

CALL TO ORDER

Deputy City Clerk Josephine G. Herrera called the meeting to order at 6:38 p.m. She announced that Mayor Aguirre was not in attendance due to a family emergency and Vice Mayor Krause was not in attendance due to her being on vacation; therefore, pursuant to City Council Rule 3.3, the City Council would elect a Temporary Presiding Officer.

Deputy City Clerk Josephine G. Herrera opened the nominations for Temporary Presiding Officer. It was moved by Councilmember Luna to nominate Councilmember Richard C. Cook as the Temporary Presiding Officer.

It was moved by Councilmember Procter to close the nominations.

All were in favor of appointing Councilmember Richard C. Cook as the Temporary Presiding Officer.

Temporary Presiding Officer Cook led the Flag Salute.

ROLL CALL

Councilmember Ray C. Luna, Councilmember John T. Procter, and Temporary Presiding Officer Richard C. Cook were present. City Manager Wally Bobkiewicz, City Attorney Karl H. Berger, and Deputy City Clerk Josephine G. Herrera were also present. Vice Mayor Mary Ann Krause, Mayor Gabino Aguirre, and City Clerk Steven J. Salas were absent.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no Public Comment.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

A. Workshop on Police and Fire Service Options

City Manager Wally Bobkiewicz provided a Power Point Presentation on Police and Fire Service Options. He responded to a question regarding the difference between a parcel tax versus a general tax by stating that a parcel tax requires a two-thirds vote while a general tax requires a majority vote; however, funds generated from a general tax cannot be earmarked for Police and Fire Services. He further responded to a question regarding the public opinion poll to determine support for a ballot initiative by stating that the firm hired to conduct the poll is waiting for the City Council's decision to proceed after May 24, 2004.

RECESS TO A BREAK

Temporary Presiding Officer Cook recessed the City Council to a break at 7:26 p.m.

RECONVENE TO REGULAR MEETING

Temporary Presiding Officer Cook reconvened the City Council at 7:39 p.m.

Joe Nesbitt, 637 Teague Drive, spoke in support of the City maintaining Police and Fire Services.

Jess Victoria, 134 Moultrie Place, expressed the need for management audits for the Fire Department, Planning Department, and City Yards prior to making a decision regarding placing tax initiatives on the ballot.

Mike Lambert, 1231 Laurel Road, spoke in support of consolidating Fire Services with the Ventura County Fire Protection District.

Scott Rushing, Santa Paula resident, questioned how the voters would be assured that funds raised by a ballot measure would be set aside for Police and Fire Services, spoke in support of the City maintaining Police and Fire Services, and expressed his desire that the issue of Police Services and Fire Services be kept separate from one another. City Manager Wally Bobkiewicz responded that a parcel or utility tax is a specific tax that requires a two-thirds vote, and an ordinance would be drafted on how the funds would be raised, how the funds would be spent, and the term of the tax. He also explained that a general tax only requires a majority vote, and some communities have attached a companion initiative advising the intent of how the funds are to be spent; however, there is nothing binding on how the funds are spent. Mr. Rushing stated that he believed the voters would support a ballot initiative knowing that the funds would be set aside for Police and Fire as opposed to general budget.

City Attorney Karl H. Berger responded to a question regarding the difference between a special tax versus a general tax by stating that Proposition 218 requires that property-related tax be passed by a two-thirds majority vote while a general tax requires only a majority vote. Further, for general tax, some communities have placed two measures on the ballot with one measure causing the tax revenue to go into the General Fund, and one measure being an advisory ballot measure indicating how the funds should be used. However, the advisory measure is not binding.

Rachel Bustillos, 227 S. Twelfth Street, spoke in support of the City maintaining Police and Fire Services.

Flo Zakrajshek, 1000 Cadway, spoke in support of the City maintaining Police and Fire Services, and in support of a utility tax if it is placed on only one utility with a sunset clause.

John Chamberlain, 930 La Vuelta Place, representing the Chamber of Commerce, stated that the Chamber of Commerce developed a prioritization of issues with one issue being public safety. He further stated that the Chamber of Commerce recommends that the current discussions include a review of options and findings by the community to allow adequate time for local groups to provide analysis and comment.

Glenn Aronowitz, 243 Lucada Street, President of the Santa Paula Firefighters Association (SPFFA), stated that at first the SPFFA was silent on their position; however, they now feel that the City would be better served by maintaining local control of the Fire Department. He also stated that most of the Fire Department employees, including paid-call employees and half of the full-time employees, do not support consolidation with the Ventura County Fire Protection District. He also expressed the SPFFA's support for the Santa Paula Police Department, and stated that the SPFFA would support any ballot measure that would go toward maintaining and improving the Police Department and the Fire Department. He responded to a question regarding which bargaining unit he represented by noting that there are two bargaining units, the Ventura County Professional Firefighters Association (VCPFFA) and the Santa Paula Firefighters Association (SPFFA), and that he represents paid-call employees on the SPFFA.

Ofelia de la Torre, 1225 Fremontia Street, spoke in support of the City Police Department and Fire Department, and in support of a ballot initiative as long as it is fair to everyone and as long as it is used for the City to maintain Police and Fire Services.

Ron Kibbe, 862 Yale Street, spoke in support of the City maintaining Police and Fire Services.

Kevin Fildes, 752 Ernest Drive, noted that the Santa Paula Fire Department is the busiest in Ventura County and responded to 1,800 calls last year. He also noted that the need for services is increasing and there are no resources for needed equipment. He also stated that if the City were to consolidate with the Ventura County Fire Protection District for \$1.6 million, the City would receive two fire stations within the City and the use of County Fire staff and equipment. In comparison, for \$3.1 million, the City would maintain two stations; however, it would need to pay additional funds for the use of County equipment. He encouraged the City Council to continue to explore the option of consolidating with the Ventura County Fire Protection District.

Phillip Viramontes, 760 Ernest Drive, spoke in support of consolidating with the Ventura County Fire Protection District and keeping the issues of Police and Fire Services separate.

Robert Salas, 1203 Hawthorn, noted that it appears that the community wants to keep its Police and Fire Departments. He recommended that the City Council wait on making a decision because the City's financial situation will improve due to an increased tax base in 2006. He also spoke in support of a utility tax as long as there is a commitment that the funds raised will be used for Police and Fire Services and as long as the amount is minimal. He also recommended that the City Council freeze all wages, not purchase new vehicles, and give raises only to Police and Fire personnel.

Richard Goff, 4667 Telegraph Road, Ventura, read from his prepared statement in support of the City maintaining Police Services. Given that Mr. Goff did not have enough time to read his entire statement, he submitted his written comments for the record.

Paul Spencer, 975 W. Telegraph Road, spoke in support of the City maintaining Police and Fire Services, and questioned whether the voters would be assured that revenue raised from a tax initiative would be set aside for Police and Fire Services.

Richard Tushla, M.D., 400 E. Santa Barbara Street, spoke in support of the City maintaining Police and Fire Services.

Al Escobedo, 318 N. Thirteenth Street, expressed his concerns with abandoned shopping carts, corn vendors, alcohol consumption at Las Piedras Park, bicycle riding on sidewalks, and lack of financial resources for the Police and Fire Departments.

RECESS TO A BREAK

Temporary Presiding Officer Cook recessed the City Council to a break at 8:38 p.m.

RECONVENE TO REGULAR MEETING

Temporary Presiding Officer Cook reconvened the City Council at 8:49 p.m.

Richard Goff was asked to complete reading his written statement. Mr. Goff read the remainder of his statement and stated that the City would have a much better vested interest in maintaining its local Police Department.

Linda Fike, 500 W. Santa Maria Street, #131, spoke in support of the City maintaining Police Services, and in support of having separate ballot initiatives for Police and Fire as long as the tax is designated for Police and Fire Services.

Kevin Brown, 811 Ojai Road, spoke in support of the local Police Department.

Ed Beach, 1500 Say Road, spoke in support of maintaining Police Services.

Fire Chief Paul L. Skeels spoke in support of a ballot measure for Police Services, expressed his concern with competing ballot measure for Police and for Fire Services, and spoke in support of continuing discussions with the Ventura County Fire Protection District in order to receive additional information.

Councilmember Luna stated that he does not support a tax increase because he feels that staff, the City Council, and the citizens of Santa Paula have not done enough to seek additional Proposition 172 funds from the County.

Fire Chief Paul L. Skeels responded to a question regarding combining Police and Fire on the November ballot by stating that he does not want to see the two compete against each other, and that additional information is still needed.

Police Chief Robert S. Gonzales spoke in support of retaining the Santa Paula Police Department, and noted that if a tax initiative passes, the City could hire additional police officers. He also expressed his concern with having two tax initiatives compete against each other.

Councilmember Procter noted that the City is faced with a deadline in order to place initiatives on the ballot, and that certain types of ballot measures may only be placed during certain elections. He also stated that more information would be received during the public opinion poll, and he asked the voters to support a ballot measure.

City Manager Wally Bobkiewicz noted that the City Council would hold a Special Meeting on May 24, 2004, in which he would present recommendations on options for providing Police and Fire Services and recommendations on a Public Safety Financing Ballot Initiative. He also noted that the first draft of the ballot initiative would be presented at the June 7, 2004 City Council Meeting, and that he would recommend that the workshop scheduled for June 10, 2004 be rescheduled for June 17, 2004. Also, the City Council would review the language of the ballot initiative on June 21, 2004, and have a final review on June 28, 2004 in order to submit to the County by July 1, 2004.

Temporary Presiding Officer Cook thanked the public for attending the meeting, expressed his support for a ballot initiative, stated that he did not support contracting with the Sheriff's Department, and noted that everyone's support is needed to support any initiatives.

CITY COMMUNICATIONS

There were no City Communications.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

There were no Future Agenda Items.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the City Council, Temporary Presiding Officer Cook adjourned the meeting at 9:31 p.m.

ATTEST:

Josephine G. Herrera
Deputy City Clerk