

Minutes

City of Soledad Joint
City Council/Successor Agency
Regular Meeting

May 05, 2021

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Velazquez called the City Council/Successor Agency Meeting to order at 6:06 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	Alejandro Chavez

THE FOLLOWING COUNCILMEMBER WAS ABSENT

Councilmember/Agencymember Ben Jimenez, Jr.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON CLOSED SESSION ITEMS

- None

MEETING RECESS FOR CLOSED SESSION

Mayor Velazquez recessed to closed session at 6:07 p.m.

MEETING RECONVENED FROM CLOSED SESSION

Mayor Velazquez reconvened from closed session at approximately 6:34 p.m.

CLOSED SESSION

1. The City Council will recess to closed session pursuant to Government Code Section 54956.9(d)(2) to confer with its attorney regarding litigation and is hereby of the opinion that a significant exposure to litigation exists.
2. The City Council of the City of Soledad will recess to closed session to meet with its designated representatives regarding labor relations matters pursuant to Government Code Section 54957.6. The employee organizations are the Soledad Police Officers' Association (SPOA), SEIU Local 521 General Unit and SEIU Local 521 Mid-Management Unit and unrepresented employees.

CLOSED SESSION REPORTS

1. City Attorney Michael Rodriguez reported with respect to item no. 1, the council conferred with its attorney regarding potential litigation. No other reportable action was taken.
2. With respect to item no. 2, the council conferred with its labor relations representative. No other reportable action was taken.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE was led by Soledad High School Navy Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps (NJROTC) members.

ADDITIONS/MODIFICATIONS TO THE AGENDA

- None

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were three public comments received by the Deputy City Clerk via email. The comments were read into the minutes by Deputy City Clerk Darlene Noriega.

1. Monterey Bay Central Labor Council Executive Director Cesar Lara submitted written comment in favor of a Resolution being added to the 05/19/2021 City of Soledad Regular meeting agenda requesting the County Ag Commissioner to post Notices of Intent online.
2. United Farm Workers Vice President Lauro Barajas submitted written comment in favor of a Resolution requesting the County Ag Commissioner to post Notices of Intent online.
3. Centro Binacional Para El Desarrollo Indigena Oaxaqueño Executive Director Sarait Martinez submitted written comment in favor of a Resolution requesting the County Ag Commissioner to post Notices of Intent online.

There were three comments via Zoom:

1. Resident of Soledad and staff member with MILPA Alexis Magdaleno Mora gave comment in favor of a Resolution requesting the County Ag Commissioner to post Notices of Intent online.
2. Safe Acts Safe Schools Coalition (locally based) organizer Hector Calderon gave comment in favor of a Resolution being added to the 05/19/2021 City of Soledad Regular meeting agenda requesting the County Ag Commissioner to post Notices of Intent online.
3. City of Greenfield Councilmember Yanely Martinez gave comment in favor of a Resolution being added to the 05/19/2021 City of Soledad Regular meeting agenda requesting the County Ag Commissioner to post Notices of Intent online.

CENTENNIAL SPOTLIGHT

Monterey County Board of Education President Ron Panziera presented Resolution No. 20-21-52 honoring and celebrating the City of Soledad 100-year anniversary of incorporation.

Joan Mocettini Shimamoto and Denise Mocettini Tavonatti, daughters of Henry Hank Mocettini, gave a brief history presentation about their father's life in the City of Soledad.

Archeological Lab Technician and CSUMB Student Joselyn Ramos presented a brief presentation regarding the Soledad Los Coches Adobe.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Velazquez had 4 items to report:

1. On 05/05 she attended the South County Mayors meeting with Supervisor Lopez.
2. On 04/30 she participated in Dia del Niño.
3. On 04/29 she participated in the State of the City Address.
4. On 04/27 she attended the Ad-Hoc Recreation Sub-Committee meeting.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REPORTS

Councilmember Chavez had 2 items to report:

1. On 04/27 he attended the Ad-Hoc Recreation Sub-Committee meeting
2. On 04/28 he attended the TAMC meeting

Councilmember Lara had 2 items to report:

1. On 04/29 she met with members of the Community regarding people having the right to know when pesticides are being around the City of Soledad.
2. On 04/29 she participated in the State of the City address.

Mayor Pro Tem Strobridge had 1 item to report:

1. On 04/29 she participated in the State of the City address.

COUNCILMEMBER PRAISES

Mayor Pro Tem Strobridge had 1 praise:

1. She praised Officer Freddy Ambriz for taking on the responsibility of K-9 Koda.

Councilmember Chavez had 2 praise:

1. He praised the Soledad Unified School District for reopening.
2. He praised the Soledad Police Department for their enforcement efforts in making sure the students are safe as they walk to school.

Councilmember Lara had 1 praise:

1. She praised the Corralejo Family for creating back-to-school signs for students in Soledad.

Mayor Velazquez had 3 praise:

1. She praised all the Administrators and Teachers for their efforts in getting the schools back in session.
2. She thanked the Public Works Department for the work they do and for all the new projects moving forward in Soledad.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

City Manager Slama presented his written report and verbally highlighted 4 items.

1. The City of Soledad qualified for the first time for the yellow tier Covid-19 tier system.
2. The City is focused on getting the Soledad Community Center ready to open on June 15th and hoping the Soledad movie theater will open at that time.
3. There was a Public Service appreciation luncheon for all City employees on 05/05. He thanked Mayor Velazquez for attending the luncheon.
4. There is a tour of the Hartnell College Soledad Education Center scheduled for all city council members on 05/06 at 6:00 p.m.

YOUTH COUNCIL REPORT

Soledad Youth Commissioners Marcela Perez presented a brief verbal update.

PRESENTATIONS

1. Mayor Velazquez presented a proclamation of the City Council of the City of Soledad proclaiming recognition of National Public Works Week, May 16-22, 2021.

Councilmember Chavez thanked the Public Works Department for their hard work.

Mayor Pro Tem Strobridge also thanked the Public Works department for the work they do in the Community.

CONSENT CALENDAR

Motion: Mayor Pro Tem Strobridge made motion to approve items C-1 through C-5. Motion was seconded by Councilmember Lara and carried by the following vote:

Action:

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

C-1. Approval of Minutes

- a. Joint City Council/Successor Agency Regular Meeting Minutes of April 21, 2021.
- b. Joint City Council/Successor Agency Special Meeting Minutes of April 27, 2021.

C-2. Warrants

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C-3. Resolution No. 5707, A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Soledad Recognizing Classified School Employees Week, May 16-22, 2021.

C-4. Resolution No. 5708, A Resolution of the City Council of the City of Soledad Recognizing California Day of the Teacher, May 12, 2021.

C-5. City of Soledad Monthly Department Activity Reports.

BUSINESS

B-1. Review and Consider Approval of the Measure Y Citizens Oversight Committee's Recommendation to the City Council for the City Council for the Allocation of FY 2021-2022 Measure Y Funds.

Finance Director Mike Howard presented the staff report and gave a brief review of Measure Y.

Mayor Pro Tem Strobridge asked why there is a Sergeant position needed when that money could fund two officer positions.

Chief Wasson said the position will be an Administrative Sergeant and would only do admin duties which would allow all other Sergeants out in the streets.

Councilmember Lara asked if this would be a position of promotion for one of the City's current officers or would a search need to be done.

Chief Wasson said this position would be internal.

Councilmember Chavez said the question on the ballot for both Measure Y and Measure I was regarding changing Chapter 3.09 in the City's Municipal Code; and referred to funding essential government services; are any of the Measure Y dollars being used for recreation.

Finance Director Mike Howard said more money can be used for other things, but the City needs to be careful to not use the taxes only being single sourced because it was passed as a general tax. In the future some one-time expenditures can be used for other things.

Councilmember Chavez asked if some of the money can be used towards a bond measure.

Finance Director Mike Howard said the money can be used towards a pledge for a bond.

City Manager Slama said more money can be moved towards Measure Y. Direction would need to be given to each committee by the council.

Mayor Velazquez asked if the funding can be used towards economic development.

Mayor Pro Tem Strobridge asked if equipment is purchased for the fire department but the City does not renew their contract with CalFire, does that equipment stay in the City.

City Manager Slama said the equipment would stay with the City.

Councilmember Lara asked since the Sergeant position can be filled internally as a promotion for one of the current officers, can the City also only move forward with hiring one new officer and can the City hire a counselor instead of an officer.

Chief Wasson said that type of counselor position is what is being requesting. The Victim services advocate would be working with the at-risk youth, victims of crimes, resources for veterans and

the homeless and that position would be working with the other entities that already provide services like this. This position would not be a sworn position.

Councilmember Lara would like to hire a position specifically for the youth. She would like the person to have an office at one of the schools. She does not want to hire another officer.

Mayor Velazquez does not want to bring in more positions and would much rather grow in economic development and youth resources or mental health resources. The Victim/Homeless Advocate should be two separate positions and they cannot be the same position. She would like to work with the Victim Assistance Center and the YWCA because they have resources already in place. She would like to not move forward with a Victim/Homeless Advocate, but the City should do either a Victim Advocate or a Homeless Advocate and the City partners with the County's District Attorney office.

Mayor Pro Tem Strobridge said a homeless person is also considered a victim in their own way. Yes, there is a victim's assistance, but they are not invested in this community. Soledad needs a person here in the City that has the people of the City as priority. Mental health is a priority because it is a huge crisis. She thanked Chief Wasson for bringing this position forward. She also thanked the Measure Y Oversight Committee.

Mayor Velazquez feels that the title of the position is important. Although a homeless person is also a victim, a homeless advocate and a victim's advocate are two different specialties. One is a sworn position and the other is not. It is important what the title is and what the responsibilities are.

Measure Y Oversight Committee Chair Chris Bourke said the position will do whatever the job description says they need to do. Regarding mental health services, the School District has assistance for that; they have two school psychologists and a mental health professional who is on campus several times a week and there is no extra space at the high school for a position there. Adding a new officer will cut the overtime and will leave an officer available for other things that need to be done. The support of an extra police officer is needed. In 2008 the City was half the size it is now and there were 28 officers, now the City is 100% larger and has 25% less officers. The Committee's reasoning for supporting a reserve fund is there would be seed money for a new public safety building for police or fire. There may be a chance to get matching funding in the future. The Measure Y Oversight Committee followed the recommendations given in coming to the recommendations.

Measure Y Oversight Committee Member Veronica Fernandez said she supports the position of Victim/Homeless Advocacy because this could be someone an officer could connect someone to for services available for them. Someone who would be well-versed in what is available for this area. This position would be able to bring in many resources that the City and area currently does not have. In terms of the capital assignment her thought were that city hall, police and fire will need a new location and this money could be used towards those needs in the future.

Resident of Soledad and staff member with MILPA Alexis Magdaleno Mora said he feels disappointed in the Measure Y Oversight Committee's recommendations. He does not think hiring more staff is good. He feels the City should partner with another organization for the Victim

and Homeless Advocate. He would like the position to not be a part of the police department. He also would like the future building that will benefit public safety and not law enforcement. He would like office spaces for community resources. He would like the City to not look at law enforcement as public safety, there needs to be a more diverse meaning to what public safety means.

Soledad resident Ivan Ibarra Mora said he agreed with Councilmember Lara regarding the need for collaborating for a social worker and mental health services. He is interested in relocating what was once used for a School Resource Officer into a social worker position.

Safe Acts Safe Schools Coalition (locally based) organizer Hector Calderon does not feel that the solution for Soledad is to add more police officers. The City should consider bringing on a social worker or mental health professional.

There were no additional public comments at this time.

Councilmember Lara would like to know if the capital fund would be used specifically for police and fire or would the capital money be used for public health overall.

City Manager Slama said the City needs to specifically think about the age of the facilities. There needs to be a plan put in place for a new fire department. As the City grows there needs to be thought put into what the City wants their civic block to look like, which includes the fire house, public safety space, a new council chambers and office space for outside agencies. The whole block needs to be reimagined.

Councilmember Chavez feels that youth services and economic development needs to be a part of the equation of the funding. He does not want to use dollars that will end, for staffing. He would like the City to be creative with contracting services for the victim advocate position.

Mayor Velazquez would like exhaust all alternatives for the services needed here in Soledad. She is not comfortable with moving forward with the Measure Y Oversight Committee recommendations for the position. She feels very disappointed that other departments did not come forward with needs from their departments to provide recommendations on economic development and youth activities.

Measure Y Oversight Committee Member Veronica Fernandez asked if the council would like the Measure Y Oversight Committee to meet again and present different recommendations based on the new current information received.

City Manager Slama said the council should look at the big picture and can be done at the budget workshop that is planned for 05/26. In the proposed budget the City has added several new positions. Direction was given to staff in the past to move economic development out of Measure Y because economic development was never in the text for Measure Y. It would be difficult to task the Measure Y Committee without having a big picture-look at what they are being charged to spend money on. The City cannot bond with Measure Y because it is not a permanent tax but can do that with Measure S because it is a permanent tax. If the council is not going to make a recommendation and the council is going to go back to Measure Y for direction, then a clear

sense of what the council wants them to do needs to be given. The Committee did a great job with the information that was given. If the other departments are going to be put into Measure Y, then that should be clear. The City intentionally did not promote public safety as a part of Measure S. The budget amounts have gone up because we have not spent a lot on staffing because we have not grown.

Councilmember Chavez said he is not fully disappointed in the Measure Y recommendations. The council did not give correct clear direction. However, he would like to make a recommendation to look at the position of mental health advocate again and not have it in the police department. The position can be contracted out with the County or the School District.

City Manager Slama said the charge of the committee is where funnel into the services most wanted by the community. He understands the council does not want to spend money on sworn personnel.

Mayor Velazquez would like to look at the set-aside \$90,000 and making sure that it is not just designated towards a Victim Services Advocate. She agrees that the budget workshop is needed, and the council needs to come open to the needs.

City Manager Slama asked council to look at the recommendation in the staff report that was presented regarding the breakouts of funds. He would like to know if the council is comfortable with the amounts presented for the departments mentioned; the council can make the recommendation for that and the discussion can be had later. If they would like to split the police and carve out or sub-categorize. The main goal is to adopt the numbers and talk about specifics later or the council can also sub-allocate.

Councilmember Chavez feels that the \$90,000 be carved out so that it can be placed somewhere else. He asked Finance Director Mike Howard, how much did the City have last year and the year before.

Finance Director Mike Howard said the previous fiscal year the City was at \$1.7 million. He had projected \$1.8 million for this fiscal year and then the pandemic happened which brought the number down to \$1.6 million, but the City will come in closer to the \$1.8 million because of online shopping. Bradley Burns, Measure Y and Measure S will perform even better this year because of online shipping. The top five of the sales tax producers is Amazon.

Mayor Velazquez clarified the number would change for the police department with the recommendation for the non-sworn, and she is not sure if they would be a sub-allocation or a carve-out.

Finance Director Mike Howard said if the council is inclined to carve out the \$90,000, he requests, so the finance department can continue to build the budget, the money be moved as a place holder into the administration section.

Mayor Velazquez would like to know if a time frame could be placed on the capital fund reserve.

Finance Director Howard said that can be done with a time frame of five years. The City needs growth and needs to take care of infrastructure like the fire house. The intent is to generate funds and put the City in the way of opportunities. The action tonight should either pass the recommendations as presented, modify the recommendations, and as a whole and still allocate the money but bring some of the money back for further discussion or do not take a vote at all.

Motion: Councilmember Chavez made motion to make the modifications that Council referred to as far as carving out the \$90,000-plus and moving the dollars over to Administration and accept the rest of the Measure Y Citizens Oversight Committee's recommendations and include the council recommendations for the capital. Motion was seconded by Mayor Velazquez.

Action:

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

Motion did not pass.

Mayor Pro Tem Strobridge left the meeting at 8:31 p.m.

This item has been continued for further discussion to the 05/19/2021 Regular City Council meeting.

B-2. Resolution No's. 5702, 5703, 5704, 5705, 5706, Resolutions of the City Council of the City of Soledad Approving Preliminary Annual Engineer's Reports and Declaring the City's Intention to Levy and Collect Annual Assessments for Various Districts for Fiscal Year 2021/2022 and Setting a Time and Place for a Public Hearing.

This item has been continued to the 05/19/2021 Regular City Council meeting.

B-3. Review of the City Council Calendar, Agendas and Consideration of an Ad-Hoc Policy Committee.

City Manager Slama presented the staff report. He explained this will need to be discussed among all councilmembers. Refinements are needed to the agendas; limits to presentations, presentations requested by council, presentations solicited by organizations, moving to written reports, and cutting back on reports and praises.

Mayor Velazquez would like to review the policy and make sure they meet the needs of the current council and making sure the council is not restricting any public participation. She would like to purpose an Ad-Hoc committee to be able to look closer at the agendas.

Councilmember Chavez does agree that an Ad-Hoc committee is needed but does think everyone on the council should come up with suggestions and decide as a council. He agrees with the dates

the council has decided to not have meetings. He is fine the praise portion of the meeting being at the end of the agenda. He has seen in other committees the consent items placed after Business items so that business can get done. He does not think it would be horrible to limit the meetings to two presentations per meeting.

Councilmember Lara agrees with Councilmember Chavez that an Ad-Hoc is not needed. She agrees that most items in the beginning of the agenda, should be placed at the end. She also feels it would be best for the Mayor and Council to submit reports instead of verbally listing the reports, this way no information is missed, and the public will be able to clearly read the report.

Mayor Velazquez would like to thoroughly review other agendas from other cities to create an agenda that works for the City of Soledad. She recommends moving forward with an Ad-Hoc committee. She asked the remaining council if they were willing to be on an Ad-Hoc committee with her.

No Council members were willing to move forward with the proposal.

No Action was taken on this item

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Councilmember Lara said that she had 87 messages from the public stating that they were not allowed to enter the meeting, and no one is reading their comments on Facebook.

Mayor Velazquez said the City does not read off comments from Facebook. Any person that would like to make a comment must join the meeting. She will be sure to announce this in Spanish at the beginning of each meeting as well. She would like to look more into having translation services at every meeting in case it is needed.

Councilmember Lara asked that the City please be sure to announce in Spanish how to clarify how someone can join the meeting and make public comment.

Mayor Velazquez would like to bring back the Gazebo item.

City Attorney Mike Rodriguez said there must be a vote to be able to bring back an agenda item.

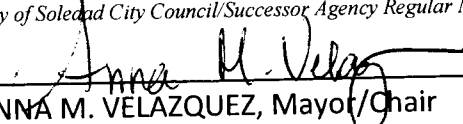
Mayor Velazquez asked for a vote from the remaining council to be able to bring back the gazebo item for consideration at the 05/19 meeting.

Councilmember Chavez agreed to bring back to the agenda of 05/19.


ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Velazquez adjourned the Regular meeting at 8:53 p.m.

Minutes Approved: May 19, 2021



ANNA M. VELAZQUEZ, Mayor/Chair



BRENT SLAMA, City Clerk/Agency Secretary