

**Minutes
SPECIAL
CITY COUNCIL/SUCCESSOR
AGENCY/PUBLIC FINANCE AUTHORITY
MEETING AGENDA
Fire Department Workshop
December 10, 2015**

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Ramsey called the meeting to order at 5:06 PM.

He led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Council Members Present: Raine, Keough, Ramsey (Absent Vosburg, Lander)

Mayor Pro-tem Keough reported that Council Member Vosburg has gone full-time at the Library and he could not change his schedule to accommodate tonight's meeting.

Others Present: City Manager Marissa Trejo, Acting Fire Chief Duane Gabriel, Captain Keith Krider, Union President Ramsey, members of the Fire Department, City Clerk Wanda Earls and several members of the community.

2. AWARDS, PRESENTATIONS, APPOINTMENTS AND PROCLAMATIONS

3. CITIZEN COMMENTS (NONE)

4. PUBLIC HEARINGS (NONE)

5. CONSENT CALENDAR (NONE)

6. ORDINANCE PRESENTATION, DISCUSSION AND POTENTIAL ACTION ITEMS (NONE)

**1. Fire Department Workshop: Discussion of Fire Department Issues
Marissa Trejo, City Manager**

City Manager Trejo opened the meeting for discussion of issues/concerns of the fire department employees.

Mayor Pro-tem Keough brought up the subject of the potential tax measure to be brought before the taxpayers for the benefit of the public service employees.

Chamber of Commerce Manager Katie Delano reported that she and representatives from the PD and FD had met. They contacted cities where a Public Safety Tax had passed and then contacted Consultant Andrea Diaz of the Lew Edwards Group. This group handles every aspect of the election process

and has a 98% success ratio for 69 communities. Red flags were identified as the city is split 50/50 Republican and Democrat and there are more males than females. This can have an affect on the voting results. The Lew Edwards Group's fee will be around \$100K-\$120K. They handle everything necessary to win a measure on the ballot.

City Clerk pulled up the following from the Internet:

The Lew Edwards Group combines effective grassroots organizing strategies and field techniques with innovative mail and media to achieve Election Day victories for our clients. Our election services include:

1. Pre-announcement Tactics
2. Viability Assessment and Strategies
3. Candidate Preparation
4. Campaign Management
5. Campaign Strategies and Tactics
6. Design and Development of Media and Direct Mail
7. Field and Grassroots Organizing Direction
8. "Vote-By-Mail" and "Get-Out-The-Vote" Implementation Techniques

It was reported that the PD and FD are ready to go and are in the committee seeking process. We are late getting started and this will be on the agenda for the January meeting. We need to jump on it and get the measure out there.

Ms. Delano indicated she regards this as a long-term investment and well worth the cost for the future.

Mayor Pro-tem Keough suggested there might be some one-time monies soon and it is a gamble and risky.

Ms. Delano said the language is important and we are up against West Hills and Coalinga Unified as they are concurrently seeking bonds measures.

It was reported that the ambulance averages 1-4 calls daily that are missed because of only two ambulances on duty. They need that third ambulance. Also, the age of the ambulances is beginning to show as they are breaking down and the costs to repair is becoming greater than the replacement value of a new ambulance. They recently tried to pull the third ambulance from storage due to an ambulance breakdown and it would not start.

The Department employees work hard and are problem solvers.

Mayor Pro-tem Keough suggested to not get lost in details. The City needs a Strategic Plan to help us determine the type of city we want to be.

Captain Krider suggested emphasizing the service the FD gives so the public is aware of all they do. He suggested post cards so people could evaluate on how well they performed their duties. This helps to measure performance.

Union President Ramsey said we have a great department. Other cities are not as particular as Coalinga fire employees. We take pride in ourselves and in the job we do.

Mayor Pro-tem Keough said he is glad to see the Coalinga patch and he is glad we did not change. He suggests we stick together and push for excellence and thus become stronger.

What can the Council do? We need to set aside our differences and hurt feelings and resolve them. He is shooting for excellence.

Union President Ramsey said he will not support a General Tax.

Mayor Pro-tem Keough said there are trust issues with our residents. They need to hold the Council accountable.

Ms. Delano said the Public Safety Tax takes 66.1% to pass. We need to make it about the needs of the department and we need to see something moving forward. We need to do our due diligence for the community.

Captain Krider said the community needs to understand. They will be voting on service levels or funding. Education is important.

Mayor Ramsey said the Department has to protect 1500 square miles.

Mayor Pro-tem Keough said we have to sell Coalinga Pride.

It was reported that the Department is a Class 3 Department and if the rating drops it will affect insurance rates for commercial. The Department has a Standard of Professionalism to meet.

Union President Ramsey asked who is responsible for solicitation of business to town.

Ms. Delano said she tries but she cannot give away anything to attract business to Coalinga.

Union President Ramsey indicated we need to sell Coalinga. We have an airport without fog; FedEx planes were landing here last winter. We need to offer property and/or five year tax breaks. Water and Sewer Systems need updating.

Mayor Pro-tem Keough said all our systems need updating and we need to rehab our infrastructure. We do need to attract businesses to Coalinga. We can no longer go to our old reliable resources like the oil companies. It is now costing them \$37.00 to make a barrel of oil. We need to let people know what is going on through updating our website.

Mayor Ramsey said we are getting an update to our website however it is not approved.

City Manager Trejo asked if Council approves this contract and they do polling, what if the company says go General Tax.

Union President Ramsey said no to General Tax he would much rather have a Public Safety earmark.

Ms. Delano said we need to educate the community on each.

It was reported that the last tax measure did not fly. The businesses were against it. The answer is to get business behind the tax measure; they cannot afford to not have a fire department. It cost the City about \$38K to put on the ballot, therefore the true costs if we choose the Lew Edwards Group would be around \$150K.

Mayor Pro-tem Keough said we need a representative from the Lew Edwards Group to come before the Council.

If we fail, morale will be down.

It was reported that morale is down but pride is up because of the lack of manpower.

Measure P received 28.1% positive votes with 1,833 people voting.

Mayor Ramsey said Orange Cove passed with 67.57% yes votes and 32.4% no votes for PD and Fire.

The Lew Edwards Group whole purpose is to pass the tax. We need to get a representative from the Group to the January 7th Council Meeting.

Fire Fighter Irwin said the Department needs a sense of purpose and a plan. They need direction and road map.

Guest said you need measurable and tangible goals.

Mayor Pro-tem Keough said the Council wants to support you and we will find out in January about the tax measure. He said to pressure the Council and bring people to the meetings and hold them accountable.

Mayor Ramsey said to keep this in front of everyone. We need it on the agenda and also a decision on the contract and to contact the consultant to appear at our January meeting; we need a decision of which way to go on the tax measure.

Captain Krider said they are seeing if the Union will pay for the Consultant to come to the January meeting.

Mayor Pro-tem Keough said we want information on both tax measures and success rates. The college's/school's measures pass all the time. There will be multiple bonds on the ballot so the City bond has to be different.

FF Irwin said nobody knows about the F/D. We need to sell the possibility of it not passing and what that would mean to the community. We need to give the facts of three ambulances being down and out of service and the firefighters fixing them. We need to sell it to the senior citizens.

An American Ambulance from out of town takes one hour to get here. We service 1100 square with two ambulances and we need more or let someone else do it. When ambulances are out it leaves two people on a Fire Engine and the department in limbo.

Mayor Pro-tem Keough said we have no grand ideas for revenue.

Firefighter Irwin said the FD brings in \$'s to the General Fund. Captains do EMS supervisory duty. A third ambulance will help. We do dual duty; it should be only fire or ambulance.

Acting Chief Gabriel said we need a better estimate on numbers for IDT's which brought in \$792K toward capital. We need more ways to save. Right now the Fire Department and Ambulance is at a "wash".

Mayor Pro-tem Keough said he is impressed by the minimal cost for the department.

Captain Krider said we run a business. The EMS makes money and helps cover the cost of the Fire Department. Acting Chief Gabriel runs it to the standards of the Department.

The Department has to be staffed. Our prime applicant just dropped out of the hiring process. We need to raise pay for FD and PD. Other departments offer sign-on bonuses of \$5k.

Mayor Pro-tem Keough said we need to do all or nothing and pass the tax measure. He wants to make Coalinga attractive and he is for doing the tax measure. He has to compromise his beliefs to make the town better.

Council Member Raine said first let's explain the validity of the need. Keep it simple and get to small groups of people. We need to reach the people by being positive. We need to gain the trust of the community and realize we have a long road ahead.

He was not in favor of CalFIRE.

Mayor Pro-tem Keough indicated the chief is smarter than you think and he is happy he is here. He knows that Chief Gabriel will promote the tax measure.

Mayor Ramsey said the F/D Union is working on, hopefully, paying for a consultant to come before the Council in January.

Mayor Pro-tem Keough asked who is working on the committee.

Ms. Delano said the FD and PD. But, you do need an alternative plan.

Mayor Pro-tem Keough indicated there is an escrow on the incubator units which for twenty years caused decline in cost for buildings. This will level the playing field and our economy should start improving.

Firefighter Milligan said we should explore the tax measure but need an alternative both short and long term. There are lots of needs in the building areas and parking lot. Dirt has been walked in for years from our parking lot. It has caused problems with our carpeting.

The station has not been rehabilitated since 1985 and it is showing its age. Problems have not been addressed. There is a problem with security. What happened to our fencing for the FD?

There is no plan to accomplish these tasks at hand; there has been nothing new for 12 years. The Department employees care for things because of pride. We need a plan and people need to ride-along or hang-out at the Station.

Firefighter Irwin said excellence begins with the school system. We need to support public safety within the City. Coalinga Fire supports exceptionalism.

Mayor Pro-tem Keough said we now have a city manager and a police chief. We are beginning to stabilize issues within the City. Please give us time because we are listening. Good news is we have small positives.

Council Member Raine thanked the FD for their input and re-emphasized the Council is behind the FD and the PD.

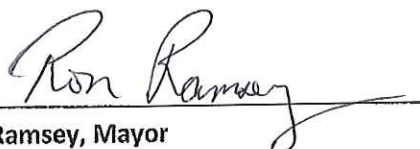
9. ANNOUNCEMENTS

10. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

11. CLOSED SESSION (NONE)

12. ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Ramsey adjourned the meeting at 6:40 PM.


Ron Ramsey, Mayor


Wanda Earls, City Clerk

3-3-16

Date