

CITY COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
CITY OF TRUTH OR CONSEQUENCES, NEW MEXICO
CITY COMMISSION CHAMBERS, 405 W. 3RD St.
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2020

A. CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Sandra Whitehead at 9:00 a.m., who presided and Angela A. Torres, City Clerk-Treasurer, acted as Secretary of the meeting.

B. INTRODUCTION:

1. ROLL CALL:

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

Hon. Sandra Whitehead, Mayor attended via teleconference
Hon. Amanda Forrister, Mayor Pro-Tem
Hon. Paul Baca, Commissioner
Hon. Randall Aragon, Commissioner
Hon. Frances Luna, Commissioner

Also Present: Morris Madrid, City Manager
Angela A. Torres, City Clerk-Treasurer

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

2. SILENT MEDITATION:

Mayor Whitehead called for fifteen seconds of silent meditation.

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Mayor Whitehead called for Commissioner Baca to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

**Commissioner Luna moved to approve the agenda as submitted.
Mayor Pro-Tem Forrister seconded the motion. Roll call was taken by the Clerk-Treasurer. Motion carried unanimously.**

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:

There were no comments from the public.

C. RESPONSE TO PUBLIC COMMENTS:

There was no response to the public.

D. CONSENT CALENDAR:

1. **City Commission Regular Minutes, October 14, 2020**
2. **Acknowledge Regular Public Utility Advisory Board Minutes, September 21, 2020:**

Commissioner Baca moved to approve the consent calendar as submitted. Mayor Pro-Tem Forrister seconded the motion. Roll call was taken by the Clerk-Treasurer. Motion carried unanimously.

E. ORDINANCES/RESOLUTIONS/ZONING:

1. **Discussion/Action: Resolution No. 19 20/21 to support a Veteran Service Officer (VSO) to Serve Sierra & Grant Counties:**

Commissioner Aragon explained that there is a need for a Veteran Service Officer (VSO) in our area. A Veteran Service Officer (VSO) is a state employee who assists veterans with receiving their due benefits. State House Representative Rebecca Dow is working on getting us a Veteran Service Officer (VSO) for Sierra County, and hopefully one for Grant County as well. Once this is approved, he will work with other Municipalities in Sierra County to get similar Resolutions in place. This Resolution is only a gesture of support, and there is no financial obligation to the city.

Mayor Pro-Tem Forrister asked if the funds have already been appropriated.

Commissioner Aragon responded, there are five that have been approved and two of them will be going into to affect as soon as possible. Olive Tree has offered a location free of charge at 808 Fir Street to house the Veteran Service Officer (VSO) in Sierra County.

City Manager Madrid suggested that they change the fourth "whereas" that says "**would** be housed at the Olive Tree Integrated Community Center" to "**may** be housed at the Olive Tree Integrated Community Center." That will make it clear that this is only a statement of support.

Commissioner Luna moved to approve Resolution No. 19 20/21 to support a Veteran Service Officer (VSO) to Serve Sierra & Grant Counties with the amendment noted by City Manager Madrid. Commissioner Aragon seconded the motion. Roll call was taken by the Clerk-Treasurer. Motion carried unanimously.

F. OLD BUSINESS:

1. Discussion/Action: Consideration of amendments to Resolution 33 19/20 pertaining to a back to work plan for the City of Truth or Consequences:

City Manager Madrid stated he does not have any recommended changes to our back to work plan. We are basically following the state regulations that are currently in place.

Commissioner Luna stated that she understands the Commission hires the City Manager to take care of the day to day operations, and she thinks he's doing a great job. However, she has some concerns regarding the City Manager making the decision to close all of the governmental offices to the public when we have not even reported our case to the New Mexico Environmental Department through the rapid response. The Governors Order says once you have four (4) cases within a 14 day period, you close your offices. She thinks it's a little premature for us to take the extreme measure of closing our offices to the public because of one case that is not even listed on the rapid response report. We are a governmental entity, and we still have to conduct essential business. There has not been a single case reported from Bullocks Grocery and they are an essential business. They are open, and they have customers constantly shopping there. There was only one case at Walmart within the last 30 days, and we all know how many people shop at Walmart. There have also been over 3,000 people in the County Clerk's Office to early vote. Some of which were not wearing masks, and they have not had one single case in that office. In the City Manager's report, there was no mention as to which office had the active COVID case, or if that individual had been in contact with another employee or customer. Those measures should be taken internally, and not to the extent of not allowing the public into our offices to conduct business. We are a governmental entity, and we need to be united and work together to create a calm amongst our residents. We can't stop living and doing governmental business because of this. We need to make sure people are wearing masks, and we have the PPE, or safety glass, because we need to be open for business as far as she's concerned.

City Manager Madrid explained that the case that was reported was for an employee that had not been at work, and was not at the office. The case was reported privately through the individual, and that's why it was not reported through the city. In regards to the other matters; when that case was reported to us, other employees also appeared to be symptomatic, and we weren't sure if they had COVID. Ultimately they all tested negative, and their symptoms were from other things. We closed the city offices to the public so we can be proactive in preventing the spread of COVID, and not reactive in responding to cases that already occur. The idea is to protect our employees. We have very small crews in every department, and if we had a major infection spread we could be put in a position where we may not be able to operate some departments, and that is not an option because we have to continue to operate. The only services we discontinued were the ones that have been ordered by the governor. The Library is still accessible, and our city offices are still accessible. They are just accessible in a

different way. We haven't stopped providing services. We just provide them differently so that we can protect our employees.

Mayor Pro-Tem Forrister asked if this this Resolution needs to be a re-occurring item since we are following the Executive Order, and we haven't made any adjustments in quite some time.

Commissioner Luna made a motion to remove Resolution 33 19/20 as a re-occurring agenda item, and to only place it back on the agenda if needed. Mayor Pro-Tem Forrister seconded the motion. Roll call was taken by the Clerk-Treasurer. Motion carried unanimously.

G. NEW BUSINESS:

1. Discussion/Action: Consider the appointment of George Szigeti to the Public Utility Advisory Board:

City Manager Madrid explained that this item is on the agenda at the request of the Public Utility Advisory Board. This item was on a previous agenda, but due to the lack of a full Commission, we had an even numbered vote and no decision was made. Now that we have a full Commission, this item is being brought back for re-consideration.

Commissioner Aragon moved to approve the appointment of George Szigeti to the Public Utility Advisory Board. Commissioner Luna seconded the motion. Roll call was taken by the Clerk-Treasurer.

Hon. Paul Baca, Commissioner voted nay.
Hon. Sandra Whitehead, Mayor voted aye.
Hon. Amanda Forrister, Mayor Pro-Tem voted aye.
Hon. Randall Aragon, Commissioner voted aye.
Hon. Frances Luna, Commissioner voted aye.

Motion carried with a 4 to 1 vote.

H. REPORTS:

City Manager Madrid reported the following:

- City Manager Madrid explained that sod installation at the Ralph Edwards Park was put on hold due to the recent winter storm. The installation will continue on Friday, October 30th and we should have about 90% of the sod in place by next week. The park will be completely fenced off until it is completely accessible.

City Attorney Rubin reported the following:

- City Attorney Rubin addressed Commissioner Luna's question from the last meeting regarding the issue of whether we have the authority to increase the Municipal Infrastructure Gross Receipts Tax. His answer is yes we could, according to Ordinance No. 389 which reads: *Imposition of tax. There is imposed*

on any person engaging in business in this municipality an excise tax equal to one eighth (1/8) of one percent of the gross receipts reported or required to be reported by the person pursuant to the New Mexico Gross Receipts and compensating Tax Act as it now exists or as it may be amended.

City Commission Reports:

Mayor Pro-Tem Forrister reported the following:

- She attended the Jornada RCD meeting and they are doing some really neat things. They are a big component for the foot bridge, and what we want to do with that. She will continue to meet with them and report back on what they are doing to help the city. She just hopes that we can support them as well.
- She asked City Manager Madrid when the city offices will be open again and what procedures are in place for business to be conducted.

City Manager Madrid explained that the re-opening of city offices will depend on the numbers (especially here in Sierra County) and whether or not other employees or family members test positive. Business is still being conducted, and customers can also make arrangements to come into the building if needed if they use COVID safe practices. If there is an issue where they can't get out of their vehicle, they can call us and an employee will come out to them.

Commissioner Luna reported the following:

- While attending the Joint Powers Commission meeting, they voted to continue pursuing the creation of a hospital district through legislation within Santa Fe which will allow the 20 plus people who oversee the hospital operations to be reduced to a board of 5 people.
- She asked that a workshop be scheduled to discuss the tax issue, and their options regarding the property taxes, and what methods and mechanisms they need to take. We might be able to get the public's support if we tell them where we are going to spend their money. Also, the gross receipts tax helps through all of the winter visitors, and those visitors who come to the lake and shop so doing a gross receipts tax increase may be better than doing property tax increase.
- She announced that the Sentinel and KCHS are sponsoring a drive through Haunted House at the County Fair Grounds on Friday, October 30th from 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. and Saturday, October 31st from 4:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. The proceeds will benefit the High School Future Farmers of America (FFA) and Renaissance Groups. The event was approved through the State Police, the CDC Guidelines, and the Governor's Executive Order. As long everyone stays in their cars we won't get any complaints and won't get shut down.

Commissioner Aragon reported the following:

- He commended City Manager Madrid for his weekly reports and amplifying the use of masks, because it is a big perception in our community that people are not wearing masks.

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- He thanked Lisa Gabaldon at the Clerk's Office for helping him when he registered his dog. The process was quick, and the price was only \$5. He encouraged the public to get their dogs registered.
- He is a member of the Joint Powers Commission and districting is very important.
- He concurs with Commissioner Luna that we should go with the GRT if we do anything.

Mayor Whitehead reported the following:

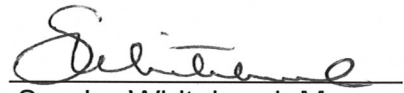
- She made a brief comment regarding the recent snow storm.
- She announced that the city offices will host a drive through Sweets N Treats event on Friday, October 30, 2020 from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the Utility Office drive through window. She also announced that MainStreet T or C will be doing an event on October 31, 2020.
- She reminded everyone that the next Commission Meeting will be held on November 18, 2020 at 9:00 a.m. There will only be one meeting held in the month of November.

Commissioner Luna added that MainStreet will be giving out candy during the drive through haunted house at the County Fair Grounds. You don't have to go into the haunted house to get the candy. If all you want to do is get the candy, you will be able to pull up to a separate site and get the candy from MainStreet.

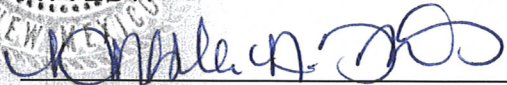
M. ADJOURNMENT:

Mayor Pro-Tem Forrister moved to adjourn at 9:37 a.m. Commissioner Luna seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Passed and Approved this 18th day of November, 2020.


Sandra Whitehead, Mayor




Angela A. Torres, CMC, City Clerk