

**CITY OF UNIVERSITY PLACE
MINUTES
Special Meeting of the City Council
Saturday, January 28, 2023**

CALL SPECIAL MEETING TO ORDER

Mayor Worthington called the Special Meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

Attendance was noted as follows: Mayor Worthington, Mayor Pro Tem Figueroa, Councilmember Belleci, Councilmember Flemming, Councilmember McCluskey, Councilmember Wood, and Councilmember Keel.

Staff: City Manager Sugg, City Attorney Kaser, Executive Director/ACM Faison, Finance Director Blaisdell, Administrative Services Director Petorak, Community and Economic Development Director Briske, Police Chief Premo, Public Safety Administrator Hales, Engineering and Capital Projects Director Ecklund, Communications Manager Seesz.

Facilitator: Michael Pendleton (Pendleton Consulting, LLC)

MAYOR'S REMARKS

Mayor Worthington welcomed Council and explained the meeting protocols. He introduced Michael Pendleton, the facilitator for this retreat. Mr. Pendleton went over the retreat ground rules with Council and highlighted the agenda.

ASSIGNMENT OF COUNCIL ROLES

Mr. Pendleton led Council through a review and discussion of changes in Council assignments. Council assignments basically remained the same with minor changes in representation: Councilmember Flemming replaced Councilmember McCluskey as the lead representative in SSHAP. Additional footnotes to the 2023 matrix were made to include other representations outside of the designated assignments.

PUBLIC SAFETY/NEXT STEPS

Police Chief Premo provided a recap of the 2022 property tax levy. The November 2022 ballot measure that would have raised funds to increase public safety staffing in University Place failed by 99 votes out of more than 13,000 votes cast. At Council's direction, staff began the process of gathering information to advise Council on appropriate next steps. Based on NWP Associates who have conducted an evaluation of the election results, there is a strong base of voters that support public safety investments, and a very small group of residents that needs to be convinced of either the need or value of the proposition in order to reach the 50% plus 1 threshold needed for approval. Staff have also collected information about the views of residents through solicited feedback from residents in the City's December Headlines e-newsletter and through a FlashVote survey. Staff conducted two focus groups – the first included approximately 21 participants primarily from the City's commissions, and the second included over 30+ citizen participants who responded to the City's e-newsletter and in the FlashVote survey. Overall themes reflect support for public safety and that the City should go back to voters; community-wide communication about crime in University Place; messaging on staffing situation (lowest staffed in the state and lowest staffed state in the country); increased communication on taxes; communicate how new additions will help address crime; support for option B of the Chief's proposal and more specifically support for a package that is less than \$20/month; support for non-traditional limited commission person (Community Outreach Officer position); and educational outreach and communication efforts.

Chief Premo indicated that there will be educational public safety mailings targeted for delivery on the following dates: February 2-9, February 14-20, and April 4-10.

The Council was presented with three options: (1) do nothing; (2) use one-time monies for public safety; and (3) new ballot measure. Chief Premo discussed the pros and cons to each of these options for Council to consider and to seek their opinion about whether to return to voters, when to return to voters, and what level of funding to request.

Council discussed the information gathered from the focus groups and survey; the need for residents/voters to understand City finances and how funding works; the need to come up with a different strategy and be proactive; the need to rebuild the community's trust; a need for a community conversation/public outreach; strategic communication/messaging and education process; concerns about the recession; limited tools and limited resources; and timing.

There was agreement for Council to bring the ballot measure back to the voters in either the April or August 2023 special election. Staff was asked to provide an election timetable and costs, and a revised levy proposal for Council consideration.

ALLOCATION OF \$1.1M ONE-TIME MONEY

Councilmembers were provided with a list of previously indicated interests for the use of one-time monies that would meet some of their Council Goals. There was agreement to fund the following items under Goal #2-Economic Development: Wayfinding Signage Program (Consultation); Wayfinding Signage Program (Construction/Installation); 27th Street Business District Plan (Consultation); and Town Center District Plan (Consultation). There was also agreement to fund the following items under Goal #3-Infrastructure: Kobayashi Driveway Repaving; Cirque Park Field/Light Repairs and Wire Theft Security; Curran Orchard Fence Replacement; Curran Orchard Irrigation Upgrade (Phase I); Cirque Park Skate Park Wall; Cirque Park Field/Wire Theft Security Upgrade; and Sunset Terrace Parking Lot Pave/Expansion. Should guidelines allow, there was also agreement to use ARPA monies to fund the Retail Leakage Study (under Goal #2) and the purchase of Paradise Pond Easement (under Goal #3). After discussing the list of on-going expenses under Goal #3-Infrastructure, the topic was tabled to a future study session.

Council travel was discussed in relation to Council Goal Number Six - Regional Influence. There was agreement to support regional travel to leverage funding and policies that benefit the City. Members saw a need to increase the current budget and showed interest in taking steps to develop an equitable process, and to identify priorities for determining and allocating that budget.

LUNCH – Council took a 45-minute lunch break at 12:30 p.m. The meeting resumed at 1:15 p.m.

VALUES – Due to time constraints, this subject was not discussed.

EMERGING ISSUES

Council salary adjustment was brought up as it relates to CPI inflationary rate. Feedback/opinions varied with most in favor of not pursuing an adjustment in salary; others suggested that if adjustments were to be made, that it be done through a salary commission set by the community rather than set by Council.

Other Topics – Councilmember McCluskey brought up the catastrophic event on Day Island/Sunset Beach and wanted to know about evacuation shelters in the City. She requested

pre-thought-out procedures/actions and preparedness so that information can be passed on to residents when certain emergencies happen. She requested an after-action report on Day Island.

ADJOURNMENT - The meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m. No other action was taken.

Transcribed by:

Emy Genetia