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Regular City Council Meeting

Documenter name: Hally De Groot

Agency: City of Chula Vista

Date: Aug. 6, 2024

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Summary

Several issues were raised, with a significant turnout from Association of Chula Vista Employees (ACE), who are involved in labor negotiations with the city of Chula Vista. Multiple ACE members emphasized the need for fair pay increases, citing the invaluable work they performed during the COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing challenges like high employee turnover due to low wages. They argued that while the city is financially stable. A community member raised concerns about underage smoking and the inconvenience of requiring seniors to drive to Santee for volunteer training. Other public comments included criticism of the Tenant Protection Ordinance, questions about cannabis tax allocations, and the impact of city policies on small businesses.

Here's what you need to know

- This meeting saw a lot of engagement from the community with 19 comments made in total
- Closed session agenda item 15.1: Conference with Labor Negotiators Pursuant to Government Code Section 54957.6ACE (Association of Chula Vista Employees) brought members of ACE to turn out in large numbers; over 90 people were in attendance, nearly filling the council chambers. They were there to bring the council's attention to their low pay. Citing their work added value to the community, and they in turn deserve higher wages.

- Public comments voiced concern for unhoused members of the Chula Vista community with a variety of perspectives.

Notes

Meeting Call to Order:

- The meeting was called to order at 5:01 by Mayor McCann.
- The agenda for this meeting may be viewed by clicking [here](#), while a video recording can be found [here](#).
 - All timestamps below were taken from the video recording.

Councilmembers in Attendance:

- Mayor **John McCann** Present
- Councilmember **Carolina Chavez** Present
- Councilmember **Jose Preciado** Present
- Councilmember **Alonso Gonzalez** Present
- Councilmember **Rachel Morineau** Present

Staff Present:

- City Clerk **Kerry K. Bigelow** and one other member of their staff
- City Attorney **Marco A. Verdugo**
- City Manager **Maria V. Kachadoorian**

SPECIAL ORDERS OF THE DAY: Oaths of Office - asked to come forward by the Mayor and be sworn in by city clerk. They were not in attendance.

- Commissioner **Felix Sablan** - Cultural Arts Commission
- Commissioner **Eleuterio Buquiran** - Sustainability Commission
- Commissioner **Morgan Murphy** - Health, Wellness, and Aging Commission

Consent Calendar: approved by motion from Mayor McCann

Public Comment on Agenda items

John Acosta

- **Concerns with Agenda Item 5.8**
 - How do these programs address underage smoking? “Where is the money being invested?”
 - Speaker concerned about Cannabis Education Program in the community. Mr. Acosta says that he sees kids at Hilltop Park smoking marijuana, kids smoking on the way to school, smoking marijuana at the Marina.
- **Concerns with Agenda Item 5.9**
 - Concern regarding City Patrol Volunteer Programs requiring seniors to

drive to Santee for training in a volunteer position. He said that it is “unfair” for seniors to drive to Santee. It should be taking place in Chula Vista. “Do something about it and help the senior community, you ignore the senior community.” **(3:44)**

Agenda Items from Consent Calendar read by City Clerk, Vote introduced by Mayor, approved unanimously

Non-Agenda Public Comments:

- **Joseph Raso**: Revise Tenant Protection Ordinance (TPO) Which he described as forcing landlords to raise rents and pay \$5,000 fines “for simple paperwork errors” without a chance to make amends. Claims landlords are not being notified when they are close to being in violation and are hurt by the TPO. He said that the TPO needs to be fixed, that in its wake, the city is still, “feeding homeless people instead of improving housing.” **(9:27)**
- **Nicole Hobson (Association of Chula Vista Employees ACE)**: Pay Increase for ACE. The ACE president came to the podium with five other members of ACE, citing their invaluable work during the COVID-19 pandemic and volunteering to aid the CVPD with incident report workloads among the reasons they deserve better pay. The ACE president described their current pay as not meeting the amount needed for cost of living. **(12:49)**
- **Maya Estrada (ACE)**: Recycling specialist for the Environmental Division of the Parks Department. Expressed concern that employee satisfaction is going down, they are not “excited and inspired” to work for the city. ACE has a large workforce and Estrada described them as severely underpaid, causing employee turnover due to higher wages offered by neighboring cities. As of August 1st, ACE has taken most compensation reductions in the last 17 years, which Estrada says contrasts heavily with the city doing so well financially (in comparison to all cities in the county. Estrada said that difference in funds are available through enterprises funds and they should be used for “fair competitive raises” for ACE. **(19:30)**
- **Marisol Aguilera (ACE)**: Code Enforcement, came to podium with partner, Alejandro Rodriguez; said that their contract expired months ago and hasn’t been updated. Aguilera referred to police receiving favorable contract negotiations and raises, then listed many of the tasks for which ACE is responsible. Stating, “we are the backbone of the city and we deserve to earn a living wage” **(20:06)**
- **Romano (ACE)**: Associate Planner at the Planning Division, calling for wage adjustment in response to inflation. Romano described the tasks that planners are involved in and their value to the city. States that they are “visionaries,” yet

“undervalued” as demonstrated by their low pay in light of inflation. **(23:01)**

- **Recreation supervisors (ACE):** Recreation community events, sports, public spaces staying open enhances quality of life for citizens. Like other ACE speakers, the speaker emphasized the importance of staff in the quality of life for Chula Vista. Loss of invaluable knowledge, experience, and commitment every time people leave due to low pay. Asked council to vote in favor of pay raise, so “employees and residents can thrive.” **(25:30)**
- **John Acosta:** Brought many concerns, first stating that (the council) “You should be ashamed... of the raise you gave yourself...and not caring.” He stated that the shelter program is not working, and made comments about the City Manager possibly engaging in some form of gender discrimination. Acosta voiced concern for a senior woman who was attacked in a park, calling for police to be patrolling in parks. He was also concerned about a pay raise. Then, referring to the flag flying outside the council chambers, “...USA flag is the smallest flag flying out front? Because of the raise.” Acosta had brought a USA flag for them to fly out front. Gave the city clerk the flag that he brought. Acosta said that money was being wasted by the city. **(29:08)**

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

Presentation: [Open Space Maintenance Districts: Approve Levying the Assessments and Collectibles for Fiscal Year 2024/25 for Open Space District 1](#)

- Councilmember Chavez and Mayor McCann recused for conflict of interest
- Councilmember Gonzalez presiding:
 - No presentation, no questions
 - **Verdugo:** Proceeding is following Landscape and Lighting Act of 1972
 - Public Hearing is continuation from July 16th 2024

Public comments:

- **John Acosta:** Said that District 1 has more open space than others, namely District 2. Stated need for more open areas in other districts. Stated that parks need trash cans and described the lack of them in parks around the city and Eastlake. Saying that having them would be “helpful” in order to “keep it nice so people can enjoy it.” **(35:37)**

Council action:

- Closed by Gonzalez, motion seconded by Morineau)
- Vote: 3-0-2 (recused invited back to dais)

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- **Marianna:** Representing a group called “Nacion Avenue Crusaders” a senior

group who advocate on behalf of J St, Nacion, and the Hilltop Schools areas. Safety concerns have not been resolved. Concerns are about traffic around schools on Nacion and J St, after a past fatality. A meeting is scheduled for 8/8/24 with Mayor McCann to discuss this issue. **(38:28)**

- **Brandon Claypool:** Advocating for the homeless with goal to get people off the streets. Kids in the community shouldn't be exposed to this, and that the city should address this. **(41:20)**
- **Frederickson:** "So where does my weed money go?" With a receipt in hand at the podium, the speaker wanted to know where money from the city's cannabis tax goes. Described that it feels like the council doesn't care about anyone's problems and that no one gets raises, while the City Council "gets our money." She expressed that she feels like people do not have their problems addressed. The speaker used an expletive in their description of the council, but the comment was otherwise in line with rules of decorum. **(42:27)**
- **Jessica Van Arsdale:** San Diego Urban Timber, almost been around for 20 years. The speaker said that in 2020 the City asked them to use a "blighted city building" on 610 Bay Blvd. They are currently occupying the building, but the City has terminated the 2025 lease. The reasons given are "confusing," there has not been timely nor clear communication when they reach out. This situation would leave the small business in "economic destruction." The effects are also "catastrophic." Their exit date from the property is the last day of August. The speaker asked for a 90-day transition timeline to prevent further loss to the business. **(44:37)**
- **Darell Judd:** Concerns that the council has given Sunnyside Saddle Club exclusive access to horse arena at Rohr Park and that fees for individual and family use are too expensive. Stated that the council's actions "hurt park users," and that the arena is unused except for two days this year so far. It was noted that Councilmember Gonzalez communicated with Judd and agreed with the sentiment that the arena should be open for all. Judd said, "No problems ever recorded" in previous use of backyard horse owners using the arena, and that the impact is on children in the community as well. **(47:58)**
- **Dennis Avalos:** Requesting horse arena unlocked as well. Exclusive contract to one club is in violation of municipal code. **(51:00)**
- **Harold Demoss:** Currently unhoused, brought artwork to show what he makes. Explained that he has bed bugs as a result of having to sleep outside, and wasn't able to get into one of the 65 tiny houses the City had provided for the homeless. States he currently is staying at Chicano Park by the Bay

with 50-60 Venezuelans roommates. **(52:48)** Ended his time saying, “Thank you for stifling a small business” **(52:01)**

- **Tony Young**: President CEO San Diego Workforce Partnership. Approached the podium being greeted by Councilmember Preciado, and Young replied with a greeting as well. SD Workforce is opening an office at 333 8th St, for their constituents, opening in April. They want to work to be “more responsive” to constituents in the South Bay and Chula Vista, and especially help with a new upcoming waterfront development. “We are here, available for you.” **(54:18)**
 - Councilmember Preciado: Replied yes, they would like to have a workshop with Workforce to engage with leaders, describing the organization as a “critical resource in this county” and sought consensus to arrange a forum later this year, “November or December”, There was discussion of how best to do this and it was approved to make plans for a future meeting. **(57:28)**

MAYOR’S REPORTS

- **Presentation: Consideration of Appointment of a Voting Delegate and Alternates for the 2024 League of California Cities Annual Conference to be Held in Long Beach, October 16 - 18**
 - Delegate for the Conference is Mayor McCann, alternate is Councilmember Chavez **(59:55)**
- **Public comments:**
 - **John Acosta**: comment about appointment to represent the city, Carolina Chavez doesn’t represent the whole city. The speaker said that the Mayor should be the only one representing the city. **(1:00:42)**
- **Commission, Council, or Committee comments:**
 - **Preciado**: asking the Mayor: are other members able to participate even if not voting? Mayor McCann and City Attorney said yes, with emphasis from **Attorney Verdugo** to not discuss city matters **(1:02:30)**
 - **Preciado** went on to say that he was “dismayed” by public comments, that the comments are “entertained under the auspices of...free speech,” and apologized to the City Manager for comments made towards her. **(1:04:00)**
- **Commission, Council, or Committee action:**
 - Vote: unanimous

Off agenda, Mayor McCann also requested to move to make a subcommittee for outdoor dining (1:05:41)

- **Mayor McCann**: Mayor MacCann and Councilmember Preciado seek to create future ordinance for outdoor dining, sidewalk dining, or sidewalk-adjacent dining

areas. The mayor is seeking consensus to put on future agenda, not addressing current parklets **(1:07:14)**

- **Preciado:** current parklets to be removed after 9/03/24, and confirmed interest in proposed conversation to create subcommittee
 - **Consensus taken by nodding heads (1:08:18)**

COUNCILMEMBERS' REPORTS

- **Presentation:**
 - **Morineau:** who had been away for a long time and not in attendance for a previous meeting, updated the council on activities. She wanted to clarify her lack of attendance was due to a conference she described as “very valuable.” She went on to describe the events in her district. **(1:08:39)**
 - **Chavez:** Consensus for future agenda: resolution for senior transit pass, directed to City Manager.
 - Had attended “[El Futuro es Latino](#)” talk presented by Chapman University. Wants them to come to the community. **(1:15:43)**
 - **Preciado:** “[Seeking Council consensus to add the attached resolution for consideration at the August 13, 2024. Resolution supporting the California Legislative Black Caucus \(CLBC\) 2024 Reparations Priority Bill Package.](#)” Resolution to support work being done at the State level towards Reparations **(01:19:00)**
 - It was supported, just with some concern from the Mayor McCann that there might not be adequate time to review the materials **(1:21:47)**

CITY CLERK'S REPORTS

- **Presentation:**
 - “[APPOINTMENT PROCESSES City of Chula Vista Boards and Commissions](#)” **(1:24:38)**
 - City clerk report: presentation board and commission appointment process
- **Public comments:**
 - **John Acosta:** Concerned with appointment of Jesse Navarro, community wanted him (Navarro), says city council rejected him and that was not a reflection of what the community needed. **(1:38:58)**
- **Councilmembers Comments:**
 - **Preciado:** appreciate decorum: (assuming reference to Navarro from public speaker John Acosta) controversial nomination, does not think process needs to be changed **(1:40:55)**

- Overrepresentation of applicants from District One discussed **(1:42:11)** Noted need for diversity from multiple districts in different city commissions.
- **Chavez:** Thanked city clerk, acknowledged need for equal distribution of voices from all over the city (1:43:58)
- **Mayor McCann:** agrees with councilmembers
 - Council members: “Encourage people from your district” **(1:46:18)**

CITY ATTORNEY'S REPORTS

- **Presentation:**
 - Closed session, item 15.3 was removed (1:47:42)

Adjournment for closed session:

- **Mayor McCann adjourned the meeting at 6:48. (1:48:50)**

If you believe anything in these notes is inaccurate, please email us at documenters@inewssource.org with "Correction Request" in the subject line.