

Alturas City Council

Regular Meeting

City Hall Council Chambers

January 15, 2019 2:00 p.m.

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Bobby Ray at 2:00 p.m. **Councilmembers present:** Bobby Ray, Jim Irvin, Mark Steffek, Cheryl Nelson, and Loni Lewis. **Councilmembers absent:** None. **Staff present:** City Clerk Macey Binning, City Attorney Jeff Hedlund, Director of Public Works Joe Picotte, City Treasurer Dorothy Long, Police Chief Sid Cullins, Fire Chief Keith Jacques and Fire Marshall Eric Hunter. **Public attending:** 5. All present joined together in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Under the public forum, Carol Madison Executive Director of TEACH, Inc. reported on a project that TEACH has been working on with the County and City. The District Attorney's office approached Mrs. Madison back in July, 2018 regarding grant funding. Through this grant funding they were able to create a Community Work Service Program. TEACH was able to fund a part time coordinator for this project. In a span of 6 months TEACH received 52 referrals and completed 649 hours of community work service. These hours were spent cleaning up the community. According to the Court this has been more hours completed than the past 3 years. With such a successful outcome TEACH will continue the project, even though funding ended December 31, 2018. Mrs. Madison would like to eventually use this Community Work Service Crew to help with the abatement on properties in city limits. The main challenge is going on to private property to do so, Mrs. Madison was hoping City Attorney Jeff Hedlund could do some research to find out if this would be possible.

Doreen Smith Power had concerns on the Downtown Pedestrian Project due to an invoice that was paid for the engineering that was over \$10,000. She believes it did not go through the proper process, and did not have a description of the work that was completed.

Director of Public Works Picotte explained to Ms. Smith Power that this project was started a while ago and went through the proper process. Mr. Picotte said he would be happy to sit down with Ms. Smith Power and explain the invoice and answer any concerns she had.

MOTION by Councilmember Steffek, **SECONDED** by Councilmember Lewis to re-appoint Sam Kylo to another four-year term as City of Alturas representative on the Modoc County Library Advisory Board effective January 1, 2019 through December 31, 2022. **ALL AYES.**

MOTION by Councilmember Lewis, **SECONDED** by Councilmember Irvin to approve the second reading of **Ordinance #516** repealing portions of Chapter 30 of the Alturas City Code relating to "Recreational Areas" and changing the program name from "County of Modoc Tobacco Education" to "Modoc County Tobacco Policy and Education". **ALL AYES.**

Mayor Ray wanted to address the November 30, 2018 letter that the City Council received from Kyle Weber District Manager of Waste Management. Mayor Ray wanted Council to be aware that the rates for Waste Management will increase by 6%. This rate will be effective February 1, 2019 for commercial and April 1, 2019 for residential.

Mayor Pro-Tem Steffek inquired on how the rate increase was determined. Mr. Steffek wondered if they take in consideration that Alturas is a rural area. Steffek also asked what business cost would make this increase.

Kyle Weber District Manager of Waste Management responded that their main business increase has been fuel costs to the company.

Mayor Ray's concern for the rate increase was to inform the public that the rate increase will be taking place.

City Clerk Binning would like to keep the public informed by creating social media accounts, such as Facebook. This would not replace the paper. However, it could give real time updates. For an example when Department of Public Works has a project that temporary effects water lines, the public would be immediately notified. In today's society this is the best way to inform the public. However, creating a Facebook would be another public forum so the City would need to establish Social Media Policy.

City Attorney Jeff Hedlund has three concerns. One is that it is public forum, two that it is government speech, and lastly that is not public form because it is hosted by a third party, and because of this it causes time, place and manner restriction. Hedlund warned City Council if the do go forward, litigation is still new and unclear to the social media accounts.

Mayor Ray is concerned that by creating a Facebook page it will take up too much staff time to monitor throughout the day. Mayor Ray asked who would be in charge of maintaining the page. Mayor Ray also sees this as just a complaint form for the public, and would prefer the public to address issues by contacting the office or attending Council Meetings.

City Attorney Hedlund responded that he believes the main idea of page is strictly information only. Comments will still be active. The City cannot turn that feature off due to freedom of speech. However, you can regulate comments with a Social Media Policy of what is not acceptable such as profanity, discrimination, and or anything else along those lines. Hedlund believes it could be a valuable tool.

Mayor Ray is not sure what the "valuable tool" would be from this.

Bill Hall added it isn't about public input, it is more about reaching and notifying the public of critical information. That is why it is considered as a valuable tool by other agencies.

Councilmember Lewis believes by seeing some of the same issues posted, it would be good to address those issues.

Councilmember Nelson believes that the Councilmembers and staff are the social media. By hearing complaints and reporting them on to Council.

Mayor Pro-Tem Steffek thinks that it would be a benefit for the City. He has looked at other City websites and those cities have a policy in place. He also did a little research and found you do not have to respond to all comments. He feels our City should have Social Media to provide fast and accurate information to the public.

Mayor Ray asked if we did proceed, what kind of information would go on this? Emergencies, general business, meeting dates?

City Clerk Binning responded that emergency notifications, meeting dates, and legal/classified information that is normally posted in the newspaper will also be posted on the Facebook page.

City Attorney Hedlund recommended posting the link to our website to the Facebook page announcing to the public when items become available on our website.

City Treasurer Long believes it will create good public relations for the City, and believes a good Social Media Policy in place would help. Ms. Long believes by outreaching through Facebook we could see more public attendance in town hall meeting and council meetings, because the public would be informed. Ms. Long also mentioned that you do not have to constantly monitor the page, so it should be minimal staff time.

City Council decided to create a committee to meet with staff and review policy examples. Councilmember Lewis and Councilmember Nelson volunteered to meet with staff and report back to council.

MOTION by Councilmember Steffek, **SECONDED** by Councilmember Nelson to adopt **Resolution #2019-1** approving the amendment to City of Alturas Employment Contract between Cary L. Baker. and the City of Alturas. **ALL AYES.**

MOTION by Councilmember Irvin, **SECONDED** by Councilmember Nelson to adopt the consent agenda as follows: a) Approve minutes for December 18, 2018 meeting with the amendment to add Mayor Pro-Tem Mark Steffek as attending December 18, 2018 Council Meeting; b) Approve City warrants for December 2018 in the amount of \$ \$102,215.40; c) Adopt **Resolution #2019-2** removing inactive water & sewer accounts in the amount of \$308.63. **ALL AYES.**

COUNCIL/STAFF REPORTS:

Fire Chief Jacques informs Council they've been working closely with City Attorney Hedlund to update the weed and nuisance ordinance. They would like the ordinance to be adopted by Spring of 2019. There have been a few small fire calls and they've been busy with medical calls.

Bill Hall & Tanya Shulz with Modoc County Tobacco Policy and Education gave a presentation on flavored tobacco. Mr. Hall demonstrated the devices and flavors that have been used by minors, and how flavors are targeting minors. Mr. Hall would like to have the flavored tobacco ban ordinance on the next City Council agenda.

Police Chief Cullins reports that case numbers are down from 2017. In 2017 Alturas Police Department had 804 Cases and in 2018 had 674. However, number of arrests increased from 223 arrests in 2017 to 265 arrests in 2018.

Mayor Ray asked if there has been an increase in burglaries.

Police Chief Cullins responded that there has been an increase in the last few weeks. Residential burglaries are usually uncommon for the City.

Councilmember Nelson asked Chief Cullins if squatters have increased as well.

Police Chief Cullins is aware of the issue with squatters and has been working on contacting absentee owners of houses to start the process. There are a lot of absentee owners, which is hard to verify if a person can or cannot be on the property.

Councilmember Lewis has been approached by concerned citizens regarding if transients are coming from Fresno area that are banning together for robberies.

Police Chief Cullins is unaware of this, the Alturas Police Department has arrested a few people originally from Fresno. However, he does not believe they have a connection.

Councilmember Lewis would like to have an open house to address these issues and reassure the citizens. With helpful tips on how to protect their homes.

City Treasurer Long informs Council the auditors suggested providing an ACH report at Council meetings. This report will show the amount of transactions that are not included on the blue check warrants because they are automatically withdrawn. Some of the expenses are CalPERS contributions, airport taxes, and unfunded liability. Ms. Long also informed Council office procedures have now changed as well to create a better check and balance system.

Director of Public Works Picotte reports the skate park and new dugouts have been vandalized with graffiti. Picotte also reports a midsized pickup went through the airport gate. Which because of this incident deer were able to get in to airport area. Picotte is working with Alturas Police Department on investigating. Picotte is working on housing element, and may need to hire a consultant to help with housing element. The benefit of completing the housing element is grant funding will become available. Picotte is working with the Fire Marshall to update ordinances, Picotte hopes to update other ordinances too. Picotte would like to have more “teeth” behind ordinances to clean up properties and streets.

Mayor Ray asked about the chlorine issue.

Director of Public Works Picotte responded that recently during routine water sampling a few issues came up. Picotte followed State procedures and took necessary action to correct issue. Per State requirements notification is not required if chlorine amount is under a certain threshold amount. Picotte was well under amount, and was amazed that some people could detected any signs of chlorine.

Councilmember Nelson brought up the potholes on Modoc Street. She did see that Director of Public Works Picotte did purchase cold mix.

Director of Public Works Picotte responded with tight funding, heavier traffic streets will be more of a priority.

Councilmember Nelson also reports she is receiving complaints on the building on Main Street with a hole through it.

Director of Public Works Picotte has drafted and sent a letter to owner, with current ordinances that is all he can really do. However, he will keep addressing the matter.

Mayor Pro-Tem Steffek met with Director of Public works and Rotary Club of Alturas to take a tour of the Alturas Municipal Airport. Steffek was pleased with the attendance. All together he believes 15 people attended. He thought Picotte did a great job informing and showing the value of the Alturas Municipal Airport is to the community.

Mayor Ray informs Council he has received a letter form Anna Marie Jones. He wanted to make Council aware and he will be contacting Anna Marie Jones.

With no further business to come before Council, meeting adjourned at 3:55 p.m. to return in regular session on Tuesday, February 19, 2019 at 2:00 p.m., City Hall.

Respectfully,

Macey Binning

Macey Binning
City Clerk