

SUSANVILLE CITY COUNCIL
Regular Meeting Minutes
August 21, 2019– 6:00 p.m.

Meeting was called to order at 6:01 p.m. by Mayor Stafford.

Roll call of Councilmembers present: Brian Wilson, Joseph Franco, Brian Moore, Mendy Schuster and Mayor Kevin Stafford.

Staff present: Mike Wilson, City Administrator; Jessica Ryan, City Attorney and Gwenna MacDonald, City Clerk.

1 APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Motion by Councilmember Schuster, second by Councilmember Wilson, to approve the agenda as submitted; motion carried unanimously. Ayes: Schuster, Wilson, Franco, Moore and Stafford.

2 PUBLIC COMMENT REGARDING CLOSED SESSION ITEMS: No comments.

3 CLOSED SESSION: At 6:02 p.m. the Council entered into Closed Session to discuss the following:

A CONFERENCE WITH LABOR NEGOTIATORS - pursuant to Government Code Section §54957.6

Agency Negotiator: Michael Wilson

Bargaining Unit: Susanville Peace Officers Association (SPOA)

4 RETURN TO OPEN SESSION:

At 7:00 p.m. the City Council reconvened in Open Session.

Staff present: Mike Wilson, City Administrator; Jessica Ryan, City Attorney; Dan Newton, Public Works Director; James Moore, Fire Chief; Kevin Jones, Police Chief; Quincy McCourt, Project Manager; Deborah Savage, Finance Manager; Anthony Hanner, Building Official and Gwenna MacDonald, City Clerk.

Mr. Wilson reported that prior to closed session the agenda was approved, and during closed session, direction was given to staff. Mr. Wilson requested that Item 6B on the Consent Calendar be pulled for separate discussion, and he requested the addition of an introduction for the Police Department.

Councilmember Wilson provided the Thought of the Day.

Chief Jones introduced Officer Hoover and canine officer Zeke. Officer Hoover discussed the newly acquired department canine, and his smooth transition into the Department. Officer Zeke has already proven useful by identifying illegal drugs in a vehicle.

5 BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR:

Amy Holmer asked to be provided information related to the City's efforts and plans to improve pedestrian safety and unsafe traffic conditions on Main Street.

Chief Jones invited her to stop by the Department at any time and discuss her concerns.

6 CONSENT CALENDAR:

A Approve minutes from the City Council's July 3 and 17, 2019 meetings

B Approve closure of Pancera Plaza on September 13-14, 2019 for Chalk Art Canvas project

- C Consider **Resolution No. 19-5686**, approving body worn camera agreement with Visual Labs, Inc.
- D Consider **Resolution No. 19-5687**, approving State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Supplement Agreement No. N004 Revision 1

Motion by Councilmember Wilson, second by Mayor pro tem Franco, to approve Item 6A, 6C and 6D; motion carried unanimously. Ayes: Wilson, Franco, Moore, Schuster and Stafford.

Mr. Wilson discussed the requested to extend the closure of Pancera Plaza for a Chalk Art Canvas project that was proposed. The Plaza is currently closed for a certain number of hours each week for the Farmer's Market. He turned the floor over to Laura and Seth, representatives from the Lassen Land and Trails Trust.

Laura stated that she is the manager for the Farmers Market, and since the submittal of the letter requesting a street closure on September 13-14th, a few of the details of the proposal have changed. She turned the floor over to Seth.

Seth provided an overview of the proposed project. He discussed the success of the Community Garden, how it ties in to the Farmer's Market, and his vision to build on that momentum and create a culture of art in the uptown. He's worked with Bottle and Brush, and the request to close the street was no longer necessary, but they would like to move the art contest to the sidewalk. The chalk is not permanent, and the hope was to have the artwork last for about week to be viewed at the Wine Walk that HUSA has scheduled for the following weekend.

Motion by Mayor pro tem Franco, second by Councilmember Schuster, to approve the Chalk Art Canvas project as requested; motion carried unanimously. Ayes: Franco, Schuster, Moore, Wilson and Stafford.

7 **PUBLIC HEARINGS:** No business.

8 **COUNCIL DISCUSSION/ANNOUNCEMENTS:** Commission/Committee reports: No business.

9 **NEW BUSINESS:**

9A Consider approval of vendor warrants numbered 204417 through 204714 for a total of \$2,175,611.64 including \$1,268,649.83 in payroll warrants Ms. Savage presented the vendor warrant report.

Motion by Mayor pro tem Franco, second by Councilmember Moore, to approve the vendor warrant report; motion carried. Ayes: Franco, Moore, Wilson and Stafford. Abstain: Schuster.

9B Consider Resolution No. 19-5688 authorizing the execution of a lease with Yamaha Golf Carts for the Diamond Mountain Golf Course Ms. Savage reported that the lease executed with Yamaha Golf Carts in 2014 was nearing the end, and it requires executing a new lease and returning the 15 carts. The cart rental generates income for the course, and the new lease is for 48 months, since during the final year of the lease the carts are getting worn and the cost for repairs and maintenance increases. It is a cost savings to the City to execute a 48 month lease.

Mayor pro tem Franco asked if the City was considering reducing the course from 18 to 9 holes, based upon an inquiry he received. If that happened, would the City need to have 15 carts.

Ms. Savage responded that the question was posed on social media to gauge community sentiment regarding reducing the size of the course, and was not currently being discussed at the staff level. If the course were to be only 9 holes, they would still utilize 15 carts during tournament events.

Councilmember Wilson asked if the City were to sell the golf course, would the lease be binding.

Ms. Savage responded that the lease is assumable.

Motion by Councilmember Wilson, second by Mayor pro tem Franco, to approve Resolution No. 19-5688; motion carried unanimously. Ayes: Wilson, Franco, Moore, Schuster and Stafford.

9C Consider Resolution No. 19-5689 authorizing the execution of agreement with California Office of Traffic Safety for Grant EM20010 Chief Moore reported that the City applied for a grant through the Office of Traffic Safety and have been awarded \$105,000 with zero local match required. The grant will allow the purchase of three sets of extrication equipment to be utilized by Susanville, Milford and Westwood, with Susanville being the lead agency. The goal of the grant is to reduce the number of people killed in traffic collisions by reducing the time between calls for service and extricating victims from a vehicle. There will be 45 regional firefighters trained in the use of the equipment.

Mayor Stafford commended the department on doing a great job in obtaining the funding.

Chief Moore thanked Mr. McCourt for his effort in writing the grant application.

Motion by Councilmember Moore, second by Councilmember Shuster, to approve Resolution No. 19-5689; motion carried unanimously. Ayes: Moore, Schuster, Franco, Wilson and Stafford.

9D Consider Resolution No. 19-5690 authorizing the execution of agreement with CalFire for Volunteer Fire Assistance Grant #7FG19021 Chief Moore reported that this item is related to another grant that the Department has received in the amount of \$6,181.03. This is a 50/50 grant which doubles the Department's budget, and will be utilized to purchase safety gear related to the prevention and suppression of wildland fires, and communication equipment, which will include pagers and radios.

There were no questions or comments.

Motion by Councilmember Schuster, second by Councilmember Wilson, to approve Resolution No. 19-5690; motion carried unanimously. Ayes: Schuster, Wilson, Moore, Franco and Stafford.

9E Consider Sales and Use Tax Measure Mr. Wilson stated that the City Council directed staff to look into the possibility of placing a tax measure on the 2020 ballot for the next election. The election in March 2020 will also have City Councilmembers on the ballot which qualifies the City to include a tax measure. The purpose of the report was to solicit City Council input regarding the specifics of the Measure. The first question, is whether the City wants to pursue a general tax or a special tax dedicated to public safety. The next question is the amount of tax, which ranges from a quarter percent that would generate approximately \$450,000 per year in additional revenue to a one percent increase which would generate approximately \$1,800,000 per year.

Mr. Wilson review other options, which included making no change the sales tax, having a sunset date on the sales tax for 5 years or 10 years, or another date of the Council's choosing. The report also contains a tentative timeline to pass the ordinance and resolutions needed to place the item on the ballot.

Mayor pro tem Franco suggested reviewing the list, line by line.

Mayor Stafford stated he would support a .75 percent increase.

Mayor pro tem Franco agreed.

Councilmember Wilson suggested discussing the costs that were anticipated in the next few years to determine if the estimated increase in revenue would be enough. The costs include the increase in Calpers, additional officers, equipment, and pay increases for the public safety employees.

Councilmember Schuster asked if the Council was in agreement that the tax should be a special tax for public safety only.

Mayor Stafford commented that he would support a public safety tax with no sunset clause.

Mayor pro tem Franco added that it would probably increase the percentage of additional revenue needed.

Councilmember Moore stated that it was important to be as transparent as possible for the public, and asked when the appropriate line item would be established in the budget.

Mr. Wilson responded that the City would, as part of the budget process and in writing the language in the ordinance, require that a separate fund be established for those revenues, and a clear definition of what expenses the revenue would pay for, including retirement benefits, increase in officers, and it would all be available for the public before it ever gets to the ballot.

Councilmember Wilson remarked that the Calpers charges is a concern because there is nothing preventing them from increasing the charges again, and raising them beyond what is already anticipated. He asked when the peak expense was expected.

Ms. Savage responded that based upon the estimates provided earlier in the year, it was expected that 2025 would be the high point for the added costs, and then it would start dropping again.

Councilmember Schuster stated that she is not in favor of any additional taxes at all, however based upon what the City is facing, and the public feedback regarding public safety, it is important to put it on the ballot and let the voters decide if they will support it or not. She suggested going for a one percent special tax increase dedicated to public safety.

Mayor pro tem Franco referred to the previous attempt to pass a tax, and the importance of having the support of the Susanville Peace Officers Association. The Council has seen an increase in the past year or two with public attendance at meetings and the requests for added public safety, even the comment made this evening by Ms. Holmer, who is concerned about pedestrian safety. Hopefully the voters will recognize that in order to do more, the City will need more revenue because rising crime is a big problem. In terms of a sunset clause, Calpers is not going away, and it is likely those costs could continue to increase in the future. The City has to be careful and transparent throughout the entire process.

Councilmember Schuster asked at what point was the Council not allowed to discuss the sales tax anymore.

Mr. Wilson stated that he circulated a legal opinion to staff regarding staff participation, which is essentially that answers may be provided to questions, but the City is not allowed to utilize any City resources to promote or advertise voting a certain way.

Councilmember Wilson stated that it is an election year, and it will be a discussion topic during the campaign process. He recommended brainstorming with some of the questions that arose at the last attempt to pass the measure, and develop answers that address some of the concerns that the public expressed.

It was the consensus of the Council to move forward with a one percent special public safety tax with no sunset clause.

9F Consider approval of HUSA expenditures for the 2019/2020 fiscal year Mr. Wilson reported that the City Council voted to move forward with the HUSA organization, but without approval of the annual levy of assessment on the business owners. He has attended a few meetings, and Mayor pro tem Franco has also met with the Board, and the discussion that has not occurred is how the City plans to move forward with supporting the activities that the organization provides to the Community. He requested a copy of the annual budget for events which was provided and attached for the Council's review. The projects include the Safe and Sane Halloween event, Magical Country Christmas, Farmers Market and Wine Walk. He turned the floor over to Melanie Westbrook.

Melanie Westbrook, HUSA President, pointed out that certain expenses included insurance for the Board, and the Board would be unable to move forward if those administrative costs were not covered.

David Teeter, Margie's Book Nook, discussed the Pancera Plaza fund and the near completion of the plaza. HUSA sells memorial bricks that are placed in the plaza as a fund raising effort, and he discussed the damage that occurred to the mural located on the east side of the plaza. He talked about the success of this season's Farmer's Market, adding that they had more vendors than in previous years.

Councilmember Wilson asked if there was anything in this budget that was not included in previous years, and advised that even if the City was going to be cutting a check to fund these events, HUSA must continue to be responsible and efficient with spending.

There was a general discussion regarding the Wine Walk event. The participating businesses are assessed a charge and the event generates money to cover the costs.

Councilmember Schuster stated that she was not supportive of the event based upon irresponsible behavior that had been seen at past events. The Council discussed the safety of the event and the necessity to convey to the participants that alcohol was to be consumed only inside the businesses and not on the sidewalk.

Mayor pro tem Franco commented that whatever fund raising effort that the group engages in, such as the sale of memorial bricks, should not be money that is returned to the City. Many service organizations raise money and HUSA should dedicate effort to that. He asked what the annual revenue was from the assessment.

Ms. Westbrook responded that HUSA assessments generated between \$12,000 and \$14,000 annually.

There was additional discussion regarding the City's involvement in supporting the Wine Walk. Ms. Westbrook stated that the Magical Country Christmas event also has alcohol served, however the street closure associated with the event so it is allowable to consume alcoholic beverages outside of the business, similar to the beer garden at the fair.

Mr. Teeter stated that the larger, successful events in the City do often involve the sale of alcohol, as is shown by the beer and wine sales every year at the fair. It is not always a comfortable topic to discuss, however that is the reality that some of the best fund raisers in the community, such as the Margaritafest, involve the sale of alcohol.

Councilmember Wilson thanked Ms. Westbrook and Mr. Teeter for the conversation, noting that it took some time to get there, but the events that HUSA sponsors are very important, enjoyable events for

everyone in the community. Not placing the responsibility of paying for those events on the businesses that are located in the uptown should hopefully make the former assessee's happier and as a result, make HUSA's job easier.

Ms. Westbrook requested that the newspaper and City utilize social media to dispel the rumors circulating that HUSA is disbanded.

Motion by Councilmember Wilson, second by Mayor pro tem Franco, to approve funding the fiscal year 2019/2020 Historic Uptown Susanville Association (HUSA) events in the amount of \$14,984; motion carried unanimously. Ayes: Wilson, Franco, Moore, Schuster and Stafford.

10 SUSANVILLE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY: No business.

11 SUSANVILLE MUNICIPAL ENERGY CORPORATION: No business.

12 CONTINUING BUSINESS: No business.

13 CITY ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORTS: No business.

14 COUNCIL ITEMS:

14A AB1234 travel reports:

Councilmember Wilson stated that a proposal is being discussed to allow outdoor seating on Main Street, and the challenge in working with Caltrans to obtain approval to have tables on the sidewalk.

15 ADJOURNMENT:

Motion by Councilmember Schuster, second by Mayor pro tem Franco, to adjourn; motion carried unanimously. Ayes: Schuster, Franco, Moore, Wilson and Stafford.

Meeting adjourned at 8:22 p.m.

Kevin Stafford, Mayor

Respectfully submitted by

Gwenna MacDonald, City Council

Approved on: September 18, 2019