



Minutes

Lakewood City Council

Adjourned Regular Meeting held
May 29, 2001

MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER at 6:16 p.m. by Mayor Wagner in the Executive Board Room at the Civic Center, 5000 Clark Avenue, Lakewood, California.

ROLL CALL: PRESENT: Mayor Robert Wagner
Vice Mayor Larry Van Nostran
Council Member Joseph Esquivel
Council Member Wayne Piercy
Council Member Todd Rogers

SCHOOL DISTRICT FORMATION COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

City Manager Howard Chambers stated a copy of an item approved by the Bellflower Unified School District (BUSD) Board had been included in the Council's agenda packet so that the City Council could provide direction to staff for an appropriate response.

Mayor Wagner stated that Bellflower Unified had proposed expanding their district area to include all students within the City of Bellflower and the City of Lakewood. They had acted to form a committee to study the feasibility of such an action and stated that such a combination would be more likely to gain the approval of the State Board of Education than a Lakewood-only district. He expressed concern that since part of the City of Bellflower was served by the Downey Unified School District, such a move might just bring another combatant into the battle. He noted that the major benefit of such a move would appear to be an improvement in the number of students per school site ratio. He stated the City Council needed to determine the best response to the BUSD action.

Council Member Rogers stated that he had previously had an opportunity to meet with Mr. Cleveland and Mr. Carman of the Bellflower School Board and that they both felt that any Downey transition would be a non-controversial issue. He stated that while he was willing to work with the Bellflower committee, he saw no reason to join their committee when there were other committees that had long been established to work on the district organization issue. He also expressed concern that the City Council had not been contacted by the BUSD, but had learned of the action through the media.

The City Manager stated that he had received a call from the Assistant Superintendent of BUSD apologizing for having failed to contact the City sooner.

Council Member Piercy expressed concern that working with the BUSD committee on their plan would suggest Lakewood favored or endorsed such plan.

SCHOOL DISTRICT FORMATION COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE - Continued

Council Member Rogers stated that it could be viewed as a window of opportunity to focus on discussions with all four districts. He suggested formal correspondence go out to all districts inviting each to sit down and see what common ground existed.

Mayor Wagner stated there could be other issues involved such as the shift of students in the relatively small area served by Paramount Unified School District to the Bellflower District. He also expressed an interest in meeting to determine if any common ground existed. He suggested a sub-committee could be formed to meet with the individual districts.

Vice Mayor Van Nostran stated that a committee-of-the-whole had been established so that all Council Members would have the opportunity to hear all of the information from the original sources and no information would be lost, as could happen when a sub-committee has to report back.

Council Member Piercy suggested that the City Council sponsor a summit conference with representatives from all districts attending. He stated that it could appear divisive should the Council meet only with the Bellflower district.

Mayor Wagner expressed concern about bringing all the districts together at once, stating that there was little opportunity for any meaningful dialog in such a large group. He stated that it could best be determined where each district was coming from by meeting with them individually.

Vice Mayor Van Nostran noted that whenever asked, Lakewood residents had consistently expressed the desire for their own separate district. He stated that Bellflower should be advised that at this time, Lakewood was not ready or interested in joining their committee.

Council Member Rogers suggested that a letter go out from the Mayor to all four districts expressing our continuing interest in improving the delivery of educational services in Lakewood and the possibilities for cooperation. He stated that staff could be assigned to follow up with the districts.

Council Member Piercy supported the idea of sending a letter to all districts and meeting to look for common ground.

VICE MAYOR VAN NOSTRAN MOVED AND COUNCIL MEMBER PIERCY SECONDED TO AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR TO SEND A LETTER TO EACH OF THE FOUR SCHOOL DISTRICTS SERVING LAKEWOOD

Mayor Wagner stated the letter should advise that the City was interested in exploring possibilities and requesting each district to send a representative to meet with the Committee-of-the-whole. The letter directed to BUSD would decline a seat on their committee but express an interest in meeting to discuss possibilities.

SCHOOL DISTRICT FORMATION COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE - Continued
UPON ROLL CALL VOTE, THE MOTION WAS APPROVED:

AYES: COUNCIL MEMBERS: Esquivel, Piercy, Van Nostran, Rogers and Wagner

NAYS: COUNCIL MEMBERS: None

3.1 • PRELIMINARY REVIEW OF AMENDMENT OF OPERATING BUDGET

a. PRESENTATION BY CITY MANAGER

The City Manager displayed slides and stated the current budget represented the eighth two-year budget for the City of Lakewood. He reported that last fall, negative financial projections regarding the economy had prompted a reanalysis on the second year of the budget, but the worst had not happened. He stated that staff was proposing minor adjustments to sixteen categories of the budget. He noted that sales tax revenue figures had been adjusted down to reflect the cooling economy and that adjustment had also been made for the increases in utility costs. He stated that depending on the economy and the actions of the State, there were projects contained within the proposed Capital Improvement Projects that could be scaled down or deferred if necessary. He provided a brief fiscal overview of the budget process including fiscal realities affecting Lakewood and the City's overarching priorities.

Mayor Wagner questioned the revenue estimates relating to the Utility Users' Tax (UUT). Assistant City Manager Michael Stover responded by stating that Edison had changed the formula that was used for collecting the tax. The City Manager noted that there was not an expectation of a large increase since most residents were making significant conservation efforts which would offset the increase. The Finance Director, Larry Schroeder, also noted that there was legislation pending in Sacramento that would cap increases in UUT revenues.

b. RATIFICATION OF MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH LAKEWOOD CITY EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION

The Assistant City Manager gave a brief presentation on the changes in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the City and the Lakewood City Employees Association. He stated that following the parameters established by the City Council, negotiations had occurred and an agreement reached with the Association. Staff was requesting the City Council ratify and approve the MOU.

VICE MAYOR VAN NOSTRAN MOVED AND COUNCIL MEMBER ESQUIVEL SECONDED TO APPROVE THE AGREEMENT WITH THE LAKEWOOD CITY EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION.

Mayor Wagner inquired about the changes in jury duty service. Mr. Stover responded by stating that the Association had raised the concern that although the City's policy provided for five days of paid jury service, occasionally a judge would demand that an employee serve additional days. Although in practice the employee would be paid for the additional days, the Association wanted this practice to become a written policy.

b. RATIFICATION OF MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH LAKEWOOD CITY EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION - Continued

Mayor Wagner requested the City Attorney review the letter normally provided to employees for submission to the courts, stating the City's five-day policy to ensure that this recent change did not present a legal conflict.

In response to a question from Mayor Wagner, Mr. Stover stated that the language added to the Committee Participation section meant that both sides would be willing to come back to the table to discuss the issue, but there was no automatic agreement implied.

Mayor Wagner also expressed concern that the change in medical benefits for retirees would increase the number of employees retiring at age 55. Mr. Stover noted that the benefit was only available to employees who retired from Lakewood with at least 20 years of service with the City and that this benefit added only one quarter of one percent to the base amount. Mr. Stover also noted that payment of this type of benefit was a requirement of agencies participating in the Public Employees Retirement System.

Mayor Wagner stated that he felt the component of the agreement dealing with the medical retirement benefit had gone beyond the authority granted by the City Council and that he would not support that portion of the agreement.

Council Member Rogers noted that an employee retiring at 55 with 20 years of service to Lakewood would be gambling that they would not need the supplement after age 75 when such benefits would cease. He also inquired about the additional language for Article 26, Retirement System. Mr. Stover responded by stating that it was not really anything new, but was rather a matter of putting into writing something that the City was already doing.

MAYOR WAGNER MOVED AND COUNCIL MEMBER PIERCY SECONDED TO AMEND THE MOTION TO CONSIDER THE MEDICAL RETIREMENT BENEFIT SEPARATELY. UPON ROLL CALL VOTE, THE MOTION WAS APPROVED:

AYES: COUNCIL MEMBERS: Esquivel, Piercy, Van Nostran, Rogers and Wagner

NAYS: COUNCIL MEMBERS: None

UPON ROLL CALL VOTE, THE ORIGINAL MOTION AS AMENDED WAS APPROVED:

AYES: COUNCIL MEMBERS: Esquivel, Piercy, Van Nostran, Rogers and Wagner

NAYS: COUNCIL MEMBERS: None

COUNCIL MEMBER ESQUIVEL MOVED AND COUNCIL MEMBER PIERCY SECONDED TO APPROVE THE AMENDMENTS TO SECTION 16. MEDICAL RETIREMENT BENEFIT.

b. RATIFICATION OF MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH LAKEWOOD CITY EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION – Continued

UPON ROLL CALL VOTE, THE MOTION WAS APPROVED:

AYES: COUNCIL MEMBERS: Esquivel, Piercy, Van Nostran and Rogers

NAYS: COUNCIL MEMBERS: Wagner

The Assistant City Manager also requested the City Council consider staff recommendations two and three, which would instruct the City Manager to place the resolutions adopting the MOU and the modified Personnel Rules and Regulations on the June 12th City Council meeting and authorize the retention of professional services from Phase II Systems for the preparation of an IRC 401(a) tax deferral plan in a sum not to exceed \$10,000.

COUNCIL MEMBER PIERCY MOVED AND COUNCIL MEMBER ESQUIVEL SECONDED TO APPROVE STAFF'S RECOMMENDATIONS. UPON ROLL CALL VOTE, THE MOTION WAS APPROVED:

AYES: COUNCIL MEMBERS: Esquivel, Piercy, Van Nostran, Rogers and Wagner

NAYS: COUNCIL MEMBERS: None

3.2 • PRELIMINARY REVIEW OF LEGACY CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATE 2001-2006

The Assistant City Manager displayed slides and presented a brief overview of the update to the Legacy Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) reviewing both the funded and unfunded projects. He stated the Plan always had a significant percentage of unfunded projects and that it was not our policy to proceed with any project unless the funding source was firm.

Council Member Piercy inquired about the slide showing changes to the CDBG Eligible Areas of the City. Mr. Stover responded by stating that no changes were official until the census data analysis had been finalized, which would be in about two years.

Vice Mayor Van Nostran asked if the energy cost increases were likely to affect the proposed Sheriff's Station expansion. Mr. Stover responded by stating increased energy costs could impact the amount available in the Sheriff's budget for the project. The City Manager stated that a portion of the project was to be funded from the Sheriff's Department budget and that the Sheriff would seek the remainder from the Board of Supervisors.

Mayor Wagner suggested that funding be set aside for the City's 50th anniversary celebrations in 2004.

Mayor Wagner expressed the need to find a funding source for the median and panel renovation project and stated that perhaps such a project could be spread over multiple years.

3.2 • LEGACY CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATE 2001-2006 – Continued

Council Member Rogers stated that the project was important to residents and that the City needed to be responsive. He requested staff investigate and provide the City Council with a report on how this project could be initiated.

Council Member Piercy raised the budget-related issue of compensation and educational funding for City commissioners, noting that it had been many years since an adjustment had been made and that it was especially important to provide funding for new commissioners to take advantage of educational opportunities.

*120-3
Commission
Compensation*

Mayor Wagner noted that the policy had previously been that the City Council could entertain a request from a new commissioner to attend a special training seminar or conference, but that no requests had been made in the recent past. He thanked Mr. Piercy for raising the issue and stated that action was warranted and more information was needed. He suggested conducting a survey of other cities for comparison purposes.

CLOSED SESSION:

At 8:16 p.m., the City Council recessed to a closed session pursuant to Government Code §54957 to evaluate the performance of the City Manager. At 9:20 p.m., the meeting was reconvened with all members present.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to be brought before the City Council, Mayor Wagner adjourned the meeting at 9:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Denise R. Hayward, CMC
City Clerk