

Minutes

City of Soledad Joint City Council/Successor Agency Regular Meeting

July 01, 2020

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Ledesma called the City Council/Successor Agency Meeting to order at 5:36 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 Strobridge Stewart

THE FOLLOWING COUNCILMEMBER WAS ABSENT

- None

PUBLIC COMMENT ON CLOSED SESSION ITEMS

- None

MEETING RECESS FOR CLOSED SESSION

- 5:38 p.m.

MEETING RECONVENED

- 6:09 p.m.

CLOSED SESSION ITEMS

1. The City Council will recess to Closed Session to consider personnel matters pursuant to Government Code Section 54957(B)(1)- City Manager Separation, Employment, Appointment.

CLOSED SESSION REPORTS

1. City Attorney Michael Rodriguez reported with respect to item no. 1, The City Council took action by unanimous vote to separate the City Manager from employment from the City. No other reportable action taken.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE was led by Carla Strobridge Stewart

ADDITIONS/MODIFICATIONS TO THE AGENDA

- None

PUBLIC COMMENT

- None

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Ledesma gave report regarding the City of Salinas Mayor Joe Gunter's passing over the weekend. Mr. Gunter was a very good Mayor and representative of the County of Monterey. He was a very cool straight forward man. He hopes that the City of Soledad would please send a sympathy offering to the City of Salinas in condolence for their loss. He also reported that him, Mayor Pro Tem Chavez and Acting City Manager Brent Slama met with Craig Kaufman regarding tourism and the Visitor's Center.

COUNCILMEMBER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REPORTS

Mayor Pro Tem Chavez reported that he, Mayor Fred Ledesma, and Acting City Manager Brent Slama attending a meeting regarding the Visitor's Center and scaling back on tourism dollars. He also attended a TAMC meeting on 06/24/20.

Councilmember Carla Strobbridge Stewart said that SnipBus is continuing in South County and they have been very successful. SnipBus has served 65 South County animals and 35 of those were from Soledad. In July they will be in Soledad for three days.

Councilmember Velazquez reported that she attended in the Census Caravan in Soledad on 06/28/20. She thanked Soledad Police Chief Wasson and the officers from Soledad for helping with the event. She also thanked the Youth Council for participating with the Census Caravan. On 06/30/20 she participated in the South County Food Drive, about 800 people received food. On 07/10/20 she will be participating in the groundbreaking ceremony for the Monterey Salinas Transit for the King City Operations and Maintenance facility. She praised Councilmember Strobbridge Stewart for assisting her with her dog that was having seizures and providing hospital information

Councilmember Lara reported that she attended the AMBAG meeting via Zoom. The Board approved funding for the Regional Early Action Planning Program to support housing, the maximum award will be \$165,000. She also attended the SVSWA on 06/18/20. At the meeting they at the meeting they congratulated Luis Alcala from Frank Ledesma Elementary for worm cultivating and helping educate the other students.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

Acting City Manager Brent Slama presented an oral and written report.

- On 06/18/20 the first group of loans to businesses here in the community of Soledad were approved. There are more to come this coming week and there are hopes to expand the program significantly.
- He gave special thanks to Police Chief Wasson for his efforts of convincing Union Pacific to move their cars out of Soledad.
- He had a meeting with Junior Nuno and Chief Wasson about the potential of having recreational services out at the landfill and gun range site.
- He attended a meeting with Salinas Valley Tourism & Visitors Bureau Craig Kaufman.
- There was a meeting with the Salinas Valley Solid Waste Authority regarding the upcoming mandatory food waste collection and diversion program that the City will be taking part in and the mandatory procurement by the Cities of Recyclables.

YOUTH COUNCIL REPORT

Youth Commissioner Amber Solorio reported that the Youth Council had their End of the Year celebration on Tuesday, June 16, 2020. They recognized the outgoing seniors. Councilmember Lara was in attendance for the celebration. They have started the process of selecting the new youth council. They have been collaborating with the Gonzales Youth Council for the Census 2020 and have been doing videos on Facebook and Instagram and have also done outreach regarding Covid-19.

CONSENT CALENDAR

Motion: Councilmember Velazquez made a motion to approve items C-1 through C-5. Motion was seconded by Councilmember Lara and carried by unanimous vote:

Action:

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

- C-1. Joint City Council/Successor Agency Regular Meeting Minutes of June 17, 2020.
- C-2. 041301 - 041492
- C-3. Resolution No. 5602, A Joint Resolution of the City Council and the Successor Agency to the Former Redevelopment Agency of the City of Soledad Approving and Authorizing the City Manager to Sign a Contract with Bryant L. Jolley, CPA to Perform Annual Auditing Services for Three Years, At a Cost Not to Exceed \$117,500.
- C-4. Resolution No. 5603, A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Soledad Approving the Master Fee Schedule for Fiscal Year 2020-2021.
- C-5. Receive and Accept City of Soledad Monthly Department Activity Reports

PUBLIC HEARING

Receive the Staff report
Open the Public Hearing 6:31 p.m.
Close the Public Hearing 6:46 p.m.
Council Action

- PH-1. Public Hearing for Discussion of Possible Community Development Block Grant Applications for the 2019/2020 Funding Cycle.

Acting City Manager Slama presented the staff report.

Mayor Pro Tem Chavez said he would like to look further into how else the CDBG money can be used so that it is beneficial to the City and the businesses in the City.

Councilmember Velazquez would like to know for the future how can Soledad move forward with the housing assistance programs that are also being offered in these grants; the City should look into the assistance for homebuyers and the Housing Rehab. There is a lot of need in Soledad for the aging homes. How can the City use funding sources through CDBG to increase the number of affordable units when talking to developers.

Acting City Manager Slama said there are several programs that must be looked at; there is need everywhere. The City is jumping into CDBG very late in the game because in the beginning the City was not planning on submitting the application because the fire station was not going to be an eligible expense, but the City has a lot of needs and these are the types of programs that need to be taken advantage.

Motion:

No Action taken for this item
Direction was provided to staff.

BUSINESS

- B-1. Resolution No. 5604, A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Soledad Approving a Consulting Services Agreement with Sun Street Centers for the Continued Implementation, Operation, Management, Staffing and Administration of Road to Success Youth Pre-Diversion Program.

Acting City Manager Slama presented the staff report along with Police Chief Wasson.

Councilmember Velazquez asked if the Council could please receive quarterly performance reports and success stories and to hear from the youth the program helps.

Chief Wasson said the kids that receive service through Sun Street and complete the programs offered, are recognized through awards. The police department does receive performance reports from Sun Street. The Chief is working with Sun Streets on new ways to bring recognition to the youth.

Mayor Pro Tem Chavez would like to see the City partner more with Sun Street and other agencies expand more of the preventative programs.

Councilmember Lara would like to know how the youth are being recruited to be a part of the programs and she would also like to know if Chief could please send over the reports that he is receiving from Sun Street. She would like to see data and statistics but not names.

Motion: Councilmember Velazquez made a motion to approve Resolution No. 5604. Motion was seconded by Mayor Ledesma and carried by unanimous vote:

Action:

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

B-2. Consideration of Appointments to the Community Center Committee.

Acting City Manager Slama presented the staff report.

The City hopes to meet on the second Tuesday of each month and the first meeting will be 07/14/20. There will be appointments for two councilmembers. The Soccer League will be represented by Jesus Quevas; the Soledad Little League will be represented by Victor Penera; The Soledad Mission Recreation District will be represented by Frances Bengtson; Lulu Vargas will represent the South County YMCA; Tim Vanoli will represent the Soledad Unified School District; Youth Commissioner Amber Solorio will represent the Youth; Darlene Acosta will represent Sun Street; and there are five open positions that would represent one senior representative, one Special Needs Representative and three community members.

Mayor Ledesma and Councilmember Velazquez had suggested names for all the categories that are open, but in terms of applications received, we have applications from Aaron Arriaga, Michelle Galloway, Barry Groves and Richard Perez.

Mayor would like to move forward with the applicants that have applied.

Councilmember Velazquez and Mayor Pro Tem Chavez volunteered to be the two City Councilmember representatives.

Mayor Pro Tem asked what positioned would each person specifically be filling

Acting City Manager Slama said that there is a total of four applications that were received. There is also an opening for the Park Committee member. The total should have been 15 total and as of right now there are only 13 so there is room for two more which would be the Senior Representative and the Special Needs Representative.

Motion: Councilmember Velazquez made a motion to approve by Minute Motion. Motion was seconded by Councilmember Lara and carried by unanimous vote:

Action:

Ayes: Velazquez, Lara, Strobridge Stewart, Chavez, and Ledesma

Noes: None

Abstain: None

Absent: None

WORKSHOP

B-3. Strategic Planning Workshop on a Potential Revenue Measure for the November 3, 2020 General Election Ballot.

Acting City Manager Slama presented the staff report, he also shared a PowerPoint presentation. He focused on a potential Revenue Measure. The City of Soledad needs take advantage of opportunities to increase funding and needs to continuously advocate for fundamental changes to the system. Soledad does have a .5% sales tax capacity and must emphasize on the economic development, building new stores and new business increases property tax value which increases sales tax. Soledad needs to connect with the prisons, both literally and figuratively, and take advantage of the opportunities that the prison presents itself for services to connect with the businesses in the City as they are a city unto themselves and they buy millions of dollars of things and if the City can connect our Soledad businesses to the prison to provide those services, that would be a win for everybody. In addition, he stated that there should be a literal connection as well. There should be an annexation from mainland Soledad to the prison, which is incorporated, then Soledad would have Dole, Wilbur-Ellis Ag, the Chevron Station and San Benito Supply, which would open an opportunity for Soledad. The City of Soledad is not lined up with what the Council would like to see done. Soledad has zero dedicated staff for Economic Development & tourism, zero dedicated staff for Parks & Recreation and zero dedicated staff for capital projects. There is a 2% local sales tax limit. Soledad has Measure Y which is 1%, TAMC which is .375% and MST which is .125% and .5% remains which represents about \$900,000 in potential revenue for the City. That would have to be voted on and passed by the voters. The cost to place it on the ballot is minimal compared to doing it in a Special Election and the money can be used for any government purpose.

Mayor Pro Tem Chavez said that he is not a fan of taxes, however he does realize that another community or the County can come in and take advantage of the last .5% of the

sales tax and he thinks Soledad should look further into this and try to figure out how the City can align its goals with the budget.

Councilmember Velazquez stated she finds it difficult to entertain a tax because of looking at the cost of living in Monterey County. However, she does think the council needs to look further into the measure and how much of the money will be allocated correctly. She would like to look into the Measure Y funds and figure out how some of that money can be freed up for recreation, seniors, and the arts. She does think it is important to have someone as a manager and not a director. The previous housing manager was excellent and was able to do the housing job as a manager and not a director. She also feels very concerned about the capital projects and every time a consultant agreement needs to be approved it makes her feel sick to her stomach. She would like to move forward with looking into grants. She likes the idea of connecting the prison with annexation so that the City can benefit from the businesses. It is sad to see the disparities with what sales tax comes to Soledad in comparison to other Monterey County Cities.

Councilmember Strobbridge Stewart feels uncomfortable with a new sales tax at this time, she knows that it is needed but maybe not the right time. Seeing the consultant numbers is very disturbing. She agrees with Councilmember Velazquez regarding having community transparency with the Measure Y dollars. In the beginning of pushing for Measure Y it was supposed to be used for public safety and recreation and aside from the community center, it is not clear what else for recreation those funds have been used for. She likes the idea of an in-house Community Engagement coordinator. She would like to know of the ideas that the Community Center Committee members come up with. She feels that maybe this is not the right time for a new tax, and it may be better to present to the public in two years.

Councilmember Lara agrees with Councilmember Lara in bringing back the idea of a new tax in two years. She also agrees that the Measure Y money should be looked at closer and there should be community transparency.

Mayor Fred Ledesma said he thinks everyone is concerned about taxes but now that Acting City Manager Slama has shown the council the numbers the issues are very real. Soledad is a City that does a lot on a limited budget. The things that the City has is astounding; new schools, Hartnell College, the Soledad Community Center, and an indoor swimming pool. He has not been an advocate of the South County YMCA because of the administrative costs that they pay themselves, with that money Soledad can pay its own person to run a whole youth program. Soledad has fourteen parks, soon to be seventeen parks. Soledad needs a Parks Coordinator. Who will pay a director to do that? Who will oversee the maintenance of the new parks? The Council is asking Public Works department to do more with no more money. Council needs to think and be creative. He does agree that the City needs to do a better job with Measure Y. The council says they want more youth services but are they willing to spend the money. If the council does not want to charge a tax, then why not take half of the Measure Y money and spend it on real youth services and programs. Soledad has no Arts programs, no music programs, no senior programs, no Parks Coordinator, and no computer classes until money is reallocated or gets additional money. The first thing the City should do is stop the Teacher Housing Project with the school district because their Bond issue did not pass. The City Council should tell them we are not going to give them that land.

He believes the City should try to move forward with the new Measure or look further into the Measure Y money, but with reallocating Measure Y money the City will lose cops.

Mayor Pro Tem Chavez said that he is not a fan of sales tax but if the City does not do it, someone else will and they will take up that .5% and the Council will have no say. There needs to be further very serious discussion about it.

Councilmember Velazquez said that other key points are that the council needs to take into consideration of the Measure Y funds and look into how funds can be reallocated. Soledad is spending more on services and supplies than are being spent on our own personnel. The City should be working with our local agencies that are already supplying services. The City should be going out for grants. There is a lot of money out there that can be used for services that are needed in Soledad.

Mayor Ledesma said he agrees with Councilmember Velazquez but there needs to be someone to apply for the grants. The City does not have someone that does that. Acting City Manager Slama has made it very clear in how we need to move forward; the City wants youth services, but we have no one to run those youth services. He asked; how much of the Measure Y money is spent on youth programs and how much is spent on cops?

Councilmember Strobbridge Stewart said that she understands what Mayor is saying but Measure Y was for Public Safety and Recreation; for recreation there is the YMCA contract which is \$179,497 and for Police the cost is \$919,343.

Mayor Ledesma said hearing these numbers shows that the City of Soledad does need the .5%. He said the City is spending almost a million dollars on police, but our police department is short staffed. We also very much believe in the youth and want more in the City for them.

Councilmember Velazquez said that at one time she left the community of Soledad because there was no youth service and now that she has come back and has her own children and she sees that Soledad still does not have services for youth. Our community spends money outside of our community to be able to give our kids youth services. The City is spending 12 million dollars on supplies and services, we need to ask ourselves do we need to be spending 12 million dollars on those types of services. To see that we are spending 12 million on consulting and supplies and services. A portion of that can be going into our own youth services.

Mayor Ledesma said that it may be difficult to pass the tax because the economic hardship people are in. He believes we should still try.

Councilmember Strobbridge Stewart asked the Acting City Manager Slama if it might be possible to come up with an idea or plan for a couple of the consultants and how the City can make better use out of the money that is being spent.

Acting City Manager Slama said he will look into giving council an idea but does want council to remember that some of those services the City will not be able to pull away from. For example: Tri-Cities, CalFire, Legal Service and Finance. A lot of funds are restricted. Funds

that are restricted cannot be taken and put into something that it cannot be used for. The funds that can be moved around sometimes are the General Fund and Measure Y. When looking at the City of Greenfield has passed 1.75% of local taxes and passed a separate fire assessment and now their General Fund is 3 million dollars more than Soledad and they have the same population as Soledad. If you want more services, you will need to add revenue. If the council does not do something to move forward, then the Soledad School District or the Healthcare District will put something on the ballot. If the Council does not put something on the ballot, then someone else will. Even if there are some savings made with the consultants, that still will not be enough for a recreational program. The City needs to triple the investment in recreational services, if not then it is not going to work.

Mayor Ledesma asked of the contracts that are not already allocated, how much money can be saved by hiring in-house?

Acting City Manager Slama said he does not have that number right now but will present that information once he gets an accurate number.

Councilmember Velazquez would like to hear feedback from the community. She hopes there can be some virtual meetings scheduled to get a better feel of what information the council may not be aware of.

Mayor Ledesma thinks that the community of Soledad is a very giving community, but they want to see where their money is going. There needs to be more community transparency.

Mayor Pro Tem Chavez suggested opening the conversation to the public during the current Zoom meeting.

Soledad community member Alexis Magdaleno said the City of Watsonville also has a Measure Y that is very similar to Soledad. People in that community are tired of most of the money going to law enforcement. When he first got involved in the Measure Y committee, he was very excited because he thought things would be able to change for youth services. He would like to not have to pay for an SRO and repurpose that officer for the streets of Soledad. People in Soledad do not receive the services needed in Soledad and he would like more money used towards the youth.

Mayor Ledesma informed that an SRO is usually paid for through grants and this last years SRO was paid for by the school district.

Councilmember Velazquez said that the Superintendent of School in California said there is now a task force that will be looking into the pros and cons of having an SRO in the school.

Mayor Ledesma thanked Acting City Manager Slama for the presentation.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Ledesma adjourned the Regular meeting at 8:18 p.m.

Minutes Approved: July 15, 2020



FRED J. LEDESMA, Mayor/Chairman



BRENT SLAMA, Acting City Clerk/Agency Secretary

