

Minutes of the Blythe City Council Meeting March 24, 2020

The March 24, 2020 meeting of the Blythe City Council was called to order at 6:00pm in the Council Chambers by Mayor Reynolds. Also in attendance were Vice Mayor Egan and Council Members DeConinck, Rodriguez and Halby. Staff in attendance included: Interim City Manager and City Clerk Crecelius, Finance Director and City Treasurer Elms and Police Chief Coe. City Attorney Baron Bettenhausen participated via teleconference.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mayor Reynolds. The Invocation was led by Vice Mayor Egan.

REPORT FROM CLOSED SESSION:

City Attorney Bettenhausen stated there was no reportable action taken in Closed Session.

CONSENT CALENDAR: *Items on the Consent Calendar are considered routine and will be enacted with one motion of the Council. If any item requires individual consideration, it will be removed from the consent calendar and acted upon separately.*

1. Posting of the Agenda.

The summary of agenda items were posted on the bulletin boards on the outside of the public entrance to the Council Chamber and near the inside entrance of the Council Chamber on Friday, March 20, 2020.

2. Approval of the Warrant Register.

Recommendation: Approve **03/24/2020**, warrants numbered 71292 through 71375 and Utility Billing Refund warrants numbered 71376 through 71394 in the amount of \$245,680.73; **03/24/2020**, warrants numbered 71396 through 71472 in the amount of \$642,443.88 and **03/24/2020**, warrants numbered 71473 through 71500 and Utility Billing Refund warrants numbered 71501 through 71512 in the amount of \$140,322.59.

3. Approval of the Payroll Register.

Recommendation: Approve **03/24/2020**, warrants numbered 51592 through 51607 and Direct Deposits numbered 46948 through 47005 in the amount of \$217,728.21; **03/24/2020**, warrants numbered 51572 through 51587 and Direct Deposits numbered 46889 through 46947 in the amount of \$227,431.59; **03/24/2020**, warrants numbered 51588 through 51591 in the amount of \$8,979.28; **03/24/2020**, warrants numbered 51608 through 51612 and Direct Deposits numbered 47006 through 47111 in the amount of \$79, 521.79 and **03/24/2020**, warrants numbered 51613 through 51629 and Direct Deposits numbered 47112 through 47170 in the amount of \$227,837.88.

4. Minutes of the February 11, 2020 City Council Meeting.

Recommendation: Approve the Minutes of the February 11, 2020 meeting.

5. City of Blythe Permits issued for the Month of February 2020.

Recommendation: Receive and file this monthly report.

6. City of Blythe Fire Department Monthly Activity Report for February 2020.

Recommendation: Receive and file this monthly report.

7. City of Blythe Police Department Monthly Activity Report for February 2020.

Recommendation: Receive and file this monthly report.

8. Agreement for CFD No. 2004-1 Special Tax Administration Services.

Recommendation: Authorize the City Manager to sign an agreement for CFD No. 2004-1 with David Taussig and Associates.

No public comment. Councilman DeConinck moved approval of the Consent Calendar. The motion was seconded by Councilman Rodriguez with a unanimous aye vote.

PUBLIC HEARING:

Tentative Parcel Map 857-110-008. Interim City Manager Crecelius stated William Brunet with Blythe Partners, LLC is requesting approval to allow the division of one (1) 21.72± acre parcel into four (4) separate parcels and a remainder parcel. The project site is located at 1575 E. Chanslorway and is legally described as Assessor's Parcel Number 857-110-008. Proposed Parcel No. 1 is 5.46± acres in size, Proposed Parcel No. 2 is 5.46± acres in size, Proposed Parcel No. 3 is 5.46± acres in size, Proposed Parcel No. 4 is 3.99± acres in size and the remainder parcel is 1.33 ± acres in size. Each parcel has access from an improved dedicated right-of-way and all public and private utilities are in place (i.e.: city water, sewer). Proposed Parcels 1-4 are currently in agricultural production with the remainder parcel being occupied with residential structures. No variances or exceptions are required for this Parcel Map. The General Plan Land Use and Zoning Designation of the site is Low Density Residential. The existing zoning designation allows for a minimum lot area of 7,800 square feet with a minimum lot width of 65' and minimum depth of 100'. As the smallest proposed parcel is 1.33± acres, the proposed project is consistent with existing zoning regulations. Surrounding land uses include: residential, undeveloped land and Agriculture. The project is categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act pursuant to Guidelines Section 15315-Minor Land Divisions, and a Notice of Exemption with De Minimis Impact Finding will be filed. Therefore, subsequent to the public hearing it is recommended Council adopt Resolution No. 2020-007 approving the Notice of Exemption with De Minimis Impact Finding for Tentative Parcel Map 857-110-008 and Resolution No. 2020-008 approving Tentative Parcel Map 857-110-008 with conditions.

Mayor Reynolds opened the Public Hearing. No public comment. The Public Hearing was closed. Councilman Rodriguez moved approval of Resolutions No's 2020-007 and 2020-008. The motion was seconded by Vice Mayor Egan with a unanimous aye vote.

RESOLUTION NO. 2020-007. A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BLYTHE CONTAINING FINDINGS IN SUPPORT OF APPROVAL OF A NOTICE OF EXEMPTION WITH DE MINIMIS IMPACT FINDING FOR TENTATIVE PARCEL MAP 857-110-008

RESOLUTION NO. 2020-008. A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BLYTHE CONTAINING FINDINGS AND CONDITIONS IN SUPPORT OF APPROVING TENTATIVE PARCEL MAP 857-110-008 TO ALLOW THE DIVISION OF ONE (1) 21.72± (GROSS) ACRE PARCEL INTO FOUR (4) SEPARATE PARCELS AND ONE (1) REMAINDER PARCEL ON PROPERTY LOCATED AT 1575 CHANSLORWAY (ASSESSOR'S PARCEL NUMBER 857-110-008)

NEW BUSINESS:

Ratification of Proclamation of the Existence of a Local Emergency. Interim City Manager Crecelius stated the State and County of Riverside have declared a public state of emergency in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. As the City may incur costs for the coordination, surveillance, communication and management of COVID-19 the Mayor issued a Proclamation declaring the existence of a local emergency on Friday, March 20th. This will allow the City to apply for and hopefully recover the City's expenses in response to COVID-19. The proclamation is a necessary step in obtaining state and federal funding. It is therefore recommended Council adopt Resolution No. 2020-009 ratifying proclamation no, 2020-01 declaring the existence of a local emergency.

No public comment. Councilman Rodriguez moved approval of Resolution No. 2020-009. The motion was seconded by Vice Mayor Egan with a unanimous aye vote.

RESOLUTION NO. 2020-009. A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BLYTHE, CALIFORNIA, RATIFYING PROCLAMATION NO. 2020-001 DECLARING THE EXISTENCE OF A LOCAL EMERGENCY.

COVID-19 Update. Interim City Manager Crecelius stated as things are rapidly changing we put this item on as a place holder to give staff and Council the opportunity to have a discussion about our

response to the COVID-19 pandemic. As of this afternoon there are 59 cases in Riverside County with 6 deaths and 1,102 cases in the State of California. We were thrown for a loop late last week when the Governor mandated the closure of all non-essential services. We are now working through that. The Chief of Police has been working very closely with the Sheriff and Riverside County Department of Health. At this time they are asking for the Police Chiefs and police departments to help them with these business closures. At this time they are asking for voluntary compliance. If non-essential businesses remain open they are reported to the Department of Health and they make the determination if it is a health nuisance and what steps to take. As a City we have taken many preventative measures to enforce social distancing and limit the need for the public to come into a city facility.

Chief Coe stated there have been weekly teleconferences with the Sheriff and RCOPS. We are getting our guidance from them. The voluntary compliance is the first step. There will be a multi-step process for closing non-essential businesses. This first step is education. If they continue to be non-complaint it will be forwarded to the County Department of Health.

No public comment. The item was received and filed.

Utility Customer Protection Policy in response to COVID-19. Finance Director Elms stated the Governor issued an Executive Order in response to the COVID-19 outbreak. Within that order was a request to have the Public Utilities Commission monitor measures undertaken by public and private utility providers to implement customer service protections for critical utilities. In response to the Governor's order the Utilities Commission announced it would be monitoring all consumer protection measures taken by all public and private utilities under its jurisdiction. The City will need to report to the Commission any protection orders taken. Many agencies have already announced voluntary moratoriums on service disconnections for non-payment. The City realizes that water is an essential element to the containment of the outbreak as well as to the health and safety of the public. Like many communities, Blythe residents are trying to navigate through difficult times that are of no fault of their own. This policy will allow staff to take immediate action as need arises to minimize impacts to our customers while maintaining the highest level of service during these difficult times. It is recommended Council adopt the attached Utility Customer Protection Policy which will go into effect immediately and remain in effect until May 31, 2020.

Councilman DeConinck asked about the customers that are already in trouble. Finance Director Elms stated this goes into effect immediately. We have already done disconnections for the month of March and are not scheduled to do it again until mid-April. Most agencies are working with the customers to have water turned back on in those situations.

Mayor Reynolds asked about the finance charges. Finance Director Elms stated the policy is written that if we are not going to disconnect service, we would not apply the interest or penalty charges. This will be in effect until May 31st.

Public Comment. Leslie Watkins 1117 E. Hobsonway asked about making utility payments over the phone. Finance Director Elms stated you can make payments over the phone or on-line through Paymentus. There is a service charge, but we are not equipped to take payments over the phone at City Hall.

Councilman DeConinck moved approval of staff's recommendation. The motion was seconded by Vice Mayor Egan with a unanimous aye vote.

April's City Council Meeting Schedule. Interim City Manager Crecelius stated Council had previously discussed moving the April City Council meeting to the fourth Tuesday of the month to

accommodate two Town Hall meetings scheduled for April 13th and 14th to discuss Measure K, the City's 1% sales tax measure of the May 5th ballot. Due to all non-essential events being cancelled we will not have a public town hall meeting on those dates, but will instead prepare a presentation to be live streamed on April 14th at 6pm. A conference line will be also be provided for anyone wishing to ask questions about the tax measure. To accommodate this, staff is asking to hold the April Council meeting on the fourth Tuesday of the month to accommodate a Measure K presentation on April 14th .

No public comment. Councilman DeConinck moved approval of staff's recommendation. The motion was seconded by Vice Mayor Egan with a unanimous aye vote.

Office 365 Migration. Interim City Manager Crecelius stated the City's current email system is no longer supported by Microsoft and requires an upgrade. Due to security concerns and changes in law related to public records requests and data storage the City's IT provider, Southwest Networks recommends the City migrate from Microsoft Exchange and Office 2007 to Office 365. After the migration all City emails would be stored on the cloud in perpetuity vs. on a server located on site. The City currently has 45 users impacted by the migration. Each user requires an Office 365 Business Essentials licensing. Southwest will use the Microsoft Staged Migration method for the conversion. The licensing will cost \$12,320 and labor is estimated between \$4,275 and \$8550. The labor will be tracked during the project and the City will only be billed for the actual time spent. It is recommended Council authorize the Interim City Manager to issue a purchase order to Southwest Networks in the amount of \$12,320 for the licensing, a purchase order for labor estimated between \$4,275 and \$8,550 and authorize necessary budget adjustments for this purchase/installation.

Mayor Reynolds stated he uses the city's email on his phone and I found out Microsoft no longer supports Exchange so I can no longer get City emails on my phone.

No public comment. Councilman DeConinck moved approval of staff's recommendation. The motion was seconded by Councilman Rodriguez with a unanimous aye vote.

ORAL REPORTS:

Police Chief Coe stated I went to Sacramento earlier this month with a group of Police Chiefs, Chief DA and Riverside County Sheriff. We met with numerous Assemblymen and tried to get our message across about some of the laws that have been voted in that were soft on crime. Even in Sacramento it seems like they are ready for the pendulum to swing the other way in favor of law enforcement. There will be a ballot initiative in November called make California Safe Again to fix some of the language in Props 47 and 57. We spoke about making this trip annually until some of these laws are changed.

Councilman DeConinck stated we are going to take a pretty big hit in Sales, TOT and Property Tax from this outbreak and there will be future discussion we will need to have. Interim City Manager Crecelius stated it will have a big impact on our local businesses, but will have a major impact to the City as well as we have balanced our budget with minimal reserves. We hope to receive some type of reimbursement from the State and Federal Governments at some point. Finance Director Elms stated our consultants are keeping a close eye on impacts to our Sales and Property tax. Chief Coe stated it will also have an impact on hiring at the Police Department as the Academy has been shut down.

Mayor Reynolds thanked Leslie Jessop-Watkins for posting about the restaurants open in our community. We have done several Facebook lives trying to keep the public informed.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Leslie Jessop Watkins of 117 E. Hobsonway asked the Chief about the RV Parks within City limits. We have seen an increase in boating traffic the last few days. Interim City Manager stated we will have to

look into it. I noticed this weekend Mayflower Park was closed. Chief Coe stated some of them have long term residents so I will see what I can do about the weekend traffic.

ADJOURN: The City Council meeting was adjourned at 6:40pm.

Dale Reynolds, Mayor

ATTEST:

Mallory Crecelius, City Clerk