

SAN FERNANDO CITY COUNCIL

**SPECIAL MEETING
MINUTES**

JUNE 28, 2004 – 6:00 P.M.

*THE FOLLOWING MINUTES ARE A SUMMARY OF ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE
CITY COUNCIL. AUDIO CASSETTE TAPES OF THE ACTUAL MEETING
ARE AVAILABLE FOR LISTENING IN THE CITY CLERK'S OFFICE*

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Mayor Maribel De La Torre called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m.

The following persons were recorded as present:

PRESENT:

Council: Mayor Maribel De La Torre, Mayor Pro Tem Julie Ruelas,
Councilmembers Nury Martinez, José Hernández, Ph.D., and
Steven Veres (participating via teleconference from 6786 River
Road, Manassas, Virginia, 20111)

City Treasurer: Elvira Orozco

Staff: José E. Pulido, City Administrator; Michael Estrada, City
Attorney; and, Elena G. Chávez, City Clerk

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion by Councilmember Hernández, seconded by Mayor De La Torre, to approve the agenda.
The motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC STATEMENTS – WRITTEN/ORAL

David Rodriguez, Recreation & Community Services Commissioner, talked about the median household income in the City and doesn't think it is appropriate to increase salaries at this time (referring to Item No. 4).

Beverly Di Tomaso, 718 N. Meyers St., suggested that the budget adoption Public Hearing item be postponed because the public has not had an opportunity to review the agenda packet (or the amendments that were provided prior to the meeting). She believes that allowing a Councilmember to participate via teleconference is setting a precedent.

Elvira Orozco, 417 Newton St., agreed with Ms. Di Tomaso and requested that the budget approval be postponed to another meeting to allow time for the public and herself to review.

James Jerrols, 1981 Eighth St., reported that he and his family members are on fixed incomes and opposes the water rate increase.

Councilmember Martinez suggested that staff work with Mr. Jerrols to determine whether he qualifies for the lifeline utility rate program for low-income residents.

Councilmember Veres said that he appreciated everyone's patience and reported that the phone conference is taking place at no additional expense to the City.

CONSENT CALENDAR

Mayor Pro Tem Ruelas removed Items #1 and #5, and Councilmember Hernandez pulled Item #4 for further discussion. Motion by Mayor De La Torre, seconded by Councilmember Veres, to approve the remainder of the Consent Calendar items. The motion carried unanimously.

- 2) RESOLUTION ADOPTING JOB SPECIFICATION FOR JUNIOR ACCOUNTANT
- 3) RESOLUTION ADOPTING JOB SPECIFICATIONS FOR HOUSING INSPECTOR AND ASSISTANT PLANNER (HOUSING)

Items

Removed for Further Discussion:

- 1) RESOLUTIONS AMENDING THE SALARY PLAN AND TABLE OF ORGANIZATION

In response to questions from Mayor Pro Tem Ruelas, Personnel Manager Michael Okafor stated that the Resolutions include pre-negotiated increases for the miscellaneous (including confidential) employees and police officers. He stated the Resolutions do not include salary increases for management and most part-time employees at this time.

Councilmember Veres reported that the Commissioner stipend should read that Commissioners are paid per meeting attended, not to exceed one meeting per month. Mr. Okafor said that it was inadvertently omitted and would be corrected.

In response to Mayor Pro Tem Ruelas question, Public Works Director Edwin Galvez stated that all General Fund numbers previously presented to Council included the intern position. He said that the department relies heavily on interns to do a lot of their technical work and that the intern program produces valuable employees that move on.

Motion by Mayor Pro Tem Ruelas, seconded by Councilmember Martinez, to adopt Resolutions amending the Salary Plan and Table of Organization (correction to be made on Salary Plan regarding Commissioner stipend). The motion carried unanimously.

4) **PUBLIC WORKS REORGANIZATION AND ADOPTION OF RESOLUTION FOR NEW JOB SPECIFICATIONS**

Councilmember Hernández said that it is essential for City employees that communicate with the public to understand and speak Spanish and he noticed that this language was not included in certain job specifications.

Regarding the Administrative Assistant position, Mayor Pro Tem Ruelas asked if the requirement has always just been a high school diploma. Mr. Galvez stated that was correct, the educational requirement was not changed.

Councilmember Hernández stated that because of the budget situation, it is difficult for him to justify the reorganization and salary increases when the public is now being asked to pay \$9 more per month for utilities.

Councilmember Veres expressed support in moving forward with the reorganization and that the City's utility rates are much cheaper than anywhere else in the region.

Motion by Mayor De La Torre, seconded by Councilmember Martinez, to approve the Resolution adopting certain job specifications and approval of the Public Works Reorganization plan (include language regarding understanding and speaking Spanish is highly desirable in the job specs for the Public Works Field Supervisor and Administrative Assistant). The motion carried with the following vote:

AYES: De La Torre, Martinez, Veres – 3
NOES: Hernández, Ruelas - 2

5) **ADOPTION OF THE FISCAL YEAR 2004-2005 REDEVELOPMENT BUDGET AND LOAN DOCUMENTS**

Mayor Pro Tem Ruelas said that she doesn't have a good feeling about constantly borrowing between the Redevelopment Agency and the General Fund and paying back the loan in two years and for that reason, she could not support this.

Motion by Councilmember Hernández, seconded by Councilmember Martinez, to adopt the Resolution and Agreements between the City and the Redevelopment Agency for the 2004-2005 Fiscal Year. The motion carried with the following vote:

AYES: De La Torre, Martinez, Hernández, Veres – 4
NOES: Ruelas - 1

PUBLIC HEARING

6) UTILITY RATES

Mr. Galvez presented the staff report.

In response to Councilmember Hernández's question, Ms. Quijano said that residents opening new accounts are informed of discounted rates for those that may qualify (low-income).

Mayor Pro Tem Ruelas suggested that a statement in Spanish and English be included in the water bills encouraging residents and business owners to conserve water.

In response to Councilmember Veres' question regarding water rates in neighboring communities, Mr. Galvez explained that a typical San Fernando resident that uses anywhere between 15 and 20 HCF, would be paying between 30-40% less than if they lived in the City of Los Angeles.

Councilmember Martinez said that the issues she wanted to talk about regarding the lifeline utility rate program for low-income residents and a water conservation program were previously addressed. She wants to make certain that we are aggressively putting together a conservation program that will benefit both residents and the City.

Mayor De La Torre declared the Public Hearing open and called for public testimony, either in favor or opposed.

Beverly Di Tomaso, 718 Meyer St., said she was curious why San Fernando is being compared to larger cities. She mentioned that Phoenix, Arizona, pays residents to plant indigenous vegetation and said that was something to think about.

There being no further comments, Mayor De La Torre closed the public portion of the Hearing.

Motion by Mayor De La Torre, seconded by Councilmember Martinez to introduce, by title only, and waive further reading of two Ordinances: 1) "An Ordinance of the City of San Fernando Amending Portions of Chapter 94, Utilities, to Increase Water and Sewer Service Charges and to Increase Water and Sewer Capital Facility Charges"; and 2) "An Ordinance of the City of San Fernando Establishing a NPDES/Street Sweeping Fee and Amending the San Fernando Municipal Code". The motion carried with the following vote:

AYES: De La Torre, Martinez, Hernández, Veres – 4

NOES: Ruelas – 1

Motion by Mayor Pro Tem Ruelas, seconded by Councilmember Martinez that staff include a statement (both in Spanish and English) on the water bill encouraging residents and business owners to conserve water.

Councilmember Veres suggested that staff also be instructed to develop a more comprehensive outreach program to encourage water conservation.

The above motion made by Mayor Pro Tem Ruelas, and amendment made by Councilmember Veres, carried unanimously.

7) **ADOPTION OF THE CITY'S FISCAL YEAR (FY) 2004-2005 BUDGET**

Ms. Quijano presented the staff report.

Mayor Pro Tem Ruelas said that the report stated that the retirement tax will be able to absorb the increase for the next fiscal year by adjusting the tax rates and she asked what will happen in the years to come. Ms. Quijano responded that we only have information for the next fiscal year and the rates for PERS increase and decrease on a yearly basis.

Ms. Quijano reported that, at a future meeting, staff will be recommending that the PERS rate be increased to avoid the City having to pay for these retirement expenses from the General Fund.

Discussion ensued and staff responded to questions regarding the various funds.

Mayor Pro Tem Ruelas pointed out a discrepancy in the balance on the Water Fund and Ms. Quijano agreed to provide a corrected draft.

Councilmember Veres suggested that in the future, funds that are in the negative should be brought to the City Council's attention as soon as possible so that necessary adjustments can be made.

Mayor De La Torre declared the Public Hearing open and called for public testimony, either in favor or opposed.

There being no comments, Mayor De La Torre closed the public portion of the Hearing.

Motion by Councilmember Martinez, seconded by Councilmember Hernández, adopt the Resolution Approving the Final FY 2004-2005 Budget. The motion carried with the following vote:

AYES: Martinez, Hernández, De La Torre, Veres – 4
NOES: Ruelas - 1

GENERAL COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilmember Martinez said that the budget process was tough, thanked everyone for giving their best and is glad that it was adopted by the deadline.

Councilmember Hernández said that because most elected officials have full-time jobs, it was difficult for everyone to meet and suggested the budget process begin earlier next year.

Mayor Pro Tem Ruelas is also glad that we got through the process but suggested that in the future, greater participation should be encouraged even if it extended the budget approval past the July 1st deadline by a week or two.

Councilmember Veres said that residents should be encouraged to participate in every Council meeting so that they are best informed of what is going on and they could also provide input.

Mayor De La Torre: 1) thanked staff for their time spent in putting together the budget; 2) requested that staff provide an update on the Cesar Chávez Memorial Transit Plaza at the next Council meeting; and 3) said that more than two Councilmembers may attend the Orange Grove Ave. residents meeting and asked that staff post the notice and that representatives from the Police, Public Works and Community Development departments attend.

STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Pulido thanked Councilmembers, staff, and the City Attorney's office for their support and contributions to the budget process. He reported that the City was losing one-half million dollars annually in water, sewer and parking district fees and commended Councilmembers for being bold enough to make the necessary adjustments in the budget to cover those expenditures.

ADJOURNMENT (8:44 P.M.)

Motion by Mayor De La Torre, seconded by Councilmember Hernandez, to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.