

**Minutes of the
Blythe City Council Special Meeting
May 26, 2022**

The May 26, 2022 Special meeting of the Blythe City Council was called to order at 3:00pm in the Council Chambers by Mayor Reynolds. Also in attendance were Vice Mayor DeConinck and Council Members Rodriguez and Burton. Councilman Halby was excused from the meeting. Staff in attendance included: Interim City Manager and City Clerk Crecelius, 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.

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.*

1. 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 Wednesday, May 23, 2022.

No public comment. Vice Mayor DeConinck moved approval of the Consent Calendar. The motion was seconded by Councilman Rodriguez with a unanimous aye vote.

NEW BUSINESS:

Ratification of the Mayor's Proclamation of the Existence of a Local Emergency Due to the May 23, 2022 Fire on Spring Street. Fire Chief Hasler gave an update on the fire. As of right now, Chief Dale and I have been in contact with County Emergency Services. The investigation is complete, and once we receive equipment from County EMD, we will stage it and put out the hot spots. I have some equipment that is down and being repaired. We hope to have it back in service this afternoon.

Police Chief Dale stated the State Fire Marshall was out along with the State Arson investigator and his arson dog along with our detectives. A full scene investigation was done yesterday. No evidence of arson has been found at this point. The scene has been cleared. It is now a safety issue only, but the fence is up, and barriers are coming tomorrow. It is now turned over to the property owners. The owner's insurance company is doing their investigation, they are responsible for paying for the fence and making it safe as well.

Interim City Manager Crecelius stated the item today is ratification of the Mayor's Proclamation of the existence of a local emergency due to the fire. We have deemed it an emergency. That gives the City the potential to report some of our expenses to the State for reimbursement, as well as potentially FEMA. This action is necessary so that our costs from fighting the fire, 24/7 monitoring of the property for fire and safety issues and other resources are recovered. It will also hopefully open up some type of funding for the affected businesses. I have had conversations with Riverside County EDA who are looking for any available programs.

Mayor Reynolds stated the Dobbs family has stated they are coming back bigger and better. Have we heard from Sears?

Interim City Manager Creceilus stated I have spoken with Dylan Dobbs of Ashley Furniture and Toni Tobourn of Sears. Everyone is devastated about the loss of these businesses. Toni stated that she was working on a plan to convert her store from a Sears to another appliance store. I know the Dobbs family wants the community to know their business is not going to be a another burned structure in Blythe. They are going to rebuild and come back better than ever. They still have their distribution center, so anyone that has made an order, it will be delivered. The showroom was destroyed in the fire, but they are here to serve the community through the Main Street store.

No public comment. Interim City Manager Creceilus stated it is recommended Council adopt Resolution No. 2022-015. If adopted, the Resolution will remain in place until rescinded by the Council. Councilman Rodriguez moved to adopt Resolution No. 2022-015. The motion was seconded by Councilman Burton with a unanimous aye vote.

RESOLUTION NO. 2022-015. A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BLYTHE, CALIFORNIA, RATIFYING PROCLAMATION NO. 2022-01 DECLARING THE EXISTENCE OF A LOCAL EMERGENCY DUE TO THE FIRE THAT STARTED ON MAY 23, 2022.

ORAL REPORTS: None

MEMBER COMMENT:

Mayor Reynolds stated the Palo Verde Varsity Baseball Team was leading in the CIF Championship game.

Councilman DeConinck stated Pastor Mick has found a temporary place to hold services until his building is cleared.

Interim City Manager Creceilus stated it has been shared with the businesses affected that the City wants to be a resource in whatever way possible. We will work through how we can help with rebuilding. There may be some further items brought ot Council for approval/Direction as to how we can assist them moving forward.

Councilman Bruton thanked everyone who showed up, Blythe PD, the other fire agencies, the Mayor was out there directing traffic. It made me feel proud to be from Blythe.

Councilman Rodriguez stated for Sears the hardest part will be not having an income stream. As Ashley's was the showroom, they can keep on going.

Councilman Burton asked if the other businesses will be closed. Interim City Manager Creceilus stated Calvary Chapel sustained water and smoke damage. The concern now is the wall separating the Church and Sears. Calvary's insurance investigator is there, and they are hoping to get an all clear.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

ADJOURN: The City Council meeting was adjourned at 3:16pm.

Dale Reynolds, Mayor

ATTEST:

Mallory Crecelius, City Clerk