



**CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING
ACTION SUMMARY MINUTES
October 29 2013**

**CIVIC AUDITORIUM
400 N DOUTY ST**

SPECIAL MEETING - 6:00 PM

ROLL CALL BY THE CITY CLERK:

Mayor Lou Martinez called the meeting to order at 6: PM.

Present: Russ Curry (RC); Joleen Jameson (JJ); Gary Pannett (GP); Lou Martinez (LM)

Absent: Jim Irwin (JI)

FLAG SALUTE:

Led by JJ.

1. STUDY SESSION FOR THE DISCUSSION OF THE FOLLOWING:

- A.** Discussion and possible direction regarding the current and future needs of the City of Hanford and the topic of a possible sales tax initiative to support those needs.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Ted Gamby: Asked if services go beyond city of Hanford, and if the taxes collected extended beyond city limits?

Fire Chief responded that yes service is provided outside of the city limits, explained mutual aid agreements. City Manager Darrel Pyle stated that property taxes are collected for property inside the City limits, and sales tax from everyone that purchases goods inside Hanford.

No Name given - stated that problems with police and fire hasn't happened over night, what happened to funding from 2000 to now that ended up in such an array of problems now?

City Manager Darrel Pyle stated that revenue growth in sales and property taxes have been similar to neighboring agencies, with a significant decline during recession. Cost of doing business is essentially growing at the same rate as revenue growth, keeping service levels the same. Stated there was hope with the incoming Costco, that there could be an increase in \$600,000 in sales tax revenues to the City. Stated that this revenue could hire 6 fire fighters or 5 police officers, but would not get the City closer to building fire or police stations.

Felix Delgadito - Ask if money only for police and fire, and if this was being done to bring Costco? Agreed with tax if the money goes directly to Police and Fire. State that it bothers him that over the years prior city councils haven't taken care of needs in the past. Expressed anger that Council is asking the public instead of making the decision.

City Manager Darrel Pyle stated that the use of proposed sales tax was yet to be determined, suggested that consultant would help to determine what citizens would want. Also stated that Costco was not a part of this topic at all.

Ted Gamby: Asked how much of an increase is being asked for and who it would affect, then stated that council needs to focus on down town.

City Manager Darrel Pyle: stated that the consultant would be able to help us to determine how much the public would support, asking for .75% or 1% increase.

Staff: stated that it would be a sales tax.

Michelle Speer: Agrees with other comments, frustrated with current situation, can't change history, so if not a tax then what do we do to solve it? Doesn't want to necessarily increase taxes but if that's what it takes to keep family safe then she was for it.

Allan Scott: Asked what the proposed new rate would be? Then asked for a clarification on the number of officers per 1000 population. Also spoke regarding current issues in Federal level with health care act and we don't yet know how much that will cost. Same issue with the state increasing taxes, prop 30. Stated that he wants services, they are currently doing a good job, but need to make sure we have federal and state in line, need to make sure that all the people can actually pay the bill and not suffer for it. He would support it if there was a comprehensive study, can't do that until we know what Obama care will cost.

City Manager Darrel Pyle: stated that staff would get that information from survey, but would be anywhere from 8.25% to 8.5% from the current 7.5%. Pointed out that Prop 30 had increase in sales tax and certain income tax brackets, both have sunset clauses and they are going away in 4-6 years. Local tax measure is something that the state cannot take away, and stated that when state went broke they came and took revenue from the city by reducing things like RDA.

Frank Etelain: Hanford Fire, works at fire station 1. Spoke about a call of a little girl trapped in a house, responded to in under 5 minutes, he resides outside that 5 min response area, it's time to let the voters decide what to do about this. Asked council to put this to the voters, not to just ask a few people, but let the whole community decide. Ashamed that they can't make the 5min response time more than 26% of the time, worries about what he's going to face daily, how he will respond to a mom of a kid that wasn't in that 26% and died. Asked council again to put on ballot and let voters decide.

Dave Elias: asked council to put this issue before the voters, to put it on the ballot. Staff gave a recommendation, and believes that the citizens should be given the choice. Stated he has had to call the PD 10 times over the years, 8 times in the last year, there is no such thing as status quo, we are moving forward or falling behind.

Sue Sorenson: spoke regarding the question of what was done by past staff and council, stated that they were fiscally responsible. Agrees we should create revenue that we control locally, as opposed to the state and federal issues that were brought up. Spoke regarding the increasing issues in crime in community and that we need to turn that around. Other communities around us have already done this, let's look at what they did and how it works. Asked that council give the citizens the chance to vote.

Bernie Hopkins: agrees that people should get to vote, feels that some neighborhoods in Hanford have been left behind, East Side, South Side, Home Gardens as examples, asked that those neighborhoods not be forgotten as tax initiative moves forward. Appreciates public safety but at the same time can't forget to invest in those areas.

Richard Pontecorvo: works for HPD, started in 1996, my ID number was 43, and in 17 years we only have 55, detectives unit has not grown, and are strained, dealing with more violent crimes and don't have resources to deal with current needs. Spoke regarding a SWAT call when he was the only officer on street for entire City of Hanford, because all else had to deal with the SWAT call. It takes more people than we have to do the job. We need help, we need to be in one building to increase efficiency, need to increase flow of communication. Asked that council move this forward and to support it.

Linda Silvera: Spoke in favor of sales tax increase, it will help community and everyone will have to pay it.

Eric Brotemarkel: with the fire department, spoke regarding having a consultant. Gave example of special services, and what would happen if you used a detective to run fire engine, job doesn't match training. He is in favor of consultant to provide a professional opinion that knows how this works.

Dave Sumaya: Hanford Fire, challenged the council to let the public vote on this and more to support it, this will benefit the community and council should support it. No one wants to pay taxes, but there is no other way to fix, just going to continue to grow, not enough to put on the ballot, but we need council support.

Todd Fredrickson - Hanford fire dept. – thinks the public needs more information, people think this is to increase my wages and that's not what it's for, need more public information on what the money is for, increased staffing and facilities.

Randy Shaw - city employee and lifelong resident, conservative and don't believe in excess taxes, but sometimes there is a time, and this is it. population has grown exponentially, but our local sales tax has not, I support this and never thought it would be used for wages, the money is needed to maintain the city, example of staff to number of facilities to maintain, needed maintenance deferred because no staff, no funding. He used the Bastille as an example of how city gems have deteriorated.

Danny Escobar - asked council to revisit impact fees that are currently reduced that causes a loss of revenue. Spoke regarding the ladder truck, and when Adventist hospital was built that concerns were how a fire would be fought without proper equipment; spoke regarding using money from a parcel sale and to earmark it for the new fire station; spoke regarding the recent topic regarding community development director, position is still not funded and the position could bring more revenue by stimulating business; let the citizens decide.

John Shilling: stated that you have got to pay the bills, got to find money, only way to do that is to raise taxes and to bring in more people here to spend money and bring more business into Hanford to keep people here and bring in more tax revenues, let the citizens decide how they want to move forward.

Alice Sasson: agrees with the tax, but doesn't think hiring a consultant is good use of that money instead of using that money for the Police and Fire departments. Addressed Mr. Camara regarding how bad the landscape around the city is.

City Manager Darrel Pyle - gave a final staff recommendation to have a study session with a consultant to discuss on 11/19 with consensus.

GP – stated that he was not available on the 19th.

City Manager Darrel Pyle indicated that he would work with staff and Consultant to set a date when all Council could be present.

RC - Thanked everyone for coming, heard two things, general sales tax and public safety tax, Public safety sales tax takes a 2/3 approval and a general sales tax takes a 50% approval. Heard more tonight indicating the want for a public safety. Agrees not a new problem, and trying to address it but have to live within means. All he heard was increase tax, believes there are other options out there, and wants staff and council to discuss them.

GP - This has brought up more questions for the council with staff, to make sure we get it right. Spoke regarding the consultant, asked what we got for the \$50,000 on the consultant vs how much it cost to just put it on the ballot. Doesn't think it's appropriate to compare Hanford to cities around us, we are not on fire. Council has been pro-public safety, got 2 new engines and 14 new PD cars, take home car policy, this council has been creative in what we've been able to do. This council cares and wants the community to know that, will do his part, not a knee jerk reaction, need more information.

JJ - spoke to a challenge that was issued to council to step up and make some decisions, this sales tax has been discussed for at least 3 years, and this is the closest we have come. Going to be in trouble if we don't create some revenues we have control over, state and federal money has dried up. No, not on fire, but sewage is falling from the ceiling in the Police department. In favor of tax, and has been talking to people about it, and everyone she has talked to has explained the need. Issued a challenge to get it on the pavement and then to pound the pavement and get it done.

LM - Thanked staff and public, glad discussion will be continued so Council can come to a consensus.

City Manager Darrel Pyle - Clarified consensus would be that study session would be put on agenda when all 5 council are anticipated to be in attendance, the City Clerk would confirm dates.

RC – Indicated that he also wanted an action item to select a consultant or not to select a consultant.

City Manager Darrel Pyle - discussed that consultant would assist in determining what kind of tax measure, and the consultant could help council what to put on ballot. Discussed how different types of tax, special tax versus a general tax would need to appear on a ballot.

GP - Asked if this would be put out to RFP or just using the one?

City Manager Darrel Pyle - stated that staff was recommending to use a known consultant that has a proven track record that staff has recently worked with cost proposal is \$39,700, to assist determining the amount of tax and the actual ballot language.

Any person may directly address the Council at this time on any item on the agenda, or on any item that is within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Council. A maximum of five minutes is allowed for each speaker.

Written Correspondence:

ADJOURNMENT:

Mayor Martinez adjourned the meeting was at 8:24 PM.