

MINUTES OF THE



REGULAR MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION AND CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WESTMORLAND

WEDNESDAY, MAY 15, 2024

6:00 PM

City Council Chambers
355 South Center Street
Westmorland, CA 92281

Mayor's Message

This is a public meeting. You may be heard on an agenda item before the Council takes action on the item upon being recognized by the mayor. During the oral communications portion of the agenda, you may address the Council on items that do not appear on the agenda that are within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Council. Personal attacks on individuals, slanderous comments, or comments, which may invade an individual's privacy, are prohibited. The mayor reserves the right to limit the speaker's time. Individuals wishing accessibility accommodations at this meeting, under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), may request such accommodations to aid hearing, visual, or mobility impairment by contacting City Hall at (760) 344-3411. Please note that 48 hours advance notice will be necessary to honor your request.

Brown Act AB 361:

Location: Westmorland City Hall Council Chambers 355 S Center Street

Judith Rivera- Mayor

Xavier Mendez- Mayor Pro- Tem

Ana Beltran- Council Member

Justina Cruz- Council Member

Ray Gutierrez- Council Member

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by Mayor Rivera

Pledge of Allegiance & Invocation: The pledge of allegiance was led by Mayor Rivera

Roll Call: Council Members Present: Mayor Rivera, Council Members Mendez, Beltran and Cruz. Council Member Gutierrez was excused absent.

Oral Communication-Public Comment: Now is the time for any member of the public to speak to the Council. Please step to the podium and state your name and address for the record. Three (3) minute maximum time.

Ryan Kelley, Supervisor District #4 presented a PowerPoint regarding the Lithium Valley Development.

Delia Sanchez, asked Council to not close United Family Center. She provided some hand outs that outlined the benefits of early childhood development. Mayor Rivera responded and stated that the Council's intention is not to close United Families (UF) but that the City applied for a grant to construct a new public safety building at that location. The grant is not secured, but we did apply for \$5.2Million dollars to build it. If the City is awarded the grant, the City will reach out to the community and give them ample notice about the location and what it will mean to UF. Ms. Rivera also translated this message to Spanish. Ms. Sanchez said she wants to express that UF wants to know "if and when" that day comes.

A member of the community also asked about the City's efforts to mitigate the brush and trash collected in the big lot behind Love's Travel Center. Council Member Mendez gave an update saying it should be cleaned within 30 days.

Council Member Cruz stated that the property where United Families is currently located was purchased by the City of Westmorland for the purpose of housing the Fire Department.

A gentleman in the community brought signs that showed the children at the United Families Center.

Alexander Arias, a member of the community called attention to two council members who he said were laughing and not taking the community's concerns about UF closing seriously. He also stated that the Council was not ethical.

A member of the community spoke from the back of the room in Spanish translated back as it being a good idea to move the daycare due to it being in a unsafe location and having the fire department being housed in the building.

Council Member Xavier Mendez stated that Misinformation was not given to the community as he told them it was and idea and may not happen, but that he is opposed to the UF closing.

A member of the community spoke and asked how long has the fire department been on Main Street. This question was answered by Jackie Loper who has worked for the Westmorland Fire Department in some capacity for 45 years. He said that the fire department has been on Main since 1961 and at the current location since 1970. Mr. Loper also stated that the property at 198 3rd Street where UF is currently renting was purchased for the purpose to house the police and fire departments.

Darlene Barber suggested that Council address the timeline that will be implemented if the city is awarded a grant to build the public safety building so that UF has time to relocate and address their wait list. She also expressed concerns about the lack of safety, reported about a crime, stated that some organizations that rent buildings from the city do not take care of them like UF and that early education helps all of the community.

Community Member Spoke in Spanish and translated back as stating that Westmorland should be the richest in the Valley due to the algaculture how long should take to build a fire department. Mrs. Rivera stated that the city is going for a 5.2 million dollar grant to make it happen.

Council Member Mendez told the audience when and where the City Council meet and encouraged everyone to attend the meetings.

Mayor Rivera asked fellow Council Member Cruz who built the Youth Hall? Council Member Cruz stated that the Youth Hall was built by members of the Volunteer Fire Department with money that they raised and donated personally. They spent their own time and money to build the Youth Hall for the benefit of the community and now the community is 'kicking them in the teeth'.

Mayor Rivera thanked everyone for coming and there was no further public comments.

Staff Reports Non-Action Items:

Fire Department - Sergio Cruz

Chief Cruz stated that the Insurance Service Organization that sets rates for fire insurance is meeting with the City next week. He also stated that truck 6231 is back in service, but the medical truck is down.

City Manager- Laura Fischer

Ms. Fischer presented a written report and was asked by the mayor about the status of the park improvement project. She stated that the construction was to start on Memorial weekend, but is concerned about the pool use schedule. Council directed Ms. Fischer and Mr. Barajas to meet with the contractor.

Public Works Director - Ramiro Barajas

Nothing to report

Consent Agenda: Approve the Consent Agenda Items 1-4.

Item 1. Council Member Mendez requested that the minutes be pulled and tabled until next meeting. He wants to make sure his comments from the meeting are included.

Item 3. Was pulled and Mr. Leo Hernandez presented some information to Council regarding the grant application.

1. Approval of Meeting Minutes from May 1, 2024 – **Pulled and Tabled until next meeting.**

2. Approval of City Warrant List.
3. Authorize the Mayor to execute a letter of support to the IID in their proposed DOE GRIP Project, ADMNS Implementation Project.
4. Authorize payment to in the amount of \$75,000 from 510-00-6001 to Dudek Engineering for design and engineering work prepared by AWC on the filter replacement project at the Water Plant funded through the Small Community Drought Fund Grant.

A motion was made by Council Member Beltran and seconded by Council Member Mendez. Motion passed 4-0.

Regular Business:

1. Action in Approving RESOLUTION NO. 2024-06 RESOLUTION ORDERING AN ELECTION, REQUESTING IMPERIAL COUNTY REGISTRAR OF VOTERS TO CONDUCT THE ELECTION, AND REQUESTING CONSOLIDATION OF THE ELECTION- Christine Pisch, City Clerk

A motion was made to approve and adopt by Council Member Beltran and seconded by Council Member Mendez. Motion passed 4-0.

2. Discussion & Action to Authorize the Purchase of Frey Municipal Accounting Software and Approve a Five-Year Payment Agreement in an Amount Not to Exceed \$37,941.87 with a Total Five-Years of Payments Not to Exceed \$117,561.48 - Laura Fischer, Manager

Ms. Fischer presented information on two companies that presented their software to staff.

A motion was made by Council Member Beltran and seconded by Council Member Cruz to approve agreement with Frey Municipal Accounting Software. Motion passed 4-0.

3. Discussion & Action Authorize the Mayor to executed an Agreement with Fechter and Company Certified Public Accountants to prepare the 2023-24 audit in an amount not to exceed \$30,000.00-Laura Fischer, Manager

A motion was made by Council Member Beltran and seconded by Council Member Cruz to approve and adopt Agreement with Fechter. Motion passed 4-0.

4. Discussion & Action Authorize the State Controller's Office, Division of Audits to prepare the City's FY 2023-24 Annual Street Report on a cost-recovery basis not to exceed \$3,000 paid from Gas Tax HUTA Funds. - Laura Fischer, Manager

A motion was made by Council Member Beltran and seconded by Council Member Cruz to approve and authorize. Motion passed 4-0.

5. Discussion & Action Approval Field Training in the amount not to exceed \$1,700.00- Laura Fischer, Manager

A motion was made by Council Member Mendez and seconded by Council Member Beltran to approve sending police officer to Field Training School. Motion passed 4-0.

6. Discussion & Action Approval of Invoices for the following Repairs/Maintenance Expenses for Public Works Department:

- a. Emergency Repairs to two mechanical seals on settled/filtered water pumps in the amount of \$6,382.20 from account 510-00-6001

A motion was made by Council Member Beltran and seconded by Council Member Mendez to approve the repairs. Motion passed 4-0.

- b. New Shutoff valve at the Water Plant north finishing pond inlet in an amount not to exceed \$6,000 from account 510-00-6001

A motion was made by Council Member Beltran and seconded by Council Member Mendez to approve the purchase. Motion passed 4-0.

- c. Approval to purchase spare chemical pump and recirculation pump at Water Plant for Aluminum Sulfate in an amount not to exceed \$3,600 from account 510-00-6001

A motion was made by Council Member Cruz and seconded by Council Member Beltran to approve the purchase. Motion passed 4-0.

- d. Approval to make necessary repairs to the mechanical seal on the lift station pump in an amount not to exceed \$1,210.00 from account 520-00-6001

This item was tabled until the next meeting on June 5, 2024.

- e. Approval of materials and labor needed to install sewer, water and electrical service at the Fire Department FEMA trailers in an amount not to exceed \$3,160.00 from account 110-22-6246 in Fire Department Repairs and Maintenance

A motion was made by Council Member Mendez and seconded by Council Member Beltran to approve the installation of FEMA trailers at Fire Station. Motion passed 4-0.

7. Information Only Regarding Love's Development Agreement Status – Laura Fischer, Manager

Direction was given to staff and counsel to prepare a request to Amend the Development Agreement with Love's.

8. Information Only Budget Review FY 2025- Laura Fischer, Manager

Council was notified that they should meet with Ms. Fischer within the next two weeks to review the budget at their convenience.

Closed Session: Council adjourned to Closed Session at 7:18 pm

- o Public Service Employees Job descriptions and salary scales, as well as Appointment, Employment, or evaluation (Gov't. Code §54957(b)(1).)
- o Conference with real estate negotiator (Gov't. Code §54956.8.)

Council Reconvened to Open Session at 8:10 pm.

City Attorney reported that no reportable action was taken.

A motion was made by Council Member Beltran and seconded by Council Member Mendez to adjourn. Motion passed 4-0.

Adjournment: Next regular scheduled meeting June 5, 2024.

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cityclerk@cityofwestmorland.net



