

Sierra Vista City Council
Work Session Minutes
May 9, 2023

1. Call to Order

Mayor McCaa called the May 9, 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 – absent
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
Sharon Flissar, Public Works Director
Gabriel Squires, Public Works Internal Operations Manager
Matt McLachlan, Community Development Director
Jennifer Dillaha, Budget Officer
Judy Hector, Marketing and Communications Manager
Adam Curtis, PIO
Tony Boone, Economic Development Manager
Dianna Cameron, Management Analyst
Kennie Downing, Chief Procurement Officer
John Healy, Sports Coordinator
Barbara Fleming, Chief Human Resources Officer
Tammy-Jo Wilkins, Interim SEACOM Director

2. Presentation and Discussion:

A. [FY 23-24 Balanced Budget](#)

Ms. Yarbrough reported that since last week the General Fund is balanced. The one fund that staff is still working on is the Capital Improvement Fund because they need to check some things, as well as HURF.

The total budget is going to end up around \$165,000,000. However, \$60 million of that is streets infrastructure grants, like last year. Staff did not go full force on grants. Last year the infrastructure bill was signed; therefore, staff put in a whole lot of placeholders for potential grants. Staff learned a lot since last year, but they are still putting in a lot of grants, especially for streets infrastructure that are big dollar grants.

Personnel requests did go up because of adjusting overtime and part-time budgets, which staff did

not have a chance to do before last week's presentation.

Capital also went up and that is due to vehicles being entered into the Capital budget yet and the Animal Control design.

Ms. Yarbrough stated that during the last work session, Council asked about the bond payment for the Schneider Electric debt. The bond payment next year will be \$3,237,704.00.

Staff made some changes to the General Fund revenue after looking at the sales tax projections. Staff decided to increase the sales tax projection from three percent to four percent. The City should get the April numbers during the week, and hopefully they will have that information. Staff felt that going to four percent was still a safe bet that added about \$251,000 to the revenue.

Staff goes through and double check what actuals were for last year, where the City ended up on various accounts, and how those accounts are tracking for the current year. Fuel sales were adjusted up that was based on actuals from last year and projections. Everyone knows that the price of fuel is fluctuating but it is still staying up high.

Labor charges and fluids were increased last year. The City has over twenty agreements with outside government agencies to work on their heavy equipment and vehicles. The small increases are for labor.

Revenue projections were adjusted for aquatics and sports for the Cove to where the City ended last year, and staff is aware that it is trending slightly higher this year.

Mayor Pro Tem Umphrey asked if the three percent increase a part of the \$25,884,000 TPT in March. Ms. Yarbrough stated that it is with the three percent. Mr. Potucek stated that at that time, staff was being conservative on the revenue projections because it seemed like the trend for the revenue growth was drifting downward. Since that time, staff has seen a recovery over the last couple of months and staff is hoping to see that again with the next month's numbers. Therefore, this is why staff chose to go to four percent growth in the sales tax. Ms. Yarbrough stated that the League gives the City their projections and then the staff takes a close look at what the actuals are and usually project somewhere in between that. The City usually does not project up. Although, the League's numbers are usually better than what the City projects; however, City staff tend to project a more conservative number.

Mayor Pro Tem Umphrey asked if the sales tax has been coming in higher. Mr. Potucek stated yes and explained that the revenue has been trending double that amount for growth. Staff always try to remain more conservative than the top line numbers just to make sure that there are no budget problems going into the next fiscal year.

Mayor Pro Tem Umphrey stated that she understands building a cushion, but it is a bigger cushion this time around. Mr. Potucek stated that he tends to have a cloudy view of the economy. Therefore, he tends to be more conservative when betting on the economy in the future.

Mayor Pro Tem Umphrey stated that last time the revenue was \$20 million for sales tax. Ms. Dillaha stated that the TPT is broken down into General Fund and CIF. The \$20 million is General Fund and CIF (part of it is about \$5,000,000).

Mayor Pro Tem Umphrey asked how much of the General Fund, the old number of \$49,690,000, was TPT. Ms. Dillaha stated that she believes that it was about \$20 million.

In LTAF, staff increased the transfer out to \$570,000 and made some changes. The new bus stops

that were proposed in the budget at around \$540,000, were taken out and instead budget \$200,000 to do a Transit Master Plan for next year, which will include a route study, ridership study, and then determine where new stops need to be before budgeting for them. There are still from previous years money in the budget to address certain stops, especially Walmart.

Council Member Benning asked if the ridership study is currently being done with Transit. Ms. Yarbrough stated that they are not.

In response to Council Member Benning, Mr. Potucek stated that staff is tracking the riders in terms of the change in the routes and trying to decide as to the effectiveness of going to the no fare system. The study that Ms. Yarbrough referred to will be a routing study and an overall study of the system. Ms. Yarbrough added that it would be a formal study done by a consultant.

The transfer out from the General Fund to HURF is \$2,000,000 for the Buffalo Soldier Trail extension that came from the additional amount of income tax that the City will see next year because of the State's adjustments to the income tax by going to a flat tax. The City will receive more next year, and more the following year, but slightly less and then the City will dip below to what the City had previously been getting the third year.

The transfer in from the Capital Improvement Fund for the Animal Control expansion is for \$2,000,000.

The notes payable proceeds are to finance the vehicles that are in the proposed budget.

Mayor Pro Tem Umphrey stated that the TPT sounded like a lot more than the change in the number between the number that was provided last week, which was around \$20 million. She further stated that TPT now makes up \$25 million, a greater increase than four percent. Ms. Yarbrough stated that it would be best to pull those presentations and look at them after the work session to review the numbers to be able to provide the breakdown.

Mr. Potucek stated that the City gets sales tax revenue in and TPT revenue in. It is split between two funds, the General Fund, and the Capital Improvements Fund. The Capital Improvements Fund is about 1/4 or 20 percent of the overall sales tax. The addition of the two is the \$25 million and \$20 million is the General Fund portion.

In response to Council Member Benning, Mr. Potucek stated that the slide shows four percent over last year to get to the \$25 billion.

The City has a dedicated half cent of its sales tax revenue to the Capital Improvement Fund. The half cent equates to approximately \$5,000,000 a year. City staff has tried over the past couple of years, as more money has been seen come into the Capital Improvement Fund or the City has gotten more money from ARPA, to shift operating capital into the General Fund which are the projects seen on the slide. City staff has tried to maintain the Capital Improvement Fund for major projects, and not things like vehicles, or generator replacements. The City was successful, and all the projects listed on the slide were shifted into the General Fund. Projects like the Animal Control expansion, the forest Dorner of multi-use path replacement, Tacoma Sports Field, pedestrian bridge, Veterans Park Pavilion power upgrade are all Strategic Plan items. The Animal Control expansion was specifically listed in the Strategic Plan and then the others are part of the Parks Master Plan. Nothing else on this list has changed except for the addition of a printer for the Library, the main public printer and people are charged a fee to print from it.

The two projects that would be in the Capital Improvement Fund would be the purchase of the half acre lot beside Fire Station II and the grant match for the Land Water Conservation Fund grant. The

grant would be about \$3 million, and the City would be responsible for \$1.5 million. There is also another grant that staff can apply for to piggyback onto the City's match. The City's total match should be \$500,000, a part of the Parks Master Plan and Council's Strategic Plan that would accomplish the sewer run from the OYCC down to the Domingo Paiz complex, the construction of restrooms, and a small parking lot along Tacoma Street. This would also address some of the safety issues with cars driving quickly which the pedestrian bridge also does, along with some RV parking down by the pump track.

In response to Council Member Benning, Mr. Potucek stated that the sewer line runs through the Sports Complex. Ms. Flissar stated that the exact alignment will be worked out as part of the design. It is through the Sports Complex to carry it down from its current endpoint down to the Domingo Paiz complex. Mr. Potucek added that it is not running along Tacoma. Ms. Wilson noted that it is by the Bill Stone area.

Ms. Yarbrough stated that Ms. Dillaha is trying to get everything balanced so that the draft budget books can get out before the Memorial Day weekend. She added that she will go over some more information at the next work session. However, staff always includes future budget issues for next year and the future. Some of them are familiar to those Council Members that have been on Council for a while. Staff is always going to look at maintaining the Class Comp Plan. There are several cities in the valley that have done class comp studies or planning to do class comp studies in future years. Therefore, staff always keep a close eye on that. The City did okay this year in seeing what people implemented, which is why the two percent market shift is being recommended in January and the two percent step increase in July. This is not a huge increase required for all staff, or most of staff to maintain about 100 percent of the market.

Council Member Rodriguez stated that he would like to see the last two years of the market study of the one-third of the positions to be able to see the rotation. He added that he is aware that the League does their own study and that it does not cost the City because the City is a League member, but it does not cover every job. These are mostly based on cities that respond, but if a city does not want to respond, he wonders if the City of Sierra Vista must go out and research on their own. Ms. Yarbrough stated that it depends on the position. The City of Sierra Vista depends on what is sent in the report but is not just a number that Human Resources is comparing as far as salary and job titles that are quite different across cities, counties, and states. Therefore, Human Resources only does a third a year because they would not have the time to do all positions. They compare both the job responsibilities and the number. If somebody does not respond, she is unsure if the Human Resources Department reaches out to other cities. Ms. Fleming stated that the Human Resources Department has a core list of cities that are the most comparable cities, size, position, and budget wise. The Department does reach out to them directly, not just through the League's survey, which Sierra Vista has participated in every year. The Department reciprocates with all those cities that may need the same type of data that Sierra Vista has. The City has had satisfactory results with these core cities, even if they do not participate in the other surveys. There are also a few positions that are difficult, i.e., a museum curator. There are not a lot of them around with the municipal government. Therefore, getting three comps can be difficult, and this is when the Department will reach out a little further, even go out of state for some of those positions.

Council Member Rodriguez asked if this is available for him to look at it so that he can relay to people that these are the cities that they are compared to each time.

In response to Council Member Rodriguez, Ms. Fleming stated that comparisons are not solely based on the study because the Human Resources Department has an internal and external factor in the Class and Comp that is used, which was established by the City's implementation of the Class and Comp; therefore, the City does have an internal component to that as well. Human Resources looks at the classifications above and below as well as the responsibilities, and at the positions that

are hard to fill. There are a lot of varied factors that go into that. It is not just based on external report.

Ms. Yarbrough stated that street maintenance is on this list as well and will be in perpetuity because it is always going to be a challenge. However, City staff is applying for a lot of grants to help with better addressing the road needs. She noted that in the next few months, the results of the pavement condition index survey will be out, and Council will then be able to see how well the City has done in the past few years.

Council Member Rodriguez voiced his appreciation for the list and noted that the number one question that Council gets from citizens is if their street is on the list. Therefore, Council can now relay that the City paid this company to show this data. This also explains patches, crack seal, and replacement of the whole Rd. This tool is good for Council to have and to be made public so that people can find out if their street is on the list.

Included was the impact on local revenue from State income tax reduction, which is going to be something to keep an eye on over the next few years. It is unknown what is coming. The State Legislature last year voted to change the income tax to a flat 2.5 percent that was supposed to go into effect in three years, phase in. However, there was a trigger in that bill that if the State's revenue crossed a certain threshold, that it could be implemented immediately, which is what happened last fall. Governor Ducey decided to implement it immediately starting January 1, 2023. There were some other things that went on in the State Legislature this spring, but none were successful to further curb that income tax revenue. Therefore, City staff will be keeping a close eye on that since it is a significant part of the City's revenue.

The census impacts on local revenue will be monitored because as the State keeps growing, Sierra Vista continues to grow, but at a much slower rate and especially when there are cities in the Valley area that are growing quickly. Since that State shared revenue is divided up based on population, their share of the pie is growing much faster than Sierra Vista's. This will and can impact Sierra Vista's State shared revenue. The economy is another factor that staff will keep an eye on.

Upcoming budget meeting:

- May 23, 2023 work session;
- Tentative budget book will be out by the Friday before Memorial Day weekend;
- June 5, 2023 through June 7, 2023 are the one-on-one council meetings;
- June 12, 2023 through June 14, 2023 are the special budget work sessions;
- June 22, 2023 meeting will be the Tentative budget adoption, which will set that cap on the budget.
- July 27, 2023 is the public hearing on the property tax levy and the final budget adoption;
- August 10, 2023 is the tax levy adoption.

Council Member Benning asked if the notice for the special budget work sessions can be highly publicized for those the people want to attend.

Mayor Pro Tem Umphrey asked about the subjects that Council will discuss on May 23, 2023. Ms. Yarbrough stated that it will be the balanced budget with the other funds as well.

B. [FY 23-24 SEACOM Budget](#)

Ms. Wilkins, Interim Director of the Southeastern Arizona Communications Center (SEACOM) stated that SEACOM is a regional public safety answering point (PSAP), which was established in July 2018 after Cochise County and the City of Sierra Vista entered into an intergovernmental agreement to provide emergency communication services to the region from a consolidated center. This has

been done in partnership with the State of Arizona 911, who manages 81 PSAPs across Arizona. SEACOM is the only dispatch center providing regional communication service in Arizona. The model is based on contracts with public safety entities, which are subscribers, who then receive an array of services from SEACOM. Currently SEACOM serves fourteen fire departments, four law enforcement agencies, one private ambulance company, and the National Park Service.

Services provided through SEACOM, a 24-hour countywide radio service through a system maintained by the Cochise County IT Department through a contract with SEACOM:

- 24-hour phone coverage to include both administrative and 911 calls using the VESTA and 911 Platform;
- Certified operators providing priority dispatch services in three modules. SEACOM utilizes Police, Fire and EMS;
- Spillman record services;
- Access to statistical information;
- Monitor and communicate with active units through phone, radio and mobile data computers or MDCs in each service vehicle.

Ms. Wilkins shared the following statistics about the calls that have into SEACOM:

- There were 50,480 9-1-1 calls alone in 2022;
 - o A total of 201,762 calls including admin lines with 34,560 outgoing calls
- There were 54,888 calls to the center in 2021;
 - o A total of 148,173 total calls including the admin lines; and
- There were 42,932 calls to the center in 2020.

This shows a major increase, and the calls that SEACOM had in CAD activity are as follows:

- Approximately 149,968 calls for service were entered in 2022:
 - o 93,453 were law enforcement related;
 - o 3,890 were for fire; and
 - o 18,425 were for EMS.
- Approximately 100,800 calls for service were entered in 2021:
 - o 82,517 were law enforcement related;
 - o 3,621 for fire; and
 - o 14,751 for EMS.

The Priority Dispatch System (ProQA) is a software that provides the 911 dispatchers with the training to provide pre-arrival assistance to callers if they have an emergency in a Police, Fire or Medical situation.

Ms. Wilkins stated that most recently, one of the trainees who recently came off the training program, delivered a baby in Wilcox using the priority dispatch. SEACOM is the only agency in Arizona that uses the three ProQA modules, and the dispatchers obtain and maintain a personal certification that is recognized through the International Academy of Emergency Dispatch. They are required to recertify every year and to keep up with their continuing education credits. This helps SEACOM with building standards and offers the ability to differentiate between Fire and EMS request for service. Using CAD and various phone reporting systems, staff can identify which times are the busiest and which days are the busiest so that SEACOM can staff accordingly.

Ms. Wilkins stated that she was appointed in February 2023 as the interim director. She further stated that SEACOM has a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) Board, and an Operations Committee (OPS). The administrator position is currently vacant; however, recently promoted was a second-floor supervisor. Therefore, SEACOM now has two supervisors. There are currently sixteen dispatchers and two call takers in the upcoming budget. Full floor staffing will be at 20, but currently there are eight, which is the first in a couple of years under the IGA.

The City of Sierra Vista is the fiscal agent, and the principals are the City of Sierra Vista and Cochise County. Huachuca City is a partner and there are sixteen subscribers: Cochise County who owns the building at 1728 Paseo San Luis as well as the controls, the radio, and I T functions. The City of Sierra Vista manages the employees and is responsible for the budget, finance, procurement, media, and personnel issues. All SEACOM employees are City of Sierra Vista employees.

Ms. Wilkins shared that as she has transitioned into the director position while doing the administrator duties, she has reassigned the administrator duties to herself, a floor supervisor in hopes to play some catch up. She further shared the following accomplishment since February:

- Located, made contacts, and caught up on all billing;
- Hired a second-floor supervisor;
- Applied for the 9-1-1 grant for next fiscal year;
- Working on important partnerships across the County;
- Addressing complaints and staff concerns;
- Working towards the NG911 upgrade which will occur on July 18, 2023.

Ms. Wilkins stated that they will start with training coming into the facility three weeks before the transfer over and they are building trainer plans inhouse to address the nine trainees. Four of them are currently on the console in training, and five are getting ready to come to the console to go to training. They are also rebuilding the internal staffing plan, adjusting, and preparing for Wilcox and Bisbee PCAPs switch over to SEACOM fulltime effective July 1, 2023.

A slide was displayed of SEACOM's revenue contributions for FY24 that depicted Bisbee contributing \$126,950 and Wilcox contributing \$99,450 because they will be coming on board full time for the grand total of \$2,759,518.

A slide was displayed of the budget by category for FY23 and FY24:

- Personnel is down to \$1,954,950 due to the reclassification of some positions to give some internal incentive for promotional opportunities.
- Travel and training are reduced to \$7,000 because staff has not been able to use it;
- Professional services have increased to \$37,450 since SEACOM had so many people coming in all at once and there was a need to have the funds to pay for backgrounds, etc.
- Utilities is running about a couple thousand in addition to association memberships about just under one hundred dollars.
- IT services for Fiscal Year 24 is about \$100,000 less than it was last year.
- Total requests are \$2,759,519.

The City's contribution is \$914,076 and the county contribution is at \$984,576, an increase of \$28,677 over Fiscal Year 23.

Mr. Potucek stated that Bisbee and Wilcox will be coming on board in July, which will only leave Benson and Douglas not in SEACOM in Cochise County. An agreement is being worked on with Douglas to provide mutual aid backup services to each other. However, he is not sure about Benson, but eventually they may have to come in because of the excessive cost of providing these services. He noted that SEACOM could expand beyond the borders of Cochise County as well. If areas such as Safford and others want to join in later, SEACOM can do that.

Staffing has improved dramatically. There is now more of a problem getting them all trained than bringing them in. In terms of the actual budget, on the revenue line, there are \$380,000 of fund balance being used this year that was generated over last year primarily because of the staffing shortage. They had a grant for the Motorola System that is one of the most expensive components

of running SEACOM, which was over \$3 million over six or seven years. However, the Governor has pulled that funding. Therefore, staff is looking for a chance to see if that can be restored and working to try to get that. In the meantime, SEACOM has a fund balance broken up into two years to pay for any of the upgrades that may hit in the future.

Mr. Potucek stated that overall, the system is working the way it was intended and they got most all the members of Cochise County on. The collaborative efforts with the Sheriff's Office are going well in terms of bringing outside funding to the effort. As a result, SEACOM has excellent equipment to state-of-the-art equipment and software with ProQA. SEACOM is more advanced than anywhere in the state with regards to dispatch services, a credit to Ms. Wilkins and all the people working at SEACOM.

Mayor McCaa asked when the five individuals that are in training expected to be on the counsel taking calls. Ms. Wilkins stated that she hopes in the next two weeks. Mr. Potucek stated that there are people in training that are coming on very soon and then hopefully the other ones that are completing their background will be in, but that will take a few months to get them on board.

Council Member Rodriguez stated that he is overly impressed with the ProQA System and noted that he has been going over to SEACOM in the evenings. He shared that he watched Firefighter River Davis take a call and provide chest compression instruction until the paramedics showed up out McNeal and then right back to another call. He noted that Ms. Wilkins stated that there are eighteen people, but he has only seen the same people and wonders where they are. Mr. Potucek stated that currently there are only nine full-time. The four or five that were mentioned that are in training will be on in the next few weeks. The other five that make the eighteen will still take a few months due to more months of training.

Police Chief Thrasher stated that there are only four trainers that can only train four at a time. The rest of them are getting experience from some of the other agencies while they are waiting for those trainers to open.

Council Member Rodriguez stated that he has seen some of the employees doing a ride along, which is good so that they get the experience on the calls, but he would like to see them taking calls soon as possible. He noted that the background checks are taking long and that is frustrating; although, he understands that there are a lot of parts to that. Police Chief Thrasher stated that even if that happened, they would still have a trainer for them to sit there and they would still not be able to answer any calls.

Council Member Rodriguez asked about the amount of money coming in from the 9-1-1 grant for next year. Ms. Wilkins stated that she wrote the grant for \$580,000 and this is a reimbursement grant for some of the equipment that is utilized with the 9-1-1 call center.

Council Member Rodriguez asked about the calculation for the revenue contributions. Ms. Yarbrough stated that a number was determined for a base position, the number of dispatchers who would be present on a shift on regular basis. For most communities that is one, but for Sierra Vista and the County, they are both figured at six. Then there is a number that is based on the number of radios used, both mobiles and portables. One is five hundred and the other is 1,000 which is calculated into their final.

Mr. Potucek pointed that while that is a good reflection of the revenue coming in and the costs, SEACOM is still working through the in-kind contributions that both the County and the City make to support SEACOM that are not reflected in the revenue and cost numbers. Therefore, the IT support, building support, the County is doing that in-kind as well as the City's administrative services. The City is also contributing in-kind. It is the County and City's hope that once they can

assimilate all those costs into SEACOM, they are going to then must reassess those costs for the subscribers. They will go up at that point, but currently it is more important to get everybody on board and then work through that and decide as to when the County and City need to start charging for those in-kind services.

Council Member Rodriguez noted that Fort Huachuca has dispatching, and he wonders what is meant by Fort Huachuca hosting. Ms. Wilkins stated that SEACOM hosts their backup systems. Mr. Potucek noted that they also host Spillman.

In response to Council Member Rodriguez, Ms. Wilkins stated that some of the IT services have increased due to everything increasing in the last year, and then an additional charge to SEACOM is the SUA maintenance fees that must be budgeted. Ms. Dillaha stated that the IT services went down because there was a \$130,000 variant upgrade last year. The DEMA grant was for the capital for the SUA2 and for the Motorola maintenance, which is about a \$130,000. Mr. Potucek added that the variant was a one-time cost, but the SUA2, Motorola is an ongoing cost.

Mayor Pro Tem Umphrey thanked Ms. Wilkins for her presentation and asked her if she is trying to recruit for the administrator. Ms. Wilkins stated that not at this time. She is trying to reclassify that position to a communications manager. Mr. Potucek noted that the administrator recently resigned, which allows for some restructuring.

Mayor Pro Tem Umphrey asked why the administrator is being changed to a communications manager. Ms. Wilkins stated that she would like the opportunity to recruit internally so that there is an extra layer of promotional availability. Mr. Potucek clarified that the incumbent administrator who recently resigned came over from the City and was at a high pay rate in relation to the rest of the staff, which was a result from the pay that the individual was receiving at the City. Therefore, the position was reclassified at an administrator level to justify the expense.

Council Member Benning welcome Ms. Wilkins aboard and noted that she has done excellent since taking over in February. He then asked Fire Chief Jones about response times since going to SEACOM. Fire Chief Jones stated that the Fire Department has not seen an increase for response times, but a decrease in response times, especially in Station IV's area. ProQA and station learning allows for a zero-response time based on the dispatchers being able to give instructions in route. They are providing EMS care or giving fire instruction prior to fire apparatus or EMS arriving.

Council Member Benning asked about the number of JPA board members and the representative from Sierra Vista. Mr. Potucek stated that he is the City's representative and currently there are four members on the JPA Board, Sheriff Daniels, Chief Savage from Fry Fire, and Suzanne Harvey from Huachuca City. The board will be expanding to six in July and that will include Mr. Pauken from Bisbee and Mr. Blaschke from Wilcox.

Council Member Benning asked if at the beginning of the fiscal year each of cities buy in at the same time. Ms. Yarbrough stated that the cities are invoiced throughout the year and staff tends to work out the schedule with the cities. Therefore, some may pay it all up front, some may want to be billed a couple times throughout the year, and some may want to be billed at the end of the year.

In response to Council Member Benning, Ms. Dillaha asked if he is referring to the General Fund Personnel numbers. SEACOM has its own fund. It is in addition. Mr. Potucek stated that when the City and the County entered the IGA to form the Joint Powers Authority, which allowed by Statute, it is its own separate governing board. It is an interesting relationship, but in fact Council must approve the budget along with the County Board of Supervisors as principals to SEACOM. The City also has the responsibility as the fiscal agent to present the numbers in the budget. Ms. Yarbrough stated that as an agency fund, SEACOM works differently. The City budgets its contribution, the \$900,000

that goes into the Police Department's professional services and then the revenue is budgeted that is expected to come in from everybody else against that total budget.

Council Member Benning asked who trumps if the City Council approves the budget, but the County does not. Mr. Potucek noted that there is a complex intergovernmental agreement with Cochise County on this, and there is a poison pill provision in there that allows for either party to leave the agreement but all the assets in the operation then go to the remaining member. There is a powerful incentive to stay in SEACOM.

Mayor McCaa thanked Ms. Wilkins and shared that he had the opportunity to visit SEACOM. He encouraged everyone to see the operations going on.

C. [18-month Update on Council's Strategic Plan](#)

Ms. Yarbrough stated that a couple of things are behind schedule are:

- Goal 1, the reduction of City-owned streets that fall into the extremely poor classification, referring to the Pavement Condition Index (PCI) Survey. This goal was marked behind scheduled not because there has not been improvement on the streets but because this goal is also tied to that measurement that comes through the PCI survey, which is in process and will be concluded later this year.

Ms. Yarbrough stated that streets that were rated as fair and poor in the past PCI survey received priority in the past few years, but it is expected that that number should have improved when that updated survey comes back.

- Goal 5.1, Highway 90 repaving, which should happen later this year in the October and November period.
- Goal 15.2, expanding the Animal Shelter, which is proposed in the budget for next year, \$2,000,000 to proceed with that expansion that would start this fall if approved.

Items moved into completion are:

- Goal 6.5.1, construction of Avenida Escuela;
- Goal 8.1, completion of the Joint Resources Utilization Study that wrapped up last summer and then closed out last fall.
- Goal 11.4, evaluating how people were counted at events.

Ms. Yarbrough explained that staff tried a few different things and found a piece of software called Placer, which will show where people attending events are coming from, where they stay, and how much they spend while in town.

- Goals 16.5 and 16.6, Neighborhood Partnership Program and the Street Tree Planting Program that was incorporated into it, and that launched in December.

Other highlights:

- Goal 1.2, amount of funding that staff applied for and received through the FTA for street infrastructure projects.

Ms. Yarbrough stated that this funding will go towards multiuse paths along Buffalo Soldier Trail from Golf Links to Fry Boulevard and then along Highway 92 from Avenida Cochise to Foothills. There are multiple FTA grants that were applied for and received, which will also address curb, gutter, and sidewalk in different areas of the City, repaving and solar streetlights. This was a new source of funding that staff identified a couple of years ago and those will show remarkable results as those kick off.

- Goal 6.2.2, North Garden Avenue improvements.

The project design is close to completion and should be going out for bid for construction at any time now and kicking off early in the summer. Therefore, those funds also will carry over to next year, but construction will be seen soon.

Mayor Pro Tem Umphrey asked how long the North Garden Avenue improvements will take to be completed. Ms. Flissar stated that she does not have a specific period, but her best guess is nine months.

Mayor Pro Tem Umphrey stated that she was hoping that it would be done prior to the U of A moving in 12 to 18 months.

- Goal 10.1 expanded participation in sporting events.

Ms. Wilson and her team have done amazing, and the revenue is looking extraordinarily strong. Staff will provide a report during the final Strategic Plan update. The staff will have exceeded the \$3 million revenue increase target with the success again of El Tour De Zona in March, and the upcoming Summit Challenge and Wine, Beer, and Spirits Festival.

- Goal 12.1, restrooms.

After some delays the City is on track for the installation of the first round of new restrooms out at the Veterans Park Sports Complex and then near the pickleball courts. Staff will be applying for the LWCF grant to do the next round next year.

- Goal 15.4, creation of the Better Work Program from the Arizona Department of Housing Grant.

Participants picked up 19,860 pounds of trash. Five of the seventeen participants found jobs and four secured housing.

Council Member Benning thanked staff and noted that during a meeting he attended, Better Bucks and Better Works was the rave of the meeting. He added that a lot of the programs that the City is doing are coming along and are doing better than expected.

Council Member Rodriguez asked questions on the following goals:

- Goal 6.3.1, annexation

He noted that some business owners asked about turning lane changes to be able to turn left out of Circle K, the big building, the flower shop on Highway 92. Ms. Flissar stated that it must be a request that would need to go to ADOT. However, she was involved in the project that put the medians down that roadway, and the Police Department and Fire Department could speak more to it, but that was done because of a significant accident history along that segment of roadway, including incapacitating, injuries, and fatalities along that roadway segment. It was done for safety reasons.

- Goal 7, digital marketing

He stated that he likes the 140,000 click engagement, but he would like to know what the City gets from those clicks, who has come to the City, and who are the people clicking. Ms. Hector stated that the data really goes into a lot more detail in the executive report. It shows where those people are coming from and what information they are asking for. As far as who they are, staff can get some

demographic information, but she would not be able to tell who the person is clicking. It is just not possible. What she has done, looking at what the impact of these clicks are, and it is general practice in the tourism industry to look at the extended stay tax or hotel tax as one of the measures, and restaurant and bar tax revenues. Therefore, she watches those trends and in her report she direct Council to the Finance Report because they are in there. However, she can get Council a trend analysis if they want. The City dropped during COVID, but it is coming back up and those revenues are looking good in both of those categories.

In response to Council Member Rodriguez, Ms. Hector stated that he is correct in that the City no longer uses Buxton. Staff is looking at Placer, and for her upcoming tourism presentation, she has data that she pulled out of there that she will share with Council. This does provide more detail about their age, income level, interest. It gets into that psychographics that lets her department know if the City is targeting the right audiences with their marketing projects.

Council Member Rodriguez stated that it is his understanding that the City is unable to have data from the South, from Mexico that come in to shop and attend events because that data is not represented at all, even though it is known that this is a huge part of the City's revenue. Ms. Hector stated that he is correct and there is no way that it is financially feasible. It can be captured, but it is not something that the City has the tools to do.

Council Member Benning asked if the Department is doing any data mining, gathering information of people that come to the City's events. Ms. Hector stated that it is available through Placer. Ms. Wilson stated that she utilizes Placer. However, Placer is providing U.S. data and her department is working with their representatives to interpret the data. She added that she likes the part where it provides the top five things, where they are coming from, where they go to before and after the event, and it is shown on a map, which she is going to start dropping that into the executive report after events. She further added that there were 5,000 people at the West Fest. In the industry of event planning, one would look at a section and count the people within that section and then multiply that by how many sections that size is to produce a best guess. Now she can see where people come from, their home or work because it tracks over a period, how many times they go back to this place.

Council Member Benning asked if Placer could be tied into license plate readers. Ms. Hector stated that she believes that it is illegal. Ms. Yarbrough stated that this program is not for identifying personal information, i.e., addresses of homes etc.

Mayor Pro Tem Umphrey noted that people must consent to giving this information to the company collecting it. Ms. Hector stated that Placer is mining the data from a cell phone.

Ms. Wilson stated that her department has been able to see with the clicks that the number of clicks go up when there is a sports tournament. The department can start seeing people coming from places and they are actively going to get information and Placer is also providing the department with the other half of that.

Council Member Rodriguez continued with his questions:

- Goal 10.2, there is a comment there that was interesting about accessing the traffic control cones, barricades, etc.

He stated that he has noticed that when they come, everyone sees all those things out there, but they are not from the City's yard. They contract from a company in Tucson to bring those things out because the City does not have the capacity to provide that. Ms. Flissar stated that the Public Works Department maintains an inventory of cones, barricade signs for typical traffic control functions, but if the cones and signs are for something on the scope of El Tour de Zona, then the department does

not have that kind of inventory available, nor do they have the specialized signs that would accompany that type of event. A smaller event like a 5K or something like that, the Department has that inventory.

- Goal 10.5, expanding, reaching the sports community.

He added that he is aware that Ms. Wilson is a lot of this, and highlighted AV Anderson Disc Golf Park that has been working well, but he wonders if staff could go out there on a Saturday and talk to the people that show up from Phoenix, Utah, etc. to use the park. He added that they asked if they could have some of the City's mulch and make one of the basket areas with mulch.

- Goal 10.6, Vale Park Complex in Mesa

He stated that there are issues with that park, and they are going bankrupt. It is a beautiful complex for sporting events that looks like something that would be seen in Las Vegas.

- Goal 14, maintaining staff, recruiting strategies, Citywide growth opportunities, internships, especially where it notes opportunity to students in military.

He stated that the Youth Commission would like to host a youth job fair specifically for youth in the City for those that do not want to go to college right away, do not want to go to the military, do not want to get a clearance. He noted that this would be perfect to represent at a youth job fair.

- Goal 14.1.3, recruiting for Police Department

He stated that he is aware that the Department is going to Fort Bliss a lot, but he has not talked to anybody that came for Fort Bliss. He asked about the strategy in looking at other cities. He suggested Barstow, NTC, 29 Palms, Fort Polk, Louisiana, all the places that a person does not want to be at in the military. The problem with going to Texas is that people do not want to leave Texas.

Police Chie Thrasher stated that his experience at the military bases, is that they are having difficulty with those places in terms of recruiting anybody to come to Arizona. Fort Bliss and Las Cruces area because it is such a such a similar type of environment to the City of Sierra Vista. He added that they have had applicants from there, but they have not gotten through the process. The Department now has a link with the Community College Academy that they have in the Fort Bliss area, in El Paso. Therefore, they are hoping to piggyback off that. The Department is hitting California hard in terms of recruiting, and they want to expand out not necessarily just to the military bases, but the local community colleges, and they are having more success in that, than the military bases. Although they are starting to see some success with the Career Skills Program. Lastly, he stated that he received word that there is another person that is interested from Fort Huachuca that wants to come on board. This would be their fourth one in that program.

- Goal 16.1, improve the form function, character of environment of Sierra Vista

He noted that the City is missing hummingbird stuff. The City of Sierra Vista is the capital of the Hummingbird in the United States. The little swag that Council Members give away at various places needs to be turned up. He suggested the Buffalo Soldiers, hummingbirds, etc.

Council Member Benning stated that the Council has its own budget where they can bring that out of too. Council Member Rodriguez stated that the statement should be on the sign on I-10.

- Goal 16.5, Tree Planting Program

He stated that a lot of people when they think of Arizona do not think of what Sierra Vista looks like until they get to the City of Sierra Vista, which has a lot of trees. He asked if the City could qualify for the Tree City USA. Ms. Yarbrough stated that staff has investigated it. However, it requires hiring an arborist. Ms. Hector added that her department looked at, but it does require the hiring of an arborist, and it is hard enough to find a park supervisor. This would require a dedicated position, a certification.

- Goal 18, increase capabilities and resources to expand communication.

He stated that he went on the website, visitSierraVista.com and noted that it needs to be updated.

Council Member Benning thanked Ms. Yarbrough for presenting the 20-month update.

D. Report on Recent Trips, Meetings and Future Meetings

Council Member Benning announced the Park and Recreation Commission Meeting at 5:30 at the OYCC.

Ms. Yarbrough stated that on the agenda for the May 23, 2023 work session, along with the budget presentation there will also be a presentation by Ms. Hector on tourism and the Cochise County Tourism and Development Council. She added that she is also ready to present to Council the draft FY24-25 Strategic Plan.

Mayor McCaa stated that Council Member Johnson was absent due to being ill and he hopes that he feels better soon.

E. Future Discussion Items and Council Requests – There was nothing to discuss.

3. Adjourn

Mayor McCaa adjourned the May 9, 2023, work session of the Sierra Vista City Council at 4:26 p.m.

Clea McCaa II, Mayor

Minutes prepared by:

Attest:

Maria G. Marsh, Deputy Clerk

Jill Adams, City Clerk