Hughes discussed the need to spend money to make money. He discussed the need to look for alternatives to fully fund Benicia Industrial Park, Tourism, Benicia Main Street, Benicia Community Arts, CAC, the need to continue to be creative with moving dollars around, and the Fire Department Station 12 upgrades (the need for Staff to provide the sense of urgency, alternative options, etc.).

Mayor Patterson asked Staff to provide options for possibly fully funding the Community Center Project using some of the City's reserves (due to current lower building costs). She mentioned the issue of fans in the Council chambers.

ADJOURNMENT:

Mayor Patterson adjourned the meeting at 10:25 p.m.

Lisa Wolfe, City Clerk