

Minutes

City of Soledad Joint City Council/Successor Agency Regular Meeting

October 21, 2020

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Ledesma called the City Council/Successor Agency Meeting to order at 5:32 p.m.

ROLL CALL

The Following Councilmembers/Agencymembers were present when the meeting was called to order:

Mayor/Chair	Fred Ledesma
Mayor Pro Tem/Vice Chair	Alejandro Chavez
Councilmember/Agencymember	Marisela Lara
Councilmember/Agencymember	Anna Velazquez
Councilmember/Agencymember	Carla Strobbridge Stewart (5:37 p.m.)

THE FOLLOWING COUNCILMEMBER WAS ABSENT

- None

PUBLIC COMMENT ON CLOSED SESSION ITEMS

Mr. Abel Pinedo would like to be know if the shooting range located at 31500 San Vicente Road, is for sale. He would like to be considered for operating the range. He retired over a year ago from CTF. He is a certified firearms instructor and Range Safety Officer with the United States Concealed Carry Association which is similar to the NRA. His biggest concern would be to give the public the ability to use the range and teach them the proper handling of firearms, proper storage, and proper transportation. He does carry his own liability insurance and that would keep the City of Soledad from any liability if something happened on the range.

Mayor Ledesma thanked Mr. Pinedo for his comments and encouraged him to return to the main session once Closed session is over so that he could hear the closed session report regarding item number 3.

MEETING RECESS FOR CLOSED SESSION

Mayor Ledesma recessed to Closed Session at 5:35 p.m.

MEETING RECONVENED

Mayor Ledesma reconvened from Closed Session at approximately 6:07 p.m.

CLOSED SESSION ITEMS

1. The City Council will recess to closed session pursuant to Government Code 54956.8 to give instructions to the City's real property negotiator (City Manager) concerning sale/exchange/lease of property located at 999 Los Coches Drive, City of Soledad, APN: 022-291-010. Instructions will include price, terms of payment and other relevant conditions.
2. The City Council will recess to closed session pursuant to Government Code Section 54956.9(a)(d)(1) to confer with its attorney regarding pending litigation which has been initiated formally and to which the City is a party: Claim of Fernandez
3. The City Council will recess to closed session pursuant to Government Code 54956.8 to give instructions to the City's real property negotiator (City Manager) concerning sale/exchange/lease of property located at 31500 San Vicente Road, City of Soledad, APN: 257-081-022. Instructions will include price, terms of payment and other relevant conditions.
4. The City Council will recess to closed session pursuant to Government Code Section 54956.9(a)(d)(1) to confer with its attorney regarding pending litigation which has been initiated formally and to which the City is a party: Claim of Enriquez.

CLOSED SESSION REPORTS

Attorney Mike Rodriguez said the council was unable to complete all four items that were on closed session. The council would need to recess back into closed session at the end of the regular meeting. The council was able to complete item's 3 and 4.

3. City Attorney Michael Rodriguez reported with respect to item no. 3, the council provided direction to its real property negotiator to continue real property negotiation with a provider of services for the gun range, so we are in the midst of negotiation some form of agreement for the operations of the range with this particular provider at this time.
4. With respect to item no. 4, The claim of Enriquez was approved unanimously. Direction was provided to legal counsel and no other reportable action was taken.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE was led by Carla Strobridge Stewart

ADDITIONS/MODIFICATIONS TO THE AGENDA

- None

PUBLIC COMMENT

- None

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Ledesma reported 4 items:

1. Every Wednesday the Monterey County Mayors and City Managers meet with Supervisor Chris Lopez and the County health officials regarding the status of Covid-19. Monterey County is still in the purple and will be at this level for a while. The numbers of testing are very good, and fatalities have not risen.
2. The Air Board is still gathering information of air pollution due to the fires.
3. He and the Interim City Manager Brent Slama met with the President of B&P Packing Brian Bigioni, which is now owned by Taylor Farms. They discussed possible changes.
4. On 10/20 he attended a meeting regarding the Military Banner Program in Soledad. The group was initially concerned that the program would not get a response, but he is very happy to report there is over 70 banners that will be produced. On November 11th there will be an unveiling on Front Street of all the banners. He is extremely proud to be the first and only City in Monterey County to do this. He thanked Sherie Colesberry for putting in all the work into this. He also thanked Chief Damon Wasson, Deputy Chief Fred Lombardi, Tony Virrueta, Juan Baltierra and Steven Andranigian.

COUNCILMEMBER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REPORTS

Mayor Pro Tem Chavez reported 1 item:

1. He thanked Frank and Maria Corralejo, the YMCA, the Rec, the Police Department and the community and everyone helping put together the Spooktacular event on Front Street.

Councilmember Velazquez reported 5 items:

1. She attended the California League of Cities virtual conference.
2. The census concluded 10/15. She does not have the final numbers.
3. She wants to see a townhall scheduled for the City of Soledad to provide information regarding the Covid-19 cases and would also like information from the staff on what Soledad has done to regarding Covid-19.
4. She would like to know what funding has been provided to the businesses, the use of the \$300,000 that came from the C.A.R.E.S. Act.
5. She continues to see parties in Soledad, and she would like the City to reiterate the fact of how important it is to work together to try to bring these numbers down. She would like to pursue in having a town hall regarding the Covid-19 updates.

Councilmember Strobbridge Stewart reported 6 items:

1. She reported SnipBus was in Soledad over the weekend and over 60 animals were altered.
2. She thanked the Interim City Manager Slama and the Public Works crew for accommodating the SnipBus.
3. South County Animal Rescue conducted a low-cost vaccination clinic in Greenfield and about 150 animals were able to receive services. The census group was also at the event handing out information and burritos.
4. SnipBus will be in Greenfield on 10/30. The City of Greenfield has budgeted \$12,000 to bring SnipBus to their City for Greenfield residents only.
5. The next low-cost vaccination clinic is scheduled here in Soledad on 11/21 and S.C.A.R. hopes to have the clinic every month rotating amongst the South County Cities.
6. She thanked Frank and Maria Corralejo for their efforts in the Spookfest event here in Soledad.

Councilmember Lara reported 2 items:

1. On 10/15 she attended the SVSWA meeting.
2. On 10/14 she attended the AMBAG meeting.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

Interim City Manager Slama presented oral highlights of his written report.

1. There has been a lot of work being done regarding the rental assistance with the United Way 211 program. Economic Development Housing Program Coordinator Tencia Vargas has done a great job with getting the information out to the public. There will be outreach done through the utility bills and using extra digital communications in the community for those that do not have social media.
2. An addition grant from United Way of \$20,000 has also been given to the City of Soledad. The first check from that program will be issued on Friday, 10/23.
3. Staff is very interested in what is going on at the County level with Covid-19 and how temperatures might affect the numbers. There will be future discussion regarding use of playgrounds and parks in the City.
4. There will be a presentation done by the Community Power at the 11/04 council meeting.

Councilmember Velazquez asked Interim City Manager Slama about the multiagency meeting on 10/16 regarding the homeless encampment on Highway 101. There were notices that were going to be issued to property owners; can you give an update on how the meeting went.

Interim City Manager Slama said that the 10/16 meeting was a site visit of about two dozen people that met at the area to take pictures and learn about the conditions. This meeting seemed to have got Cal Trans attention regarding some of the infrastructure degradation. The people living at the site are digging to the footings and getting into the bridge structure itself. Both Cal Trans and CHP were there again on 10/27.

Police Chief Wasson added there are postings down there saying that it is hazardous. There have been underground fires happening down there and plastic is being burned, CalFire took care of those areas. Cal trans is worried because the people have gotten into the access

panels which gives them access. On 10/27 Cal Trans and CHP were under the trying to figure out how the bridge could be resecured. There has been a lot of different organizations offering help with many different services such as relocation and medical care.

Councilmember Velazquez asked if the help was being coordinated through the County and social services.

Chief Wasson said that the efforts are being coordinated through the county but also contacting the Soledad Police Department for information.

YOUTH COUNCIL REPORT

Soledad Youth Commissioners Amber Solorio and Marcela Perez gave a brief verbal update.

CONSENT CALENDAR

Motion: Councilmember Velazquez requested to remove items C-2 and C-6 for separate discussion.

Councilmember Strobridge Stewart made motion to approve items C-1, C-3, C-4, and C-5. Motion was seconded by Councilmember Velazquez and carried by Unanimous vote:

Action:

Ayes: Strobridge Stewart, Velazquez, Lara, Chavez, and Ledesma
Noes: None
Abstain: None
Absent: None

C-1. Approval of Minutes

- a. Joint City Council/Successor Agency Regular Meeting Minutes of October 07, 2020.

C-3. Resolution No. 5643, A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Soledad Establishing the Job Classification of an Administrative Secretary, Adopting a Job Description, Approving One (1) Full-Time Position and Establishing a Salary Range.

C-4. City of Soledad Monthly Department Activity Reports.

C-5. Designation of Voting Delegates and Alternates for the 2020 League of California Cities Annual Virtual Conference, October 07 – 09, 2020.

C-2. **Warrants**

042287 – 042389

Councilmember Velazquez asked about the expenditure of Save the Whales; she would like to know how they are conducting outreach for this specific stormwater project. Most of the outreach for this project was being done through the schools and now that the schools are not open, she would like to know what is being done.

Public Works Manager said the main outreach that happens for this stormwater project is through the utility billing.

C-6. Resolution No. 5647, A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Soledad to Approve Applying for and Entering into Agreements for the Regional Early Action Planning Grant.

Councilmember Velazquez said upon the review of the application there was specific language in terms of housing opportunities for downtown. She would like more information about having that be a priority for the application and what kind of housing opportunities will there be for downtown. There can be mixed commercial housing, but she needs clarity on what the thought process was behind having a focus on the downtown area for housing.

Interim City Manager Slama said this information is in line with the updated housing element and with the State of California policies promoting infill development within the City. If this application for the \$165,000 goes through, it would be going towards the general plan and would help offset the costs the money contributed by the general fund. There are upgrade opportunities in the downtown specific plan for housing. Encinal Street has housing opportunities and there are mixed-use opportunities on Front Street and Encinal Street. The School District will be going out for a bond to build teacher housing located in the downtown area. There are prime areas for residential housing.

Motion: Councilmember Velazquez made motion to approve items C-2 and C-6. Motion was seconded by Mayor Ledesma and carried by Unanimous vote:

Action:

Ayes: Velazquez, Ledesma, Lara, Strobridge Stewart and Chavez
Noes: None
Abstain: None
Absent: None

PUBLIC HEARING NO. PH-1

- None

BUSINESS

- B-1. **Resolution No. 5648**, A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Soledad in Support of City of Soledad Measure S, A Measure Increasing the City's Transaction and Use Tax (Sales Tax) by one-half Percent (0.5%), With the Use of the Tax Revenue To Be Subject to Annual Audits by an Independent Auditor and a Citizen's Oversight Committee.

Interim City Manager presented the staff report.

Mayor Pro Tem Chavez is in support of Measure S.

Councilmember Velazquez is in support of Measure S.

Councilmember Lara is in support of Measure S.

Councilmember Strobridge Stewart is in support of Measure S

Mayor Ledesma is in support of Measure S.

Motion: Councilmember Strobridge Stewart made motion to approve Resolution No. 5648. Motion was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Chavez and carried by Unanimous vote:

Action:

Ayes: Strobridge Stewart, Mayor Pro Tem Chavez, Velazquez, Lara, and Ledesma

Noes: None

Abstain: None

Absent: None

- B-2. Consideration of Options for City Council Virtual Meeting Protocols.

Interim City Manager Slama introduced the staff report and showed council the O.W.L., the new way virtual meetings have been being held at city hall. The OWL shows the entire room and focuses on who is speaking. The goal of this discussion is to increase professionalism for council meetings.

I.T. Director Steven Andranigian explained further of how the virtual meetings should go. There should be an etiquette followed and this item is to define the rules for the meetings. Many cities are having meetings together in the same room, but still following the social distancing rules and following the correct etiquette.

Councilmember Velazquez said she would like to move forward in a hybrid meeting with Zoom or Facebook Live or the Granicus feature. She would like the residents to be able to be live as well. However, the council decides to continue meetings, please post the information clearly so everyone can see how the meetings will be held.

Mayor Ledesma strongly recommends having the meetings in person with the O.W.L. Having meetings in-person is very important when making critical big decisions.

Mayor Pro Tem Chavez thinks the council should start looking into different options such as having a YouTube channel or using Granicus.

Councilmember Strobridge Stewart said Facebook Live may be an option as well.

Mayor Pro Tem Chavez also agreed with the Interim City Manager Slama and I.T. Director Andranigian; the councilmembers should have adequate lighting when participating in meetings.

I.T. Director Andranigian said he can assist council to find lighting and a quiet place to sit so that everyone can look professional.

Councilmember Strobridge Stewart said that she would like to participate in in-person meeting but the 5:30 p.m. start change should be changed to 5:45 or 6:00 so to give the councilmembers that work and commute time to be able to get home from work. The time should also change because there are a lot of residents that commute as well.

Mayor Ledesma asked if anyone from the public that would like to make a comment.

- There were no public comments at this time.

Interim City Manager Slama also gave a handout to each councilmember that the City of Gonzales uses that also outlines a few expectations and rules for council meeting educate. He would like to have the council meeting of the swearing-in of the in-coming Mayor and Councilmembers in person. He would also like to have in person meetings for the closed session items, because it is not clear who is in the room area of your home. We want to make sure we are accommodating the community and meeting the needs of the council. There are three directions that can be done; 1. Doing the meetings as they have been being done. 2. Talk about meeting in person again. 3. Starting a hybrid model and allowing council to have flexibility where they could either meet in person or by Zoom.

Mayor Pro Tem Chavez would like to allow the councilmembers choose the hybrid model for the meeting, giving the councilmembers flexibility. He does think that the Brown Act guidelines should be followed as far as being clear with where we are attending the meeting from.

Councilmember Strobridge Stewart agreed with Mayor Pro Tem Chavez.

Councilmember Velazquez does like the hybrid option and would also like to change the time that the council meeting starts.

Councilmember Lara also favors the hybrid idea and would also like the start time for council meetings to change to a later time.

Motion:

No Action taken for this item

Direction was given and Information was received

B-3. Provide Direction on Proposed Soledad Youth Council Budget.

Interim City Manager Slama presented the presentation.

Advisor to the Youth Council Ivan Ibarra Mora introduced Soledad Youth Commissioners Amber Solorio and Marcela Perez who gave a brief presentation regarding the proposed Soledad Youth Council Budget.

Councilmember Velazquez said she felt the original intent of the \$10,000 was for training and leadership development. She hoped that the Soledad Youth Council would have followed some of the successful practices of the Gonzales Youth Council and invest in policy trainings with the leaders such as the Police Chief, Public Works Director and the Fire Department and also understanding the ordinances that comes with the departments and also understanding the ordinances and policies that govern the city. They should be looking at the legislation that effects the community, city council and the youth. The money should be directed by the youth council to spearhead the initiatives that they seen were a need in the community. The training that has happened has been given by Ivan Ibarra Mora and Celia Solorio, free of cost to the City. Moving forward the council should invest in having an ongoing sustainable youth budget to indicate how the youth council will be allocating the funds for their initiatives. She does not feel sure with the stipend piece. She asked the City of Gonzales how they move forward and Gonzales said what they do is they have an initiative and they do hire the youth so they are learning the process and they also learn the skills that are valuable as adults. She would like to see some of the training components that have not been done yet and utilize some of the funding to make sure the youth council has the specific training modules as part of the foundation that made the City of Gonzales youth council a successful youth council.

Mayor Pro Tem Chavez said that being able to have the youth council be able to look at the modules that Councilmember Velazquez is referring to is not an issue or extra costs we should be looking at unless we are going to be allocating time from the department heads and put that as a cost towards this particular budget in which he would be opposed to. Regarding the stipends for the two leaders that have been chosen to be the youth council members for the Soledad youth council, he does not have a problem with the stipend. The youth are taking time away from the time that they would be attending college, taking courses, and getting credits towards whatever, their initiatives are. The sustainability piece is making certain that the council is aware of what the initiatives are and are supporting them. The stipends come out to a lower cost than the \$10,000 and the money left over is still plenty to be able to do what Councilmember Velazquez brought up. If there is a particular initiative that the City Council is interested in, then we should bring that to the youth council and look at how the City council and the Soledad youth council can partner to move the initiative forward and vice versa.

Councilmember Lara asked if the council does decide to move forward with the stipend, who will the Soledad youth council be working with to prepare information as they do now. Will the City need to hire someone to work with them or will Mr. Ibarra Mora continue to work with them to ensure that the information they present is accurate. Also, in the beginning of deciding on the \$10,000 that money was supposed to be specifically for training not to pay them as employees. And if the council does decide to pay the youth council will someone from the City be responsible for hiring youth council or will Mr. Ibarra Mora continue to do this. Will the City need to pay him

to do this? Will a special consultant have to be hired. Also, being that the school board might have youth commissioners be apart of their meetings, will the same two youth councilmembers be the ones at those meetings as well.

Councilmember Strobridge Stewart feels that the direction that the Soledad youth council is providing should be listened to. In the beginning of the Soledad youth council, it was a different time and before Covid-19 happened. The money was suggested to use the money for training in the beginning, but everything is different now. The youth councilmembers are doing a great job so far and she agrees with the Mayor Pro Tem Chavez. Gonzales has staff to be able to designate someone for the youth council, Soledad does not have that. Mr. Ibarra Mora has been training the young people for free and out of the kindness of his heart and that is great.

Mayor Ledesma said the amount of time the youth council has spent is phenomenal. The amount of work that they did regarding the park and Measure S, the council would not be able to do. The youth council is here all the time and they have been able to hear what the young people of Soledad are saying and needing. These young people could be having a job, but instead they are doing work for the youth council. The Soledad youth council is much more organized and has more kids than the Gonzales youth council. The City of Gonzales has a designated person that is getting paid, so they are spending much more than the \$10,000. The youth council should be given something to be able to show the gratitude for their time.

Councilmember Lara said she does believe the youth council should be paid, they are doing a wonderful job, her comment is that if Mr. Ibarra Mora gets busy with his responsibilities, will he have time to continue with training the youth council or if he decides to leave, will the youth council be able to continue to provide the great service they have been providing.

Councilmember Velazquez said she wanted to clarify that she when she talked about the department heads, she was not referring to the department heads being paid for providing training to the youth. Regarding to what she said about the initiatives for the youth council, she was not saying that the city council should be giving them the initiatives they have. They took the lead on the mental health survey and that was an amazing initiative because the City is having a lot of issues with mental health. In terms to what she was saying about the Gonzales youth council, she does think the Soledad youth council is doing an amazing job but in order for Soledad to have a sustainable youth council the City does have to invest. The money was initially for training, but things have changed, but leadership and training should be ongoing. There should be clarity with the school district, the City and the youth council to have the youth be the transformation the City of Soledad wants to see and hiring a consultant to work with the youth council and make sure that we are working directly with the school district. We have already had issues with the school district in how to move forward with the youth council. Going back to Gonzales with the changes they made with foundation they laid with their process and policies. If it's an opportunity for the youth council to get a stipend and focus on laying policies and foundation that can be sustainable and be apart of what we do and how we conduct business she is for that. As a City investing and monetarily investing, putting funding into the youth council so there is a sustainable platform for them.

Advisor to the Youth Council Ivan Ibarra Mora thanked the city council for the immense investment and would like to address the questions and comments. What the youth council was

able to do regarding the mental health initiative costed zero dollars to the City. The youth council provided an amazing program. He is deeply committed to the youth council and finances have never gotten in the way of providing the opportunities. He does feel upset that members of the council have said they are wanting to hire a consultant to do what he is already doing. He has been providing the service that is equivalent to the advising that the Gonzales youth council is getting. This is how he is giving back to the community; he loves the youth council and enjoys this type of work.

Councilmember Lara said that her concern is not that the council hire a consultant. She appreciates everything that Mr. Ibarra Mora has done so far with the youth council and is very happy and excited to see the future of the youth council. Her concern is that the work is being done for free and she believes that no one should be doing the work for free, people should be paid for their work. Her concern is if Ivan decides to leave to take on other responsibilities, who will take on the responsibility of the youth council.

Mr. Ibarra Mora said there is a lot of opportunity if Measure S does pass because that is specifically allocated for the youth. If Measure S passes the council should start drafting a plan for the long-term sustainability of the youth council.

Interim City Manager Slama said that he appreciates Councilmember Lara's comments and questions. The City has been very dependent on Mr. Ibarra Mora and Ms. Solorio. He believes that passage of Measure S will bring permanent funding structure and support. Hiring a community liaison person would have a focus on community and provide specific support to the youth council is eventually the direction the City wants to go. The stipend does seem like the more appropriate way to go.

City Attorney Mike Rodriguez suggest that staff gather information and bring it back to the council for action. In moving forward with a stipend, the City needs to make sure to comply with the rules. A true stipend cannot be a per hour amount, it should be an amount of money paid out but not by hour.

Interim City Manager Slama said the amount does not require council action because the amount is under budget authority. The City does not want to amend our personnel rules by putting part time employees on the book. Who will the check be written to and will it be paid out monthly or just one time.

Councilmember Strobridge Stewart would be fine with \$100 a month stipend per each individual.

Councilmember Velazquez said if there is any money remaining, she would like to know what type of trainings the members of the youth council would like to see happen based on the initiatives they are undertaking.

City Attorney Mike Rodriguez said there are tax questions regarding stipends that need to be worked out before the City moves forward with the stipend.

Motion:

No Action taken for this item
Direction was given and Information was received

B-4. Review of Future Direction for Community Development Department.

Interim City Manager Slama presented the staff report.

Councilmember Velazquez asked why code enforcement position was taken from the Community Development department and placed into police department.

Interim City Manager Slama said that this position was placed under the police department by City Manager Adela Gonzalez and the prior Police Chief Sills. This position is usually in the Community Development Department in most cities.

Mayor Ledesma said he does not agree that the Code Enforcement position being under the Police Department.

Mayor Pro Tem Chavez thinks that the Code Enforcement Officer should be placed under Community Development.

Councilmember Velazquez said that in her experience she has seen Code Enforcement has been in the Community Development Department.

Councilmember Strobridge Stewart asked if the Code Enforcement Officer and the Animal Control Officer are crossed trained.

Interim City Manager Slama said they are crossed trained. Vehicle abatement of the Code Enforcement duties is more of a police activity.

Councilmember Strobridge Stewart said does hope to keep the Animal Control Officer and the Code Enforcement Officer cross trained and to have someone on duty seven days a week. She also believes that the Code Enforcement position should stay in the police department.

MEETING RECESS FOR 2nd CLOSED SESSION

Mayor Ledesma recessed to Closed Session at 8:21 p.m.

MEETING RECONVENED

Mayor Ledesma reconvened from Closed Session at approximately 8:57 p.m.

CLOSED SESSION ITEMS

1. The City Council will recess to closed session pursuant to Government Code 54956.8 to give instructions to the City's real property negotiator (City Manager) concerning sale/exchange/lease of property located at 999 Los Coches Drive, City of Soledad, APN: 022-291-010. Instructions will include price, terms of payment and other relevant conditions.
2. The City Council will recess to closed session pursuant to Government Code Section 54956.9(a)(d)(1) to confer with its attorney regarding pending litigation which has been initiated formally and to which the City is a party: Claim of Fernandez

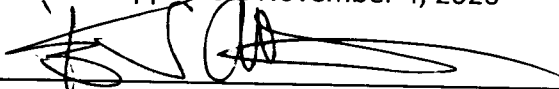
CLOSED SESSION REPORTS

1. City Attorney Michael Rodriquez reported with respect to item no. 1, the council provided direction to its property negotiator, the City Manager. No other reportable action taken.
2. With respect to item no. 2, The claim of Fernandez; there was unanimous decision to reject the claim. Direction was provided to legal counsel. No other reportable action was taken.

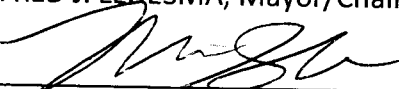
ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Ledesma adjourned the Regular meeting at 8:58 p.m.

Minutes Approved: November 4, 2020



FRED J. LEDESMA, Mayor/Chairman



BRENT SLAMA, Interim City Clerk/Agency Secretary

