

CITY COUNCIL MINUTES

May 28, 2015

A. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor THURSTON called the adjourned Regular Meeting of the City Council of the City of Merced, California, to order at 5:30 p.m.

B. ROLL CALL

Mayor Stanley Thurston, Mayor Pro Tempore Josh Pedrozo, Council Members Michael Belluomini, Kevin Blake, Tony Dossetti, Noah Lor, Mike Murphy

All Council Members were present.

C. REPORT OUT OF CLOSED SESSION

There was no report.

D. SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

1. Overview of Guidelines and Council Goals

City Manager John BRAMBLE gave a brief overview of the guidelines and Council goals.

Council Member MURPHY requested historical budgeted vs. actual information for the General Fund.

2. Departmental Reviews

A. Information Technology

City Manager BRAMBLE gave an overview of the budget items for the Information Technology department.

B. Support Services

City Manager BRAMBLE gave an overview of the budget items for the Support Services department.

Council Member PEDROZO inquired about the increase in general liability insurance premiums. City Manager BRAMBLE responded that in the past 5 years there have been a number of claims that resulted in losses that led to a 10% premium increase. The risk management pool had a review and the City received some funds to help offset the increase.

Council Member BELLUOMINI asked for clarification on financial impacts of replacing retiring staff with new employees and the proposed succession plan. City Manager BRAMBLE answered that people who put off retirement may be able to do that with the recovering economy. With 40-60% of the workforce eligible to retire in the next 5 years, there needs to be more training for employees to be able to move up into those positions. There are savings replacing retiring employees with new employees, but there are still costs because of saved vacation, sick and administrative leave payout.

Andres REYES, Merced – spoke on the Youth Council.

Mayor THURSTON requested that Mr. REYES submit a written proposal that includes the names of volunteers willing to help with the Youth Council with mentoring.

C. Public Works Operations

City Manager BRAMBLE gave an overview of the budget items for the Public Works Operations department.

Council Member MURPHY asked about Gas Tax money. City Manager BRAMBLE responded that the money will likely be for the rehabilitation

of streets, and will not help fund staff and operations.

City Manager BRAMBLE continued to present budget items for the various Public Works departments.

Council Member MURPHY asked about flexibility in the Airport Fund. Finance Officer GRANT responded that the airport is funded by various airport related revenue, but there is approximately \$36,000 that is transferred from the General Fund to meet operational costs. Finance Officer GRANT also added that money could be removed, but that it would create a bigger gap for the General Fund to fill.

Council Member BELLUOMINI questioned why vehicle replacement fund had been significantly reduced from the previous year. Finance Officer GRANT said he would need to report back on this item.

City Manager BRAMBLE continued with his presentation.

D. Police Department

City Manager BRAMBLE gave an overview of the budget items for the Police Department.

Council Member MURPHY asked about the cost of the new predictive software and new camera system. City Manager BRAMBLE responded that it would be \$30,000. Police Captain TRINDAD added that the system will be installed in the police car and there will be four locations for the license plate camera system.

Council Member MURPHY asked about retiring Code Enforcement Officers. City Manager BRAMBLE answered. City Manager BRAMBLE responded that the City has one Code Enforcement Officer and one Animal Control Officer who are both cross-trained, and an additional new staff member. Council Member MURPHY asked about the cost of an additional Code Enforcement Officer. City Manager BRAMBLE said he would get back with that information.

Mayor Pro Tem PEDROZO asked about the ongoing costs for the

predictive policing software. Captain TRINIDAD said that there shouldn't be any costs unless the City changes technology and it needs to be updated.

Mayor Pro Tem PEDROZO asked about the cost of another Animal Control officer. City Manager BRAMBLE responded that it would be the same as Code Enforcement since they will be cross-trained. They are now called Community Services Officers.

Mayor Pro Tem PEDROZO asked about the cost of another Dispatcher. City Manager BRAMBLE responded that it is approximately \$60,000.

Council Member BELLUOMINI asked for clarification on the three neighborhood beautification projects listed in the budget and the recruitment of new officers. Police Chief ANDRADE responded that it was meant to be for Code Enforcement Officers when they work with neighborhoods on cleanups.

Council Member BELLUOMINI asked about the difficulty of recruitment. Chief ANDRADE responded that the Department had been asked by Council to come up with a list of recruitment incentives, which is currently being complied. Chief ANDRADE added that some people quit because they are not prepared for the conditions of the job.

E. Water Resources and Reclamation

City Manager BRAMBLE gave an overview of the budget items for the Water Resources and Reclamation Department.

Mayor THURSTON commented on the use of methane to generate electricity at the Wastewater Treatment Plant. Merced County Association of Governments is planning to evaluate two companies who manufacture the conversion engines. City Manager BRAMBLE responded that the City has been working with Siemens to evaluate options.

Council Member MURPHY questioned the use of reclaimed water for replenishing Merced's aquifer. City Manager BRAMBLE responded

that a feasibility study should be done. Council Member MURPHY requested the cost be presented.

Mayor THURSTON suggested putting water into Merced Irrigation District's canal the City can get credit and draw it out at a later time to irrigate parks. Mayor Pro Tem PEDROZO concurred with the comments of Council Member MURPHY and Mayor THURSTON.

Reverend RAMSEY, Merced – commented on stray dogs in South Merced.

Council Member MURPHY suggested hiring a Veterinarian to spay or neuter animals.

Council Member BELLUOMINI questioned the Measure C Fund balance and why the reserves are so high. City Manager BRAMBLE responded that the reserves are there for cash flow. Finance Director GRANT responded that most of the revenue for last fiscal year comes in around September and secondly, the City maintains a reserve recommended by the Government Finance Officers Association.

3. Outside Agency Requests

A. McNamara Center Request

Kelly TURNER, Merced – Spoke about the budget needs of the programs at McNamara Center.

Council discussed concerns in funding programs that were supposed to be self-sustaining.

Monica GRASLEY, Merced – Spoke about the need for youth programs.

Mayor THURSTON asked if partial funding would be adequate to keep the center open.

Council Member BELLUOMINI asked for clarification on which items

were one time and which were recurring.

Kelly TURNER answered.

Mayor Pro Tempore PEDROZO asked about the number of kids being served and questioned why they were not using after school programs.

Ms. TURNER stated she would get the numbers requested.

Rachelle ABRIL, Merced – Spoke on the need for additional funding.

Council Member MURPHY questioned what the CDBG funding would cover.

Ms. TURNER said she would get the numbers to the Council.

B. Hmong Law Enforcement Association

City Manager BRAMBLE presented a request for funding from the Hmong Law Enforcement Association.

C. Merced Rescue Mission

City Manager BRAMBLE stated the budget request from the Merced Rescue Mission.

City Manager BRAMBLE said a late request had come from the Feet Changing Lives organization.

Council Member MURPHY asked for a breakdown of what the money would be spent on.

Rick MCMILLION, Merced – Spoke in support of Feet Changing Lives.

Michelle XIONG, Merced – Spoke on the Youth Council.

Mayor THURSTON announced that Feet Changing Lives had also requested funding in the amount of \$5,000.

4. Other Funding Requests

A. Quiet Zone Study

City Manager BRAMBLE gave a brief account of a Quiet Zone Study for the City of Merced, and recommended that if Council wants to move forward, all crossings should be included for an approximate cost of \$50,000.

Mayor THURSTON said that quiet zones require complete inaccessibility to the track, which would cost millions of dollars.

Council Member MURPHY asked if closing a couple of minor crossings could be a bargaining chip to get the railroads to contribute money.

City Manager BRAMBLE proposed reorganizing the Public Works Department to include a Director, Assistant Director, and a Water Engineer.

Council Member PEDROZO stated he would like to see an Assistant City Manager position. City Manager BRAMBLE added that the cost would be \$180,000 including benefits.

Council Member BELLUOMINI asked for clarification on the Recreation Coordinator position. City Manager BRAMBLE responded that the position is proposed for half a year at \$41,000.

E. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Tom SIVERLY, Merced – Spoke on youth sports and the facilities at the sports complex requesting some additional shade structures.

Kevin HAMMON, Merced – Requested money for the Art Hop Event.

F. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Council Member BELLUOMINI with a second by Council Member BLAKE the meeting was adjourned to June 1, 2015 at 5:00 p.m. The vote passed 6-0 with Council Member LOR absent.

Clerk's Note: The meeting adjourned at 8:57 p.m.