



Sierra Vista City Council
Meeting Minutes
December 10, 2020

Mayor Mueller called the December 10, 2020 City Council Meeting to order at 5:00 p.m., Council Chambers, City Hall, 1011 N. Coronado Drive, Sierra Vista, AZ

Roll Call:

Mayor Rick Mueller - present
Mayor Pro Tem Rachel Gray - present
Council Member William Benning - present
Council Member Gwen Calhoun - present
Council Member Sarah Pacheco – present (5:06 p.m.)
Council Member Carolyn Umphrey - present
Council Member Kristine Wolfe - present

Others Present:

Chuck Potucek, City Manager
Victoria Yarbrough, Assistant City Manager
Adam Thrasher, Police Chief
Brian Jones, Fire Chief
Nathan Williams, City Attorney
Jill Adams, City Clerk
Matt McLachlan, Community Development Director
Richard Cayer, Operations Manager
David Felix, Chief Finance Officer
Linda Jones, Transportation Administrator
Barbara Fleming, Chief Human Resources Officer
Judy Hector, Marketing and Public Affairs Manager
Tony Boone, Economic Development Manager

Invocation - Pastor Jerry Preiss, Hope and Healing Christian Church, conducted the invocation.

Pledge of Allegiance: Mayor Pro Tem Gray led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Item 1 Acceptance of the Agenda

Council Member Benning moved that the Agenda for the Regular City Council Meeting of December 10, 2020 be approved as written. Council Member Calhoun seconded the motion. The motion passed by a 6/0 vote of Mayor Mueller, Mayor Pro Tem Gray and Council Members Benning, Calhoun, Umphrey, and Wolfe.

Awards and Presentations

Certificates of Appreciation to outgoing Commissioners were presented by the Mayor and Council.

City Manager's Report: Mr. Potucek announced that the December 10, 2020 is the final Council Meeting for the year 2020; therefore, the next regularly scheduled Council Work Session will be on January 12, 2021 at 3:00 p.m. in Council Chambers, and the next regularly scheduled Council Meeting for the new Council will be on January 14, 2021 at 5:00 p.m. in Council Chambers. He reported that the EMS

Substation Design-Build Project has been advertised and is scheduled to open on December 18, 2020, and the Police Department Locker Room Remodel Project has also been advertised and is scheduled to open on January 22, 2021. He further reported that the City received five proposals for the Upper San Pedro Partnership WHIP Portal Project, which are currently under review by the Partnership. The Garden Canyon Linear Park (Saint Andrews' parking lot) Project also received five bids that are currently under review. The Hydrologic Investigations for the Riverstone Retention Basin Recharge Project that the City is doing on behalf of the Cochise Conservation and Recharge Network has statements of qualifications that are also currently being reviewed with interviews being scheduled for next week. Finally, on behalf of staff, he thanked Council Members Calhoun and Wolfe for their service as Council Members, wished everyone in Sierra Vista a Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays and a happier 2021. He added that it has been a great pleasure to serve the wonderful community during a challenging year, and he looks forward to having a successful 2021.

Consent Agenda:

[Item 2.1](#) Approval of the City Council Special Meeting Minutes of November 10, 2020

[Item 2.2](#) Approval of the City Council Regular Meeting Minutes of November 12, 2020

[Item 2.3](#) Approval of the City Council Special Meeting Minutes of November 19, 2020

[Item 2.4](#) Resolution 2020-070, Reappointment of Ronald York and Neil Gago and Appointment of Barbara Fleming to the Employee Benefit Trust, said terms to expire December 31, 2023.

Council Member Pacheco moved that the Consent Agenda consisting of the City Council Special Meeting Minutes of November 10, 2020, Regular Meeting Minutes of November 12, 2020, Special Meeting Minutes of November 19, 2020, and Resolution 2020-070, reappointment of Ronald York and Neil Gago and appointment of Barbara Fleming to the Employee Benefit Trust, be approved. Council Member Umphrey seconded the motion. The motion passed by a 7/0 vote of Mayor Mueller, Mayor Pro Tem Gray and Council Members Benning, Calhoun, Umphrey, Pacheco, and Wolfe.

Public Hearing

[Item 3](#) Resolution 2020-071, Approving the Submission of the US Housing and Urban Development (HUD) PY 2019 Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report (CAPER)

Council Member Wolfe moved that Resolution 2020-071, submission of the US Housing and Urban Development Program Year 2019 Consolidated Annual Performance Evaluation Report, be approved. Council Member Benning seconded the motion.

Mr. McLachlan stated that this is a Housing and Urban Development required document that staff submits at the end of every program year. It measures the City's progress in meeting the goals and objectives outlined in the Five-Year Consolidated Plan. The report covers Program Year 2019, which coincides with their fiscal year.

The total block grant spent in Program Year 2019 was \$487,248.80. A detailed breakdown is provided in the report and summarized in the memo to Council. Consistent with the Consolidated Plan, three quarters of the funding was spent on public facility infrastructure improvements, one-fifth was on COVID-19 response, and the balance on administration. The document was advertised pursuant to the City's Participation Plan in the local newspaper and posted on the City's website. The public comment period closed without any input being received.

Council Member Pacheco stated that the improvements to Timothy Lane Park are excellent.

The motion passed by a 7/0 vote of Mayor Mueller, Mayor Pro Tem Gray and Council Members Benning, Calhoun, Umphrey, Pacheco, and Wolfe.

Item 4 Ordinance 2020-007, Proposed City Code Amendment to Chapter 36, Commissions

Mayor Pro Tem Gray moved that Ordinance 2020-007, City Code Amendment to Chapter 36, Commissions, be approved. Council Member Umphrey seconded the motion.

Mr. McLachlan stated that this is an amendment to Chapter 36 of the City Code to reduce the maximum number of members of the Planning and Zoning Commission from seven to five to be in accordance with Board/Commissioner Practice and Procedure Guidelines that were adopted in June. The purpose is to provide consistency between the City Code and the revised guidelines. The membership requirements satisfy State Statute, and no other amendments are necessary.

The motion passed by a 7/0 vote of Mayor Mueller, Mayor Pro Tem Gray and Council Members Benning, Calhoun, Umphrey, Pacheco, and Wolfe.

Item 5 Resolution 2020-072, Adoption of the Development Fee Schedule that corresponds to the Land Use Assumptions and Infrastructure Improvement Plans in Accordance with A.R.S. 9-463, and City Code 154.10-20

Council Member Umphrey moved that Resolution 2020-072, adoption of the Development Fee Schedule that corresponds to the Land Use Assumptions and Infrastructure Improvement Plans in Accordance with A.R.S. 9-463, and City Code 154.10-20, be approved. Council Member Benning seconded the motion.

Mr. Felix stated that this is the last step in a long process established by State Law and that is the reason as to why there must be a specific number of days between each action. The City first adopted development fees in 2006 that were new to the City. There was a lot of growth at the time and in working with the development community, the City adopted fees at 75 percent of the maximum allowable. State Law requires does require if fees are not levied at 100 percent, it is made up by some other way in shape or form. At the time, the City also adopted at their request an increase in the construction sale tax classifications of .7 percent. This is .7 percent higher than the standard retail rate and it must be used to offset any development fees there are. In addition, the City updated the Infrastructure Improvement Plan based off their request. The consultant at the time did agree to that and it did increase the estimated number of housing units that were going to be built, and that changed two years after it was done and that is the reason for the current deficit in the funds.

The Council has already adopted the Infrastructure Improvement Plan Summary and the City is doing a buy-in for three of the four funds. Infrastructure is looking forward and the other three funds are buy-in for the fire station, police station expansion, and various parks, especially Cyr Park that have been developed.

The Land use Assumptions were adopted by Council a couple of months ago and this will be looked at in three to five years, but if Council wishes it can always be looked at earlier if there are sudden changes in the economy and there is a desire to update the fees. The City is required by City Ordinance to update it within five years, three years is common, but it takes about a year to update the fees based off the schedule.

Mr. Felix stated that in 2006 the 100 percent levy was \$5,300, raising that from the construction cost index in today's dollars would be about \$7,200 per single family home. The current fee at 100 percent

is just under \$4,100 and a \$5,373 per single family home impact fee is being proposed for all the various classifications combined. Also being recommended is that the fees be levied at 100 percent and reduce the construction sales tax from the 2.45 to the 1.95 that the retail sales tax is already at. The reason for this is for reporting of the excess fees because it is getting more difficult by State Law, the construction sales tax classifications have changed in the last three years that have caused differences in what used to be considered construction sales tax and what it is now in dealing with remodels, repairs, and things for homes, and the fact that the City now has a five tenths difference instead of a seven tenths when Council raised the retail from 1.75 to 1.95 a few years back.

This is the final step in the normal process out of a six-month process. There have been no comments received on the proposed fees, infrastructure improvement plan or the growth assumptions. Due to the recommendation of 100 percent fees and if Council adopts them at 100 percent, the following item corrects the sales tax and reducing it to the same as the retail sales tax rate. Staff is recommending that the fees go into effect on March 1, 2021 due to the Department of Revenue requiring a 60-day notice for a tax rate change so that they can get it out to the community. Both the new tax rate and the new impact fees go into effect at the same time.

Mayor Mueller noted that Council and staff went through this in detail during the work session.

Council Member Pacheco asked if commercial development is impacted. Mr. Felix stated that it does and stated that the report has been uploaded on the website. The development fees are also affecting the commercial businesses, some have gone up and some down, there have been changes in classifications. They used to have different classifications based on how big the building was, but in the one that was adopted four years ago, they reduced it to one industrial classification, one commercial classification, and have added new categories for nursing homes, etc.

Council Member Pacheco asked Mr. Felix to elaborate on the commercial classifications. Mr. Felix stated that he would have to pull them up from the web site, but they were distributed during the work session. Mayor Pro Tem Gray listed the following fees:

- Industrial is going up from 95 cents to \$1.05 per square foot.
- Commercial is going up from \$4.07 to \$4.48 per square foot.
- Office and other services are going up from \$1.96 to \$2.03 per square foot.
- Hotel is not per square foot; it is per room and going up from \$880 to \$1,463.
- Nursing homes are per bed, which was not charged before and proposed to be at \$655 per bed.

The motion passed by a 7/0 vote of Mayor Mueller, Mayor Pro Tem Gray and Council Members Benning, Calhoun, Umphrey, Pacheco, and Wolfe.

Item 6 Ordinance 2020-008, 2020 Amendments to the Tax Code of the City of Sierra Vista

Council Member Wolfe moved that Ordinance 2020-008, 2020 Amendments to the Tax Code of the City of Sierra Vista, be approved. Council Member Benning seconded the motion.

Mr. Felix stated that this is to reduce the construction sales tax from the current 2.45 percent to the same as the retail of 1.95 percent. This is a bookkeeping thing since Council has adopted 100 percent fees to make sure that the City follows State Law. It does require that any excess construction sales tax be used to offset fees. By adopting the fees at 100 percent, the City needs to lower the construction sales tax rate to be in line with the current retail sales tax rate. It is scheduled to go into effect on March 1, 2021, and staff will notify the Department of Revenue on Friday, December 11, 2020 if Council approves the amendments so that they can get this out to everyone in town through their standard mailings.

The motion passed by a 7/0 vote of Mayor Mueller, Mayor Pro Tem Gray and Council Members Benning, Calhoun, Umphrey, Pacheco, and Wolfe.

New Business

Item 7 Resolution 2020-073, Transfer of Funds from the General Fund to the Park Development Fee Fund

Council Member Benning moved that Resolution 2020-073, transfer of funds from the General Fund to the Park Development Fee Fund, be approved. Council Member Wolfe seconded the motion.

Mr. Felix stated that the Department is still closing the books on Fiscal Year 2020 with a few minor things left to go, but at this stage, the General Fund revenue over expenses is currently estimated at about \$577,000. This is mainly due to the revenue received from online sales that was not put into the budget because it was not estimated, and it started in November. There has also been a cost savings due to the COVID restrictions and shutdowns. Leisure activities have been shut down i.e., the wine festival and all the spring events and therefore, there have been some salary savings. Some of the employees that would still like to work have been put in other departments i.e., the ones helping at City Hall.

The City did pay its budgeted PSPRS contributions, which were more than the required contribution, an excess of about \$436,000 contribution for the police side and about a \$300,000 excess contribution on the fire side, that matches the Policy of paying the budgeted amount. This will show up in two years by the time it gets through the process that the State uses to figure out and come up with a new actual valuation.

Mr. Felix stated that as Mayor Mueller noted during a prior work session about the development fees, even with the proposed park fee, it was still not enough to cover the deficit in the ten years. This is a fund that is currently \$3.4 Million cash negative and fund balance negative due to the construction of Cyr Center Park. This will help bring the fund to a zero balance hopefully within that 10-year period. He added that State Law requires the City to do this since it was not budgeted in the system and it is more than a \$10,000 addition of a transfer.

Council Member Calhoun asked why the Cyr Center Park created a deficit. Mr. Felix stated that it had to do with the timing, and it was included in the impact fees, it was originally being constructed, but when the development fees were going on, it was adjusted before the final numbers were in. The Park cost \$2.6 Million to construct the original site with the work done and additional challenges, which caused extra costs.

Mayor Pro Tem Gray asked if \$450,000 of the \$577,000 is going into the Fund. She also asked if the \$127,000 will go into the reserve. Mr. Felix stated that she is correct.

The motion passed by a 7/0 vote of Mayor Mueller, Mayor Pro Tem Gray and Council Members Benning, Calhoun, Umphrey, Pacheco, and Wolfe.

Item 8 Resolution 2020-074, Approval of Payment Plan with Castle & Cooke Arizona for Sewer Interceptor

Council Member Pacheco moved that Resolution 2020-074, Payment Plan with Castle & Cooke Arizona for Sewer Interceptor, be approved. Council Member Umphrey seconded the motion.

Mr. Felix explained that back in 1999, the City and Castle & Cooke Arizona entered into a development agreement to extend Avenida Del Sol Sewer Line Interceptor from the sewer plant down to the Tribute area. As part of that agreement, they created a Reimbursement District and guaranteed repayment of that sewer line to the City at the end of 20 years. The interest rate at the time that they agreed to was prime rate and at the end of the 20 years, which was in June, the City Council did extend the final repayment for six months, December 28, 2020 because the City was in negotiations and discussions with Castle and Cooke Arizona about amendments/changes that the City wanted to make to other development agreements, and their specific plan.

This development agreement is completed, done, and expired. Normally, the Council would not see this item, but the City Attorney has recommended that the Department bring it before Council because this is modifying the agreement that was postponed. Castle and Cooke Arizona will pay the interest amount that is on the balance due, \$900,000 over ten years paid annually at 1.07 percent. This interest rate is the average interest rate paid to the City by the LGIP State Pool that the City invests in. The City is getting the same return that they would get by having them give the City cash and then giving it to the State. There is no subsidy, and it is a fair rate to charge Castle and Cooke Arizona, and it is a lower rate than the prime rate that they have been paying over the last 20 years. The remaining principal balance will be included in the connection fees.

Mr. Felix stated that the connection fees will be looked at, give any changes that have been going on, which will be discussed later by Mr. McLachlan in the updated Master Plan. Some key points affecting the Sewer Fund and the agreement with Castle and Cooke Arizona are that there no longer is a package plant being constructed, and the development fees that that the City currently had estimated for the package plant, along with a couple of other interceptors that need to be looked at. The Department will be looking at the updated connection fees for that over the next six months and possible recommending some changes in the budget process.

This resolution approves Castle and Cooke Arizona repaying the \$900,000 of interest over the next ten years at a 1.07 percent rate to the Sewer Fund.

The motion passed by a 7/0 vote of Mayor Mueller, Mayor Pro Tem Gray and Council Members Benning, Calhoun, Umphrey, Pacheco, and Wolfe.

Item 9 Resolution 2020-075, Proposed Amendments to Infill Incentive District Policy

Council Member Wolfe moved that Resolution 2020-075, amendments to the Infill Incentive District Policy, be approved. Council Member Umphrey seconded the motion.

Mr. McLachlan explained that this is an update to the Infill Incentive District Policy that was passed in 2005. The purpose of the district is to incentivize the reuse for redevelopment of properties within the West End Planning Area, and the Cloud Nine Planning Area. Three categories of incentives are authorized by State Statutes, permitting expediting, waivers of municipal fees, and relief from development standards. The proposed amendments are consistent with the direction provided at prior work sessions and will make the review process more predictable and efficient.

The Department agrees that the second draft is better than the first and will provide staff with stronger incentives to market in the future. The changes are as follows:

- Added a requirement that any application for a waiver through the City's permit application and plan review fees be accompanied by an economic impact statement, which will help to measure and quantify the public benefit that the City will receive through the project.

- The economic statement will address the amount of private investment and impact on the property tax base.
- The number in wage scale of any jobs that are created through the economic activity demonstration that local contractors and suppliers are being used to the maximum extent possible, and any other measurable public benefit that will be received.

Mr. McLachlan stated that this provision does not apply to development fee reductions. There is a separate procedure outlined in City Code that mandates any waiver be approved by development agreement by the City Council. Relief from development code standards, the City Manager will be delegated the authority to grant waivers within the strict policy parameters set by Council. The subject matter in the original policy that was rewritten to be more objective and measurable pursuant to Council's direction. This proposal was a collaborative effort between Community Development and Economic Development staff.

Mayor Pro Tem Gray thanked staff for making the clarifications that Council requested. She added that she truly feels that this makes it a more defined policy with more defined criteria and justification for the incidents that makes it easier for the developer as well as the City Manager. Council Member Benning concurred.

Council Member Pacheco asked about the extent that people can be relieved from development code standards. Mr. McLachlan asked Council to look at the section on circumstances in which the waiver would be considered. He further stated that the challenges are going to be different with each project and the best frame of reference would be the Casa Del Sol Development Agreement that was recently approved, a waiver request to the maximum building height to accommodate enhanced architectural features. Rather than going through a development agreement process, Council would delegate Mr. Potucek with that discretion to determine whether in fact the architecture is enhanced, and a waiver should be granted. The Department would look at existing sites being redeveloped in terms of storm water requirements that would be a technical analysis done by the City Engineer to make sure that there are no increases in flows from the site, and there could be some latitude granted in how they meet those standards.

The West End is predominantly single-story, and this would allow a property to be redeveloped in a mixed-use format. Currently the Code requires that dwelling units be second floor or above. This would allow that to be included and incorporated into a single-story building. Environmental features if there was perhaps a large tree on the site that was interfering with setbacks being applied. There could be some flexibility granted in terms of shifting the building to provide necessary separation to preserve that natural feature. This applies only to the commercial properties and Single-Family Residential Zoning Districts are excluded. This is an economic development tool that the Department is requesting to give additional latitude to work within the constraints of parcels that were platted sometimes 50 years ago and developed in a substandard manner to what is required today to help oftentimes first-time entrepreneurs get their project off the ground.

Council Member Calhoun stated that she does not recall if there was discussion or if it is in the documentation if the City Manager will let the Council know about waivers that have been given. Mr. Potucek stated that the Department can certainly do that. and it can also be added as an item on the Executive Report for Council when those occur.

The motion passed by a 7/0 vote of Mayor Mueller, Mayor Pro Tem Gray and Council Members Benning, Calhoun, Umphrey, Pacheco, and Wolfe.

[Item 10](#) Resolution 2020-076, Approval of the Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) prepared by Arizona Department of Transportation on behalf of the City of Sierra Vista per the Federal Transit Administration's regulation 49CFR Part 673.

Mayor Pro Tem Gray moved that Resolution 2020-076, Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan prepared by Arizona Department of Transportation on behalf of the City of Sierra Vista per the Federal Transit Administration's regulation 49CFR Part 673, be approved. Council Member Council Member Calhoun seconded the motion.

Ms. Jones stated that this is a request for the approval of the Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan. The City has always followed the safety protocols and procedures implemented by the City. In July 2018, the Federal Transit Administration published the Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan Final Rule. This rule requires certain operators of public transportation systems to receive federal funds from FTAs urbanized area formula grants to develop safety plans that included the processes and procedures to implement safety management systems. ADOT partnered with the City and six other cities to prepare a combined safety plan. The safety plan is required to be submitted to FTA by December 31, 2020, and it must be updated annually by each transit department to stay in compliance. This is simply another step in the process to maintain the City's funding eligibility and it confirms and updates what the City already has in place.

The motion passed by a 7/0 vote of Mayor Mueller, Mayor Pro Tem Gray and Council Members Benning, Calhoun, Umphrey, Pacheco, and Wolfe.

[Item 11](#) Resolution 2020-077, Addendum to the City Manager's Contract

Council Member Umphrey moved that Resolution 2020-077, addendum to the City Manager's Contract, be approved. Mayor Pro Tem Gray seconded the motion.

Ms. Fleming stated the resolution is for an addendum to the City Manager's Employment Contract. The addendum is inclusive of one item, a salary increase of two percent that would be effective retroactively to July 1, 2020.

Council Member Pacheco thanked Mr. Potucek for his long service to the community and employment with the City.

Mr. Potucek voiced his appreciation to Mayor Mueller and Council Members, and for their continued support.

Mayor Mueller stated that the City did give the employees the same percentage raise and it seemed right to do the same for the City Manager since that has not always been done when giving employees a raise.

The motion passed by a 7/0 vote of Mayor Mueller, Mayor Pro Tem Gray and Council Members Benning, Calhoun, Umphrey, Pacheco, and Wolfe.

[Item 12](#) Resolution 2020-078, Proclaiming the City of Sierra Vista as the Hummingbird Capital of the United States

Council Member Calhoun moved that Resolution 2020-078, proclaiming the City of Sierra Vista as the Hummingbird Capital of the United States, be approved. Council Member Umphrey seconded the motion.

Ms. Hector stated that Sierra Vista is known as the Hummingbird Capital of the United States within the State of Arizona and well beyond the State's borders. Due to the area's notoriety among birders, especially those looking for hummingbirds, Sierra Vista has long been recognized as the Hummingbird Capital of the United States. Although, hummingbirds can be found in many locations in the Americas, Sierra Vista is unique to the variety and number of species that visit the area.

There are 26 species of hummingbirds that come to North American and of that 17 can be found in the United States and of those 17 species, 15 can be found in the area including several species rarely found elsewhere in the country. Few other hummingbird watching locations in the United States host an equal number of species and none host the same variety of species found in Sierra Vista.

Hummingbirds can be found in the area in such quantity that birders have been able to spot as many 14 species in a single day. With the volume of variety of hummingbirds passing through Sierra Vista annually, the Southeast Arizona Bird Observatory has been conducting an ongoing study into the life and migration patterns of these birds for more than 10 years and contributing to the national data base of research on hummingbirds. Also, the Nature Conservancy Ramsay Canyon Preserve includes 14 species of hummingbirds in its list of more than 150 species of birds that can be found there and that bolsters the preserve's work renown reputation as one of the best bird watching spots on the planet.

There are no budgetary impacts to this resolution.

Council Member Benning thanked Council Member Calhoun for bringing this item forward because this is a great thing for the City in making it official and pushing this outside of the City.

Council Member Pacheco asked about next steps. Mayor Mueller stated that some Council Members have already spoken to a couple of local Legislators that want to assist in getting recognized at the Legislature. This will be a process once the new Legislative Session opens.

Council Member Pacheco asked if there is a national process as well. Mayor Mueller stated that he does not know if there is a national process. Perhaps a congress person could be asked or one of the senators to put it in the congressional records. There will have to be some research done.

Council Member Umphrey also thanked Council Member Calhoun for the idea and bringing it up to Council because this is a good way to end the year.

Council Member Calhoun thanked Ms. Hector and staff that assisted her for all the research put into bringing this forward to Council. This provides the community members with an opportunity to have another thing to brag about the City, and to carry the word far and wide about the community being the Hummingbird Capital of the United States.

The motion passed by a 7/0 vote of Mayor Mueller, Mayor Pro Tem Gray and Council Members Benning, Calhoun, Umphrey, Pacheco, and Wolfe.

[Item 13](#) Resolution 2020-079, Resolution in Support of Amtrak service in the region

Council Member Calhoun moved that Resolution 2020-079, Support of Amtrak service in the region, be approved. Mayor Pro Tem Gray seconded the motion.

Mr. Boone stated that the City Economic Development Team looked at this when it was originally presented to Council sometime ago. This resolution is about supporting increased passenger service. Additionally, this has no fiscal impact on the City of Sierra Vista's budget. The Council is simply

supporting in principle the expansion of the Amtrak Southern Arizona service provided by Sunset Limited/Texas Eagle with daily service that runs through Benson. Currently long-distance service train has been reduced to three days a week, restarting daily service in Benson or along the line would provide additional opportunities for the residents of Sierra Vista with alternate transportation method. There are studies that indicate that there would be an economic benefit to Sierra Vista and Cochise County.

Future discussions may include a bus service linking the City to the Benson train station, but that is not included within the resolution. Additionally, Amtrak is looking in prioritizing capacity increases from Los Angeles to Phoenix to Tucson, which may have impacts, but the City is looking out towards 2035.

Mr. Boone introduced Mr. Tod Liebman of All Aboard Arizona and Mr. Richard Dodge, representing the 501C3.

Mayor Mueller stated that during the work session, he promised that he would get a hold of the City of Benson, which he did, and they support Amtrak. He added that during a conversation with Mr. Leibman, he was told that the City of Benson was contacted, and they hope to get on board with this as well.

Council Member Benning asked about ridership. Mr. Boone stated that he does not have anything specific.

Council Member Calhoun thanked Mr. Dodge and Mr. Liebman for bringing this matter to the Council for consideration.

Council Member Wolfe reiterated her concerns that she mentioned during the work session. She added that government suggestions tend to become sometimes requirements and she does not think that as a government entity, Council should be suggesting to Amtrak how to run their business. She further added that she understands that Amtrak does receive a subsidy, and according to Mr. Leibman, a small subsidy.

Mayor Pro Tem Gray also reiterated her comments stated during the work session. She does not feel that Council is suggesting or mandating. Council is iterating their support for this idea.

The motion passed by a 5/2 vote of Mayor Mueller, Mayor Pro Tem Gray and Council Members Calhoun, Umphrey, and Pacheco. Council Members Benning and Wolfe casted the dissenting votes.

Call to the Public:

Eli Dalton-Webb wished the Mayor and Council a Merry Christmas and talked about including a Christian Nativity at Veterans Memorial Park to go along with the Santas.

Comments and Requests of the Council:

Council Member Pacheco wished a Happy Hanukah, stated that December 10, 2020 is the first night of the Festival of Lights, wished everyone a Merry Christmas, and stated that she loves the Santas in Veterans Memorial Park, and that she already put her ornaments on order. She thanked Council Members Calhoun and Wolfe for their good leadership, long conversations, and noted that they will be missed on the Council.

Council Member Benning stated it has been an honor representing a great city, the Hummingbird Capital of the United States, thanked the outgoing commissioners for what they have done and will

continue to do whether they are on a commission or not, thanked people for going to ASU, best school in Arizona, and wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Lastly, he stated that it will be different not having Council Members Calhoun and Wolfe being on the Dias with the rest of Council. He noted that their personalities and commitment is infectious, and he thanked them for their mentorship and always willing to lend advice, which he appreciated, but he knows that they will both be involved in the community and he will still see them around.

Council Member Umphrey stated to Council Member Benning, "Bear Down", and read statements to Council Members Calhoun and Wolfe, noting that she has been reflecting on the past two years while serving together. She added that both have been incredible mentors. (Statement on file with the City Clerk's Office). Lastly, she thanked outgoing commissioners and board members for their service and wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays.

Mayor Pro Tem Gray thanked Council Members Calhoun and Wolfe for everything that they do for the community. She stated that it has been an absolute pleasure to work with them.

Council Member Wolfe asked everyone to be safe, kind, and keep their sense of humor. In closing, she stated that it has been a pleasure.

Council Member Calhoun stated that the City has a remarkable staff, who show great pride in the work that they do, and who care about doing their absolutely very best for the community. She stated that she hopes that the community recognizes that and thanked the many community members that serve as volunteers in Sierra Vista, and those that have spoken to staff and Council with either praise or concerns about what happens in the City. She knows that Sierra Vistans have always been there to speak for the community and to help in making decisions, and she knows that this will not only continue but increase over the coming years. The level of community involvement is important to keep the City as an inviting place to live. Lastly, she stated that she looks forward to being involved, wished everyone Happy Holidays, and thanked everyone for allowing her to serve the community.

Mayor Mueller shared a word about COVID-19, "vigilance". He noted that everyone knows that the numbers are high across the County and the State. Capacity is being reached if not at capacity in several hospitals; therefore, people must be very vigilant and wear masks, do extra sanitation, physical separation, and stay in family groups to prevent the spread. He stated that hopefully there will be immunizations available shortly, and explained that after the first immunization is taken, it will be three to four weeks before the second one is taken, which may be anywhere from three days to a week before having immunity. This is going to take time and it puts the community into January for the first line medical folks. The vaccine will be prioritized out, and COVID-19 will remain until summertime; therefore, he asks that the community be vigilant, especially through the holiday season.

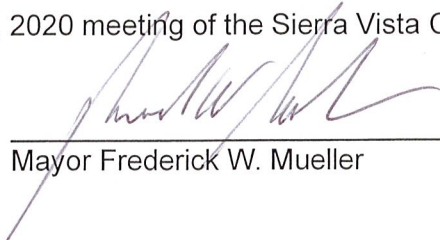
Mayor Mueller further stated that Council Member Wolfe had contact with the International Brotherhood of Santa Helpers located at the North Pole, who were concerned about some of the letters that they have been receiving from the kids that are worried about whether Santa Claus and the reindeer are going to be able to travel because of COVID. He added that he thought that it was a good idea to issue a proclamation declaring Santa Claus, his elves, and nine reindeer to be deemed essential workers during the holiday season.

Mayor Mueller stated that the holiday period is forthcoming, Christmas, Hanukah, Kwanza, New Year's, and the Council will not meet until after New Year's. He wished everyone a very safe holiday and encouraged people to enjoy their family and friends as best as possible in this different environment. Lastly, he apologized to the outgoing Council Members because normally there is a spread of food and

drinks, but due to COVID it was not possible. On behalf of Council, he presented certificates of appreciation, flowers, and a gift to Council Members Wolfe and Calhoun.

Adjournment


Mayor Mueller adjourned the December 10, 2020 meeting of the Sierra Vista City Council at 6:06 p.m.



Mayor Frederick W. Mueller

MINUTES PREPARED BY:

ATTEST:



Maria G. Marsh, Deputy Clerk



Jill Adams, City Clerk