

PIEDMONT CITY COUNCIL

Special Meeting Minutes for Friday, March 24, 2023

A Special Session of the Piedmont City Council was held March 24, 2023, at 801 Magnolia Avenue, Piedmont, CA 94611. In accordance with Government Code Section 54954.2(a), the agenda for this meeting was posted for public inspection on March 23, 2023.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Cavanaugh called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Present: Mayor Jennifer Cavanaugh, Vice Mayor Betsy Smegal Andersen and Councilmembers Jennifer Long, Conna McCarthy, and Tom Ramsey

Staff: City Administrator Sara Lillevand, Police Chief Jeremy Bowers, Fire Chief David Brannigan, Public Works Director Daniel Gonzales, Planning and Building Director Kevin Jackson, Finance Director Michael Szczech, and Recreation Director Chelle Putzer

SPECIAL AGENDA

The Council considered the following items of special business:

FY 2023-2024 Departmental Priorities

City Administrator Sara Lillevand presented accomplishments during the current fiscal year and priorities for the next fiscal year from each City department. Council asked questions and provided input to staff regarding departmental priorities for FY 2023-2024. Areas of focus included records management, public safety technology, city facilities, recreation department programming, communications programs, and human resources.

FY 2023-2024 Budget Priorities

After emphasizing the importance of delivering core services, City Administrator Sara Lillevand presented three areas of potential focus for the FY 2023-24 budget. She invited Councilmembers to discuss, question, and challenge the budget priorities before the budget meeting in May in the following areas: Public Safety Dispatch Facilities and Staffing, Building Division Permit Processing Backlog & Staffing, and Planning Division Workload & Consulting Needs.

Public Safety Dispatch Facilities and Staffing

Police Chief Jeremy Bowers presented the Public Safety Dispatch Capital Project for the FY 2023-2024 budget to renovate and relocate the police dispatch center using American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. He provided a background of the project, architectural and engineer design services and costs provided by COAR Design Group, and the areas of emphasis to upgrade the essential systems, address cyber security issues, and provide for the appropriately sized workspace and bathroom access. Police Chief Bowers used a rendering to illustrate critical deficiency improvements and a timeline of next steps. He also discussed the findings from a basic analysis of the dispatch center conducted by Federal Engineering in 2022 that looked at several areas including staffing which resulted in a recommendation to add staff to the communication center.

Finance Director Michael Szczech presented the project costs and proposed funding sources to complete the project.

The Council expressed support for staff to continue working with COAR on the dispatch capital project, funding, and staffing and to utilize facilities capital monies to cover the gap. Ms. Lillevand confirmed that grants and State funding will be explored.

Public Testimony was received from:

Deborah Leland suggested consideration be given to space limitations when adding dispatch positions during the capital dispatch project and the impact tax rate changes may have on funding the additional positions.

After discussion, the Council expressed a desire for Mr. Szczech to return with more information for two scenarios: adding one dispatch position in FY 2023-2024 and a second in FY 2024-2025 and two dispatch positions in FY 2023-2024 using the annual COPS funding, the impact to final roll up, and guidance from the Budget Advisory Committee.

Building Division Permit Processing Backlog & Staffing

Planning and Building Director Kevin Jackson presented the staffing and responsibilities of the Building Division, building permit backlog, constraints on building permit review, and improvements implemented to personnel and services. He reviewed a graph that demonstrated efforts to reduce and eventually eliminate the permit backlog and recommended improvements for the building permit processing.

Public Works Director Daniel Gonzales emphasized the positive impacts associated with moving the facilities maintenance responsibilities to Public Works.

Public Testimony was received from:

Rob Kelly questioned the reasonableness of the proposed plan and costs of reducing the building permit backlog.

The Council questioned staff's expectations and goals for the permit application process with the resources being requested, if consideration has been given to outsourcing resources and turnaround time requirements, efforts to communicate with the community, and configurations for staffing.

Planning Division Workload & Consulting Needs

Mr. Jackson reviewed the responsibilities and staffing of the Planning Division, the completion of the Housing Element update and Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and associated General Plan amendments, the preparation of a Moraga Canyon Specific Plan, other supplemental planning work related to the implementation of the Housing Element, new and revised wireless communication facilities design guidelines, staff and fee studies, and various other planning services. He presented high level details of the Planning and Building Department's budget for the current fiscal year and its proposed FY 2023-2024 budget by expense account.

The Council expressed concern about the costs related to the Moraga Canyon Specific Plan and noted economic feasibility should be addressed early on so options that are too costly are not explored.

There was no **Public Testimony** received.

Ms. Lillevand noted that all departments need more staff, and the budget priorities addressed the most pressing positions with the biggest fiscal impact. She thanked staff for preparing the budget priorities.

Mr. Szczech relayed high level projections of revenue and expense increases for FY 2023-24.

The Council requested from each department an outline of proposed short- and long-term staffing needs in advance of the May budget worksheet.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mayor Cavanaugh adjourned the meeting at 5:00 p.m.