

Minutes

City of Soledad Joint
City Council/Successor Agency
Regular Meeting

January 20, 2021

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Velazquez called the City Council/Successor Agency Meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

ROLL CALL

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

Mayor/Chair	Anna M. Velazquez
Mayor Pro Tem/Vice Chair	Carla Strobridge
Councilmember/Agencymember	Marisela Lara
Councilmember/Agencymember	Ben Jimenez, Jr.

THE FOLLOWING COUNCILMEMBER WAS ABSENT

Councilmember/Agencymember Alejandro Chavez

PUBLIC COMMENT ON CLOSED SESSION ITEMS

- None

MEETING RECESS FOR CLOSED SESSION

Mayor Velazquez recessed to Closed Session at 6:04 p.m.

MEETING RECONVENED

Mayor Velazquez reconvened from Closed Session at approximately 6:32 p.m.

CLOSED SESSION NO. 1

1. The City Council of the City of Soledad will recess to closed session pursuant to Government Code Section 54957(b)(1) to discuss the City Manager Recruitment.

2. 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.
3. The City Council will recess to closed session to confer with its attorney regarding litigation pursuant to Government Code Section 54956.9(d)(2)- significant exposure to litigation.

CLOSED SESSION REPORTS

1. City Attorney Michael Rodriguez reported to item no. 1, the city council conferred with its negotiator with respect to the recruitment efforts. No other reportable action was taken.
2. With respect to item no. 2, the council conferred with its property negotiator on the property located at 31500 San Vicente Road, the city council conferred with its negotiator and the sub-committee. No other reportable action was taken.
3. With respect to item no. 3, the council conferred with legal counsel and the City Manager. No other reportable action was taken.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE was led by Mayor Pro Tem Carla Strobridge

ADDITIONS/MODIFICATIONS TO THE AGENDA

- None

PUBLIC COMMENT

- None

CENTENNIAL SPOTLIGHT

Interim City Manager Slama gave explanation of what the centennial spotlight is; the City will be celebrating its 100th birthday on March 9, 2021. The centennial spotlight portion of the meeting is an opportunity to highlight a member of the community or something that has contributed to the hundred years of history of the City of Soledad.

The next Community Centennial meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, 02/02. On 01/21 the City will be launching a coloring contest on the City of Soledad Facebook page. The City has been working with the school district to make sure the children of Soledad know about the coloring contest.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Velazquez had 12 items to report.

1. On 01/08 she met with the Monterey County Mayor's Association/City Selection Committee and was elected as Chair for the 20/21 year. She will also be the alternate member for the LAFCO Board and the Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control Board.
2. On 01/08 she participated in the Covid-19 Regional call.
3. On 01/08 she participated in an English/Spanish townhall meeting with El Pajaro Community Development Corporation regarding growing through the application process for the Covid-19 small businesses grants.
4. On 01/11 she attended the MST Strategic Board meeting
5. On 01/11 she met with Interim City Manager Slama and YWCA Chief Executive Officer Christine Duncan.
6. On 01/11 she participated in the Monterey County Op coordination call.
7. On 01/13 she participated in the California League of Cities Homeless roundtable and the Mayor/Council roundtable discussions.
8. On 01/13 she participated in the Monterey County Mayors weekly meeting with Supervisor Lopez.
9. On 01/14 she participated in the ACCAPS meeting on behalf of Councilmember Jimenez.
10. On 01/14 she participated in a Pinnacles Gateway Partnership meeting.
11. On 01/19 she participated in the memorial; remembering those who have lost their lives to Covid-19.
12. On 01/20 she participated in the Monterey County Mayors weekly meeting with Supervisor Lopez.

COUNCILMEMBER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REPORTS

Councilmember Lara had 2 items to report:

1. On 01/14 she participated in the vaccine townhall meeting with the Monterey County Health Department.
2. On 01/15 she participated in the "Step-up Monterey County" meeting.

Councilmember Jimenez had 2 items to report:

1. On 01/12 he met with the General Manager of the Salinas Valley Solid Waste Authority.
2. On 01/14 he met with Chief Wasson, City Attorney Mike Rodriguez and Mayor Pro Tem Strobridge regarding 31500 San Vicente Road.

Mayor Pro Tem Strobridge had 1 item to report:

1. On 01/14 she participated in a conference call with Councilmember Jimenez, Chief Wasson, and City Attorney Mike Rodriguez regarding 31500 San Vicente Road.

COUNCILMEMBER PRAISES

Councilmember Jimenez gave praise to Interim City Manager Slama and City staff for the quick response to the public recreation sites throughout the City, ensuring the public are adhering to the stay-at-home order.

Mayor Pro Tem Strobridge thanked all City Staff for doing a phenomenal job in continuing to work through the pandemic.

Councilmember Lara thanked the community for putting food in the pantries throughout Soledad.

Mayor Velazquez thanked the City staff for continuing to work through the pandemic. She also thanked Interim City Manager Slama, Economic Development Housing Program Coordinator Tencia Vargas and Administrative Secretary Ariana Mora Jacobo for providing support to the local businesses with the grants that were available.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

Interim City Manager Slama presented his written report and verbally highlighted items:

1. He highlighted there was a Facebook live streaming of the meeting happening. He thanked I.T. Director Steven Andranigian for setting that up.
2. As a follow up to the 01/11 meeting with the YWCA, there has been an operational agreement signed for the cash-cards that will be distributed to victims of domestic violence.
3. The Soledad Police first responders have received their first shot of the Moderna Covid-19 vaccine. The frontline employees who engage with the public on a consistent basis will be receiving the vaccine next.
4. On Tuesday, 01/26, there is a Joint Meeting scheduled with the Soledad Recreation District.
5. Caltrans has set up their equipment and trailers in the area under the river bridge. There have been many resources put towards working with the homeless encampment in the area. There are issues that will need to be continuously worked on, but improvements are being made for the conditions of the bridge to stay safe.
6. There have been two meetings in the last two weeks with Spectrum regarding internet for all initiatives. Updates will be presented at the 02/03 council meeting by I.T Director Steven Andranigian regarding the process of moving forward.
7. He met with Tatums Garden Foundation Executive Director Amanda Bakker regarding the Orchard Lane Park. He has invited the staff of Tatums Garden to present to Council.
8. There are four new employees: Officer Brian Solis, Code Enforcement Officer Gretta Steinbruner, Public Works Department Executive Secretary Veronica Gonzalez, and Economic Development Department Administrative Secretary Ariana Mora Jacobo.

YOUTH COUNCIL REPORT

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

PRESENTATIONS

1. A brief presentation was given by Sun Street Centers South County Prevention Pre-Diversion staff member Maria Camacho and South County Program Manager Darlene Acosta regarding Sun Street Centers Pre-Diversion program, Prevention services and Adult services.
2. A brief presentation was given by Monterey County Behavioral Health Services Managers Melanie Rhodes and Philip Sherwood regarding an overview of Therapeutic services, MCBH training and other support currently offered in Soledad.
3. A brief presentation was given by Dr. Reb Close and Dr. Casey Grover regarding the Monterey County Prescribe Safe Initiative.

CONSENT CALENDAR

Motion: Councilmember Jimenez made motion to approve items C-1 through C-3. Motion was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Strobridge and carried by the following vote:

Action:

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

C-1. Approval of Minutes

Joint City Council/Successor Agency Regular Meeting Minutes of January 06, 2021.

C-2. Warrants

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- C-3. Resolution No. 5675, A Joint Resolution of the City Council of the City of Soledad/City Council as Board to the Successor Agency to the Soledad Redevelopment Agency/Soledad Housing Authority Executive Board Approving an Employment Agreement for City Manager/Successor Agency Director/Housing Authority Director Services Dated January 1, 2021 with Brent Slama.

PUBLIC HEARING

- None

BUSINESS

B-1. Resolution No. 5676, A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Soledad Approving a Contract for Construction Services with the Don Chapin Company Inc. in the Amount of \$959,000.00 for the East Street and Metz Road Roundabout Project and Authorizing the City Manager to Execute Said Contract on Behalf of the City of Soledad.

Public Works Director Oscar Antillon presented the staff report.

Mayor Pro Tem Strobridge asked what kind of communication will be given to the public and when will that communication start.

Public Works Director Antillon said there is a traffic management portion in the contract and once a construction schedule is developed, the schedule will be published in all the public areas the City uses, like the website and social media pages and signs will be posted. The City will also keep a calendar and provide updates as the project moves along.

Councilmember Lara would like to make sure the City provides a thank you note to Woodyard Funeral Home for donating property so this construction could be done.

Councilmember Jimenez asked how the after-hours traffic will be mitigated.

Public Works Director Antillon said he will make sure there will be measures to slow down the traffic and he will also work with Chief Wasson to make sure there is police presence around the area after hours.

Mayor Velazquez asked Public Works Director Antillon to please provide the outreach plan and traffic control plan to the council so the council can help communicate the information to the community. She is also concerned about the discrepancy in terms of the \$980,000 from the estimate. She hopes that as the project moves forward there are not many change orders that will increase the amount to the point of it being equivalent to the savings difference.

Motion: Councilmember Lara made motion to approve Resolution No. 5676. Motion was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Strobridge and carried by the following vote:

Action:

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

B-2. Fireworks Regulations and Control in Soledad.

City Attorney Mike Rodriquez presented the staff report.

Mayor Pro Tem Strobridge said she would like to charge a percentage from the non-profits that sell the safe and sane fireworks. That money would help pay for the over time for officers.

Councilmember Jimenez said he thinks the City should ban all fireworks, both illegal and safe and sane.

Chief Wasson said every year the entire police staff is on duty in the streets, but unless an officer sees the person lighting the fireworks, the District Attorney's office will not prosecute. Neighbors will need to start holding each other accountable if the City wants to have an end to the illegal firework problem. During the July 4th holiday the Soledad officers have had to focus more on firearms than fireworks. He suggests more education be done in the community regarding homes catching on fire.

Councilmember Jimenez agrees that more education should be done in the community regarding homes catching fire and what the fireworks do to pets. He suggests there be a neighborhood watch started to help with the problem. He does agree with Mayor Pro Tem Strobridge that the non-profits should be charged a percentage.

Mayor Velazquez said she does not think the safe and sane fireworks should be cancelled. The families abiding by the laws should not be punished for the actions of those that are not abiding by the law. Increasing the fines will not work because it has not worked in the years leading up to this time. She would like to see the cost of the enforcement associated with the July 4th holiday and look further into the City of Gilroy model. She does not think it would be good to charge the non-profits because they are not the ones violating the law. She would also like to find out further information about what some of the Salinas neighborhood groups are doing regarding the firework problem. She hopes the City can find a strategic and viable education model of awareness regarding the July 4th holiday.

Councilmember Lara asked if the police could use the City's drones during the time that fireworks are being used.

Chief Wasson said a drone would be a good idea, but the City does not own a drone. The Police Department wanted to purchase a drone in 2020 but the purchase was not approved to move forward.

City Attorney Rodriquez said there has been problems with the use of drones and it has already been determination that the use of drones is not accurate.

Mayor Pro Tem Strobridge said she vaguely remembers Attorney Rodriquez mentioning that a homeowner can be fined for someone firing off fireworks on their property.

City Attorney Rodriquez will look further into what Mayor Pro Tem Strobridge is asking but he does believe there is language that does address the issue of a property owner being fined the

cost of enforcement for allowing someone to discharge the fireworks on their property, but it is based on the observation and it is hard to quantify what those costs would be. Someone would need to see the fireworks being discharged as proof. The prior Police Chief said Soledad Police Department did not have the capacity to confiscate fireworks because the department does not have adequate storage and transportation for fireworks.

Chief Wasson said there is a cost recovery for emergency response in the fee schedule but to confiscate and transport fireworks an officer would need to have a license to be able to transport explosives because the illegal fireworks are explosives. The department would also need an explosives container. The only place that has been found to be able to do this type of transportation is in the Bay Area. The charge is \$150 per hour, plus travel time, plus storage fees and disposal fees.

Mayor Pro Tem Strobridge said she recalled reading that the City of Seaside used a drone to catch people setting off fireworks and then mailed the photo and a citation; she would like to know if the City of Seaside successful in what they did.

Chief Wasson said there has been a time when the Soledad Police Department did have someone in a photo and went to the person's home and gave the citation, but the District Attorney's office still chose to not prosecute.

Councilmember Jimenez said because this is such a huge problem for all cities, the Chiefs of Monterey County should hold the District Attorney accountable for not prosecuting.

Motion:

Information was received by council.

No Action taken for this item.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Mayor Pro Tem Strobridge had 1 item:

1. She would like staff to communicate on social media the variety of public works projects going on in the City. The people of Soledad should know the reason why construction is going on and the cost and where the funding is coming from.

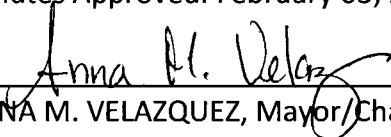
Mayor Velazquez had 3 items:

1. She would like an update report on the micro loan program.
2. She would like a status update on the CDBG applications submitted.
3. She would like an update on the communications between the school district regarding the discussion of internet for all.


ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Velazquez adjourned the Regular meeting at 8:50 p.m.

Minutes Approved: February 03, 2021



ANNA M. VELAZQUEZ, Mayor/Chairman



BRENT SLAMA, City Clerk/Agency Secretary

