

**Minutes of the Blythe City Council Meeting
April 12, 2022**

The April 12, 2022 meeting of the Blythe City Council was called to order at 6:00pm in the Council Chambers by Mayor Reynolds. Also in attendance were Vice Mayor DeConinck and Council Members Rodriguez, Halby and Burton. Staff in attendance included: Interim City Manager and City Clerk Crecelius, Finance Director and City Treasurer Elms, City Attorney Roberto, Chief Building Official Brown, Fire Chief Hasler and Police Chief Dale.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mayor Reynolds.

The Invocation was offered by Councilman Burton.

PROCLAMATION:

April is DMV/Donate Life Month.

PRESENTATION:

Recognizing the Palo Verde High School Varsity Basketball, Soccer, Wrestling, Band and Cheer Teams for their Outstanding Achievements. Mayor Reynolds stated we are here tonight to recognize another CIF Championship Team. Mayor Reynolds invited the Coaches up to introduce their teams.

The Girls Basketball Team, and CIF Champions thanked the City for their support.

In the first time in the girls' soccer program history, we had 5 seniors receive athletic scholarships to play for Antelope Valley. Recently we were awarded the all-academic team for the CIF San Diego Section and won the Mission Federal Credit Union Award. Its an award for outstanding overall GPA for the entire team. Our soccer team had the highest GPA out of the whole San Diego Section. Carla Godinez was selected as the Scholar Athlete Captain with a 4.7 GPA average.

Genny Hann, PV Athletic Director thanked Council for the opportunity to showcase our winter sports teams and all the hard work they have put in this year. In the Desert League this year we had two first team and two second team student athletes. Brock Peterson and Josiah Green were first team with Joshua Perez and Justin Guere second team. The Boys Varsity Basketball Team won all-academic team honors. Emanuel Niesu was the top scholar athlete for Basketball and Brock Peterson was the top scholar athlete for Soccer.

Ian John, Boys wrestling coach stated this year was tough due to COVID, we lost half our season. Griff Callaghan qualified for CIF and was two matches away from going to State.

Councilman Rodriguez congratulated the students. Thank you for representing Palo Verde as well as you have. I can't remember a year when so many teams did so well. It's a credit to the coach, students and the parents who support them.

Councilman Burton said you make me proud continually. Remember Green and Gold and keep making that progress. We will see you back next year.

Councilman Halby stated it's a job well done and want to give extra credit to the scholar athletes. Keep those grades up and I hope to see you here next year.

Councilman DeConinck said its great to see kids represent Blythe. It's amazing to see what comes out of Blythe. You have done an outstanding job. Blythe is proud of you.

Mayor Reynolds stated you make me proud. I bleed Green and Gold. These young athletes work very hard to make us proud. I hope to see all of you back here. To the Seniors, you can come back and coach.

Palo Verde College and Employment Development Department's 6th Annual Job Fair. Artemisa Lujano and Lourdes Aguayo invited employers and the Community to the 6th Annual Job Fair on May 3rd .

CONSENT CALENDAR: *Items on the Consent Calendar are considered routine and will be enacted with one motion of the Council. If any item requires individual consideration, it will be removed from the consent calendar and acted upon separately.*

4. Posting of the Agenda.

The summary of agenda items were posted on the bulletin boards on the outside of the public entrance to the Council Chamber and near the inside entrance of the Council Chamber on Friday, April 8, 2022.

5. Approval of the Warrant Register.

Recommendation: Approve **4/12/2022**, warrants numbered 74803 through 74888 in the amount of \$465,454.74; **4/12/2022**, Utility Billing Refund warrants numbered 74889 through 74893 in the amount of \$821.06 and **4/12/2022**, warrants numbered 74894 through 74953 in the amount of \$344,953.52.

6. Approval of the Payroll Register.

Recommendation: Approve **4/12/2022**, warrants numbered 52797 through 52815 and Direct Deposit warrants numbered 52627 through 52686 in the amount of \$248,289.43; **4/12/2022**, warrants numbered 52816 through 52833 and Direct Deposit warrants numbered 52687 through 52746 in the amount of \$242,736.15 and **4/12/2022**, warrants numbered 52834 through 52839 and Direct Deposit warrants numbered 52747 through 52853 in the amount of \$90,490.15.

7. Minutes of the March 8, 2022 City Council Meeting.

Recommendation: Approve the Minutes of the March 8, 2022 Meeting.

8. City of Blythe Permits issued for the Month of March 2022.

Recommendation: Receive and file this monthly report.

9. City of Blythe Fire Department Monthly Activity Report for March 2022.

Recommendation: Receive and file the monthly report.

10. City of Blythe Police Department Monthly Activity Report for March 2022.

Recommendation: Receive and file the monthly report.

11. Quality of Life Pilot Program Statistics since January 28, 2022.

Recommendation: Receive and file the Quality-of-Life Pilot Program Report.

12. Acceptance of Work- WWTP Influent Wetwell Rehabilitation Project.

Recommendation: Accept the work performed by H&R Plumbing and Drain Cleaning, Inc. DBA H&R Underground and authorize the Mayor and City Clerk to execute and file the Notice of Completion for the project. It is further recommended Council authorize the release of retention

- payments and project bonds once appropriate.
13. **Acceptance of Work- WWTP Sink Hole Spot Repairs Project.**
Recommendation: Accept the work performed by H&R Plumbing and Drain Cleaning, Inc. DBA H&R Underground and authorize the Mayor and City Clerk to execute and file the Notice of Completion for the project. It is further recommended Council authorize the release of retention payments and project bonds once appropriate.
 14. **Surplus Firearms Trade-in.**
Recommendation: Deem the attached list of firearms surplus property and authorize a trade-in with Arms Unlimited for store credit at current market value.
 15. **Donation of Ballistic Vests and Helmets.**
Recommendation: Ratify the donation of the attached list of expired ballistic vests and helmets made to the Governor's Office of Emergency Services Law Enforcement Branch for Ukraine.
 16. **Investment Report for Third Quarter FY 2021/22.**
Recommendation: Accept and file the quarterly investment report.

Councilman Halby asked Chief Dale to elaborate on the Quality-of-Life Program report.

Councilman Rodriguez has noticed less muscle car acceleration on Hobsonway. I think ticketing is having an effect. It's a good program.

Councilman Halby moved approval of the Consent Calendar. The motion was seconded by Councilman Burton with a unanimous aye vote.

PUBLIC HEARING:

Categorical Exemption- TownePlace/Fairfield Inn Project. Interim City Manager Crecelius stated the TownePlace/Fairfield Inn project is the proposed development of a three story, 110 room hotel on 2.04 acres located on the northeast corner of Wells and Willow Streets. The site is presently vacant and consists of two parcels that will be merged into one. The eastern parcel has been paved and was previously used as a truck and recreational vehicle parking lot. Surrounding land uses include hotels to the north and south, restaurants to the west and SCE service yard to the east. The City's General Plan land use and zoning classifications for this site is General Commercial which allows for the operation of a wide variety of retail businesses including hotels. Based upon information contained in the administrative record and review of CEQA Guidelines, the City has determined that the proposed development qualifies for a Categorical Exemption as an Infill Development Project per State CEQS Guidelines 15332. The project has no conditions as defined in CEQA Guideline 15300.2 that would make it ineligible for the applicable categorical exemptions. The applicable criteria for exceptions from exemption for Classes 3,4,5,6 and 11 do not apply to the Class 32 In-Fill Development Project. There are no conditions that would render the proposed project ineligible for the Class 32 exemption. Therefore, subsequent to the public hearing, it is recommended Council adopt a Notice of Exemption for the TownePlace/Fairfield Inn and direct staff to file the Notice of Exemption with the County Clerk.

Councilman Halby asked how this will factor into our road project on Wells/Willow Street. Interim City Manager Crecelius stated the PRC required them, along with the Puffzy project to partner with us, Holiday Inn Express and SCE. It will decrease the City's share of the project.

No public comment. Vice Mayor DeConinck moved to adopt the Notice of Exemption. The

motion was seconded by Councilman Burton with a unanimous aye vote.

CONTINUED BUSINESS:

Emergency Sewer Repairs at Hobsonway and Lovekin Blvd. Interim City Manager Crecelius stated as you are fully aware, on February 23, 2022, Council deemed the repair to the sewer line and manhole on Hobsonway at Lovekin Blvd. an emergency to expedite the repair work. The week of April 4th staff entered into an agreement with Radco in the amount of \$179,795 to relocate the sewer line and manhole. Due to supply chain issues, materials are estimated to be 3 to 4 weeks from delivery. Radco anticipates starting work on May 2, 2022. Once the sewer is repaired, the street improvements will be made and Hobsonway will be reopened. As the repairs to the collapsed sewer line are ongoing, staff recommends by a 4/5 vote, determine there is a need to continue the emergency repairs.

No public comment. Councilman Rodriguez moved to continue the emergency repairs. The motion was seconded by Councilman Burton with a unanimous aye vote.

NEW BUSINESS:

Housing Element Update. Interim City Manager Crecelius stated The Holt Group will present the process for the City's Housing Element Update.

Cynthia Mancha with the Holt Group stated the Housing Element is one of seven components of the General Plan. Part of the process is public input. I am here this evening to introduce what we have done to date and call on your input and participation. The Update will be reviewed and approved by HCD. It will help identify the goals, policies and programs needed to achieve housing for all segments of the community. 494 units were allocated for the City to achieve through the planning period of 2021-2029. The Housing Element will help achieve those units. The numbers show a decline in population, but the true story is that the decline is due to the prison population and when factored out, we have an increase in population growing at a steady rate.

Mayor Reynolds asked of the 494, how many were multi-family and single-family dwellings. Cynthia stated they are not allocated in that manner. What they tell us is that we need to allocate 82 unites for very low-income households, 71 for low-income households, 96 units for moderate income households, and 245 for above moderate-income households. The median income for the City is \$45,000. From a housing perspective, it's at a higher threshold.

Mayor Reynolds stated we do not have enough designated housing for seniors.

The item was received and filed.

Ordinance No. 914-22, Repealing and Replacing Chapter 3.08 of the BMC relating to Claims Administration Procedures and Settlement Authority. Interim City Manager Crecelius stated Chapter 3.08 of the Blythe Municipal Code established requirements for presenting claims and demands to the City. Chapter 3.08 has not been amended since its adoption in 1916. The proposed Ordinance repeals and replaces the Chapter 3.08 to formally delegate certain settlement authority to the Risk Manager and City Manager. This will streamline

claims processing and will reduce the need for the City Council to consider modest settlements in closed session. This will bring the settlement authority in line with other signing authority limits of the City Manager. This also allows the City Manager to delegate modest settlement authority to PERMA, the City's claims administrator to allow early settlement opportunity to contain costs. Therefore, it is recommended that the City Council introduce for first reading, by title only, further reading waived, Ordinance No. 914-22.

No public comment. Councilman Rodriguez moved approval of staff's recommendation. The motion was seconded by Councilman Burton with a unanimous aye vote. City Clerk Crecelius read the title of the Ordinance into the record.

ORDINANCE NO. 914-22. AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BLYTHE, CALIFORNIA, REPEALING AND REPLACING CHAPTER 3.08 (CLAIMS AND DEMANDS) OF TITLE 3 (REVENUE AND FINANCE) OF THE BLYTHE MUNICIPAL CODE RELATING TO CLAIMS ADMINISTRATION PROCEDURES AND SETTLEMENT AUTHORITY.

Blythe Police Department Security System Project Award. Police Chief Dale stated the current door lock system at the Blythe PD was installed in 1999. The company who installed and maintained the system has since gone out of business. The Department continued to use the system; programming keys as needed until the software finally failed. The Department now has a limited number of programmed keys, with no way to obtain additional keys or restrict the access of existing keys. Replacing the access control system at the Police Department has been a priority for several years, but funding was not available. In the current budget, \$100,000 was allocated to make improvements at the Police Department and to upgrade the card reader at City Hall. Although the access control system is the priority, the camera system is also in need of replacement. Both projects were included in the RFP in hopes of doing both with the funding allocated. In January, staff released an Invitation for Proposal for the Project, including language to convert the existing door lock system to an access control system and the installation of indoor and outdoor security cameras. A mandatory pre-bid meeting was held at on February 8, 2022 with six contractors in attendance. Two responsive and responsible bids were received from ASSI Security in the amount of one hundred fourteen thousand five hundred dollars and from Johnson Controls in the amount of one hundred twenty-four thousand one hundred twenty-seven dollars and sixty-nine cents. A third proposal received was deemed not responsive and was therefore not considered for the project. Due to the bids for the access control and camera system being over the allocated budget, staff decided to move forward with the access control system only at this time. The camera project will be re-bid as funding permits. Based on the bids received for the access control system, staff recommends awarding the project and an annual maintenance agreement to ASSI Security.

Councilman Halby would like to budget this for the next year. If they are coming out to do the doors, they can do the cameras too. Interim City Manager Crecelius stated once the action is in place, they would start the project. We believe we can get more competitive bids by bidding the camera project separately.

No public comment. Councilman Rodriguez moved approval of staff's recommendation. The motion was seconded by Vice Mayor DeConinck with a unanimous aye vote.

Ordinance No. 915-22, Adopting a Military Equipment Use Policy Required by AB 481. Police Chief Dale stated Assembly Bill 481 became effective January 1, 2022. AB 481 seeks to provide transparency, oversight, and an opportunity for meaningful public input on decisions regarding whether and how military equipment is funded, acquired, and used by law enforcement agencies. AB 481 requires California law enforcement agencies to obtain approval from their governing bodies of military equipment use policies prior to taking certain actions relating to the funding, acquisition or use of military equipment, including military equipment acquired prior to January 1, 2022. The term “military equipment” includes, but is not limited to, unmanned aerial or ground vehicles, armored vehicles, command and control vehicles, pepper balls, less lethal shotguns, less lethal 40mm projectile launchers, long range acoustic devices, and flashbangs. Pursuant to AB 481, the military equipment use policy must be adopted by ordinance at a regular meeting of the City Council. Once adopted, AB 481 requires annual review and renewal of the ordinance, annual reporting on the military equipment identified in the policy, and an annual community engagement meeting regarding the annual report. The Police Department currently has included an armored vehicle and specialty firearms. The Department intends to seek approval for the purchase of unmanned aircraft systems and pepper ball carbines within the next six months. In addition to the City’s equipment, the Policy provides that military equipment used by other jurisdictions that are providing mutual aid to Blythe must comply with their respective military equipment use policies in rendering mutual aid. The Policy also provides authorization for the Police Department to deploy or use military equipment owned by other law enforcement agencies. It is recommended that the City Council introduce for first reading, by title only, further reading waived, Ordinance No. 915-22.

No public comment. Councilman Rodriguez moved approval of staff’s recommendation. The motion was seconded by Councilman Burton with a unanimous aye vote. City Clerk Crecelius read the title of the Ordinance into the record.

ORDINANCE NO. 915-22. AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BLYTHE, CALIFORNIA, ADOPTING A MILITARY EQUIPMENT USE POLICY GOVERNING THE USE OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT PURSUANT TO ASSEMBLY BILL 481.

ORAL REPORTS: None

MEMBER COMMENT:

Councilman Halby stated on the Consent Calendar there was an item for the donation of outdated Police Department equipment. The donation was to the CA Department of Emergency Services, but the items were forwarded to Ukraine to help the citizens there with the war.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Cecilia Velarde of 360 S. Solano asked Council if she could bond for the required on-site improvements for the parking lot, sidewalks and driveways at her cannabis cultivation project. I need help with funding for my project.

Leslie Jessop-Watkins congratulated the City on the Outlook Conference.

ADJOURN: The City Council meeting was adjourned at 7:19pm.

Dale Reynolds, Mayor

ATTEST:

Mallory Crecelius, City Clerk