# CITY COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES CITY OF TRUTH OR CONSEQUENCES, NEW MEXICO CITY COMMISSION CHAMBERS, 405 W. 3<sup>RD</sup> St. WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 10, 2022

#### A. CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Amanda Forrister at 9:00 a.m., who presided and Lisa Gabaldon, Deputy City Clerk, acted as Secretary of the meeting.

#### **B. INTRODUCTION:**

#### 1. ROLL CALL:

Upon calling the roll, the following Commissioners were reported present.

Hon. Amanda Forrister, Mayor Hon. Rolf Hechler, Mayor Pro-Tem Hon. Destiny Mitchell, Commissioner Hon. Merry Jo Fahl, Commissioner

Hon. Shelly Harrelson, Commissioner via teleconference

Also Present: Bruce Sv

Bruce Swingle, City Manager

Traci Alvarez, Assistant City Manager

Jay Rubin, City Attorney

Victor Rodriguez, Chief of Police Lisa Gabaldon, Deputy Clerk

There being a quorum present, the Commission proceeded with the business at hand.

#### 2. SILENT MEDITATION:

Mayor Forrister called for fifteen seconds of silent meditation.

# 3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Mayor Forrister called for Commissioner Mitchell to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

#### 4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Mayor Pro-Tem Hechler made a motion to approve the agenda as submitted. Commissioner Mitchell seconded the motion. Roll call was taken by the Clerk-Treasurer. Motion carried unanimously.

#### C. PRESENTATIONS:

1. Presentation of City of Truth or Consequences Employee Service Anniversary Awards:

City Manager Swingle presented an Employee Service Anniversary Award to Alona Niebergall for 2 years of service with the City of Truth or Consequences.

City Manager Swingle and Tara Manning, Animal Shelter Manager presented an Employee Service Anniversary Award to Jessica Bowles for 2 years of service with the City of Truth or Consequences

City Manager Swingle and Sonya Renfro, Utility Office Manager presented an Employee Service Anniversary Award to Katy Martinez for 2 years of service with the City of Truth or Consequences.

City Manager Swingle and Andy Alvarez, Sanitation Director presented an Employee Service Anniversary Award to Jeremiah Easley for 2 years of service with the City of Truth or Consequences.

City Manager Swingle and Sonya Renfro, Utility Office Manager presented an Employee Service Anniversary Award to Rene Loera for 3 years of service with the City of Truth or Consequences.

City Manager Swingle presented an Employee Service Anniversary Award to OJ Hechler for 5 years of service with the City of Truth or Consequences.

City Manager Swingle and Bo Easley, Electric Department Director presented an Employee Service Anniversary Award to William Montoya for 12 years of service with the City of Truth or Consequences.

City Manager Swingle and Traci Alvarez, Assistant City Manager presented an Employee Service Anniversary Award to Pat O'Hanlon for 29 years of service with the City of Truth or Consequences.

City Manager Swingle and Victor Rodriguez, Chief of Police presented an Employee Service Anniversary Award to Donald Venable for 5 years of service with the City of Truth or Consequences.

City Manager Swingle and Victor Rodriguez, Chief of Police presented an Employee Service Anniversary Award to Rafael Marin for 6 years of service with the City of Truth or Consequences.

# D. PUBLIC COMMENT (3 Minute Rule Applies):

George Henson addressed the Commission with comments related to:

- (1) Sustaining his mental health and the difficult time he feels he has had with Code Enforcement, City Attorney Rubin, and Assistant City Manager Alvarez.
- (2) He expressed his feelings about the removal of his property that was on the city easement.
- (3) He expressed his differences with City Attorney Rubin. He feels that we need to have better applicants.
- (4) He commented on Chief Rodriguez, and he feels that he is being attacked by the city, and there is some miscommunication because he spent since February amending his property and it still came to a violation.

#### E. REPORTS:

# **City Commission Reports:**

# City Manager Swingle reported the following:

- The employees are doing a fantastic job. He couldn't be prouder of them.
- He received some calls and emails from community members supporting the
  city's efforts to clean up the city and remove the blight from the community. It is
  something that we are committed to and we are going to continue to do it until we
  get the city cleaned up. It is going to take a lot of time to do that, but the city is
  committed to doing that.
- We received a thank you letter from the county for our assistance with them, and with the forest service on the fire. It recognized the cooperation between all of the agencies so that was a fantastic correspondence to receive.
- We continue to have vacancies on the Airport Advisory Board, Golf Course Advisory Board, Lodgers Tax Advisory Board, Impact Fee Advisory Board, and Recreation Advisory Board. Anyone interested in serving on those advisory boards, please contact the City Clerk's Office.
- We still have a large amount of water leaks every week. Staff is rolling through them as fast as they can. However, it is going to be an ongoing basis for a long time until we can make the permanent fix which is the infrastructure improvements.
- You received an email from an individual who wanted to purchase the easement between his property and the Dollar General Store that is being constructed as we speak. We've looked at that easement and currently we don't have any infrastructure on it. However, the private sector does. TDS is using that easement for internet services, and with future properties and future development of the property in that area it doesn't make sense for the city to entertain the idea of selling that easement. We will likely use it in the future for those properties when they are developed.
- He provided a draft copy of the street, water and wastewater bond questions, and a presentation of what the city's position is on it outlining what its purpose is, the need for it and the impact that it will have on property owners. On the streets

current status, right now the budget is about \$1.6 million dollars for road maintenance which includes alleys, and all of the other ancillary responsibilities they have which include all of the drainages as well as the dams. All the funding that we currently budget only provides for minimal maintenance. It doesn't call for anything that actually improves the infrastructure or allows us to increase roads or improve roads to any affect at all. Sadly, the funding we have available is insufficient for long term street improvements. We receive one state grant a year for a street project, and one street out of all of the streets we have, we will never catch up with that type of funding. The streets are deteriorating city wide, and we have very limited curb, gutter and sidewalks around the city which is guite a public safety concern. Particularly around the school areas, so \$1 million dollars is dedicated to street improvements. The next page is wastewater and the current status is around \$975,000 budget which is absolutely insufficient for long term capital improvement to the wastewater system. The wastewater department has zero debt capacity. They are maxed out on their debt capacity at this point. The plant and the system are failing in wastewater. The riverside Vac station fails on a weekly basis, and the employees have to go out and manually fix it and clear it out, sometimes multiple times a week. Almost city wide the manholes are antiquated and are collapsing and leaking, and they all need to be replaced. The wastewater plant aeration system has failed, and currently staff is using manual operations to keep the plant functioning properly. The bar screen and head works are undersized for the facility and they have failed. They do a lot of manual work to keep the plant working. The investment has not occurred over time to the plant and to that infrastructure. We've got to get a grip on it with some serious capital to make the improvements over time. The bond question is basically to dedicate \$1 million dollars for streets, \$2 million for water, and \$1 million for wastewater. The plant electrical system and the SCADA system is failing. The SCADA system is the system that communicates with the system and lets us know if there is a problem. Right now, for the most part we have to go out and observe that something has failed to detect that it has. Those are part of projects in the future to get the SCADA system working to where it alerts us when something is failing or has failed so we can make the adjustments timely vs. having to have a sewer backup or something of that nature. The flow meter building is collapsing and the wiring has absolutely failed at the building. The reuse water pump is failing and that is what pumps effluent water to the Golf Course. The Williamsburg flow meter structure is also failing and is unsafe. It is a confined space issue which is quite dangerous if not done safely with a lot of protocols in place to protect staff and the systems. We have about \$1.1 million budgeted for water and that is insufficient for long term capital improvements to the water system. The water system also has zero debt capacity at this point to take on anymore debt or loans. Virtually all of the loans that are out there for water and wastewater are a loan/grant mixture. We just don't have the capacity to take on anymore debt. Engineering estimates for the water system improvements are about \$102 million dollars. Based on quotes we received lately on other projects, that's probably somewhere in the neighborhood of 50% under of what it will actually cost us. We are probably looking at closer to \$150 million dollars to make the water system

improvements citywide. 60% of the water lines are 60 years or older in the community. The city continues to average 15-20 water leaks a week. Those pipes are going to continue to leak as time goes on. They are just getting older until we can get that major investment in to replace those lines. The water meters are 25 plus years old on average which we know is really impacting our production of water and what we are actually billing for. We are experiencing significant water loss right now. Over the last year about 42% of the water that we produce is going unbilled and the low flow that the meters are not detecting is a major contributor to that so we need to address the water meters as well and upgrade those so we are registering what people are actually using. The pumps valves and wells are failing for the most part. All of our wells are located in the southern part of the city in the Williamsburg area which doesn't give us a lot of options in drought conditions. We really need to install a new well on the northern part of town to protect the residents and the integrity of the water system. No other use of the bond funds is permissible by law if the voters approve the bond issues. The city receives around \$170,000 a year in property taxes. He thinks that's really confusing for property owners when they are paying \$1000 - \$1,200 in property taxes. The city gets a very small share of that. The City, County, Schools, State, Sierra Soil and Water and other entities all get a portion of the property taxes not just the city. The city only receives \$74.16 in property taxes on a \$100,000 home with the bond increase it would go from 2.225 mills to 5.225 mills. So, a \$75,000 home will see a \$75 annual increase in property taxes. A \$100,000 home will see a \$100 annual increase in property taxes, and so on and so forth.

#### City Attorney Rubin reported the following:

• We had some considerable success in enforcing our liens. We would demolish a dangerous building and then we would put a lien on the property for the costs associated with the city demolishing the building and/or removing the debris. He just got a couple more that came across his desk that he will be proceeding with and we will be keeping an active flow on this.

# **City Commission Reports:**

Commissioner Mitchell had no reports.

# Commissioner Fahl reported the following:

• She is part of the administrative arm for an organization. New Mexico Watershed and Dam Owners Coalition. It is a statewide organization that has dam owners, which we have several. They try and advocate for funding because there are a lot of requirements if you have a dam. They have all kinds of state training, and we have an annual conference every year. She asked the Commissioners to think about going to one of the trainings because owning dams is not a pleasant endeavor. There are a lot of requirements and liability and if you don't do your due diligence, you will have a problem as dam owners. She feels that most municipalities who own dams rely a lot on engineers to help them when a

problem occurs, so to really understand the complexity and the liability when you own that structure is very important so that is why she feels that the Commission should attend those trainings. The very first day of the conference is about dam ownership and it would be really good to at least go that first day. Most of the dams in New Mexico were built by a USDA agency and a lot of them were built in the 50's and 60's. They were designed as dirt structures and they had a capacity to accumulate 50 years' worth of sediment, and once those structures were full, they would then have a high potential of breaching. She thinks once the Commission is educated then we can be more aware and then we can pay more attention to getting an ONM done.

# Mayor Pro-Tem Hechler reported the following:

He gave a shout out to the folks who coordinated National Night Out last week. It
is a great way for the public to recognize our first responders, and meet the folks
who take care of our communities.

# Commissioner Harrelson had no reports.

# Mayor Forrister reported the following:

• She commended the employees for all of their hard work.

#### F. CONSENT CALENDAR:

- 1. Amended City Commission Regular Minutes, July 13, 2022
- 2. City Commission Regular Minutes, July 27, 2022
- 3. July 2022 Accounts Payable

Commissioner Mitchell moved to approve the Consent Calendar as submitted. Commission Fahl seconded the motion. Roll call was taken by the Clerk-Treasurer. Motion carried unanimously.

#### G. PUBLIC HEARINGS:

1. Public Hearing/Discussion/Action: Final Adoption of Ordinance No. 731 amending the City of Truth or Consequences Municipal Code of Ordinances, by amending Sections 11-10-4 and 11-10-5 and adding Section 11-10-6 to the Planning & Zoning Code Pertaining to Storage Units/Shipping Containers:

Traci Alvarez, Assistant City Manager explained that this ordinance amendment was approved by the Commission for publication. We are now bringing it back to the Commission for the public hearing portion and final adoption. The amendment was to add in a section to our shipping containers under Article X: Accessory Buildings. It would allow shipping containers to be used as storage units by right in the commercial district with the exception of the downtown Main Street Historic District as well as in the residential areas that would need to go to a conditional or special use permit for allowance.

Mayor Pro-Tem Hechler moved to approve Ordinance No. 736 repealing Ordinance No. 677 pertaining to the Truth or Consequences Brewing Company Local Economic Development Project. Commissioner Mitchell seconded the motion. Roll call was taken by the Clerk-Treasurer. Motion carried unanimously.

3. Public Hearing/Discussion/Action: Approval to Submit USDA/RUS Funding Applications for Police Department vehicles and equipment needs and Authorization and Approval for City Manager and/or Mayor to Execute, Sign and Submit Required and Requested Documents Related to the USDA/RUS Applications for Federal Assistance:

Traci Alvarez, Assistant City Manager explained that this is the grant that the city has applied for and has a 55% grant, 45% match. In the past we applied for a new street sweeper, front end loader, police vehicles, electric reel trailer, backhoe, skid steer, various parks equipment, and Kubota and landscape trailer. This year we would like to submit for new vehicles for the police department. Our Chief had already budgeted for some vehicles so this will give him some cost savings. The approximate application amount is \$150,000. It may vary a little bit because she believes we just got some recent quotes that she believes brings it to \$156,000.

Mayor Forrister opened the Public Hearing.

Proponents:

None.

Opponents:

None.

Mayor Forrister closed the Public Hearing.

Commissioner Fahl moved to approve the submission of the USDA/RUS Funding Applications for Police Department vehicles and equipment needs and Authorization and Approval for City Manager and/or Mayor to Execute, Sign and Submit required and requested Documents Related to the USDA/RUS Applications for Federal Assistance. Commissioner Mitchell seconded the motion. Roll call was taken by the Clerk-Treasurer. Motion carried unanimously.

#### H. ORDINANCES/RESOLUTIONS/ZONING:

 Discussion/Action: Resolution No. 08 22/23 in support of the Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plan (ICIP) for the Sierra Joint Office on Aging (SJOA):

Crystal Walton, SJOA Executive Director reviewed the SJOA Improvement Plan (ICIP) that was provided in the packet, and explained with support of this resolution you are agreeing to be their fiscal agent for these projects.

Mayor Pro-Tem Hechler moved to approve Resolution No. 08 22/23 in support of the Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plan (ICIP) for the Sierra Joint Office on Aging (SJOA) projects. Commissioner Mitchell seconded the motion. Roll call was taken by the Clerk-Treasurer. Motion carried unanimously.

2. Discussion/Action: Publication of Ordinance No. 737 amending Sections 7-106 through Section 7-114 of our Municipal Code of Ordinances pertaining to Rental Spaces and Licensure:

Police Chief Rodriguez explained that this ordinance which used to be Article 5 under only addressed Flea Markets. This really just cleans up a lot of the language and adds the Farmers Market onto this and defines what the Farmers Market vendors are. It really makes a difference between Flea Market Centers who will be required to get an actual business license opposed to a Farmers Market who are doing a good service to the community. It also includes any event that could be exempted that would include our Fiesta. Any City Commission recognized public event or activity would only be required to have a sponsor who would then get a business license and the vendor would not. It would fall under the sponsor's business license. It also cleans up some of the language to require individuals who are maybe serving food to provide the proper environmental department documentation to the sponsors so they can submit it as well. It also exempts locally recognized civic organizations, churches, museums, private premises or other nonprofit organizations, which operate public arts and crafts fairs, yard or rummage sales, or other such functions from time to time and are not regularly engaged in the business of conducting such activities. We wouldn't require them to have a business license as long as they are just doing it from time to time and not regularly engaged in business. It also makes sure that any second-hand stores obtain a city business license because they are selling to the community. He also cleaned up Sec. 7-110. - Camping prohibited. Camping is prohibited unless approved for events. Sec. 7-1135 under Taxes was also cleaned up and states that people are responsible for claiming their own taxes, and the last portion that was amended was Sec. 7-1146. -Penalty for violation of article that stated that any person violating any provision of this article shall be subject to penalties as prescribed in Section 1-10 for each offense, and a separate offense shall be deemed committed on each day during or on which a violation occurs or continues.

MARKET !

Commissioner Mitchell moved to approve publication of Ordinance No. 737 amending Sections 7-106 through Section 7-114 of our Municipal Code of Ordinances pertaining to Rental Spaces and Licensure. Commissioner Fahl seconded the motion. Roll call was taken by the Clerk-Treasurer. Motion carried unanimously.

3. Discussion/Action: Publication of Ordinance No. 738 amending the City of Truth or Consequences Municipal Code of Ordinances, by adding a section 8-53 regulating the use of BB or pellet guns:

Police Chief Rodriguez explained that he was surprised when he reviewed our municipal ordinance that we didn't have any type of ordinance that prohibited the discharging of BB or pellet guns within city limits which is very common in New Mexico. He found cities throughout the state that have the ordinances. Since a BB gun and pellet gun can produce injury and can produce property damage, we want to regulate the safety use of them, and allow the use of them as long as the projectile that the gun produces stays within your property, and does not hit any other property or anything else.

Mayor Pro-Tem Hechler moved to approve publication of Ordinance No. 738 amending the City of Truth or Consequences Municipal Code of Ordinances, by adding a section 8-53 regulating the use of BB or pellet guns. Commissioner Mitchell seconded the motion. Roll call was taken by the Clerk-Treasurer. Motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Harrelson left the conference call prior to item H4.

4. Discussion/Action: Publication of Ordinance No. 739 amending the City of Truth or Consequences Municipal Code of Ordinances, by adding a section 8-149 of the code pertaining to closing of certain City Parks and Properties:

Police Chief Rodriguez explained that this cleans up ordinance section 8-149. What was interesting about this ordinance before is the only park that is mentioned is the Ralph Edwards Park. Every other park was allowed to be open at night so what this does is clean up the ordinance to add that the parks are closed between 10:00 p.m. through 5:00 a.m. and people have no business at our city parks or properties unless they have permission. We wanted to amend this ordinance due to the fact that people are vandalizing some of these properties, and this gives the Police Department the opportunity to take the appropriate enforcement action. This also carves out the allowance for use a city event or someone who has an approved rental agreement for overnight stay.

Commissioner Fahl moved to approve publication of Ordinance No. 739 amending the City of Truth or Consequences Municipal Code of Ordinances, by adding a section 8-149 of the code pertaining to closing of certain City Parks and Properties. Commissioner Mitchell seconded the motion. Roll call was taken by the Clerk-Treasurer. Motion carried unanimously.

#### I. NEW BUSINESS:

1. Discussion/Action: Review and approval of the Junior Bill Appropriation for the SJOA:

Traci Alvarez, Assistant City Manager explained that the Senior Joint Office on Aging received this \$35,000 last year as well. It's a 100% grant, and the city is the fiscal agent on this so Finance Director Kirkpatrick will need to do a budget amendment to account for this. This is on a reimbursement basis. The funding last year was used to reimburse the Senior Joint Office on Aging for expenses they had for meals and kitchen equipment. This year we are assuming that the language for the grant is going to be very similar which will be a reimbursement for meals and equipment. We are looking into the possibility of whether or not these funds could be used to offset a shortfall in funding that they are going to have for the appropriations they received for vehicles. The vehicles are a little more expensive. They have reached out to aging long term services to see if there is other funding available.

Commissioner Fahl moved to approve the Junior Bill Appropriation for the SJOA. Commissioner Mitchell seconded the motion. Roll call was taken by the Clerk-Treasurer. Motion carried unanimously.

2. Discussion/Action: Approval of the Chamber of Commerce Lodger's Tax Contract Extension Letter:

Tammy Gardner, Executive Assistant explained that this was submitted for fiscal year 21/22. The Chamber of Commerce was approved for a contract for \$38,000, and they didn't finish their project so they are requesting an extension to allow them to finish their project. The remaining amount is \$17,500.

Commissioner Mitchell moved to approve the Chamber of Commerce Lodger's Tax Contract Extension Letter. Commissioner Fahl seconded the motion. Roll call was taken by the Clerk-Treasurer. Motion carried unanimously.

3. Discussion/Action: Review, Approve and/or Allocate Funds for MainStreet Truth or Consequences:

Tammy Gardner, Executive Assistant reviewed the MainStreet Truth or Consequences Lodgers Tax Application provided in the packet, and stated that the requested amount was approved by the Lodgers Tax Advisory Board.

Commissioner Mitchell moved to approve and allocate Funds to MainStreet Truth or Consequences in the amount of \$4,600. Commissioner Fahl seconded the motion. Roll call was taken by the Clerk-Treasurer. Motion carried unanimously.

4. Discussion/Action: Review, Approve and/or Allocate Funds for Geronimo Trail Scenic Byway (GTSB):

Tammy Gardner, Executive Assistant reviewed the Geronimo Trail Scenic Byway (GTSB) Lodgers Tax Application provided in the packet, and stated that the requested amount was approved by the Lodgers Tax Advisory Board.

Commissioner Fahl moved to approve and allocate Funds to Geronimo Trail Scenic Byway (GTSB) in the amount of \$3,869.63. Commissioner Mitchell seconded the motion. Roll call was taken by the Clerk-Treasurer. Motion carried unanimously.

5. Discussion/Action: Review, Approve and/or Allocate Funds for Veteran's Memorial Park and Museum:

Tammy Gardner, Executive Assistant reviewed the Veteran's Memorial Park and Museum Lodgers Tax Application provided in the packet, and stated that the requested amount was approved by the Lodgers Tax Advisory Board.

Commissioner Mitchell moved to approve and allocate Funds to Veteran's Memorial Park and Museum in the amount of \$4,755.84. Mayor Pro-Tem Hechler seconded the motion. Roll call was taken by the Clerk-Treasurer.

Hon. Amanda Forrister, Mayor voted aye

Hon. Rolf Hechler, Mayor Pro-Tem voted aye

Hon. Destiny Mitchell, Commissioner voted ave

Hon. Merry Jo Fahl, Commissioner abstained from the vote because she is on the Veteran's Memorial Park and Museum.

Motion carried with a 3-0 vote and one abstention.

6. Discussion/Action: Approval of Purchase Requisitions over \$20,000:

City Manager Swingle reviewed the Purchase Requisitions over \$20,000 that was provided in the packet.

Mayor Pro-Tem Hechler moved to approve Purchase Requisitions over \$20,000. Commissioner Mitchell seconded the motion. Roll call was taken by the Clerk-Treasurer. Motion carried unanimously.

7. Discussion/Action: Approval of Professional Services Agreement with Delta Airport Consultants, Inc. for RFP #21-22-009 Engineering Services for T or C Airport Improvements:

Traci Alvarez, Assistant City Manager explained in July the city approved the award to Delta Airport Consultants, Inc. for our Engineering Services for T or C Airport Improvements. This is a request to approve that contract.

Commissioner Fahl moved to approve the Professional Services Agreement with Delta Airport Consultants, Inc. for RFP #21-22-009 Engineering Services for T or C Airport Improvements. Commissioner Mitchell seconded the motion. Roll call was taken by the Clerk-Treasurer. Motion carried unanimously.

8. Discussion/Action: Approval of award and contract for Morgan Street Booster Pump ITB #21-22-011:

City Manager Swingle explained that we have had serious problems with the Booster Pump at Morgan Street. We went out on an RFP and request for bids and we had a couple of respondents. One of the bidders did not provide all of the documentation they needed so we ended up with Morrow Enterprises Inc. as the successful candidate. The bid price was \$126,000 to upgrade and replace the two Booster Pumps at Morgan Street.

Commissioner Fahl moved to approve the award and contract for Morgan Street Booster Pump ITB #21-22-011. Commissioner Mitchell seconded the motion. Roll call was taken by the Clerk-Treasurer. Motion carried unanimously.

9. Discussion/Action: Consideration of the appointment of Jessica MacKenzie to the Lodgers Tax Advisory Board:

City Manager Swingle explained that the Lodgers Tax Advisory Board currently has two vacancies on their board. At their July 25th meeting they recommended the appointment of applicant Jessica MacKenzie to serve as a member on the board.

Commissioner Mitchell moved to approve the appointment of Jessica MacKenzie to the Lodgers Tax Advisory Board. Commissioner Fahl seconded the motion. Roll call was taken by the Clerk-Treasurer. Motion carried unanimously.

#### J. ADJOURNMENT:

Passed and Approved this 24th day of August, 2022.

Amanda Forrister, (Mayo)

Angela A. Torres, CMC, City Clerk