

MINUTES OF MENDOTA SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING

Special Meeting

March 16, 2020

Meeting called to order by Mayor Castro at 10:04 a.m.

Roll Call

Council Members Present: Mayor Rolando Castro, Councilors Jesus Mendoza, Joseph Riofrio, and Oscar Rosales

Council Members Absent: Mayor Pro Tem Victor Martinez

Flag salute led by Mayor Castro

FINALIZE THE AGENDA

1. Adjustments to Agenda.
2. Adoption of final Agenda.

City Clerk Cabrera-Garcia reported that an amended agenda was posted and distributed.

A motion was made by Councilor Riofrio to adopt the amended agenda, seconded by Councilor Rosales; unanimously approved (4 ayes, absent: Martinez).

CITIZENS ORAL AND WRITTEN PRESENTATIONS

None offered.

BUSINESS

1. Council discussion and potential determination of the existence of a local emergency related to COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus).

Mayor Castro introduced the item and City Manager Gonzalez provided an update on orders and regulations that have been implemented at various levels of government in

response to COVID-19.

Discussion was held on whether the police department has changed its protocol regarding how officers respond to calls for service and how they prepare for duty; whether certain businesses would need to close as a result of the ongoing pandemic; the length of time that regulations and precautionary measures that were implemented in response to COVID-19 would be in effect; whether residents will still be allowed to acquire noise permits; who is responsible for enforcing the recommendations that have been issued by the State in response to COVID-19; the precautionary measures that the Mendota Unified School District (MUSD) is taking to reduce the spread of the virus; the cancellation and/or postponement of various recreational activities throughout the City; whether MUSD will provide meals to students during the school closure; the ongoing spread of the virus; and staff developing a plan to determine how the City will continue to provide essential services while minimizing potential risk of exposure during the emergency.

Sergio Valdez – stated that numerous businesses are being affected by the situation; that some individuals are unable to work; and inquired as to whether residents will have their utility services shut off due lack of payment.

Discussion was held on financial assistance programs may be made available for residents.

Assistant City Attorney Castro stated that the issue regarding COVID-19 is rapidly evolving, and that the items that are on the agenda are aimed to be proactive approach to the situation.

Rigoberto Alvarado – stated that nobody is truly ready to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, and that the City should implement more drastic measures to respond to the situation.

Kevin Romero – inquired as to how the pandemic would affect recreational activities throughout the City; other viruses that have affected the community in the past; and stated that the public needs maintain a calm demeanor during this time.

Dino Perez – stated that Westside Youth, Inc. will continue having their food distribution events; that precautionary measures will be implemented for all events to prevent the spread of the virus; the center continuing regular operations until further notice, but examining the viability of these decisions on a daily basis.

Sergio Valdez – commented on other viruses that have affected the community in the past; that individuals cannot live in fear of the virus; and on how community members and the City should respond to the pandemic.

Discussion was held on the need to implement mandatory precautionary measures to prevent the spread of the virus.

Rigoberto Alvarado – stated that the lack of enough equipment to address the pandemic poses a significant problem to the City and asserted the need for individuals to follow precautionary guidelines.

Discussion was held on the various precautionary measures that are being taken to limit the spread of the virus; the City considering adopting various policies in response to the virus that are in the best interest of the community; and the importance of taking into consideration the information that is provided by medical professionals when creating policies.

City Manager Gonzalez requested that the City Council move forward with the next item on the agenda.

2. Council discussion and consideration of **Resolution No. 20-18**, proclaiming a local emergency in response to the continuing spread of COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus).

Mayor Castro introduced the item and City Manager Gonzalez deferred to City Clerk Cabrera-Garcia who reported on the background of the Coronavirus pandemic; the various measures that public agencies have implemented to minimize the spread of the virus; the means through which the City Council may declare a local emergency; the purpose of the proposed resolution; and the City being eligible for State and Federal relief for expenses it incurs in addressing the issue if it declares a local emergency.

City Manager Gonzalez reported that the City is trying to take a proactive approach in responding to the pandemic; the declaration of the local emergency permitting the City to be eligible for reimbursement; and issues related to the continuing spread of the virus.

Discussion was held on what items the City may be reimbursed for; whether the City has the authority to require that local stores give out personal protection equipment to residents; and whether local businesses are lacking certain supplies.

A motion was made by Councilor Rosales to adopt Resolution No. 20-18, seconded by Councilor Mendoza; unanimously approved (4 ayes, absent: Martinez).

3. Council discussion and consideration of concerns related to COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus).

Mayor Castro introduced the item.

- a. Receive information from Mendota United Health Center Manager Ashley Chanthaphuang

Ashley Chanthaphuang and Marilyn Rios (Mendota United Health Center) – reported on the need for individuals to not panic during this time; the importance of maintaining general hygiene practices; that certain age groups being recommended to remain at

home; precautionary protocols that the center has implemented in response to COVID-19; summarized various guidelines that the Centers for Disease Control has provided in response to COVID-19; that there are no positive cases from the clinic; and the importance of acquiring information from valid sources.

Discussion was held on how the City will be informed of any confirmed COVID-19 cases; whether the Center is able to test individuals for the virus, and the process that they follow; the purpose of face masks; the continuing spread of the virus; the means through which the virus may spread; how individuals recover from the virus; the need to protect individuals who are in particular age groups; ensuring that members of the community are aware of the precautionary measures that they should take; and whether the lack of certain medical supplies poses a significant problem.

b. Topics of discussion:

a. Mendota Unified School District precautions

Jose Ochoa (Mendota Unified School District [MUSD]) – reported that the MUSD recently made the difficult decision to close all schools; the various reasons that led to the decision; staff and administrators working to put homework packets together that will be distributed to students; the district providing meals to students on a grab-and-go basis at certain school sites during the school closure; the precautionary measures that the District is implementing; that the District does not want to be known as the one agency that contributed to the spread of the virus; that the decision that was made was made in the best interest of everyone; and that the certain MUSD administration offices will remain open.

Discussion was held on whether graduation ceremonies will be cancelled; the homework packets not containing any new curriculum; whether all MUSD staff is currently working; how the District will be addressing personnel issues that may arise; whether the District will be eligible for reimbursement from the State for certain items; and Mid Valley Disposal continuing to provide their services.

b. Potential allowance of Utility Bill Payment Plans

City Manager Gonzalez reported that the City will continue to provide utility services to residents and requested that the City Council provide direction to staff on how to the City should approach providing accommodations to residents related to utility bills.

Discussion was held on the COVID-19 pandemic will impact local employment.

Olga Valle – stated that field workers are most susceptible to the virus as they must continue to work in an environment that may not lend itself to social distancing; ensuring that workers follow precautionary guidelines; that individuals need to stay home in order to prevent the spread of the virus; and that some individuals are not taking the issue seriously.

Discussion was held on permitting staff to work with individuals on a case-by-case basis regarding utility accounts; and ensuring that City does all it can to permit individuals to not feel significant economic stress during this time.

Olga Valle – reported that certain schools are staying open, and the precautionary measures that these schools are implementing.

Discussion was held on ensuring that individuals take precautionary measures; that MUSD will be providing meals and homework for students; whether certain businesses will remain open and the voluntary precautionary measures that some are implementing; issues with price gouging in the community; and staff working with local grocery store owners regarding the issue.

Jose Meza – stated that he has two businesses in the community and inquired as to whether he can continue with his normal business activities.

Discussion was held on Mr. Meza’s businesses being able to continue their operation, but ensuring that he implements precautionary measures to reduce the potential spread of the virus; how the City will continue to provide their services; local parks staying open; and measures that the City may adopt to encourage businesses to accommodate individuals who are more at risk at acquiring the virus.

c. Status of scheduled Community Events

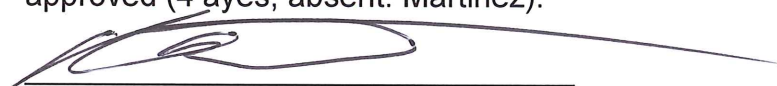
Mayor Castro inquired as to whether local events will be held.

Discussion was held on whether local organizations can hold food fundraisers; cancelling the Earth Day event for this year; acquiring trees for the Rojas-Pierce Park Expansion Project; and whether the Fireworks Show will be held this year.

Kevin Romero – provided information as to where individuals may report issues of price gouging.

ADJOURNMENT

With no more business to be brought before the Council, a motion for adjournment was made at 12:29 p.m. by Mayor Castro, seconded by Councilor Rosales; unanimously approved (4 ayes, absent: Martinez).



Rolando Castro, Mayor

ATTEST:



Celeste Cabrera-Garcia, City Clerk

