

CITY OF BLOOMFIELD
REGULAR COUNCIL MINUTES
September 24, 2018

The Regular Meeting of the Bloomfield City Council was held at 6 p.m. in the Council Chambers at 915 N. First Street, Bloomfield, NM. The meeting was in full conformity with the laws and rules of the Municipality.

In attendance were Mayor Cynthia Atencio and Councilors Matt Pennington, Curtis Lynch, Sue Finch and Ken Hare.

Also present were City Manager George Duncan, City Attorney Ryan Lane, and City Clerk Dorothy Nobis. Department Heads present were Brad Ellsworth, Jason Thomas, Fire Chief John Mohler, Interim Police Chief Randon Matthews and Donna Clifton.

Councilor Sue Finch offered the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Agenda was amended, moving the Discussion and Possible Action on Accounts Payable to Unfinished Business at the October 9 meeting of the Council, and adding a Statement from the Mayor to New Business. Councilor Finch moved to approve the Agenda, with changes, the minutes of the September 10, 2018 meeting, and Councilor Lynch seconded. Approval was unanimous.

Councilor Finch moved to approve the **Consent Agenda**. Councilor Lynch seconded and approval was unanimous.

A Special Presentation on House Bill 98, which relates to municipalities opting in to allow the County Clerk's Office to oversee all elections was given by **County Clerk Tanya Shelby**. The bill, which was passed by the New Mexico Legislature earlier this year, gives the County Clerk and her staff the responsibility of all elections (municipal, special, school board, primary and general). The City of Bloomfield has the opportunity to "opt in" to the bill, which would eliminate the need for the City Clerk to oversee the election judges/team, purchase the ballots, and monitor any overtime required. The City Clerk would be responsible for opening and closing polls for those elections. If the City of Bloomfield agrees to opt in, there will be an assessment fee, which would be paid annually to the County Clerk's Office, and would be about \$1,500 a year. Bloomfield **Finance Director Brad Ellsworth** said the assessment would save the city some money. All special elections will be held with a mail in ballot. Tanya said the hope of House Bill 98 is to increase voter participation. The city has until January to decide if it wants to opt in to the bill.

New Business:

Public Works Director Jason Thomas asked the Council to approve an agreement with Bohannon Huston Inc. (BHI) for the final design of the Water Reclamation facility. Rob Richardson of BHI was on hand to answer questions and provide additional information. Councilor Lynch moved to approve the agreement and Councilor Hare seconded. Approval was unanimous.

Finance Director Brad Ellsworth presented his Monthly Financial Report. Brad said revenues are slightly over budget, with the revenue from Gross Receipts Taxes (GRT) about \$100,000 over budget so far this year. He reminded the Council, however, that the summer months generate the most GRT, so we can anticipate less GRT revenue for the remainder of the year. Councilor Hare had some questions, all of which were answered to Councilor Hare's satisfaction.

Mayor Atencio read the following statement regarding the council's discussions with San Juan County in examining the futures of the city's Police and Fire Departments:

"In reference to the statement I released on Thursday, (September 20, 2018), I want to reiterate that NO decisions have been made on either the Police Department or the Fire Department. We will NOT make any of those decisions without having all the information necessary. That includes financial and department data. The council and I just ask for your patience and, again, to keep an open mind. We do not have any answers at this time. We have only begun the preliminary talks with the county. So we cannot tell you how much it will cost or any other information because, like I said, we are only in the preliminary stages. We are seeking out this information. The Sheriff's Office has begun an evaluation of the Bloomfield Police Department. This evaluation will serve as a tool, both for the SO to look at costs and also for the City of Bloomfield to be able to evaluate the cost of our department.

We have also been actively working with San Juan County Fire to examine the Bloomfield Fire Department.

The Council and I will schedule public meetings when all the data is available, to share and gather input.

Again, I say we are in the very preliminary stages. We invite you to participate in the public meetings, when we get them scheduled. Thank you."

Unfinished Business:

There was no Unfinished Business to discuss.

Department and Public Input:

Amanda Sandoval said her father, Audie Medina, and her grandfather, Loyd Medina, have land at 603 South Craemer Street in Bloomfield. They would like to put an RV storage

facility on the land, which is currently zoned agriculture. She asked what needed to be done to rezone that land to commercial. Mayor Atencio asked Ms. Sandoval to get with the City Clerk, who will schedule a meeting of the Planning and Zoning Commission, which will hear her father and grandfather's plans and make a recommendation to the Council.

Sam Mohler said he is passionate about the city's police and fire departments and he appreciates the council looking at the city's budget. He also said he looks forward to the public meetings the council plans to discuss the future of the departments.

Patricia (Trish) Clark extended her appreciation to the council and believes the council has the heart of civil servants. She also thanked city employees for their efforts in making Bloomfield a good city to live in. Ms. Clark encouraged the council to continue to support and maintain the Police Department, and think of the long view of the department instead of the short view.

Gary Lepire shared his thoughts on the Bloomfield Police Department and encouraged the Council to look at all facts before making a decision. He stated he is against partnering with the Sheriff's Office.

Councilor Finch said the Bloomfield Pride Committee participated in the Bureau of Land Management's Public Lands Day on September 22. Part of the committee cleaned up along the San Juan River and the Riverwalk area, and Public Works Director Jason Thomas had a crew of Bloomfield High School who helped clean up the Lybertee Park area. Councilor Finch thanked the Parks Department staff for their help and said the Bloomfield Pride Committee will schedule another clean-up day in the near future.

Mayor Atencio said she had received positive feedback from the community regarding the staff at the Aquatic Center. She thanked the staff for their hard work.

Councilor Pennington said he visits with a lot of people at Farmers Market and the feedback on the Fire Department and the Police Department is always good. He said he deals with both departments probably more than anyone else and he appreciates the departments and all they do.

Councilor Lynch agreed with Councilor Pennington's comments. He added that the Council wants to pay firefighters and officers what they are worth, but the city is unable to do that at this time. He said the Council is only looking at options now and no decisions have been made.

Fire Chief John Mohler said he needs more help in the Fire Department, but it is more than the city can afford. He asked everyone to look at the Fire Department and the Police Department separately and that the Fire Department won't be eliminated if the county partners with the city, but the community will be better served by additional staffing and equipment. Chief Mohler also stated that the Bloomfield Fire Department is the third busiest in San Juan County and his primarily volunteer firefighters are tired and they need help. He also added that the Fire Department always has the best interests of Bloomfield residents in mind.

CLOSED EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mayor Atencio asked for a motion to go into a Closed Executive Session to discuss limited personnel and pending/threatened litigation. Councilor Hare moved to go into Closed Executive Session to discuss those issues and Councilor Finch seconded. Approval was

unanimous. The council went into Closed Executive Session at 7:05 p.m. At 8:45 p.m., Mayor Atencio asked for a motion to return to the regular meeting, stating nothing was discussed in the executive meeting other than limited personnel and pending/threatened litigation, and approval was unanimous.

Adjournment:

Mayor Atencio called for adjournment at 8:46 p.m. All were in favor.

Mayor Cynthia Atencio

ATTEST:

Dorothy Nobis, City Clerk