

## **Alturas City Council**

City Hall Council Chambers

April 16, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.

Alturas City Council Mayor Kelly Crosby called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. at the City Council Chambers. **Councilmembers present:** Paul Minchella, Brian Cox, Samantha Wood and Kelly Crosby. **Councilmembers absent:** Cheryl Nelson. **Staff present:** City Clerk Tacie Wheeler, City Treasurer Dorothy Long, Director of Public Works Warren Farnam, City Attorney Jeff Hedlund, Chief of Police Marc Muller, Officer Frankie Widby, Fire Chief Jimmy Lloyd and Fire Marshal Eric Hunter. **Public attending:** 14. All present joined together in the Pledge of Allegiance.

No comments were presented under public forum.

Mayor Crosby asks for a motion to remove item #19 from the agenda to prevent any type of retaliation. Councilmember Cox states that this is a very standard practice for law enforcement that protects both the City and the Chief. The thought of retaliation is ridiculous. Councilmember Minchella makes a motion to remove item # 19 from the agenda. Councilmember Cox states that the Chief is councilmember Minchella's son and asks if he should be part of that item at all. Councilmember Minchella asks Attorney Hedlund if he is allowed to be part of this item. Attorney Hedlund states that it is ok, it is not about salary or anything of that nature.

**MOTION** by Councilmember Minchella, **SECONDED** by Councilmember Wood to approve the agenda with the deletion of item #19. **3 AYES, 1 NO.**

**MOTION** by Councilmember Minchella, **SECONDED** by Councilmember Wood to approve Consent Agenda items as presented. **ALL AYES.**

Director of Public Works Farnam says that the Chamber of Commerce is working on Fandango Days preparation and is asking for an encroachment fee waiver. The fee is \$50. Councilmember Minchella asks what an encroachment permit is. DPW Farnam explains that it is for the use of our right of ways, and alleviates a liability issue, ETC.

**MOTION** by Councilmember Minchella, **SECONDED** by Councilmember Wood. **ALL AYES.**

Mayor Crosby stands up to read Resolution #2024-12 for honor and recognition of 67 years of service from Jim Porter with the Alturas Fire Department. Jim Porter says it has been a long time and a wonderful time. He says he has enjoyed all of the people most of the time. He thanks the Council.

**MOTION** by Councilmember Wood, **SECONDED** by Councilmember Minchella to approve Resolution #2024-12. **ALL AYES.**

Mayor Crosby stands to read Resolution #2024-13 for honor and recognition of 32 years of service from Rick and Jane Holloway running the Modoc County Record.

**MOTION** by Councilmember Cox, **SECONDED** by Councilmember Minchella to to approve Resolution #2024-13. **ALL AYES.**

Director of Public Works Farnam explains that these progress reports are something that we do every year. They are a snapshot of what we do and how we're complying and making progress with our projects. He states that Tom Eames did a good job putting these reports together.

**MOTION** by Councilmember Minchella, **SECONDED** by Councilmember Wood to approve Resolution #2024-14. **ALL AYES.**

Director of Public Works Farnam says that he lumped these two reports together in his first explanation, but that this report is specifically about our housing and building projects.

**MOTION** by Councilmember Minchella, **SECONDED** by Councilmember Wood to approve Resolution #2024-15. **ALL AYES.**

Director of Public Works Farnam says that they adjusted the description of this position to be a supervisor position versus a manager position, as that fits the duties more accurately, and takes into account the exempt versus non-exempt status of the position. Warren will be incorporated for any disciplinary actions necessary for employees.

Councilmember Cox states that there is no salary range listed and asks what the salary will be.

DPW Farnam explains that it will depend on the person and what qualifications the person may have. He states that it will not be much more than minimum wage.

Councilmember Cox says that the new job description has much more qualifications listed and explains that we didn't get a lot of applicants before. He is concerned that with more qualifications we won't get any applicants. Mr. Cox asks what the top of the salary would be.

DPW Farnam says it will not be more than \$25 per hour.

**MOTION** by Councilmember Wood, **SECONDED** by Councilmember Minchella to approve Resolution #2024-16. **ALL AYES.**

Director of Public Works Farnam states this is something the Council has already approved, he just needs approval to sign and get this done.

**MOTION** by Councilmember Minchella, **SECONDED** by Councilmember Wood to approve the Supplemental Services Agreement for the Pavement Maintenance Management Plan (PMMP) for the Alturas Municipal Airport and authorize the Director of Public Works to sign and execute the agreement. **ALL AYES**

Councilmember Cox states that he had informed Council and staff when he was leaving in December that he would not be back until February 7th. He says that Attorney Hedlund sent a demand to be at the meeting, then on the agenda, there was an item from Councilmember Crosby to remove me as Mayor. There was also a closed session item and grievances against me, so essentially every item on the agenda was about him. MR. Cox further explains that he informed Attorney Hedlund that he would be unavailable for this meeting, but he did not get a response. He says the letter said he needed to attend the meeting. Mr. Cox states that there is no reason this had to be done in January while he was gone. He was on what's called the

Forgotten Coast in Florida, with no internet for a Zoom option, and no address to be able to post on the agenda for a Zoom meeting. He says he is just asking for the minimal amount for this trip to return to the meeting that was required.

Mayor Crosby says that she does not see basis that it was required for him to attend in person. She says she does not support using tax payer money for this and looks for a motion to deny this claim and to send a letter of denial.

Councilmember Cox states that he looks forward to the denial letter, and that he has all of the documentation to support this claim. Mr. Cox says that this won't be the end of tax payer money being spent on this, there will be more fees.

**MOTION** by Councilmember Minchella, **SECONDED** by Councilmember Wood to deny reimbursement of round trip travel expenses for attendance of City Council meeting on January 16, 2024, and to send a letter of denial. **3 AYES, 1 ABSTAINED**

Mayor Crosby states thank you, the threatened are noted.

Councilmember Cox explains that Attorney Hedlund's contract states that he should provide representation for the Mayor, Council, and councilmembers. He cannot represent any of us in conflict of others. Mr. Cox says he has consulted two attorneys on this, but is only asking for reimbursement from one of them, as Attorney Hedlund will not respond to him. Mr. Cox says that when the attorney has a conflict of interest and is obligated to seek attorney to represent the other party, but Attorney Hedlund refuses to contact him at all. He continues that at the behest of his attorneys, Attorney Hedlund is outside the bounds for this, as he could've provided him an attorney. Mr. Cox is asking for the exact amount that we pay Attorney Hedlund each month. He said he would love to hear Attorney Hedlund respond to this now, as he hasn't responded to any of his emails.

Mayor Crosby asks for a motion to deny claim.

**MOTION** by Councilmember Minchella, **SECONDED** by Councilmember Wood to deny reimbursement for outside legal expenses incurred by Councilmember Cox, and to send a letter of denial. **3 AYES, 1 ABSTAINED**

Councilmember Minchella states that Finance Director Long is the hub for critical tasks for the City and wears many hats. She received strong ratings on job performance in October with Councilmembers Cox and Minchella. He says that \$95,000 for year 1 is in line with other leaders of cities around us.

Councilmember Cox says that they signed a contract one year ago, and that she also receives \$6,000 per year as an elected official. He states that he looked up salaries for her position in other Northern California cities, such as Dunsmuir which was at \$73,289 per year, and Weed that was \$83,000 per year.

Councilmember Minchella says that you have to take in years of service.

Councilmember Cox says that in 2021, Ms. Long received \$63,000, so in just 3 years she would be receiving a 40% increase.

**MOTION** by Councilmember Cox, **SECONDED** by Councilmember Wood to pause briefly as Councilmember Minchella was called out of the room.

**MOTION** by Councilmember Cox, **SECONDED** by Councilmember Wood to reconvene and restart the meeting. **ALL AYES**

Councilmember Cox continues that the salary that was negotiated was concurrent with other cities. He then mentions the CalPers UAL issue and it being reported by Ms. Long wrong in November compared to now, and the \$120,000 grant that was missing and almost had to be returned, and mentions a heating system that was approved 17 months ago that we still don't have. He also stated that he was unaware of the UAL issue when the negotiated previously. He mentions that she received a stipend of \$1500 per month for those extra duties that she took on previously, and that Mrs. Binning was also receiving a stipend for extra duties that are no longer required. Mr. Cox further goes on to say that when Tom Eames was hired, Ms. Long said that it was going to reduce her duties, but it hasn't.

Councilmember Minchella says that the UAL is not Ms. Long's fault and is nothing that she is doing wrong. He says that she is doing a lot of jobs and deserves to be compensated for it.

Councilmember Cox says that a city manager makes roughly \$125,000 per year, and maybe we should be looking into that. He states that Ms. Long is well within her salary range for her job description.

Mayor Crosby states that a city manager should be explored, but that a director was approved and it is close to a manager.

Councilmember Cox states that he did not approve that.

Mayor Crosby says that the General Unit reclass that was done showed how far off our city salaries were in comparison to other cities like us. As Finance/HR Director, grant writer, public works, etc, this salary fits in line with all of those duties. Mrs. Crosby says that she thinks this is a fair salary, and supports Councilmember Minchella's proposal. She asks Councilmember Wood if she has anything she would like to add.

Councilmember Cox states that Director is a new title, it used to be City Treasurer. He says there was a 30% raise to the General Unit, about 20% to PD. Her salary was going to top at \$85,000 on year 3, which would be another 25% raise. He claims that she is not doing the job of a city manager.

Councilmember Wood says that she is not into looking for a city manager for multiple reasons.

**MOTION** by Councilmember Minchella, **SECONDED** by Councilmember Wood to approve the updated 3-year employment agreement for Finance Director that would replace existing employment contract. **3 AYES, 1 NO.**

Mayor Crosby reads the letter of resignation from Attorney Hedlund.

**MOTION** by Councilmember Cox, **SECONDED** by Councilmember Wood to accept letter of resignation from Attorney Hedlund. **ALL AYES**

Mayor Crosby states that with the resignation of Attorney Hedlund, we need to solicit a new one, and it could take some time.

Councilmember Cox requests that they explain what RFP and SOQ stand for for those who may not know. Treasurer Long explains that RFP is Request for Proposal and SOQ is Statement of Qualifications. She says in the past they've done an SOQ.

There is a bit more discussion on this process.

Mayor Crosby asks if there is a time frame on it, to which Mrs. Long replies it is up to the Council.

**MOTION** by Councilmember Minchella, **SECONDED** by Councilmember Wood to authorize Finance/HR Director to solicit for a City Attorney in the form of RFP/SOQ, with no time limit on it. **ALL AYES**

Councilmember Cox reads the agenda attachment for item #17, explaining the need to move the regularly scheduled City Council meetings. He states that over 60 people viewed the recorded Zoom meeting.

Fire Chief Lloyd states that he has asked a lot of people if they would attend a meeting if it were later in the day, and got all “no’s”.

Councilmember Cox asks him who he was talking to, because everyone that Mr. Cox has asked said they would attend. Fire Chief Lloyd said it was mostly his customers that he has talked to.

Councilmember Wood says that she appreciates the sentiment in getting more people here to attend meetings, but she doesn’t think that it’s right to keep our staff here that late, and it would cost the City more money.

Councilmember Cox says that 60 people viewed the YouTube recording, it shows the public has interest. The staff can adjust their schedules.

Fire Chief Lloyd states that the evening is time for their families.

Councilmember Cox states we are in public service.

Councilmember Minchella suggests that recording the meetings will alleviate this problem.

Treasurer Long states that this has to be done by Ordinance and cannot be decided by Council in this meeting.

Jodie Larranaga adds that usually if someone has a problem or something to say, they will show up regardless of what time the meeting is.

Councilmember Cox says that he would be willing for the live streaming of the meetings.

Officer Frankie Widby notes that the Board of Supervisors meetings are at 10 am, not after hours.

Jake Luba suggests a survey be done from people about times for Council meetings, which would allow those that aren’t here today to provide their input.

Mayor Crosby would like to table this discussion.

**MOTION** by Councilmember Cox, **SECONDED** by Councilmember Minchella to table this item. **ALL AYES**

Councilmember Cox suggests that the viewings on the YouTube video they did for the recorded Zoom meeting demonstrated that this would be popular. He also adds that a lot of agencies use good systems that we could look into for live streaming the meetings.

Mayor Crosby says that she has been supportive of some kind of streaming for our meetings. It is a good thought process that will need to involve our attorney and we will need to discuss the pros and cons of live streaming, as some places has had issues with inappropriate behavior. Mrs. Crosby feels that it’s not for her to decide, as it’s her last days on Council, and this should include the new Council members, as it will affect them.

Councilmember Wood states that she has no issue starting this now.

Duanna Knighton says that she thinks it would be important to research this.

Jodie Larranaga suggests to ask other entities what kind of viewings they get, how many people utilize this option, to see if it’d be worth it.

Councilmember Cox states that Sean Buie gave an estimate of about \$15,000, but potentially as low as \$12,000. Maybe there could be a motion to research cost.

**MOTION** by Councilmember Minchella, **SECONDED** by Councilmember Wood to table this discussion for now, establish work groups and include Sean Buie and legal counsel. **ALL AYES**

Councilmember Cox states that our budgets are very hard to decipher. In looking at others, they are clear cut. Our budget hasn't been posted in several years, but he couldn't find many cities that post a budget that looks like ours.

Councilmember Minchella agrees that it is hard to look at. He says he liked the County's version best, of the examples that were sent to him.

Treasurer Long says that the County has a different system than we do. She adds that if they would like to see the budget, she'd like a request, which is also accessible to the public.

Councilmember Cox says that this is not personal, he's just looking for different software.

Treasurer Long asks why he didn't ask her to decipher the budgets for him.

Councilmember Cox says he had many times.

Mayor Crosby adds that it is difficult to read if you don't understand budgets, or aren't part of the fiscal world.

Carol Madison agrees, that they will need to look into new software, and it is not cheap.

Councilmember Cox states that there is a benefit to these softwares.

Carol Madison says that she doesn't know anything about the software that the City uses, but it should cater to those not fiscally sound.

Treasurer Long says that she has a file of numbers in her office, as she's looked into new software, if anyone would like to see.

Councilmember Wood asks if instead of a whole new software system, could we just simplify what we have for the public?

Councilmember Cox says that he's not sure that would comply with the law.

Carol Madison asks what the City's level is to put something out to bid.

Treasurer Long informs the limit is \$25,000.

Councilmember Minchella makes a motion to table the discussion.

Councilmember Cox suggests we set a date for that to happen, maybe July or August meeting with the new Council members.

Duanna Knighton asks for more than a month to be able to look at the budgets.

Treasurer Long adds that she will be in the middle of doing budgets at that time, and it would be really hard to implement new software while being in the middle of that.

Councilmember Cox states that he is suggesting a work session, maybe with Sean Buie, and some proposals.

**MOTION** by Councilmember Minchella, **SECONDED** by Councilmember Wood to plan a work session by December 2024 for this topic. **ALL AYES**

Councilmember Cox says that this is very straightforward and nothing unusual, and provides examples. He states that this allows departments to evaluate and plan for their needs.

Fire Chief Lloyd says that him and the Fire Marshal will be getting together soon to examine their needs and will take the budget to Ms. Long. He is confused on what exactly is being asked of him for this, as he already goes through his budget each year line by line.

Councilmember Cox states that he has never seen anything from departments for budget.

Mayor Crosby says that it sounds like it's not a budget that Mr. Cox is looking for, but more like an Equipment Replacement Plan.

Treasurer Long explains their budget process.

Councilmember Cox likes that the departments submit a wish list to Treasurer Long, and is asking that that comes before the Council, as we have never seen that. It seems that it is a one point job right now.

Mayor Crosby says that is not true, that that is why we have committees. She states that if Mr. Cox has failed to do this at his committee meetings, that is his problem. Committee meetings is where you would see these things he is asking for.

Councilmember Cox says that he is asking for something like what Director of Public Works Farnam provided to them last meeting, the Capital Improvement Plan. He states he is not on any committees anymore.

Mayor Crosby says that she removed Mr. Cox from staff committees, because of complaints.

**MOTION** by Councilmember Minchella, **SECONDED** by Councilmember Wood to table this discussion.  
**3 AYES, 1 NO.**

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

Councilmember Minchella did Finance Director Long's contract in his finance committee. He attended the MCTC/MTA meeting, where they mostly discussed Caltrans plans. He also attended the LAFCO meeting, where they selected a new executive officer, upon John Benoit's retirement.

Mayor Crosby says that she, along with Councilmembers Minchella and Wood, attended the fire department appreciation dinner, and Jim Porter's retirement. She explains that every year, on the first Monday in April, Council is to provide food and serve our fire department in appreciation of all they do. Mrs. Crosby adds that SCEDD is the 18<sup>th</sup> in Redding. She mentions that Councilmember Cox is still on the LTC committee. Mr. Cox says that he has looked, and is not on any committees.

Treasurer Long says that the Lifeguard ad went out and we have been receiving multiple applications. She had a meeting with the McConnell Foundation, which is a grant that the pool committee applied for, and that seemed promising. She attended the Ethics training with Clerk Wheeler that the County put on. She has been busy with audit reports, and pulling items for the outside auditors. Ms. Long adds that the \$120,000 grant that keeps being brought up was in our budget, and was not lost, or ever in danger of being lost, it just would not have been reimbursed to us.

### **COUNCIL/STAFF REPORTS:**

Police Chief Muller says that they had 45 new cases, with 17 arrests. He states that both supervisors, Harrison and Widby, are attending supervisor training now, and the dispatcher will be attending training. They got a new Lidar gun for speed patrol, they are working on a grant for vehicles and for another position. Councilmember Cox states that a Lidar gun requires surveyed streets, school zones or retirement home zone, otherwise it is considered a speed trap. It has to be a surveyed street. Schools are the only place we could use a Lidar gun. He asks how much it cost.

Chief Muller says about \$2500.

Fire Marshal Hunter says that the grant fell through that they had been working on for the radios.

Officer Frankie Widby states that TEACH will work with us to buy us radios

Fire Marshal Hunter adds that he was quoted about \$200,000 to outfit both fire and PD with radios, about 36 radios, which is why they are searching for grants and such to help pay for them.

Fire Chief Lloyd says they are discussing their wish list, and radios are at the top of that list. He says that they received 26 total calls last month, 3 fire and 23 medical. The fire calls were nothing concerning, false alarm, etc. They worked on firefighter rescue training this month. Mr. Lloyd wants to thank City Council and staff for the dinner. He says the guys really appreciate it. They are on call 24/7, and it is nice when Council and the public recognize all they do.

Director of Public Works Farnam states that Dominic Budmark started April 1st. The mill is still working on their grant. Sewer plant is ongoing. At the WWTP, there are things getting replaced. For roads, they are looking at a start date of June or August for the W. 8<sup>th</sup> street project. He is pushing for August, as June is a very busy month. Mosquito spraying will be starting soon, weather dependent. For the hangar at the airport, insurance sent an engineer to take a look, and we got another \$119,000 from them. We are looking at something the utilized this money for. The pool is on track, with the last of the supplies coming for the heat exchanger. We are looking at May 13<sup>th</sup> to be functional. The public works crew is doing all of the work at the pool, learning new things and working hard on it. Tom Eames finished/passed his lifeguard instructor certification training. Mr. Farnam adds that he is hoping next meeting to bring the new fee rates for the pool, and wanted to look into potentially providing family passes for our employees for their hard work. We are looking at the JLS grounds as a backup for Fandango Days, and have also spoken with Reese about the Outdoor Expo also being at the livestock grounds. JLS will be going the month of June. JLS and the Little League have pitched in to buy security locks, and Eric found grant money we could use as well. They are working with PD on code enforcement.

Councilmember Cox asks how much we were spending each month on the rental generator.

Clerk Wheeler responds \$6200 per month.

Councilmember Cox states that we had already spent \$144,000 on that generator, and he did not realize that when DPW Farnam had asked Council for a \$50,000 budget to replace it so that we did not have to pay that amount in rent anymore. He states that he wants to thank Mr. Farnam for looking into that and saving the City so much money. He wants to offer to Mr. Farnam that if he needs that \$50,000 to be increased to just bring it back to Council. He just did not realize how much we had been spending on the rental generator. Good work.

Jake Luba wants to ask about lifeguard training and if it will be offered to people who want to be trained as a lifeguard, but may not be seeking a position at the City pool.

Director of Public Works Farnam states that they are looking into that.

Mr. Luba adds that according to Google, lifeguards in N. California make an average of \$17.30 per hour.

With no further business to come before City Council, **MOTION** by Councilmember Cox, **SECONDED** by Councilmember Minchella to adjourn the meeting at 4:21 p.m. and to return in regular session on Tuesday, June 21, 2024 at 2:00 pm, City Hall. **ALL AYES**

Respectfully,

*Jacie Wheeler*

Tacie Wheeler  
City Clerk