

DEE MARGO  
MAYOR

TOMMY GONZALEZ  
CITY MANAGER



CITY COUNCIL  
PETER SVARZBEIN, DISTRICT 1  
ALEXSANDRA ANNELLO, DISTRICT 2  
CASSANDRA HERNANDEZ, DISTRICT 3  
SAM MORGAN, DISTRICT 4  
MICHEL NOE, DISTRICT 5  
CLAUDIA ORDAZ PEREZ, DISTRICT 6  
HENRY RIVERA, DISTRICT 7  
CISSY LIZARRAGA, DISTRICT 8

**SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES  
CITY HALL, 300 N. CAMPBELL  
MAIN CONFERENCE ROOM, 2<sup>ND</sup> FLOOR  
January 2, 2019  
9:00 AM**

The City Council met at the above place and date. Meeting was called to order at 9:07 a.m. Mayor Dee Margo present and presiding and the following Council Members answered roll call: Peter Svarzbein, Cassandra Hernandez, Sam Morgan, and Henry Rivera. Representative Michael Noe requested to be excused. Representatives Alexsandra Annello, Claudia Ordaz Perez, and Cissy Lizarraga were absent.

**AGENDA**

**1. RESOLUTION CANVASSING RETURNS  
OF THE RUNOFF ELECTION FOR THE  
2018 CITY GENERAL ELECTION**

**WHEREAS**, the City Council of the City of El Paso ordered an election to be held in said City on November 6, 2018, for the purpose of electing certain City officials for the terms as established by and in accordance with the Charter of the City of El Paso; and

**WHEREAS**, no candidate for the office of District Representative Nos. 1 and 8 received greater than fifty percent (50%) of the votes cast; and

**WHEREAS**, the City Council of the City of El Paso ordered a runoff election to be held in said City on December 15, 2018 for the aforementioned offices; and

**WHEREAS**, the election officers who held said runoff election have duly made returns of the results thereof, and said returns have been duly delivered to the City Council.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF EL PASO:**

1. That the City Council officially finds and determines that notice of said runoff election was duly given, that proper election officers were duly appointed prior to said election, that said election was duly held, that due returns of the results of said election have been duly made and delivered, that the election returns have properly been made out and duly certified by the officers of said election in the different voting

precincts of the City, and that the City Council has duly canvassed said returns, all in accordance with law and the resolution and amendments thereto calling said runoff election.

2. That the City Council officially finds and determines that the following votes were cast at said runoff election for the following officers by the resident, qualified electors of said City, who voted at the election:

**DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVE NO. 1**

|                       |              |
|-----------------------|--------------|
| Veronica Roni Frescas | <u>1,609</u> |
| Peter Svarzbein       | <u>2,810</u> |

**DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVE NO. 8**

|                          |              |
|--------------------------|--------------|
| Nicholas Anthony Vasquez | <u>672</u>   |
| Cissy Lizarraga          | <u>1,112</u> |

3. That in the case of the following offices, the following persons received more than a 50% majority of the votes cast for candidates for such offices and are hereby declared elected to such offices for the ensuing terms, or until the election and qualification of their successors, subject to the proper issuance of certificates of election by the presiding officer, and that the number of votes cast for each person who was a candidate for such offices, according to the returns, is shown in paragraph 2 hereof:

**DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVE NO. 1**

Peter Svarzbein

**DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVE NO. 8**

Cissy Lizarraga

4. That on file in the City Clerk's Office and made a part hereof by reference are copies of the mechanical precinct tabulations of the votes cast at the Runoff Election for the 2018 City General Election, showing the number of votes cast in each precinct for each candidate.

6. That this Resolution is adopted subject to the right of any candidate to contest such runoff election in any way provided by law.

7. That this Resolution was acted upon in accordance with the law by the presiding officer and the City Council and was deemed by said City Council that upon passage of the Resolution, it shall take effect immediately.

8. This Resolution shall be spread upon the minutes of the City Council, and the City Clerk shall record the amendments so adopted in the separate book kept in her office for such purpose.

Mayor Margo and Representatives Svarzbein and Hernandez commented.

Motion made by Representative Hernandez, seconded by Representative Rivera, and unanimously carried to **APPROVE** the Resolution.

AYES: Representatives Svarzbein, Hernandez, Morgan, and Rivera

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Representatives Annello, Noe, Ordaz Perez, and Lizarraga

**2. Presentation and briefing on the City of El Paso's daily efforts and assistance being provided to support immigrants released into the community.**

Mr. Tommy Gonzalez, City Manager, introduced the item.

Fire Chief Mario D'Agostino presented a PowerPoint presentation (copy on file in the City Clerk's office).

Mr. Gonzalez commented on the challenges for Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to hold families due to limitations on physical assets; he mentioned Veronica Escobar, Congresswoman elect, has been working with the City.

Representative Svarzbein asked how many children have received medical screening. Mr. Jorge Rodriguez, Emergency Management Coordinator Deputy Chief, responded 204 children were screened as of January 1, 2019.

Mr. Gonzalez stated he reached out to the State for funding however the State had not declared an emergency.

Mayor Margo mentioned he has received inquiries on any costs the City has currently incurred.

Mr. Gonzalez commented it is currently in the thousands of dollars but will get back with the number.

Chief D'Agostino stated his staff had been called for duty; Mr. Gonzalez commented the City would keep track of costs.

Mayor Margo added the media wants information on any out of the ordinary costs.

Mr. Gonzalez thanked the departments involved, such as the Office of Emergency Management (OEM), Police, Fire, Sun Metro.

Mayor Margo commended Mr. Ruben Garcia from the Annunciation House for the great job he is doing along with the City. He then asked if the medical reviews are at a cost to the City; Chief D'Agostino responded the City has not incurred costs as they are using the Border Regional Advisory Council (Border RAC) for this purpose.

Deputy Chief Rodriguez mentioned that Border RAC is helping with the equal distribution to area hospitals and clinics to make sure the system is not overwhelmed.

Representative Svarzbein commented he has volunteered with the Annunciation House and stated this shows El Paso cares. He thanked the Mayor for also volunteering and suggested the City publicize how the community can get involved to eliminate volunteer burnout.

Representative Svarzbein asked if Sun Metro is still helping with transportation; Chief D'Agostino explained this was only a one-time event.

Mayor Margo about the number of shelters assisting and Chief D'Agostino replied that 20 shelters have assisted.

Representative Svarzbein asked if the City is coordinating the medical screenings; Chief D'Agostino explained assistance with transportation to local hospitals had been provided.

Representative Svarzbein asked why the City cannot open the Convention Center and asked for regular ongoing updates.

Mayor Margo said the City could obtain updates from Mr. Ruben Garcia from the Annunciation House.

Representative Svarzbein asked how the City can support the Annunciation House and Chief D'Agostino replied they are currently rotating volunteers to prevent burnout; he added that an NGO (Non-Governmental Organization) would be the most appropriate place to handle migrants.

Mr. Gonzalez explained that the City might help augment NGOs; Chief D'Agostino added NGOs need food, money, and volunteers.

Mayor Margo said the City will comply in the event of an emergency, he added donations of coats or money are helpful for immigrants and mentioned the City of El Paso is the second largest processing center.

Representative Svarzbein thanked the City and the community for their support.

Chief D'Agostino explained that the City of San Diego has more support with surrounding counties whereas El Paso does not have anyone around.

Ms. Laura Cruz-Acosta from the Office of Public Affairs shared Mr. Ruben Garcia is trying to handle the situation with their own resources without the use of federal funds. She added that the City held a press conference to inform the public about this.

Chief D'Agostino mentioned Mr. Garcia takes great pride in his work.

Representative Hernandez asked what the City's reaction would be in the event of an unscheduled release of immigrants.

Chief D'Agostino said the City would take the same role as the last time.

Mayor Margo expanded by saying the notification was received at 9:00 p.m. on December 23 and everyone responded immediately.

Ms. Cruz-Acosta added it is very rare to have a release in the middle of the night; Mayor Margo concurred it was a total glitch it happened that way.

Mr. Gonzalez added OEM annexes have a plan and they are prepared to respond and stated they did a really good job.

Representative Hernandez asked if the City is not seeking reimbursement if we could help by putting the immigrants in shelters instead of buses.

Mr. Gonzalez explained it is difficult to set up a refugee shop and we should notify Ruben Garcia and let him handle it, as he is the expert.

Mr. Gonzalez added that he clarified to the ICE Director that the Fire and Police Chiefs need to be notified since the importance of logistics is key.

Representative Hernandez mentioned that it is in the City's best interest to open up a short-term shelter to get the immigrants out of the cold in the event NGOs are maxed-out; she added she would cosponsor an item with Representative Svarzbein calling for updates. She believes the City should offer resources to welcome refugees and wants to make sure we look at all possible options.

Representative Hernandez also asked what about the type of medical screenings being offered to adults or the elderly. Chief D'Agostino was not able to answer that question as that is up to ICE.

Representative Hernandez commented the City has a Public Health department that may be able to help; Mr. Gonzalez explained it is a federal responsibility to provide adult screenings and the federal government has not issued an order for these.

Chief D'Agostino mentioned there are volunteer doctors and nurses currently helping.

Representative Rivera thanked the Fire and Police Departments for responding and added NGOs do have medical personnel.

Representative Hernandez questioned Mayor Margo on outreach to Homeland Security, the President, and Congress. Mayor Margo explained he has expressed his concerns to Homeland Security Secretary, Kirstjen Nielsen. He stated the City is dealing with systematic problems as a result of the problems in Washington.

Mayor Margo mentioned that immigrants can only be detained for 20 days and added he discussed the basics during the meeting with Secretary Nielsen. He explained that ICE and the City are looking at options.

Representative Rivera explained that the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) is continually looking at the plan.

Mr. Gonzalez added the City responded with Council's spirit in mind; he said when the Police Chief notified him, he immediately contacted the Mayor and staff and the Mayor reacted in a way that reflects a positive light on El Paso.

**NO ACTION** was taken on this item.

### **ADJOURN**

Motion made by Representative Svarzbein, seconded by Representative Hernandez, and unanimously carried to **ADJOURN** this meeting at 10:00 a.m.

AYES: Representatives Svarzbein, Hernandez, Morgan, and Rivera

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Representatives Annello, Noe, Ordaz Perez, and Lizarraga

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APPROVED AS TO CONTENT:

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Laura D. Prine, City Clerk