

## **MINUTES**

### **CITY OF DELANO CITY COUNCIL - PUBLIC MEETING June 15, 2015**

#### **CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Pascual called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chambers, 1015 – 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

#### **FLAG SALUTE**

Councilwoman Vallejo led the flag salute.

#### **ROLL CALL**

Council members present: Ricardo Chavez, Ruben Hill, Liz Morris, Rueben Pascual, Grace Vallejo  
Council members absent: none

#### **OFFICIALS PRESENT**

City Manager Reyna, City Attorney Garcia, City Clerk Kraft, Finance Director Rios

#### **SPECIAL AGENDA ITEM**

- 1) Receive public comments on a measure to be placed on the November ballot regarding the extension of the one percent (1%) sales tax

Ms. Rios presented the staff report and a power point presentation regarding Measure I. She noted that council recently adopted a reserve policy. Ms. Reyna stated that a reserve fund is essential to a healthy city because a variety of situations can come up. The city now has almost \$5 million in reserve. Ms. Rios noted that if Measure I sets, the senior discount on utility billing will also set. It would also affect the child care facilities located on Fremont Street. The EEOC provides the service, but the city owns and maintains the buildings. It was also noted that we are susceptible to funds being taken by Sacramento and the state's economics. Measure I is local money and we have local control. Ms. Reyna noted that voters approved Measure I in November 2007. The city did not see much revenue until we had commercial growth. It touches almost every part of what the city does.

Mayor Pascual asked for public comments.

Mr. Arredondo stated that a discount for senior home owners is good, and that it would be fair to have the discount for those who rent and those living below poverty level.

Roberto Ibarra stated that he cannot give all his money to the city. He stated that the city was in the red because of the CCF. When it closed, the city had to pay CO's unemployment. He asked about a discount for people who rent.

Richard Markham asked how long the extension would be. He stated that he hopes we get it because we need all the help we can get. Ms. Reyna answered that it would be ten years and extend the tax to 2028.

Javier Cruz stated: the city should have a subsidy for seniors instead of spending money foolishly; we don't need the new police building; staff says the city is spending on streets, but it are not; Latinos are charged for their meal at the senior center; the city should hire professional people from here; it's time the people choose the mayor; there is corruption here and he has proof; this is a great country; the city should hire a lawyer who is cheaper; this lawyer covers up everything

Isabel Miranda stated she would like the senior discount to continue, and it should also be for non-owners. She stated that some percentage of Measure I should be used for utility bills, for the regular funds, and leave some for reserve.

Luis stated he is not for or against the tax, and is here to get answers. He wants to see an itemized list of where the funds are going. He stated that he did a breakdown of Measure I funds that shows each citizen is paying about \$120 a year in the extra sales tax. He noted that a reserve is very important. He looked on the city's web site for revenues and expenditures, but could not find it.

(unable to understand name) stated he is a senior citizen but does not get the discount because he put his house in son's name when he started getting social security payments. He still pays all the bills.

Ida Ramirez stated: we should have this fund; where will we get proof where money goes; we have high unemployment and poverty; because of the drought, farmers will have to lay off workers; many people are farm workers or senior citizens; a lot of property is in someone else's name. She stated that she called the police to have them patrol 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue during school hours because cars race from Randolph Street to the high school. She noted that a lot of people are not on meters and not following watering schedule. Ms. Ramirez stated that everyone should get facts and they should be in English and Spanish. She would like to see how the money is being spent

Suzanne Villaruz stated: she is not fond of the Measure I extension; for 20 years we have had the highest tax rate in Kern County; how many other cities have an extra tax; Measure I is 25% of general budget – that is huge amount; funds are used for the summer academy, but it started before 2007 and is going on now; are we looking at building a pool, but we just stopped opening the spray parks; the city used to contract with the high school for use of pool; the community center in Lindsay is great but how many kids here could afford to pay to go there; she is glad we are working on the animal center; Measure I should be gravy, but it is becoming the meat and potatoes; the general fund should work without this extra tax

Max Bacerra stated: we all care about what's going to happen to the community; he would like to see a better process of what Measure I has done for the community – what has it done for public safety, what streets has it been used for; it is helping to build new centers, but we need to know how much each facility costs; the senior discount should also go to those who rent; what kinds of programs are the citizens able to enjoy because of Measure I; we have a lot of wonderful programs that Measure I has helped; the funding source should continue; the public should get a say as to what Measure I is being used for; we are on the right track but can improve

Councilman Hill stated he had to leave but wanted to have a dialogue with the people and will let them know when that meeting will be. He left meeting at 7:25 p.m.

Gloria Herrera stated: people were not informed about this meeting; the notice was not in the Shopper, it was only in the newspaper and only in English; seniors who rent should get the discount; she would like to see figures on where money is being spent; we are becoming dependent on Measure I; the senior discount is like recycling because the seniors pay the tax

Maria Espinoza stated people who rent are not getting the discount. She stated that the senior center charges \$2 - \$3 for the meal.

Ms. Mendez asked if we are going to build a pool during a drought and if a pool is a justified use of the money. She stated that she can't believe that for so many years the city didn't have a reserve fund; what do other towns do that don't have extra sales tax; most people are field workers and not educated; some bring home \$50 per day

Lupe Martinez stated: he is having mixed feeling about Measure I; the community is already having problems in the budget; the tax is 1%, not one cent; 4 or 5 years ago we had problems and were told the city would not go bankrupt; for the city to be dependent on 1% sales tax is a real concern; a discount for all seniors would be great; what will the rest of the citizens benefit from the tax; we have farm workers struggling to pay; they will connect watering days to this tax; we were told years ago that this tax is being used to pay salaries; he has concerns that citizens aren't getting all the information; where is the money for pool coming from; didn't we get insurance for senior center; can we change the language in the ordinance; is the tax going into utilities; he would be for the tax if he knew it was going to help people on the actual needs they have

Cornel Markham asked what happened to the old police cars. He was informed they will be auctioned off. Mr. Markham asked where the money from the auction will go.

Lupe Martinez stated staff needs to clarify the process for the tax measure and asked when there will be a response to the questions being asked.

Mr. Garcia stated there is no ballot now. This is a policy question, and council must decide. He noted that Ms. Reyna is taking down the questions being asked at this meeting, and staff will be working on them. Over the next several meetings, council will be working on language for the measure.

Nathan Ford stated that the public might be asking too many questions now. He noted that this is only the first of three meetings, and it is way too early to be answering all the questions.

Councilwoman Vallejo stated that at the second meeting the council, city manager, and city attorney will take questions and comments and come back with answers.

Mayor Pascual stated council is still thinking about the senior discount. He noted that the city needs to be more transparent. He stated council will take questions and give the best answers they can.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Mayor Pascual adjourned the meeting at 8:05 p.m.

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Phyllis A. Kraft, City Clerk