

MINUTES OF THE ADJOURNED MEETING
OF THE LA PALMA CITY COUNCIL

September 24, 2001

CLOSED SESSION

The City Council met in Closed Session at 6:10 p.m. pursuant to Government Code Section 54956.9: CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL – POTENTIAL LITIGATION; Utility Users Tax.

The City Council adjourned the Closed Session at 6:58 p.m.

Mayor Aragona called the adjourned meeting of the La Palma City Council to order at 7:08 p.m. on Monday, September 24, 2001, in the Council Chambers of La Palma City Hall, 7822 Walker Street, La Palma, California.

ROLL CALL:

Councilmembers present: Lauree Aragona, Christine Barnes, Kenneth A. Blake, Alta E. Duke, Paul F. Walker

Councilmembers absent: None

City Officials present: Catherine Standiford, City Manager
Ed Ethell, Police Captain
Ismile Noorbaksh, Director of Public Works/City Engineer
Tami K. Piscotty, Assistant to the City Manager
Paul Pitts, Director of Building & Safety
Robbeyn Bird, Director of Finance
Jan Hobson, Director of Recreation & Community Services
Joan Hoesterey, Principal Planner
Joel Kuperberg, City Attorney
Crystal Wilkerson, Senior Office Assistant

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

There was no one who wished to address the Council at this time.

REGULAR ITEMS

City Manager Catherine Standiford made a visual presentation, which included the following:

- Background
- Financial Overview
- General Impact of Losing the UUT
- Public Education and Outreach

Ms. Standiford concluded by stating that she is requesting two actions by the City Council at this evening's meeting:

- 1 An authorization to spend up to \$50,000 to hire consultants to assist in the public education and outreach program; and
- 2 Allocate \$50,000 from unreserved fund balance for that purpose.

Mayor Aragona asked if there was anyone in the audience who would like to ask any questions at this time.

Mr. Andy Hilbert, 4812 El Rancho Verde Drive, La Palma addressed the Council to state he found the presentation very impressive and thorough. He asked if the \$50,000 for the consultant includes framing the actual ballot language.

Ms. Standiford responded it could potentially be that, but added she did not want to box the Council into a corner and say they are going to choose an election. Essentially what it pays for is a citizens survey at a cost of anywhere from \$20,000 to \$25,000, production of two to three special editions of the La Palman, mailing costs associated with that, assistance to staff at the proposed Community Open Houses and it potentially does include framing of the ballot measure.

Mr. Hilbert asked if staff had considered making cuts to the current budget.

Ms. Standiford responded that is something that can be considered but at this point the recommendation staff has made is to not make significant cuts until the first quarter revenue has been determined. In addition, due of the uncertainty of the utility users tax issue in terms of its magnitude, in her professional opinion making cuts today before a decision is made as to whether the City is going to maintain that revenue source could actually be more disruptive to services than is potentially necessary.

Mr. Hilbert stated he would only suggest making cuts if the revenue is truly going to be less, but in looking ahead as far as advocating the continuance or ratification of the UUT, he feels the citizens like to see some action. If some cuts were made he feels it would be easier for the voter to swallow.

Mr. Gerald Sohl, 4501 Maroon Drive, La Palma, addressed the Council to state that he, too, felt the presentation was excellent. He stated he hopes that the City can continue the services that the City has, and has had in the past. He added that he feels the information needs to be gotten out to the citizens on the importance of this situation because he has heard from several citizens that they are not in favor of keeping this tax, or increasing it. He stressed the need for more education and suggested that volunteers from the community be used to speak in favor of the UUT at the various community meetings.

Mr. Brian O'Neal, 5042 Cartagena Circle, La Palma, addressed the Council to state he would hate to see any of the services and projects planned for the community regress. He stated he felt the presentation made by the City Manager was excellent and he voiced his support for the educational process that needs to be presented to the general public. Mr. O'Neal stated he did an analysis of his utilities for the past year and he paid approximately \$185 for the year and he didn't feel it was that much for the privilege of living in La Palma's type of community. Mr. O'Neal asked

what type of survey would be conducted. Ms. Standiford responded that the survey would be a telephone survey.

Mr. O'Neal asked what the statistically target numbers of households would be. Ms. Standiford responded that has not yet been determined. She added that what they would probably do is take a look at the registered voters and do a stratified random sampling of registered voters taking into account ethnicity, voter patterns, and things like that.

Councilmember Duke commented she feels there is a great need for an educational program for the residents and would like to see that go forward as soon as possible.

Councilmember Blake agreed that a lot of education is needed and hopefully there are some volunteers in the audience that will assist in this effort. He added that not only is the fate of the UUT uncertain but there is uncertainty of the vehicle license tax and the sales tax, and the citizens need to be educated about that as well.

Councilmember Barnes thanked the City Manager for the wonderful presentation. She expressed concern in getting the unreserved funds down to \$16,000 but because of the time limitations she feels the Council needs to do something so she feels the money for the consultant would be well spent. She added that education is so important and she wants the voters to be able to make an informed decision. She suggested that perhaps a survey could be included as an insert in the La Palman.

Mayor Pro Tem Walker stated he has historically been opposed to the Utility Users Tax but in light of this evening's presentation his mind may have been changed. He added one thing he hears is that the City definitely needs to go out and make sure the citizens are properly educated. He concluded by stating he is 100% behind this.

Mayor Aragona stated that if the elementary schools are used as a tool in providing public education, the City needs to make sure that the citizens north of Houston Avenue are pulled in as well. She stated that what has been presented tonight and what the City Manager has asked the staff to come forward with is very aggressive and very forward thinking.

Councilmember Duke made a motion to authorize the City Manager to expend up to \$50,000 in consultant services for a Public Education and Outreach Program. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Blake and carried on the following roll call vote:

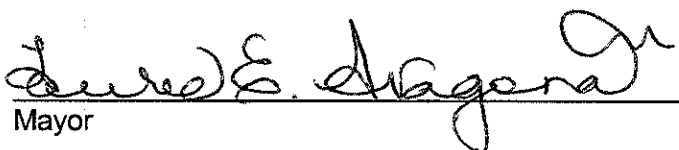
AYES: Aragona, Barnes, Blake, Duke, Walker
NOES: None
ABSENT: None

Councilmember Blake made a motion to allocate the \$50,000 from unreserved fund balance. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Barnes and carried on the following roll call vote:

AYES: Aragona, Barnes, Blake, Duke, Walker
NOES: None
ABSENT: None

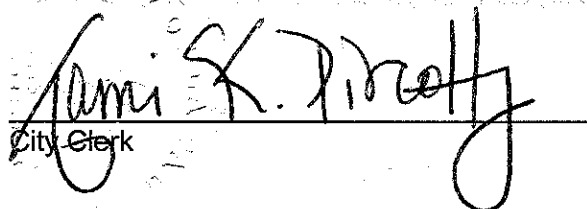
ADJOURNMENT

The City Council adjourned at 8:22 p.m. to its regularly scheduled meeting of October 2, 2001 at 7:00 p.m. in the City Council Chambers, 7822 Walker Street.



Mayor

ATTEST:



City Clerk