

Sierra Vista City Council
Meeting Minutes
September 28, 2023

Mayor Pro Tem Umphrey called the September 28, 2023, City Council Regular Meeting to order at 5:00 p.m., City Hall Council Chambers, 1011 N. Coronado Drive, Sierra Vista, Arizona.

Roll Call:

Mayor Clea McCaa II – absent
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
Chris Hiser, Police Chief
Brian Jones, Fire Chief
Laura Wilson, Leisure, Parks, and Library Director
Sharon Flissar, Public Works Director
Matt McLachlan, Community Development Director
Jill Adams, City Clerk
Nathan J. Williams, City Attorney
Adam Curtis, Public Affairs and Communications Manager
Tony Boone, Economic Development Manager
Dianna Cameron, Management Analyst

Invocation – Justin McPeak, Thunder Mountain Church, led everyone present in prayer.

Pledge of Allegiance – Council Member Landry led the Pledge of Allegiance.

[Item 1](#) Acceptance of the Agenda

Council Member Benning move that the agenda for the Regular City Council Meeting of September 28, 2023, be approved. Council Member Rodriguez seconded the motion. The motion unanimously carried, 6/0. Mayor Pro Tem Umphrey, Council Members Benning, Johnson, Landry, Rodriguez, and Messmer voted in favor.

City Manager's Report: Mr. Potucek reminded that City's offices will be closed in observance of Columbus Day on Monday, October 9, 2023; therefore, the refuse schedule will change to Tuesday and Thursday for the Monday pickups, and Wednesday and Friday for the Tuesday pickups. The next regularly scheduled work session is scheduled for Tuesday, October 10, 2023 at 3:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers, and the next regularly scheduled Council Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 12, 2023 at 5:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers. He reported that on Tuesday, September 26, 2023 during the work session, he had updated the Council about the situation at the border discussed at the Mayors/Managers Meeting in Willcox. That meeting was attended by elected officials and managers from the various cities in the County. At that time, everyone was informed of the situation regarding shelters being set up at Bisbee

and Douglas and the request for assistance by those communities and County staff in the event a similar situation was to occur as a couple of weekends ago. That situation occurred because the Ajo Station was over capacity and several migrants were then driven to the Naco facility, primarily women and children. At that point, those people were dropped off at Safeway to be provided transportation through the State to the shelter in Pima County. However, the Pima County shelter that has been set up primarily using the federal dollars and grants was over capacity and no buses were forthcoming for those individuals. The cities of Bisbee and Douglas set up shelters, and so that request was made at that meeting because at that time, it looked like more shelter space might be needed. Since that time, Sierra Vista has not been requested to stand up a shelter, but the City received an e-mail from County staff indicating the need for food, supplies, toiletries, etc. for volunteers that could drop off those at the Salvation Army or at Bisbee City Hall. Currently, no city staff has been assigned to a project like this and the City is not providing any funding assistance to that effort. There have also been no needs requested of the City by the County or the other communities.

Item 2 Consent Agenda

[Item 2.1](#) Discussion and Possible Action of the Work Session Meeting Minutes of September 12, 2023

[Item 2.2](#) Discussion and Possible Action of the Regular City Council Meeting Minutes of September 14, 2023

Council Member Johnson moved that the Consent Agenda consisting of the Meeting Minutes of the Work Session of September 12, 2023, and Regular City Council Meeting of September 14, 2023, be approved. Council Member Benning seconded the motion. The motion unanimously carried, 6/0. Mayor Pro Tem Umphrey, Council Members Benning, Johnson, Landry, Rodriguez, and Messmer voted in favor.

Public Hearing – there was no response.

[Item 3](#) Discussion and Possible Action of Resolution 2023-073, Program Year 2022 Community Development Block Grant Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER)

Council Member Landry moved that the Resolution 2023-073, Program Year 2022 Community Development Block Grant Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER), be approved. Council Member Johnson seconded the motion.

Mr. McLachlan stated that the CAPER documents the City's progress in expanding Community Development Block Grant funds during the program year, which coincides with the City's fiscal year ending on June 30, 2023. As stated in the report, the City awarded a total of \$173,636.12 in CDBG funds. This included completing the parking lot and expansion project at Saint Vincent de Paul, replacing the cabinets and countertops in the kitchen at Good Neighbor Alliance Emergency Shelter, carrying out emergency home repairs or improving accessibility to seven low-income homeowners in the City and providing a range of relief distributed by the United Way of Sierra Vista and Cochise County through the Emergency Crisis Fund. Also spent was a small amount on administration to cover expenses associated with legal ads and environmental reviews. The contract for the slide at Soldier Creek Park has been awarded and it is anticipated that the construction will take place during the fall. The report includes demographic information on the beneficiaries from the services provided, another material to address HUD reporting

requirements. With Council's approval, staff will submit the report to HUD for their acceptance on September 29, 2023.

The motion unanimously carried, 6/0. Mayor Pro Tem Umphrey, Council Members Benning, Johnson, Landry, Rodriguez, and Messmer voted in favor.

New Business

[Item 4](#) Discussion and Possible Action of Ordinance 2023-009, Codification of Code of Ordinances

Council Member Messmer moved that Ordinance 2023-009, Codification of Code of Ordinances, be approved. Council Member Landry seconded the motion.

Ms. Adams stated that this item is the final step in the adoption into the City's permanent record of the ordinances passed by Council between July 14, 2022 and August 10, 2023. The ordinances included were a variety of topics, from zoning and building codes to annexations to City department director specifics. All the ordinances that were passed became effective at the time of their passing, after the required waiting period of 30 days. This has absolutely no effect on the effect of these ordinances. This welcomes them into the permanent record, and after 30 days, staff will move on and start building another set for next year.

The motion unanimously carried, 6/0. Mayor Pro Tem Umphrey, Council Members Benning, Johnson, Landry, Rodriguez, and Messmer voted in favor.

[Item 5](#) Discussion and Possible Action of Approval of Resolution 2023-074, Intergovernmental Agreement with Cochise County Community College District for a Joint Program to train Emergency Medical Services and Fire Science Students

Council Member Rodriguez moved that Resolution 2023-074, an Intergovernmental Agreement with Cochise County Community College District for a Joint Program to train Emergency Medical Services and Fire Science Students, be approved. Council Member Johnson seconded the motion.

Fire Chief Jones stated that this resolution is an intergovernmental agreement with Fire and Medical Services and Cochise College to form together a partnership to teach Fire one and two in an expedited fashion, normally it takes a year-long to gather their certifications. However, this will take two months. Once the program is completed, the students will have the ability to take the state's test, be Firefighter One certified, Wildland certified, and have their HAZMAT certification. Currently there will be eight people going through the program.

Council Member Benning asked if some of those eight are EMTs that are trying to crossover. Fire Chief Jones stated that there are two to three individuals that work at the EMT Division that will be going to the Fire Division.

Council Member Rodriguez asked if the employee's probationary period would not change. Fire Chief Jones stated that they will go through their Academy and then they will still have the year-long probation as well.

Council Member Johnson stated that since this is an ongoing program, he would like to know if firefighters and EMTs outside of Cochise County may also be trained. Fire Chief Jones stated

that this a pilot program that the College is initially doing with the City, but it is hoped that in the future the College will be able to hold these programs on a year-long basis where they will mostly stay within Cochise County because other programs within the state offer the same thing. However, if they get people from outside the County that want to come along, it is hoped that maybe next year, two from Sierra Vista, two from Fry, one from Wilcox, and one from Douglas will be able to attend; therefore, keeping it local.

The motion unanimously carried, 6/0. Mayor Pro Tem Umphrey, Council Members Benning, Johnson, Landry, Rodriguez, and Messmer voted in favor.

Call to the Public

In response to Council Member Johnson, Mayor Pro Tem Umphrey stated that there are 22 speakers. Council Member Johnson suggested limiting the number of speakers.

Mayor Pro Tem Umphrey stated that she understands the concern and noted that normally people would get five minutes each, but because there are so many people, she will be limiting it to three minutes each. She then asked that speakers not repeat each other if a point is already made and to just make a statement. She explained that this is a common practice made by the Council and noted that Council may not legally respond to any of the comments made.

Inga McCord stated that the idea of housing illegals in Sierra Vista is preposterous. She further stated that she has been under siege for almost 25 years, and added that they have left trash everywhere, started multiple fires, do not have the same priorities as the citizens, and they did all their bathroom business in her yard numerous times. The whole thing is unacceptable because they have different customs and behaviors, and suggested a program where they can be trained to act like Americans and not soil people's yards, burn forests and be able to get water so that they do not die. This affects everybody in the County and citizens do not want them loitering in public places, adding more crime because if they do not have jobs, they do not have anything to do; therefore, they are going to get in trouble. Lastly, she stated that it is a very bad idea for a community that is mostly retired people, noted that not everyone carries a gun, and perhaps the laws will need to change so that people may be shot when threatening lives.

Radford Hyde stated that he heard a rumor about housing illegals in Sierra Vista because other places are filling up and Sierra Vista is the last to agree in the County that has facilities for this. He further stated that he knows that a lot of people in the room are not against legal immigration, against people coming in the right way, through the checkpoints, through the border, and applying. However, the people in the room do not want these people who are slipping through the fences, getting bussed around, and dropped off in neighborhoods. He shared that he moved to this area on purpose because this is a wholesome community, and he wants it to stay that way. He also knows people in the room that are going to be on the lookout for Council agreeing to an intergovernmental agreement or any government agency who wants to offer the City money that will slip in housing for illegals/migrants. Lastly, he asked Council to reject those.

Gwynn Patterson thanked everyone present, stated that this is a very bad idea, and it is a betrayal of the leadership of the City to even condone it and think about it. Everyone has seen other cities, and this City is not an open city, a sanctuary city. She shared that she has women patients coming into her practice all the time who have been assaulted on military bases where they house these people and there is no justice. She shared that a woman that came to her

office during the week had stated that she carries a gun, but if she were to shoot anybody, it would be their word against hers. They do not feel safe, and it is not fair, and anybody who has been maligned and cheated with this whole cultural issue is women. They cannot go to their bathrooms, participate in sports, nor go out on the street if it is dusk. Bayada Home Health has recently made a ruling in their company that their healthcare providers cannot be out past five because they are afraid for them. In closing, she stated that the citizens do not want them housed in the area.

Marie Blair voiced her concerns about the City Council considering illegals to use the old Juvenile Detention Center to which she vehemently objects. She stated that this is not a good idea, and it could lead to more, which the City cannot afford, nor would the citizens agree to. She asked Council to consider that this is a federal government issue that is responsible for caring for these people that they are letting in illegally across the border. She suggested that Fort Huachuca house them. The federal government has plenty of room and plenty of money. Lastly, she stated that she left messages for Mayor McCaa and Chuck Potucek to talk to them about this issue, but they have not responded to her calls. However, Council Member Johnson did call her back, and she commended him.

Linda Coonts stated that she resides in Sierra Vista, and is present to tell Council, "shame on you"! She noted that everyone has seen this rabbit hole and they know how it plays out. If this is allowed in the door, there will be headlines stating, "City at Breaking Point after Welcoming Illegal Immigrants". Citizens do not want Council to do this and if it is necessary to put some people on the Council who will listen to the community, then that may have to be done; but the citizens are trusting Council to keep the citizens' best interest at heart. After all, they pay the bill for this building, for salaries, for all that Council speaks about when they have meetings. Therefore, she is asking Council to take this into consideration and understand that the humanitarian end of this and all other charitable entities lies in the citizens and their own choice, not Council; and these people and the churches that they go to, and the families they live with can decide which charity to give their money to – Council should not be allowed to do that.

Kim DePew voiced her support for the Border Patrol and quoted Justice Antonin Scalia, "are the sovereign states at the mercy of the federal executive's refusal to enforce the nation's immigration laws?" She stated that checking a box on an asylum form and declaring the illegal migrant legal is a perversion of the laws and cowardice. The sovereign nation is being willfully destroyed by its leaders and everyone who fails to say no are complicit. Every mayor, councilman, supervisor, sheriff, deputy, county, state attorney, police chief, officer, and citizen must say no. Every beleaguered Border Patrol agent and Homeland Security employee must be empowered to say no. Everyone is a human smuggler if everyone fails to say no. The hordes of people walking into the nation are invited by evil bureaucrats who wish to break the country with the weight of their presence. No one in this County will deny the outstretched hands of human beings in need, but leaders must answer no, when asked to be partner in the destruction because the people will not host this corruption in Sierra Vista.

David Greenberg stated that he traveled over 12,000 miles this year to a lot of his favorite places, cities that he spent a lot of time in, and he has seen them in dire straits because they did not say no. A bus was brought in, and they did okay because it was just one, and now all of a sudden they are a sanctuary city and they have a mess on their hands. They did not say no. He added that this cannot be fixed. This is only putting a band-aid on a missing limb. All that Council can do is say no and turn this problem back over to the federal government. They created it and it is their problem. He further stated that he sent a message to Sheriff Daniels suggesting declaring martial law and not allow anyone else to unload a bus in the County. There

are homeless vets, suicidal vets and they are the ones that deserve help. Lastly, he shared that last week when he traveled to Rocky Point, he saw five busloads coming from Ajo on Highway 86, 300 people. The Council cannot fix this, but they can say no.

Richard Barr stated that he and his wife Kathy have lived in Sierra Vista for over 25 years, and they enjoy this town. He further stated that he has never felt the need to come before Council to give his opinion, but he sincerely hopes that Council will agree with what he has to say because he strongly feels that the City is in grave danger. The number one job of the City Council is to keep the City safe, and Council took a pledge to do this. Border Patrol has dropped off people coming across the southern border that include cartel members, people with criminal backgrounds, terrorists, and have already apprehended over 70 people on the terrorist watch list. The polls show that most Americans consider the border to be in crisis because in just two years, there have been more aliens than the population of some of the states. The 10th Amendment of the US Constitution says the power is not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the states, reserved to the states respectively, or to the people. There is no statement in the Constitution that gives a federal government the power to control the borders, nor is there anything that says that cities and towns must use their resources to take care of anyone coming into the country. Lastly, he reported that the Republican candidates during the debate agreed that the Biden border policies are illegal, and these candidates represent at least 50 percent of the voters in the country. He strongly recommended to the City Council that they arrange with the Sierra Vista Police and other city resources to put any immigrants dropped off in Sierra Vista onto a bus for immediate transportation to a large sanctuary city like Tucson.

Jean Guffrida from Hereford stated that it is important for everybody to know that these people are in the United States with an alien status because they do not have a valid driver's license, a birth certificate showing that they were born in one of the 50 states, a US certificate of birth abroad, a US passport, a foreign passport, an I-94 form with a photo, a US Citizenship Immigration Service employment document, or a refugee Travel document. They also do not have a US Certificate of Naturalization, a US Certificate of Citizenship, a tribal Certificate of Indian Blood, a tribal or Bureau of Indian Affairs affidavit of birth, nor other licenses that are issued by the federal government, any state government, any agency of the state or political subdivision of the state that requires proof of citizenship or lawful alien status. They are illegal aliens, not drop offs. She further stated that the elected officials who gave a press conference two weeks ago said that the illegal aliens have a lawful right to be in the state, an unbelievable statement to hear as a taxpaying citizen of the County. City Council is supposed to protect the citizens, not the illegal aliens, and the place that was thought to be such a grand idea to house these people is next to a hospital that have people that work odd hours, walk from the building to their car unassisted, a lovely residential neighborhood where kids walk to school, walk to their friend's house or their playgrounds.

Daniel LaChance noted that he has had to come before City Council more frequently because the City Council has forgotten whom they work for. He stated that illegal aliens are from roughly 160 different countries, and they represent everybody. He further stated that he was told that the City Manager thinks that it is a good idea to house them in Sierra Vista because they cannot get a ride and suggested giving them a ride to the border where they came from. Citizens did not ask for them to be in the City. He then asked Council Member Johnson if he was seriously considering this because he has seen him laughing a few times as people have expressed their concerns and noted that the people present elected him, yet he was considering limiting their speech. He stated that people would not be present if this was not a problem and referred to Jason Aldean's song, "Try that in Small Town", and asked not to do this because it is a bad

idea. He further stated that it is his understanding that it is Mr. Potucek's brainchild that the City of Sierra Vista house illegal aliens because they cannot get a ride, and he wonders if this is the predicate for the town that if people cannot get a ride, that the citizens must become responsible. The citizens did not accept, ask for, or approve of any of that. Lastly, he stated that he believes that Council took an oath of office as an employee of the city government and that oath of office was to uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic.

Mr. LaChance addressed Mayor McCaa, although he was not present, and stated that he is aware that Mayor McCaa is in the Army Reserve and retired as a Colonel after a third of his career. He congratulated him and voiced his appreciation for defending the Country as a Brigade Commander, Army Reserve Element, Detachment 6, UCOM. He shared that in having done a total of 34 years in the Army as a signal officer, department civilian, he is certain that they could share some stories about the places that they have been. However, he is in attendance because the country is being invaded at the border, and because of this invasion, citizens are being told that the City is now considering housing these aliens. He knows that he is going to be told that these illegal aliens are not illegal aliens, but they walked across the wide-open border. The federal government is responsible for securing the border, one of the reasons why they get paid so well by the taxpayers. These people are illegal, and the citizens do not want them in the City.

Lee Chadbourn stated that these people are illegals who broke the law of the United States Constitution that need to be arrested, confined, and deported back to their original country of birth. The people of the United States and Sierra Vista did not invite all these illegals, men, women, or children who are aware that they were coming into the country illegally and violating the Constitution and breaking the law. He further stated that this will induce crime 10 times fold in the City and by accepting the first illegal, the City will reap continued trouble because a precedent has been set and this will send a message to President Biden and his administration, to bring in some more because the City accepted them. He added that the Biden Administration is called humanitarianism when in essence that humanitarianism is harboring criminals who will willfully violate the constitution and laws, who will not love the country and use it for their own satisfaction. Lastly, he stated that humanitarianism is providing food, clothing, shelter, and transportation to those who are in the state legally, whether they are a citizen or a green card holder, and that person then respects and loves the country. The City Council will be disrespecting the citizens of Sierra Vista and Cochise County if any thought is given to harboring these criminals and at the same time, Council will become a criminal, subject to arrest for allowing the Constitution to be violated as well as violating their oath of office.

Paul Varble read Article 4, Section 4 of the Constitution, stated that if the government does not protect and defend its borders, the Constitution authorizes the free citizens to defend themselves and their state in place of a treasonous government. He noted that it is treason under Article 3, Section 3 of the Constitution if the government gives aid/comfort to a hostile foreign invasion and does not defend the borders. He further noted that the City is not taking care of its own in the City of Sierra Vista and that there is no way, shape, or form that the City can take care of illegals, not migrants because migrants are seasonal farm workers that return to Mexico and do not seek asylum. Asylum seekers seek asylum in the first country they enter, simply invaders that come in illegally with camouflage outfits, coming in groups - an act of war. Failure of the City Council to comply with their oath of office and the Constitution is being complicit in the acts of treason by continuing to keep the border open and allowing these people to come in and giving aid/comfort to enemies. City Council is not giving aid and comfort to its own people in Sierra Vista. There are homeless, veterans that are homeless that are not being

taken care of or fed. Allowing this to happen is being complicit in the illegal actions of the Biden cartel and Homeland Security, ICE, County Sheriff's Office, or the Border Patrol is complying with unlawful orders from the Biden cartel, being complicit in human trafficking, pedophilia, drug smuggling, weapons smuggling, money laundering, rape, and child abuse. Any law that violates constitutional law is null and void as if it never occurred and the City Council does not have to comply with that unlawful order. The City Council serves and protect the people and does not give aid and comfort to its enemies. Lastly, he suggested having these people rounded up and taken onto military transport planes going to Ukraine.

Renata Dany reiterated that the Sheriff in town has the capacity to protect the citizens of Cochise County, they can say no, and they should because they should protect the citizens. She commented that years ago there were Minutemen and asked the Council to look at the cities like New York, Philadelphia, and Oregon that are deteriorating. The federal government is not going to bail them out. This is not sustainable, and this City cannot do it.

Bob McCormick stated that City Council is not seeing anything different than the rest of the United States. This is happening all over because of the Biden Administration. They did it on purpose so that they could get continued voting to have illegal elections. He noted that the citizens are not against the Council any more than any other city and asked that they not take it personal. He added that citizens are compassionate to women and children and noted that YouTube shows that people crossing the border are not women and children. Therefore, the City of Sierra Vista will soon be a sanctuary city like Tucson.

Daniel Bergene stated that the 2022 midterms changed the City and shared that his neighborhood has been flooded with homeless whom he speaks to every day. These people are from Wilcox, Pima County, and Maricopa County that have camps in the deserts behind the schools in his neighborhood. They throw trash in people's yards, defecate in the streets, shoot up heroin on the sidewalks in broad daylight, scream in the playgrounds at imaginary friends that scare the children away from their play, and fight in the streets at night. The neighborhoods are not safe, and his neighbors are terrified to walk in their neighborhood, to allow their children to go outside, and this is without the illegals in the City. He wonders what is going to happen when the streets are flooded with them too and suggested housing the homeless at the detention center instead to start taking care of them. The City Council is failing the City and he sees it every day in the street, a travesty.

Randall Limbaca stated that the mainstream media and government bureaucrats dishonestly identify these illegal immigrants as women and children to play on the sympathies of local citizens, but being reported nationwide by actual citizens, directly affected by these mass migrations, is an overwhelming influx of military-age males. The women and children are likely victims of human and sex trafficking which are federal offenses to be dealt with by federal not local agencies. The City and County officials are nothing more than actors playing a game to paint themselves as humanitarians, to draw more federal and state funds for misuse. He further stated that before Council and the Herald describe him and others as non-compassionate and part of an angry mob, he wants everyone to know that they did not create this crisis but rather Joseph R Biden and those who support him. Lastly, he stated that it is not compassionate to encourage human and sex trafficking with an open-door invitation to a town with no resources, to prioritize illegal aliens over homeless veterans, to place the most vulnerable populations at risk, the youth, the elderly, and to demand more from legal citizens who can barely manage an ever-increasing cost of living. In closing he stated that bureaucrats, the City Manager, and citizens who wish to assist, and, or harbor certain aliens, are in violation of Title 8 of the United States Code Section 1324 that is subject to fines and imprisonment.

Ivonne Mayer thanked everyone present and noted that people need to be heard, stated that Council's job is to keep the people of Sierra Vista and surrounding areas safe and secure, and to make decisions based on facts, not emotions. Lastly, she asked Council to stand up and do the right thing.

Tom Crosby stated that a factor in determining the ineligibility to be and remain in the United States is the likelihood to become a public charge, which almost all these in discussion are and so remain in violation of the law. These people are admitted contrary to the law by the policy of the Biden Administration. He further stated that in a 2012 article, Assistant Secretary of International Affairs and Chief Diplomatic Officer for the Department of Homeland Security, Alan Burson told the gathering of the United States and Mexico Chamber of Commerce in Washington, DC that the Guatemalan border with Chiapas was now the southern border. The left knows that it is critical to the survival of any nation to discriminate based on nationality and that is what a border is for. He noted that one Al-Qaeda linked operative convicted in the 1993 World Trade Center bombing plot obtained amnesty through a program intended for farm workers and out of the 48 Al Qaeda operatives that committed crimes between 1993 and 2001, 12 of them were illegal aliens and seven were visa overstayers to include two of the conspirators in the first World Trade Center attack, one figure from the New York subway bomb plot, and four of the 9/11 terrorists. Other terrorists were visa overstayers and had either applied for asylum or finagled a fake marriage certificate to launder their status. Lastly, he stated that there are already 30 million lost illegal aliens in the country. Therefore, given the prevalence of overstays among terrorists in the United States, it is clearly an important security goal to limit this phenomenon.

Joseph Patterson thanked Council for listening and stated that a lot of excellent points have been made. He read into the record Section 4, Article 4 of the Constitution, "the United States shall guarantee to every state in this union a republican form of government and shall protect each of them against invasion". He noted that this is the responsibility of the government to protect and not to protect those who would destroy. In closing he asked Council to say no.

Allen Brackhahn stated that he moved to this area in 1972 with his father who served in the Army and retired on Fort Huachuca. He decided to make this his home with his wife of 41 years and raised three kids out on Ramsey Road where they have seen their fair share of illegals on their property. He further stated that anyone who thinks that this is an invasion is wrong because this is a precursor to an invasion. He wonders who is going to protect the citizens. If people think that they are protected, they are wrong. In closing, he asked Council to find their honesty and noted that it is not cool for Council Members to be laughing.

Alice Benton stated that everyone is experiencing the biggest migration the world has ever seen into the country and noted that a study on the environment in 1962 indicated that for best use of land in the country for farming, housing, wildlife, that it should never exceed the population of 335 million people; however, that number was exceeded several years ago and there are people not coming just from the Americas, but from all over the world. There is a shortage of water, doctors, nurses, housing, and job shortages, yet the import of people into the country continues. She noted that the plan to house illegals is not a good one. Anyone in the military or law enforcement knows that they are supposed to contain a problem and spreading out six million illegals, officially called by the Biden Administration legal because they can claim refugee status, cannot be done all over the United States. Texas and Arizona started sending people who came to the country as migrants to New York City and Chicago that CNN, NBC, ABC and CBS have started to pay attention too as well as the government. Spreading out

people is going to hurt the small communities, but if the people that are coming in are contained into the larger cities who say they are sanctuary cities, then if action is needed, it will be easier to locate these people.

Dawna Stewart chose not to speak and gave her time to Julie Turnaoge. Ms. Turnaoge, an immigrant, and naturalized citizen that came legally many decades ago, and worked herself up along with her siblings, stated that she finds this very appalling. She shared that she is a proud American and that this is her country, not her country of origin, Italia. She further shared that she worked 28 years on Fort Huachuca and then went on to space industry, but she supported DOD, MI, counterintelligence, and held a TSSCI clearance, which took three years of background investigation, even as a naturalized citizen, a U.S. citizen. She added that sanctuary cities harbor criminals and create dangerous environments for all citizens and their policies make it very difficult on law enforcement, sheriffs, Border Patrol, and PD, who are quite upset in having to do what is being asked of them. She implored Council to say no to making Sierra Vista a sanctuary city because they encourage illegal immigration, strain all resources economically, and make it difficult to deport criminals. The so-called drop offs are not drop offs. They are illegal aliens that did not follow the process.

Katelin Sinclair, a Harvard student, thanked Council for listening to her on behalf of her generation. She stated that it is important to always have the mind of awareness and shared that she was born and raised in the area, a small property with horses, dogs, cats, and farm animals. She noted that before the borders were open, there were probably 20 illegals coming through every month, but since the borders opened, it has become thousands and she no longer feels safe when feeding her animals by herself or walking to her car after dark. In closing, she stated that the Council is supposed to support everyone, and her generation is not doing well if this is where it is at now. Therefore, she is asking Council to say no for the sake of the citizens and her generation.

Comments and Requests of the Council

Council Member Landry thanked everyone present and noted that it is important to share comments and explained the Call to the Public process. She explained that Council may not respond to comments and announced the upcoming Art in the Park and NAMI's Sky Island Bike Ride on October 7, 2023. She noted that Council's Executive Report, which is on the City's website will answer questions for the public. She recognized Patricia "Trish" Harman for her work with the City and in closing wished Alice, her daughter, a Happy Birthday.

Council Member Rodriguez stated that it is good to see everyone that came to speak about their concerns, noted that Council is not voting on the issue, and voiced his appreciation at all the comments. He also stated that he has continued his ride-a-longs with the Police Department, thanked Police Chief Hiser and stated that it is a testament to keeping the City's streets safe. He noted that he has seen the Cochise County Sheriff Office and state troopers out as well. He announced the Hispanic Heritage Fest at the park with live music, a big salute to service, and a lot of food vendors and the Where they Buck Rodeo. Lastly, he encouraged people to check out ADOT's website regarding State Route 90 Project's details that breaks down the two sections. The bid is posted that is going to be open for bid until October 27, 2023.

Council Member Benning stated that it is unfortunate that people are leaving the meeting, but for those that stayed, he will be available after the meeting to talk. He voiced his appreciation at people coming out to share their concerns, whether everyone agrees or disagrees. He apologized for cutting their time from five minutes to three minutes and explained that staff is in

attendance and must go. He reiterated that he will be available after the meeting, and he can sit with people in Council Chambers or go out outside and talk all they want. He noted that it is good to voice an opinion, concerns, and noted that whether Council were voting on this tonight or not, it is still good to hear from everyone. In closing, he thanked Pastor Justin McPeak for his blessing as the Lord knows that Council, the City, and the country needs it.

Council Member Messmer thanked everybody for their comments and reminded everyone present that everyone one in the Council Chambers are citizens of Sierra Vista. She shared that her family was in Sierra Vista before the State was even a state. Therefore, this country and the City means a lot to her. The Council will do the right thing for the City. In closing, she stated that she appreciates everyone being respectful as Council tries to be respectful up on the dais and she knows that whenever Council speaks to people, and people speak to Council that everyone is respectful because that is what is going to help.

Council Member Johnson reported that the Sierra Vista Environmental Stewardship Commission met on Wednesday, September 27, 2023, where there was discussion about a lot of things. He noted that the Commission is short one commissioner, but there are applications that came in that will be vote on at the next meeting. The Commission is also planning a field trip to the Environmental Park because many Commissioners have never been to it, nor do they understand the workings of the operation.

Mayor Pro Tem Umphrey thanked everyone present for taking the time to come out to the Council Meeting and stated that normally there is not such a large turnout. She further stated that she is aware that this was fueled by a rumor about the City possibly entertaining becoming a sanctuary city and noted that rumors need to be fact checked, especially those on social media. She wished Alice, a wonderful teenager, a Happy Birthday, and thanked Council Member Rodriguez for bringing up ADOT's posting regarding the two projects for State Route 90 that include the terrible section of road around Target and Fry's. That project has been put out to bid and construction is scheduled to start before the end of the year.

Adjournment

Mayor Pro Tem Umphrey adjourned the September 28, 2023, meeting of the Sierra Vista City Council at 6:24 p.m.

Clea McCaa, Mayor

Minutes prepared by:

Attest:

Maria G. Marsh, Deputy Clerk

Jill Adams, City Clerk

A recording of the Council Meeting is available at:
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC8PtUpIbkQsixlhSy-jeR_Q/videos