



## CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minute summary of the work session of the City Council of Sierra Vista held on the 21<sup>ST</sup> day of February 2023. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held, and that a quorum was present.

Dated this 9<sup>TH</sup> day of March 2023

SEAL

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Maria G. Marsh".

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Maria G. Marsh  
Deputy City Clerk

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jill Adams".

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Jill Adams  
City Clerk

Sierra Vista City Council  
Work Session Minutes  
February 21, 2023

1. Call to Order

Mayor McCaa called the February 21, 2023, City Council Work Session to order at 3:00 p.m., Council Chambers, City Hall, 1011 N. Coronado Drive, Sierra Vista, Arizona.

Mayor Clea McCaa – present  
Mayor Pro Tem Carolyn Umphrey – present  
Council Member William Benning – present  
Council Member Gregory Johnson – present  
Council Member Angelica Landry – present  
Council Member Marta Messmer - present  
Council Member Mark Rodriguez – present

Others Present:

Chuck Potucek, City Manager  
Victoria Yarbrough, Assistant City Manager  
Adam Thrasher, Police Chief  
Brian Jones, Fire Chief  
Laura Wilson, Leisure, Parks, and Library Director  
Matt McLachlan, Community Development Director  
Sharon Flissar, Public Works Director  
Chanel Kirkpatrick, Public Works External Service Manager  
Gabriel Squires, Public Works Internal Operations Manager  
Jeff Pregler, Planner  
David Felix, Finance Manager  
Tony Boone, Economic Development Manager  
Dianna Cameron, Management Analyst  
Adam Curtis, PIO  
Mike Cline, Management Analyst  
Jill Adams, City Clerk

1. Presentation and Discussion:

A. February 23, 2023, Council Meeting Agenda Items ([agenda attached](#))

Mayor McCaa stated that on the agenda for February 23, 2023, is the call to order, roll call, invocation by Reverend Donna Smith, Graceful Passages for Vets, the Pledge of Allegiance led by the Youth Commissioners, and under awards, there is the Defense Community Champions Award from the Association of Defense Communities to former Mayor Mueller, as well as certificates of appreciation to Youth Commission Members and Community Volunteers.

In response to Mayor McCaa, Mr. Potucek stated that there will not be a JPA Board Meeting on Thursday, February 23, 2023; therefore, his report should be a normal report on City projects. He announced that during the last JPA Meeting, the Board accepted the resignation of Michael Cline as the director of SEACOM, and Ms. Tammy Joe Wilkins with Cochise County will now be the interim director. Some of the changes over at SAECOM are the employee training and hiring, which are still going at pace and the upcoming graduation of the Academy Class later in the week.

In response to Mayor McCaa, Mr. Potucek stated that the graduation will be held at Cochise College.

Consent Agenda – There was no discussion.

Item 2.1 Approval of the City Council Work Session Minutes of February 7, 2023

Item 2.2 Approval of the Special City Council Meeting Minutes of February 9, 2023

Item 2.3 Approval of the Regular City Council Meeting Minutes of February 9, 2023

Item 2.4 Discussion and possible Action of Resolution 2023-007, Acceptance of public improvements for PDS at Holiday, Phase 5B subdivision plat

Public Hearing Item 3 Discussion and possible Action of Resolution 2023-008, Development Code Amendments to Administration and Enforcement- Article 151.03; Unattended Donation Boxes- Section 151.02.004, Section 151.06.012, and Section 151.22.006; Site Plan Review Processes- Article 151.18; Lot Coverage and Setbacks- Section 151.22.009, Section 151.22.010, and Section 151.22.011, and declaring a 30-day Comment Period – Mr. McLachlan stated that the amendments cover a lot of ground that took the Planning and Zoning Commission two work sessions to hammer out. The requested action on Thursday, February 23, 2023, is to place the proposed amendments into the public record for a 30-day comment period.

The amendment package bundles four sets of Development Code changes. Most Code changes that were proposed in the past are designed to streamline and clarify processes, procedures, and permit requirements. There is one exception with this item, where the proposal is to enact reasonable standards on unattended donation containers, not a term that the Department came up with because it is borrowed from other codes that were researched. While they have not been a major issue in the grand scheme of things, the recommendation is for the City to adopt basic standards on their use and placement, as well as basic responsibilities of the owner on their care and maintenance.

The article dealing with administration and enforcement includes some minor tweaks for the sake of clarity and consistency with current practice. Zoning compliance certificates and certificates of occupancy are often required by lenders, title companies, and State licensing agencies to verify that the use is authorized to occur on the property where it is being cited. Certificates of occupancy are issued upon passing final inspection for new construction or when there is a change of use within an existing building. Zoning compliance certificates, on the other hand, are issued on those properties with no record of prior site plan approval. The certificate of occupancy is vested under the Code in effect at the time the construction was completed, and since the Department cannot retroactively issue a certificate of occupancy in those instances where the Department does not have one on file in permanent records, albeit the building was built before codes were enacted, or it was annexed without that file being conveyed to the City, or it otherwise cannot be located. The Department can alternatively issue an occupancy permit that will provide written certification that the building by the building official that the building or unit is safe and suitable for the authorized use, which is usually an acceptable substitute to a certificate of occupancy. The Department is just cleaning up that article to be in alignment with current practice.

The second article for proposed amendment concerned special regulations for uses. The proposal is to establish permitting requirements for unattended donation containers which are used for temporary storage of donated items and materials. The proposed regulations do not affect donation bins affiliated with a nonprofit on the property where they are located, only those that are located off-site in a nonresidential property that is an accessory use. In terms of standards, the unattended donation container would need to be set on a paved surface outside the required setbacks, landscape areas, parking, be lighted, or have a functioning video camera, a firmly closing and locking lid and to be clearly marked on the specific items acceptable for donation and the owner contact information. They are allowed only one unattended donation container per lot or two within a shopping center or industrial park if they are not clustered together. Contents are required to be cleared at least once per week, and any items left on or around the container shall be removed within 24 hours upon discovery and notification. If damaged or vandalized, the container must be repaired or removed within five business days. Upon receiving three valid complaints or when determined to be a violation of this Code, the City may take action to revoke permission and compel the removal of the container from the property when it is deemed to be a public nuisance.

The third set of changes concern the site plan review process by more clearly delineating a three-tier review process calibrated to be in proportion to the degree of impact on the community. The level one subthreshold is for minor changes to a site that could be processed with a simple building permit, a plot plan associated with a building permit, which would apply to building additions and accessory structures adding no more than 2,500 square feet to a site not more than 1,000 square feet or 10 percent of the impervious surface area resulting from site improvements. Impervious surface area are materials that do not allow for the penetration of water into the soil which can affect stormwater runoff. The level two small scale review process applies to principal buildings and expansions that conform to a previously approved site plan and alterations to existing principal buildings or accessory structures that add more than 2,500 square feet, but less than 5,000 square feet to a site. The maximum amount of additional impervious surface area resulting from site improvements is capped at 5,000 square feet, or 10 percent, unless previously approved drainage master plan accommodates the increase. This level of review requires a scale drawing and the same information currently required for administrative site plan submittals. Level three applications are required for projects that do not meet the levels one or two thresholds, and the current process followed for site plan approvals, which are acted upon by the Development Review Committee, would be followed. The Department thinks that in having this charted out in Code will make things clearer for prospective applicants.

The final article deals with district regulations proposed amendments to how lot coverage is measured and reductions to residential setback requirements. The rear yard setback requirement on single family lots varies from 20 to 30 feet depending on zoning district. The Planning and Zoning Commission suggested establishing a uniform required rear yard of 20 feet across all single-family zoning districts to provide more flexibility within the building envelope for home placement and to accommodate building additions. The Commission supports reductions to required side yards and single-family zones to provide more flexibility in home design, particularly for wider homes, with three car garages, which is a growing trend. The City's largest home builder supports this change, and it is also recommended by the Housing Supply Study Committee formed by the Arizona State Legislature to remove regulatory barriers to increasing housing supply in the State.

Mr. McLachlan stated that the Department is seeing single-family homes gravitate towards multi-family residential districts for the smaller setbacks. In fact, 44 percent of the land that has been developed under multi-family zoning is occupied by single-family homes, which is a statistic that he did not appreciate until the research was done. The proposed action would reduce the required interior side yard setback from 15 feet to 10 feet, in the SFR 12 and SFR 18 zoning districts from 10 feet to 7 feet, and in the SF R10 zoning district from 7 feet to five feet, and the SF R8 zoning district. On multifamily property staff is proposing to reduce building setbacks in the urban infill incentive overlay district on the West End, where the City is trying to promote compact redevelopment with an urban context. The minimum front yard setback would go from 40 feet down to 20 feet. The minimum side yard setback from 20 feet down to 10 feet, and the minimum rear yard setback from 15 feet to 10 feet. Currently there is no required setback for accessory structures on lots that are contiguous with an alley. Staff is recommending that this allowance be extended to include lots that are about a dedicated drainage way which serves the same buffering effect as an alley.

The last proposal has replaced yard coverage with overall lot coverage standard scaled to the minimum lot sizes, which is industry standard. In single-family zoning districts the proposed lot coverage percentages range from 30 percent on 36,000 square foot lots to 60 percent on 6,000 square foot lots. On lot zoned for multi-family and manufactured homes the proposed lot coverage percentage is 80 percent. These ratios are in line with the requirements adopted by communities that were researched throughout the State. The Department also ground truth the proposal using local GIS parcel mapping data to determine the average lot coverage of principal buildings across the City zoning districts and applied a factor of two to create the upper limit. These amendments will provide additional latitude for the placement of structures and make the lot coverage area easier to calculate and enforce. The Planning and Zoning Commission held two work sessions, and a public hearing on December 13, 2022 and they voted unanimously 4 to 0 to recommend approval of these amendments to the City Council.

Council Member Benning thanked the Planning and Zoning Commission and asked about grandfathering unattended donation containers. Mr. McLachlan stated that they will be subject to the standards adopted by the Code, but they will not require a permit according to the City Attorney. However, the most problematic donation container has their lease up next Tuesday, February 28, 2023, the one off the Mercado Loop. There are others on that same mall property that have not presented problems. This is intended mitigate problems down the road.

Council Member Landry thanked Mr. McLachlan for his summary and for all the work that went into it. She added that it is important to have clarification and steps in place to prevent things from getting worse.

Council Member Rodriguez stated that this is necessary and noted that it is not the donation people's fault. They have provided a good service and have a good heart, but unfortunately it is the people that want to dump out couches, chairs, mattresses, etc. where they are clearly not supposed to be. He further stated that he does not know how to mitigate this, but the drop off location at Mercado Loop has their lease coming to an end and hopefully will no longer be an issue; however, people are used to dumping there.

Item 4 Discussion and possible Action of Resolution 2023-009, Donation of Dispatch Consoles to the City of Cananea, Sonora – Police Chief Thrasher stated the resolution before Council is to approve the donation of four surplus dispatch consoles for the City of Sierra Vista's Sister City, Cananea, Sonora Mexico. Currently the Department is in possession of four dispatch consoles from its previous dispatch area, which has been vacant since 2018 since moving it over to SEACOM. These are fully functional dispatch consoles that change elevation for standing, sitting and cable placement. The Procurement Department has tried to surplus these items through auction and has had no bidders. Therefore, the Departments started looking for those that would want to want these, and the City Manager from the City of Cananea has said that they would like to accept these four dispatch consoles for their use in their public safety operations. The value of the four consoles is approximately \$2,000.

Council Member Johnson asked if the City of Cananea will pick them up. Police Chief Thrasher stated that the City of Cananea is going to move these; therefore, there will be no expense to the City of Sierra Vista.

Mayor McCaa stated that this is for a good cause and in his recent discussions with the City Manager of Cananea, he was told that they are ecstatic about receiving these consoles.

In response to Council Member Rodriguez, Mr. Potucek stated that an old ladder truck was donated to the City of Cananea as well as ambulances in the past and they were very well received. They are still using the equipment. He also pointed out that the City of Cananea has a great relationship with the City of Sierra Vista. Many people come up from Cananea to shop and entertain themselves; therefore, Sierra Vista gets the benefit of the sales tax revenue, and what is being returned in equipment, does not come close to what they contribute to the local economy. Yet, the appreciation for what Sierra Vista does is always tremendous, and they put it to good use.

In response to Mayor McCaa, Police Chief Thrasher stated that they will be showed how to operate the system when they come to get it. However, they will have to dismantle it and then reassemble it when they get down there. The Department wants to leave it as is so that they can mark the right panels so that it gets put back the way it should be.

Item 5 Discussion and possible Action of Resolution 2023-010, Stonegarden reallocation grant for overtime/ERE and mileage – Police Chief Thrasher stated that the resolution before Council is an authorization to accept Arizona Department of Homeland Security grant reallocation funding of Operation Stonegarden grant funds. Throughout the years, some of these funds are not expended by other agencies and they go back to the Department of Homeland Security for reallocation agencies that that can use them. These funds will be used to continue the City of Sierra Vista's support of Operation Stone Garden and the Border Patrol, as well as the Sheriff's Department with

Operation Safe Streets. The amount of the reallocation is \$46,069.05 that will be used for overtime and employee-related expenses as well as for mileage. This supports both Operation Stone Garden and Operation Safe Streets, and there is no match required. This covers everything from overtime, full employee-related expenses including PSPRS, workers compensation, Social Security, and the mileage expenses.

Item 6 Discussion and possible Action of Ordinance 2023-001, Amendments to Chapter 94, Sections 94.01, 94.04, Park Grounds/Park Properties, and Chapter 90, Section 90.06, Impoundment – Ms. Wilson state that the item before Council is regarding the proposed City Code amendments related to Chapters 94 and 90.

The proposed amendment to Chapter 90 is an edit to the language regarding the sanctioning of public events.

Chapter 94's recommendations add definitions for athletic fields and courts, distinguish the different types of parks located throughout the community, and addresses electrical bicycle usage in the City's multi-use paths and park trail systems.

The proposed amendments were presented by staff during the January 12, 2023, Council Meeting as a public hearing item. It was then approved to be published to the public for their feedback for a period of 30 days. Public comments were received from Friday, January 13, 2023 through Wednesday, February 15, 2023. All the comments received were collected by the City Clerk's Office and have been included in Council's packet for review. They are also available for public review as a part of the February 23, 2023 meeting agenda. The City did not receive any comments or recommendations to any of the amendments, except for Chapter 94's proposed amendments regarding electrical bicycles. Several articles of feedback were collected regarding that topic and the recommendations varied from doing absolutely nothing to enforcing a speed limit, allowing all classes of e-bikes on trails, and then also restricting class 3 e-bicycles.

Arizona Revised Statute 28-219 does not allow for Class three e-bikes to be operated on a bicycle or multi-use path unless it is within or adjacent to a highway or roadway. The way that the law is written, it currently restricts Class three e-bikes from operating on the multi-use path located on Avenida Cochise between Oakland Drive and Coronado Drive, Garden Canyon Linear Park Trail, and the path between Cochise College and Buena High School. The law does permit local governments the option to allow all classes of electrical bicycles access to all trails. To legally permit all classes of e-bikes to utilize all paths and trails within City limits, staff recommends adding language to Chapter 94.04 to the City Code that will allow all classes of electrical bicycles to utilize all paths and trails if that is the desire of the Mayor and Council.

Council Member Landry stated that she thought that it was great to have a lot of public comments and thanked everybody for sharing their thoughts because it is important, and the result is good.

Council Member Johnson stated when this was originally proposed in January, before the input period was permitted, he read through the comments and he spoke initially at that meeting that regardless of the type of e-bike that is ridden, he thought that the City could not discriminate against them. Many people have Class three e-bikes, many are senior citizens, and they are unable to exercise, and he felt that it was very discriminatory. According to the State Statute, a city can permit all classes of e-bikes on the multi-use paths.

In response to Mayor Pro Tem Umphrey, Ms. Wilson stated that this this is the current recommendation from staff. Mayor Pro Tem Umphrey stated that she agrees with the new recommendation and thinks that this is the right way to go based off feedback and what a city is allowed to do within the law.

Mayor McCaa complimented the citizens of Sierra Vista for all their comments and noted that this item produced a whole slew of comments. He added that he would like to see more of this going forward.

B. Presentation by [Warrior Healing Center](#)

Ms. Katherine Goodman, RN, introduced Dr. Tim Kirk and stated that they are with the Warrior Healing Center. The Warrior Healing Center has been working for a few years on how to find the answer to veteran suicide and they found that it is all about the community and giving hope. The Board of Directors is fighting the good fight daily. The community, hometown, has been doing something that is not done nowhere else in the country for almost five years. They are 100 percent volunteer and have made the Warrior Healing Center basically out of nothing but blood, sweat, tears and some donations which have come in very handy. They are devoted to helping veterans in solving the veterans suicide problem.

Research and experience show that the veteran suicide problem is not a mental health problem. The reason the problem is so out of control is because nobody is treating it the way that it needs to be treated. Veterans are not committing suicide because they have lost touch with reality or succumbed to irrational thinking. On the contrary, suicide is often a very rational final act of control that has its own logic; but the VA sees veteran suicide and PTSD primarily as mental health problems, and that directs their course of treatment, which is often heavy medication and therapy. The Warrior Health Center works with veterans daily and listens to them, and they know that this is wrong because they have been there personally and because they listen to them. The Warrior Healing Center understands that the veterans suicide problem is a product of psychological or emotional disruption. For a veteran, crisis can be very individualized. It is caused by social integrators, the things that cause stress in lives, having a breakup, losing their house, losing their job, and every one of those things is going to be treated or individualized by the veteran differently. Community crisis intervention generates hope, and the problem is much worse than the marketing has led everyone to believe. The marketing is bad enough, 22 a day number is hugely underreported. The VA counts veteran suicides for those that have notes left, so they are missing drug overdoses, alcohol overdoses, single vehicular accidents, and death by misadventure because veterans are very vulnerable to falls from significant heights. The marketing is bad, but the truth is that the VA's reporting is not only misleading, but it is also reckless. They have just released their 2022 annual report on Veterans suicide, and in it they celebrate a small decrease in the number of veteran suicides in the year 2020 from the prior three years. That report really covers veteran suicides from 2001 to 2020, and the truth is that the numbers counted by the VA are higher in the year 2020 than they are in the year 2001. In that time, the veteran population shrunk by 24.6 percent; therefore, they should be looking at it as ratios, the rate of veteran suicide. In 2001, the rate of veteran's suicide was 23 per 100,000 veterans. In 2020, that jumped to 31 per 100,000 veterans. In the age group of 18 to 34, the suicide rate has increased to 46 per 100,000 veterans. In Cochise County it is 55 per 100,000 veterans, worse than the national average.

Looking at the VA numbers, the truth is America has suffered over 6,000 veteran suicides every year for 20 straight years, which is more than 120,000 deaths by their own hand, which is more than the service members lost in battle in Vietnam, Korea, Desert Storm, Iraq, and Afghanistan all combined. In Cochise County, there is not a coroner and Pima County's Office of the Medical Examiner is used. However, thanks to the efforts of the Warrior Healing Center this past December, Pima County has started tracking veteran causes of death separate from the rest of society, which has been very helpful.

Per capita, Sierra Vista is the number one city in Arizona for veteran population, but third in the country. Sierra Vista should be breaking the mold and setting the example because Sierra Vista has the potential to be the most veteran friendly town in the country and it should be pursued. If Sierra Vista is a good place for veterans to land, veterans have a lot of benefits, and that means financially the City will have more education, more small businesses, better housing, better medical care options, better shopping, stronger churches, and probably less crime. The benefits that they have earned, a lot of them have not been connected to those benefits, but that is one of the things that the Warrior Healing Center helps with as well. More than 25 percent of the population in Sierra Vista is veteran, and therefore, there should be more focus on veteran issues and opportunities.

Veterans should also be encouraged to set the example that they learned when they served in the military, their high standards, a good lesson for them to teach everyone and hold accountable to. However, all of this begins with taking care of veterans in crisis and helping them transform their lives into veterans of stability that begins with PFA.

Dr. Kirk stated that suicide is not a mental health problem. This is the product of many years of research and the problem has a lot more to do with people who have a firm grasp on reality, but who have these strange things that they do not like to talk about called emotions. These emotional people are sometimes damaged or traumatized by their experiences. Maybe not 20 years ago in the military, but currently. The standard country music song, my wife left me, my dog died, lost my house, lost my job. All those things happen at once. Or some combination of those creates psychological trauma and create emotional effects. There is a fine line between mental illness and psychological distress. Mental illness is what happens when the person loses track of reality, when they need medication or therapy to deal with reality. Psychological effects are when they lose the ability to cope with problems when they cannot see the horizon, they have no reason to hope for tomorrow. This is why they need psychological first aid. These problems are treated the same way as physical health problems. The first step is first aid. The Warrior Health Center would treat them with psychological first aid. Veteran crises do not happen during business hours, but the VA closes at 5:00 p.m. on Friday and a veteran usually experiences the crisis after Friday. 5:00 p.m. when they have been drinking and are six or seven beers or shots back. This is when the crisis happens. There must be availability of crisis intervention resources at night on the weekends and that is what Warrior Healing Center is all about.

The Warrior Healing Center has worked with Johns Hopkins University to model veteran crises resolution after the lessons they learned from studying natural disasters. They found that 30 years ago, they started sending psychiatrists and psychologists into areas where they had earthquakes or tornadoes or hurricanes to try to help the victims of those natural disasters. They found after 10 years of research is that is the exact wrong thing, and it was doing more harm than good because the people who have been victims of those crises did not need long-term mental healthcare. They needed crisis intervention, psychological first aid. They had issues today. They did not need to hear about how they would have support six months down the road. They needed living quarters, money, insurance, they had lost a loved one and had issues with getting insurance taken care of. Johns Hopkins developed this psychological first aid concept to respond to that and the Warrior Healing Center worked with them to tweak it to what veterans' experience.

The VA is not capable of supporting veterans in crisis appropriately. A veteran in crisis who calls the VA, are told that they can get in for a mental health appointment with a therapist in three months; but by then the crisis has long metastasized into suicidal thoughts, suicidal ideations, and maybe even suicidal attempts. The other problem is that veterans do not ask for help because that was trained out of them in the military. At this point there is a need for a team of folks who get it because there is often shame, guilt and pride involved in the crisis that prevents veterans from building a Media Trust with care providers. The Warrior Healing Center has volunteers who can build that trust because they are combat veterans and family members, who can put together a plan of action. The Sierra Vista Police Department and Cochise County Sheriff's Office have both reached out to the Warrior Healing Center on multiple occasions to assist when a stressed veteran runs into the law, but they just need assistance with resources, avoiding an escalation with law enforcement and that ultimately is what psychological first aid is about.

Ms. Goodman stated that for three years, Cochise County averaged 12.3 suicides a year. Last year, the Warrior Healing Center was granted \$100,000 by the State in funding to apply towards the veteran suicide Prevention. They worked with local organizations and set up a monthly meeting so that they could include DAV, VFW, and the American Legions that are local and some of the other leading organizations. The idea was to work together to figure out where that money could do the most impact. They wanted to make sure that they were spending State funds on direct veteran's support before spending the hard-earned dollars locally. In 2022, the number of veteran suicides dropped in Cochise County by 27 percent, but none of those vets were working with the Warrior Healing Center.



Dr. Kirk stated that suicide is remarkably expensive. The Warrior Healing Center went to the CDC, and found that on average each suicide attempt, not even necessarily successful suicide, but each suicide attempt costs on average \$396,669 in 2019, which means that from 2019 through 2021, Cochise County suffered an estimated cost for veteran suicide of about \$4.8 million per year just in successful suicides and not counting suicide attempts.

Ms. Goodman stated that the Warrior Healing Center is making a strong impact in the community and there are a variety of services that they provide. They are working with local veteran owned businesses to try and provide networking opportunity for them.

The VA rates veterans based on their injuries and symptoms, which translates into benefits and compensation of compensation and pension. Many veterans struggle with seeking these benefits, and most of those who do find the process incredibly arduous and painful. The Warrior Healing Center has done a lot of work in the past couple of years in working with a local family veteran owned business up in surprise that has cracked the code on this. They can help veterans through this process and have a high success rate of getting them upgraded and in getting them upgraded, those disability ratings means that they get benefits like education, healthcare, dentists, and cash. They have helped 113 veterans in Cochise County get their rating upgraded, 62 of them to 100 percent. They are constantly assisting more through this process. Last year this work generated an additional \$1.6 million tax free into the community as back pay. That is an extra \$6 million every year coming in to those 113 veteran families.

A slide was shown with the numbers of first-time veteran visits to the Warrior Healing Center. They are underrepresented of the whole population because they get a lot of repeats. The most important thing to note is that they are tracking these numbers and they are going to start to reveal trends and challenges that need to be met, how stressed the veteran population is and what their needs are. They are also working with local veterans' service organizations within the County so that they can compile all of this and be effective and efficient so that they can share information. They have a database that is available for them to see so that they can work together to help identify who these veterans at risk are, and make sure that they are taken care of.

Ms. Goodman stated that as people are paying for their taxes, she would like everyone to know that the Warrior Healing Center is now a qualified charitable organization in Arizona, meaning that a donation at the Warrior Healing Center can be a tax refund from the State. This is important to the center because they are trying to find ways to operate on low money. They rely on grants, private donations, and their fund-raising campaign. Their goal is to be community owned and supported. They need Sierra Vista and Cochise County to be proud of what they have and to participate in what they do. They are fighting for veterans and making people angry at the state level and in Maricopa County, there are bureaucrats that are not happy with the work that they are doing because they are shining a light on things that they do not necessarily want the light shone on. They need awareness and for people to understand the fight that they are fighting and to be proud of it and supportive.

The Warrior Healing Center would like to have the public made aware of the problems, the statistics, namely that suicide is not a mental health problem, and the VA has failed in 20 years of effort to make a dent in the veterans' suicide issue because they do not understand this, and they need someone who does understand this to make a difference in the community. The Warrior Healing Center uses an innovative method developed by listening, listening to the veterans in the community and experts in the field at Johns Hopkins. This is attacking the problem as a matter of psychology and emotions, a subtle but vital difference. Veterans' suicide is expensive, and much of it is preventable, and when they use a model like the psychological first aid station at Warrior Healing Center, veterans do use it and it makes the difference. Added to that, it gives the Warrior Healing Center the opportunity to assist veterans as they build better lives through the benefits they have earned and that helps the local economy and community in many ways.

Mayor McCaa thanked Ms. Goodman and Dr. Kirk for their extensive brief and asked if the Warrior Healing Center applies every year for the \$100,000 that the received from the State. Dr. Kirk stated

the \$100,000 was a budget item in the State of Arizona for veteran suicide prevention, and in the next budget there is currently \$0.00 in the State of Arizona, marked for veteran suicide prevention in the state of Arizona. The Warrior Healing Center applied with the Arizona Department of Veterans Services for their large grant for 2023 and were rejected. Therefore, they have zero State support for 2023.

Council Member Benning asked if the Warrior Healing Center has a designated grant writer. Dr. Kirk says that he is the grant writer.

Council Member Johnson asked about the number of organizations that are within the Warrior Healing Center. Dr. Kirk stated that they are hovering right around 50. It is both organizations and dedicated programs. Some organizations are housed there, and others use the facility, it is a one-stop shopping. One place for veteran families to go whenever they need any kind of assistance.

In response to Council Member Rodriguez, Dr. Kirk stated that the Warrior Healing Center maintains relationships with the community because they cannot provide all the solutions, but they maintain relationships with the people who do. They can provide certain short-term solutions such as short-term housing, or short-term financing for small problems; but then they have the rolodex with all the experts in the community who perhaps provide the HUD Vash housing long term solution, or who provide other ranges of government solutions such as Good Neighbor Alliance, who is tied into government state sponsored programs for housing. The Warrior Healing Center tries to be that central clearinghouse with case managers who know who to call based upon what situation it is, so that the veterans do not have to continually figure it out for themselves.

Mayor McCaa asked about the numbers for the first two months of 2023. Dr. Kirk referred to slide 15, which showed last year's intake numbers. In January, they had 32, which is off 39 for January of last year. This is a data point, but maybe took a lot of the pressure off last year and they will see a lower rate this year.

Council Member Benning stated that he has had the privilege to work with the Warrior Healing Center and he knows what they do and what they need, but for all the people watching the meeting on YouTube, he would like to know what is the one thing that they would like to ask the community to help you out with. Dr. Kirk asked people to go to [22toend22.com](http://22toend22.com) and buy a cup of coffee a week for a veteran. That is ultimately what they want, 500 guardians buying a cup of coffee a week because they do not want to be the Coca-Cola Warrior Healing Center, the government Warrior Healing Center, they want the veterans to be confident that this is community owned and no one is trying to get their information, nor their guns, get into what medications they take. This is just their neighbors trying to help them as neighbors and that is what works best with the Warrior Healing Center's model. That is what works best with our veterans, and they love being helped by the community, and they turn right around once they are better and give back.

Mayor McCaa noted that he has been to the Warrior Healing Center's facility, and he loves the bagels. He asked Dr. Kirk how the Center got started? Dr. Kirk said that it is a long story, but in essence, it is out of the Tim Kirk and Kathy Goodman's pockets. Initially, they wanted to do was create an indoor dog training facility after he went through the Soldier's Best Friend Service Dog Training Program and learned that Sierra Vista was the only city out of five in Arizona that did not have an indoor training facility. He saw firsthand several veterans quit the program because they were trying to train their dog in the Veterans Park and there were other dogs, rabbits, squirrels, and kids. He did create an indoor training in the Center's building but found that they had tons of extra office space because it is a 16,000 square foot office building. Therefore, they started building out from there as they learned about the problems that veterans were having and it was providence, who made it happen.

Council Member Landry thanked Dr. Kirk and Ms. Goodman for sharing and stated that Sierra Vista is very fortunate to have them to share their passion and the experience with others in putting this together, where somebody can go, and have whatever need they have met. She further stated that she found the information that they are tracking great that will show the trends going on.

Mayor Pro Tem Umphrey thanked Dr. Kirk and Ms. Goodman for everything that they do and noted that she personally knows of a couple veterans that they have helped, and whoever thought to get them enrolled with the company that is helping them to fully get all their benefits, or whatever they are entitled to is life changing.

Council Messmer thanked Dr. Kirk and Ms. Goodman and shared that she has three veterans in her family, and she knows how valuable it is to have this information and help.

Mayor Pro Tem Umphrey stated that everyone on the dais is either a veteran or married to a veteran; therefore, this is why they all appreciate this at a deeper level. Ms. Goodman stated that there are many veterans in Sierra Vista, and some are doing great, but there are a lot that have different struggles.

### C. [Mid-Year Financial Update](#)

Mr. Felix reported that this mid-year financial report on the revenues and expenditures, which looks good for the City to finish the fiscal year as was done last year without using any General Fund Reserve. The City has received all \$3.1 million of the annual federal CARES Act; therefore, the City looks well over budget in that, but the City will not be getting any more. The budget figure is the full year budget divided in half. On the expenditure side, there are certain programs like Parks, where they currently look ahead of budget. However, all those expenditures will occur in the spring as they get the fields ready for all the summer programs and summer events. Likewise, Capital is well under budget. Most vehicles are expected to come in except two of the big items, the ambulances. Those will probably not come in until next year, but staff managed to get some that at least actually have a production date unlike the other brand that could not even provide a production date for the chassis. Those will show as them under budget because we do not put the encumbrances in there. The one that sticks out kind of like a sore thumb in the department divisions sheet is the Animal Control Facility. The full expansion of the Animal Control Facility was fully budgeted in there at \$2,000,000; however, the expansion has not yet started. The grant that was expected, the donation, was not given to the City in the manner that it was going to be. Instead of getting the \$1,000,000 up front, the money has been invested in the stock market and they are going to give the City a perpetual income. Last month the City got \$8,000 of that million, which will take 175 years for the City to get the million.

Mr. Potucek stated that this report is very favorable, and it looks like the City will be generating some fund balance at the end of the fiscal year, maybe not quite as high as last fiscal year. This will help the City going into next year's budget. There are a few items going on at the Legislature that may have a very detrimental impact to the budget. This includes the residential rental tax that has made it through both House of the Legislature and is on the Governor's desk. He noted that Mayor McCaa sent out a letter to them in opposition in hopes of getting a Governor's veto on that bill and that alone would cost the City an estimated \$531,000 in General Fund revenues going into next fiscal year that equates to a slight increase in General Fund sales tax which would make up the difference. The potential loss of the sales tax on food is far more concern which hits rural communities a lot harder than those in the Valley because the tax base is not as broad as larger cities in the Valley in terms of taxable items. It appears that this one will go through, and it might be more difficult to sell the Governor on a veto of this bill. If this occurs, the City will lose just over \$3 million in General Fund revenue, a significant number. If both bills go through, the City will lose \$3.5 million in annual revenue from those two sources that would equate to General Fund sale tax increase from the current 1.95 percent to 2.5 percent to make up the difference. Staff will be preparing the budget, but do not generally do that in anticipation of tax increase. Therefore, they will need to wait and see how that translates into service area cuts. On top of this, is the jail district sales tax proposal moving forward out of the County in May. A lot of these things are converging at one time, but staff will keep track of all this.

### D. [Council Executive Report](#)

Mr. Potucek stated that the biggest operational issue is currently Transit and finding qualified drivers. There was another retirement that will take effect on Friday, February 24, 2023; therefore, there will be an impact on routes that have already been planned, moving down to three routes on Monday, February 27, 2023; but the times are being changed because there has been at least one person that has been adamant about the service, and needing it to get to work, and hopefully those changes will accommodate people that may have those types of start times in that change. However, until the City gets the drivers in the pipeline, hired, and trained properly, Transit will not be back to regular service for a few months yet.

Council Member Benning voiced his concern about transit going to a free fare and changing hours and routes. He asked if there is going to be a basis to compare the change to what Transit currently has because there may not be any people using Transit due to the proposed changes. Ms. Flissar stated that it is tough when there are multiple changes at one time. Transit is currently in a position where changes cannot be avoided, but she does continue to believe that currently it is a good time to go fare free on the transit system. There are a lot of people who really need that. She further stated that she is hopeful that the staffing situation will improve within six months, which is the length of the pilot program and Transit can restore some of the things that were lost, although it will not be brought back too soon for exactly the reasons that Mr. Potucek noted. There needs to be some stability before that can be done, but hopefully if staffing stability is restored then staff will be able to get a gauge of how ridership works with both the free fares and the revised routes.

Council Member Landry thanked staff for the Executive Report and noted that it always contains a lot of great information, the breakdown of all the different departments. She voiced her appreciation at the Better Bucks with the Better Work Program and their initial workday and how they tackled it in one hour when the job was estimated to take three hours.

Council Member Johnson stated that Council was presented with the Fare Free Program during a work session and there was no resolution from Council that permitted such an act. He further stated that he feels that the horse has left the barn already. However, in order to make it a legitimate act by the Council, there should be a resolution permitting that, stating how long it is going to go on, if it is going to be a six-month trial, and if there is going to be a sunset clause on the trial.

Mayor McCaa concurred and asked Mr. Potucek how to proceed. Mr. Potucek stated that this is an operational matter, and he is unsure if a resolution is required, but if Council wants to vote on it, there can certainly be a resolution placed on the agenda. Mayor Pro Tem Umphrey stated that after the trial, she would feel more comfortable if Council voted on it, and if it is going to be extended.

Council Member Johnson stated that the Department can change routes, but when it is affecting the fare box, that is taxpayer money and he believes that Council has a responsibility to either approving the plan, or disapproving the plan, and making it transparent in city government. Council Member Benning concurred.

Mayor Pro Tem Umphrey asked Ms. Wilson if she has the final numbers on how much revenue was brought in connection with the ice rink. Ms. Wilson stated that it was just under \$76,000; therefore, just under 7,600 people participated on the ice in 30 days. The Arizona Office of Tourism Grant did help to pay for that, and the City had a match of \$63,000. They paid \$63,000 that also included the blue tooth sound system, decorations for the Christmas tree, the topper for the Christmas tree, the ice rink, and the upgrades to the electricity, which were rented.

Mayor Pro Tem Umphrey thanked Mr. Cline for all his work at SEACOM as he got SEACOM through some difficult times.

Mayor Pro Tem Umphrey thanked Ms. Flissar for helping with the State Transportation Board Meeting and for providing the Highway 90 update because Council gets asked about it all the time.

personnel go out and gets snakes. It is designated snake fire because there are columns, a fire column, an EMS column, and a fire snake column.

E. Report on Recent Trips, Meetings and Future Meetings

Mayor Pro Tem Umphrey announced that the Sierra Vista Metropolitan Planning Organization will meet Wednesday, February 22, 2023 at 2:30 p.m. in the City Manager's Conference Room.

Council Member Rodriguez announced the Youth Commission Meeting on Tuesday, February 28, 2023, reported that the Commission will be a part of the Youth Arts Festival at Cochise College during the weekend of February 25, 2023, provided an update on the donations and disbursements of coats, blankets, and the attendance level at the Youth Commission meetings, which includes adults.

Council Member Johnson announced the Economic Development Commission Meeting on Wednesday, February 22, 2023, reported on his meeting with Dean Gary Packer, where they talked about the vision of where the Economic Development Commission is going to go.

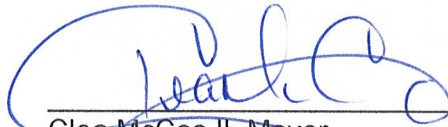
Council Member Benning stated that on Monday, February 20, 2023, there was a ribbon cutting for the Economic Garden, which is a project spearheaded by the Industrial Development Authority.

F. Future Discussion Items and Council Requests

Ms. Yarbrough stated that at the next Council Work Session there is an item for meet and confer, and forthcoming agenda items are the three resolutions for the commissions.

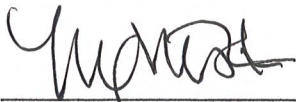
3. Adjourn

Mayor McCaa adjourned the February 21, 2023, work session of the Sierra Vista City Council at 4:12 p.m.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Clea McCaa II, Mayor

Minutes prepared by:

Attest:



\_\_\_\_\_  
Maria G. Marsh, Deputy Clerk



\_\_\_\_\_  
Jill Adams, City Clerk