

**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 R. NOE, DISTRICT 5  
CLAUDIA ORDAZ PEREZ, DISTRICT 6  
HENRY RIVERA, DISTRICT 7  
CISSY LIZARRAGA, DISTRICT 8

**SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES  
MAIN CONFERENCE ROOM  
July 9, 2018**

The City Council met at the above place and date. Meeting was called to order at 10:23 a.m. Mayor Dee Margo present and presiding and the following Council Members answered roll call: Alexandra Anello, Cassandra Hernandez, Sam Morgan, Claudia Ordaz Perez, and Cissy Lizarraga. Late arrivals: Henry Rivera at 10:24 a.m., Peter Svarzbein at 10:25 a.m. and Michiel Noe at 10:26 a.m.

**AGENDA**

1. For discussion and action: FY 2018 Budget as presented by the City Manager.

Mr. Tommy Gonzalez, City Manager, and Mr. Robert Cortinas, Chief Financial Officer, presented a PowerPoint presentation (copy on file in the City Clerk's office).

Mayor Margo mentioned Fort Bliss is the largest employer and noted that a few members of the Governor's Achievement Award Review Board were impressed with El Paso during their recent visit.

Mayor Margo also commented that the pension and fund balances affect the City's credit rating.

Mr. Gonzalez added that the following points:

- It is best practice for pension funds to pay off some liabilities or deposit more monies into the fund
- "Chime in" requests received mirror budget priorities
- Pay increases in departments with key positions, for example: within Legal and Sanitation Drivers so that we can retain good people.
- Revenues are now forecasted based on three-year actuals, which is a better indicator.

Representative Hernandez asked if historical information was being used for the revenue forecasts; Mr. Cortinas replied "yes".

Mayor Margo asked what percentage of total revenues comes from sales tax; Mr. Cortinas said it is 22 percent.

Mr. Tommy Gonzalez talked about expanding Sun Metro routes and added there is a

seven-year pay back that needs to happen as well as changes based on ridership.

Regarding staffing, Mr. Gonzalez mentioned that a large portion of the general fund budget goes to the Police and Fire Departments; he also added that 76 positions within Sun Metro are funded through sales tax.

Mayor Margo commented that the focus needs to be on the general fund for example over \$425 million from the general fund covers public safety and streets costs.

Ms. Melissa Bailey, member of the El Paso Police Wives Association, expressed her concerns related to fire extinguishers, outdated gear, and tourniquets needed to administer aid and help with response time.

Mr. Gonzalez replied that the City does provide some items and is currently looking at others.

Ms. Dionne Mack, Deputy City Manager, provided some examples and related costs.

Mr. Gonzalez reiterated that safety is not being compromised, he mentioned, as ex-military, he was not aware of tourniquets but will look to make sure they are available; he thanked the speakers for bringing up these issues.

Ms. Mack added that the City looks at training, standards, and experts to decide on priorities.

## **Goal 1**

Ms. Monica Lombrana, Aviation Director, presented a PowerPoint presentation (copy on file in the City Clerk's office).

Mr. Gonzalez spoke about the increase in operating cost on airport projects.

Mr. Gonzalez commented on the international bridges and mentioned that in the past funding was not available; he added that the state is currently figuring out how to allocate funds. It was mentioned that the Bridge of the Americas does not belong to the City. Mr. Gonzalez talked about a Lean Six Sigma project that looked at the bridge system versus one bridge at a time.

Mr. Gonzalez mentioned that the City is currently looking at facial recognition and the fact that the City is currently getting federal funds to automate bridges.

Ms. Lombrana commented on the \$0.25 increase per axle charge on bridges.

Representative Svarzbein commented that there have not been any infrastructure improvements to the bridges and asked if Mexican cities, such as Guadalajara or Monterrey, are expanding air travel to El Paso for defense, aerospace, and tourism.

Ms. Lombrana mentioned there have been continuous meetings with Mexican airlines, such as Volaris, and the fact that it's hard to track passenger data as some passengers drive to Juarez and fly in and out from there. The possibility of tracking

passengers that go by bus was mentioned and also that Mexican airlines do not want to overload Cd. Juarez for political reasons.

Representative Svarzbein raised the question on conventions and Mr. Gonzalez said the City has been working as a team along with Destination El Paso now that there is a hotel inventory. Mr. Westin added that the City is talking with major hoteliers for participation.

Representative Hernandez inquired if there was an increase in outside contracts for economic development; Mr. Cortinas mentioned there was a 1% El Paso Electric franchise fee.

Ms. Jessica Herrera, Economic and International Development Director, commented on the current planning for additional contracts with new Tax Increment Redevelopment Zones (TIRZ) or Public Private Partnership (P3) deals.

Mayor Margo commented on the \$2 million for Customs and Border Protection (CBP) expenditures and how this could be improved; Ms. Lombrana mentioned CBP makes that determination and added they will bring forth a 5-year Capital Improvement Plan.

The Special City Council meeting was recessed at 12:03 p.m.

The Special City Council meeting was reconvened at 12:43 p.m.

## **Goal 2**

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

Mr. Gonzalez mentioned that vehicle preventative maintenance is now performed at the stations instead of taking the vehicles to the garage.

Mayor Margo was interested in knowing what the current percentage of operational fleet is and the response time for the Police Department.

Police Chief Gregory Allen explained that it all comes down to staffing; he stated the City of Albuquerque has 1,700 officers versus 1,106 officers in El Paso, which is bigger and more populated than Albuquerque.

Representative Hernandez asked about the \$4 million in increases for professional services, materials and supplies. Ms. Isaura Valdez, Police Administrative Services Manager, mentioned the additional amount is needed to cover the building lease increase for the Texas Anti-Gang (TAG) center and \$800,000 in materials and supplies for items such as fuel and ammunition.

Representative Hernandez also inquired about increases for professional services. Ms. Valdez cited the wellness health care providers for sexual assault and tests that go along with it.

Representative Annello inquired about the 5 percent increase for Municipal Court. Ms.

Lilia Worrell, Municipal Court Clerk, explained it will go to the upgrade of the credit card machines.

Representative Svarzbein asked Chief Maloney about the advertising budget for Cinemark and about the number of people reached. Chief Maloney replied it was \$5,000 for a total of six weeks at Tinseltown Cinema.

Ms. Mack mentioned additional resources being used to reach people for hiring, such as postcards, billboards. She also mentioned they would be asking the City's web team for assistance due to hits on websites and Twitter.

Representative Svarzbein asked about future plans for advertising with movie theaters and for the definition of a PSA announcement.

Chief Maloney explained a Public Service Announcements are put out to educate the public.

Representative Svarzbein asked about using the Public Information Office (PIO) for this purpose and Ms. Mack commented that it's being handled by the Police Department's PIO. She also explained how the impact is being measured.

Mr. Gonzalez expanded on the video by adding the City has reached out to UTEP and all school superintendents so it can be sent out to the students.

Representative Svarzbein added that more can be done, such as having Police Officer Profiles, information on services provided by the Police Department, and the two police academies.

Mr. Gonzalez said the two academies will continue to address department staffing, about 300 by the year 2020. He mentioned other measures such as camera systems and how they can help prevent crime.

Chief Allen expanded on the topic of the academies by explaining the selection and training processes. The academies now overlap, the one that started in early February of this year will graduate in October, and the one that started in June will graduate in January, 2019.

Representative Rivera asked how it equates to retiring officers; Chief Allen replied 50 percent of officers are eligible for retirement.

Representative Ordaz Perez commented on the average response time going from 18 to 16 minutes and wondered if 300 extra officers would be the magic number. Chief Allen mentioned that compared to other cities, like Austin where there are 1,500 officers and are still running short, 300 is still not enough.

Mr. Gonzalez mentioned officers for the City of Albuquerque with a population of 600,000 equals 189 per square mile and the City of El Paso equals 273 per square mile; the City of Austin with a population of almost 1 million is 1/3 larger than El Paso with a current population of 680,000.

Mr. Gonzalez mentioned that addressing current attrition could be achieved with a combination of officers, technology, cameras, and smarter vehicles.

Mr. Sam Rodriguez, City Engineer, continued with the PowerPoint presentation, which included the design of the Police headquarters garage.

Mayor Margo commented that 70% of the valuation of the new property is considered prime land in District 2.

Representative Annello commented that the current headquarters is in poor condition and that money should be spent on a new facility. Mr. Gonzalez mentioned that the current facility was never meant for a Police Department and that a new facility should maximize space.

Representative Noe suggested that the new facility could share space with the Sheriff's Department and that the current location property could be sold.

#### **Goal 4**

Ms. Tracey Jerome, Museums and Cultural Affairs Director, presented a PowerPoint presentation (copy on file in the City Clerk's Office).

Representative Noe inquired about the eastside natatorium and if it will hold regional and national competitions; Ms. Jerome's reply was yes.

Representative Annello asked about the \$900,000 in professional services; Ms. Jerome explained the stipend in the memorandum of understanding with the Children's Museum.

Discussion continued related to the water increase for parks, new library fees, and History Museum membership fees.

Mr. Gonzalez talked about the priorities for the year 2020, including the expansion of programs for students in parks and recreation centers.

Representative Svarzbein asked for input on the film incubator program and the possibility of 380 agreements for film production; Ms. Jerome provided answers related to the program. Mr. Cary Westin, Deputy City Manager, explained that the city is already looking into 380 agreements.

#### **Goal 5**

Mr. Enrique Martinez, Information Technology Director, presented a PowerPoint presentation (copy on file in the City Clerk's office).

#### **Goal 6**

Ms. Claudia Lujan, Human Resources Assistant Director, and Ms. Maria Pasillas, Tax Assessor Collector, presented a PowerPoint presentation (copy on file in the City Clerk's office).

Representative Svarzbein commented on the success of the *Chime In* program and wondered if it should be a year-round process, or even a three-month process.

Discussion was held on the topics of work schedules, vacation, and holidays as benefits, as well as additional positions within the City Manager's office.

#### **Goal 7**

Mr. Sam Rodriguez, City Engineer, presented a PowerPoint presentation (copy on file in the City Clerk's office).

Mr. Gonzalez and Mr. Jay Banasiak, Sun Metro Director, talked about the status of the streetcars, and mentioned they should be operational by November.

Mayor Margo asked about the percentage of police fleet that is currently operational; Mr. Richard Bristol, Streets and Maintenance Director, replied 273 units per day are needed and included additional information.

Mr. Gonzalez added that the sales tax would help with replacement costs.

Discussion continued on streetlights; Sun Metro efficiency and the streetcar forecast.

#### **Presentation on Championship Fields by District**

Mr. Sam Rodriguez, City Engineer, presented a PowerPoint presentation (copy on file in the City Clerk's office).

A discussion on synthetic field costs was held and Mr. Tracy Novak, Parks and Recreation Director, commented on filed irrigation, temperatures during prime season; and improvements in technology.

Maintenance cost for synthetic and natural turf were discussed as well as the solutions currently being looked at to maintain fields green. A discussion on the use of fields at the Eastside Sports Park also occurred.

#### **Goal 8**

Ms. Ellen Smyth, Environmental Services Director and Ms. Nicole Ferrini, Community and Human Development Director, presented a PowerPoint presentation (copy on file in the City Clerk's office).

Topics such as different fees, allowing pets in restaurants, the ADA budget and requests from Council and departments were discussed.

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**ADJOURN**  
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Motion made by Representative Ordaz Perez, seconded by Representative Anello, and unanimously carried to ADJOURN the Special City Council meeting at 4:59 p.m.

AYES: Representatives Svarzbein, Annello, Morgan, Noe, Ordaz Perez, Rivera, and Lizarraga

NAYS: None

NOT PRESENT FOR THE VOTE: Representative Hernandez

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APPROVED AS TO CONTENT:

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Laura D. Prine, City Clerk