

ALAMOSA CITY COUNCIL
Wednesday September 15, 2010
Minutes of the Meeting

The Regular Meeting of the Alamosa City Council was called to order on the above date by Mayor Kathy Rogers at 7:02 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Present at roll call: Mayor Rogers, Councilors Rusty Johnson, Josef Lucero, Leland Romero, and Marcia Tuggle. Councilor Greg Gillaspie previously requested to be excused. Councilor Charles Griego previously gave notice that he would arrive late, and subsequently arrived at 7:46 p.m. A quorum was declared. Also present: City Manager Nathan Cherpeski, City Attorney Erich Schwiesow, and City Clerk Judy Egbert.

AGENDA APPROVAL. It was moved by Councilor Romero and seconded by Councilor Tuggle to approve the agenda as presented, and to note the late arrival of Councilor Griego. On the roll call the vote was ayes five, nays none. The motion carried.

CITIZEN COMMENT

A. Audience Comments

Erin Smith reported on the recent Friends of the Library book sale. The next sale will be in November. Donations are accepted year round.

B. Follow-Up

Council commended Ms. Smith and the group for their efforts.

CEREMONIAL ITEMS

A. Proclamation – POW/MIA Recognition Days

Mayor Rogers read the proclamation and presented it to Chuck Cooper who spoke about the event.

CONSENT CALENDAR A. It was moved by Councilor Romero and seconded by Councilor Johnson to approve Consent Calendar A as presented. On the roll call the vote was ayes six, nays none. The motion carried. Items:

- Review of August Expenditures
- Minutes of Regular Meeting September 1, 2010
- Review of August Monthly Reports
- Approve Asbestos Abatement Phase I

REGULAR BUSINESS

A. Presentations from Outside Agencies

1. Matt Abbey, Railroad Whistle Regulations and Information

Matt Abbey, General Manager of the San Luis & Rio Grande Railroad, presented the history and purpose behind train whistles. The railroad runs a 24-hour operation, requiring appropriate whistle signals during that operation.

Mr. Abbey displayed a five-chime horn and a steam whistle. The Code of Federal Regulations Part 49 Section 222 specifies how loud and how long the whistle must sound for specific purposes. Whistles must be used any time a train changes an action, such as moving after being stopped. The CFR defines the volume, distance, and length of time.

Whistle testing was conducted in June, so there was more activity than typical during that time. The railroad has a "blow legal, blow polite" policy, and strives for a balance between compliance and neighborhood issues.

C. Business Brought Forward by City Staff

3. Police

a. Accept COPS Office Technology Mobile Data Grant

Chief Jackson described the benefits from the non-matching \$125,000 grant. This would allow mobile data in fourteen police cars, enabling officers to have better resources in the field and to coordinate data with other agencies.

NOTE: Councilor Griego arrived at this time (7:46 p.m.)

The grant will cover the cost to upgrade the part time IT position to full time. The budget will be maintained to support mobile data in the future after the grant ends.

It was moved by Councilor Tuggle and seconded by Councilor Johnson to accept the COPS Office Technology grant in the amount of \$125,000. On the roll call the vote was ayes six, nays none. The motion carried.

4. Parks/Recreation/Library

a. Disc Golf Project

Heinz Bergann described the Eagle Scout project proposed by Dillon Vance and the research that lead up to the recommendation before Council. Both the Recreation Board and the Ranch Board have done extensive research in recommending the site northwest of the golf course. Other areas were considered and ruled out because of incompatibility with ranch use, lack of landscape, and access issues.

Council debated concern regarding impact on wildlife, and thought that other sites could be an option with modifications or access changes.

Staff clarified that Dillon Vance would conduct planning and clean-up and staff would remove the old corrals and scrap metal, and develop the road and a vault toilet.

Trees and rolling terrain are necessary to make an appealing course. The sites that are not recommended do not have these qualities. The proposed site is recommended partially because it does have the desired terrain and it is close to town.

Councilor Romero suggested using City-owned property near the wastewater treatment plant. Mr. Cherpeski noted that this area is the site of the former settling ponds.

Dillon Vance would like to begin planning and preparation work this fall, and the City could do road work also this fall. The facility would be open to the public, not restricted to Boy Scouts.

Councilor Tuggle noted that both the Ranch and Recreation Boards have invested a significant amount of effort in conducting the research involved in making the recommendation to Council. Council runs the risk of alienating its boards if it disregards the advice of its boards.

In response to a question from Council regarding the cost to the City, Mr. Cherpeski replied that the fencing needed is available what has been taken down in other areas. The manpower used to remove the corrals and remove the scrap metal is an expense that is already occurring. Staff will research the cost of the vault toilet and water supply.

It was moved by Councilor Tuggle and seconded by Councilor Johnson to direct staff to work with Dillon Vance toward completion of the Eagle Scout disc golf project at the proposed location. On the roll call the vote was ayes three (Tuggle, Johnson, Rogers), nays three (Lucero, Romero, Griego). The motion failed.

Council clarified that is was not opposed to a disc golf project, but preferred to take the time to do further research.

8. City Manager/Legal

b. Resolution No. 18, 2010, A Resolution Asking Local Citizens to Vote in Opposition to Amendment 16, Amendment 61, and Proposition 101 As These Will Significantly Reduce Services Available to our Community.

Mr. Cherpeski presented information on the three ballot issues, and the alternate budget that would be required should these issues pass.

Impacts of 60, 61 and 101

- Reduces revenue to the City's general fund by \$650,000 each year by year 5.
- We would need to reduce approximately \$440,000 in year one.
- Will require utility to pay property tax. This will mean about an 80% to 90% rate increase.
- Debt must be paid in 10 years. We could not have built the water treatment plant if this was in place without a much larger tax.

Impacts to City Services

- The city runs a lean budget. As such cutting 10% ongoing will impact services
- Department Heads were asked to look at core services and cut in areas not identified as a core service.

What it means to citizens

- Reduced hours at recreation center.
- Increased costs for programs and potentially fewer programs
- Programs eliminated would likely be those requiring the highest subsidy.
- Reduced hours at Library
- Closed Saturday or Sunday
- Shorter daytime hours
- Over time, a reduced number of public computers
- Eliminate all non-profit support
- Reduce overtime throughout including for snow removal and special events.
- Eliminate staff intensive services such as:
 - Funeral escort

- Security for special events
- Limited weed enforcement
- Increased fees for services such as fingerprinting, civil service of outside agency papers, etc.
- Reduction in “friendly contacts” before late fees are assessed
- Potential for reduced front window hours for utility payments
- Longer response times for phones and window contacts
- Impact to SRO programs
- Significant reduction in fire prevention efforts
- Elimination of team escorts by police and fire.
- Elimination of Fire Dept. stand by assistance at ASC and AHS bonfires
- Changes to smoke and alarm calls
- Efforts will have to continue to keep equipment up to date for safety reasons

It was moved by Councilor Romero and seconded by Councilor Griego to adopt Resolution No. 18, 2010. On the roll call the vote was ayes six, nays none. The motion carried.

c. Solar Parking Structure

This issue is continued from the presentation made at the prior meeting.

Joe Buellen explained that power companies are mandated to get at least 20% of their power from alternative sources by 2020. Excel offers a \$200,000 rebate to investors who make this possible. He expects the city to realize about \$15,000 per year in direct energy payment savings, based on the initial year's rates.

Butch Burgener added that the investor would own the facility and provide funding for the project. The government incentives make this a good deal for them. The second party is the beneficiary, which is the City. The third party is Mr. Buellen's business. He would act essentially as the general contractor to oversee the project. That company's interest is the potential profit on the construction.

Counselor Schwiesow noted that the Sun Edison contract had extensive provisions dealing with the government incentives. He anticipated that this one would be similar in that respect.

Mr. Buellen answered a question by saying that there is no carbon credit. The potential investor is an individual in Denver. The investor stands to make a 15% return on his investment within three years.

At the last meeting Mr. Buellen had told Council that the minimum lease period would be ten years, but is now prepared to change that to six years. The \$75,000 buy-back price after that time will still be honored.

It was moved by Councilor Lucero and seconded by Councilor Griego to direct staff to provide a letter of intent to participate in the solar parking structure project. On the roll call the vote was ayes five (Tuggle, Johnson, Lucero, Romero, Rogers), nays one (Griego). The motion carried.

d. Approve Employee Health Plan Stop Loss Insurance Renewal

Mr. Cherpeski reviewed the request to renew the stop loss insurance for the employee health plan, and to move the limit to \$55,000. This follows industry trends and makes financial sense for the City's plan.

It was moved by Councilor Tuggle and seconded by Councilor Lucero to authorize staff to execute the necessary documents to renew the stop loss coverage at \$55,000. On the roll call the vote was ayes six, nays none. The motion carried.

E. Committee Reports None.

F. Staff Announcements

Mr. Cherpeski gave an overview of the City Services Fair coming up on September 22.

LOCAL LIQUOR LICENSING AUTHORITY ACTIONS

A. Consent Calendar B

Ms. Egbert asked for a change in the recommended date for the hearing on the Bistro Rialto new license application. There is a need for the outdoor dining request to be considered by the Planning Commission as a Permitted Use by Special Review. This makes November 3 the first opportunity to conduct the hearing.

It was moved by Councilor Romero and seconded by Councilor Tuggle to approve Consent Calendar B with the amended date for the Bistro Rialto hearing. On the roll call the vote was ayes five, nays none. Councilor Griego abstained as the spouse of a liquor license holder.

Items:

- Hotel/Restaurant License Renewal – Mrs. Rivera's Kitchen
- Hotel/Restaurant License Renewal – Calvillo's
- Accept New Hotel/Restaurant License Application – Bistro Rialto
- Hotel/Restaurant License Renewal – Trujillo's, A Dining Place
- Tavern License Renewal – Trujillo's On Tap

B. Liquor Licensing Items

6. Resolution No. 17, 2010, A Resolution Adopting the Attached Policy Delegating Certain Administrative Actions to the City Clerk

Ms. Egbert presented the proposed policy. This essentially moves approval authority to the City Clerk for routine actions currently handled on the consent agenda. The impetus behind this is improved customer service, specifically due to timing challenges with Special Event Permits and renewals.

At the request of Councilor Griego, Counselor Schwiesow advised that Councilor Griego does not have a conflict of interest on this issue, as this policy affects all licensees equally.

It was moved by Councilor Lucero and seconded by Councilor Tuggle to adopt Resolution No. 17, 2010. On the roll call the vote was ayes four (Johnson, Lucero, Tuggle, Rogers), nays two (Griego, Romero). The motion carried.

COUNCIL COMMENT

Councilor Griego reported on the recent national heritage event and dinner at the Bistro Rialto.

Councilor Tuggle reported:

- That she attended the Senior Citizen meeting, and announced a September 23 fundraising supper
- The Recreation Board met. Among other items, the Board discussed the need to relocate the playground equipment to accommodate the new skate park.

Councilor Griego suggested coordinating with Valley Athletics to avoid competition. This can be passed on to the Recreation Board for discussion.

Councilor Johnson:

- Echoed Councilor Griego's comments regarding the national heritage dinner.
- Reported on today's Tree Board meeting and recent tree plantings.
- The Ranch Board met last week to discuss the disc golf project.

Councilor Lucero:

- Requested that a crosswalk be established at Second and State
- Noted that there are many bicycles riding on the wrong side of the street.

ADJOURNMENT. The meeting adjourned at 9:52 p.m.

Judy A. Egbert, City Clerk

Kathleen J. Rogers, Mayor