

CITY OF BLOOMFIELD
REGULAR COUNCIL MINUTES
November 26, 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, Sue Finch, and Curtis Lynch. Councilor Ken Hare was absent.**

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, Donna Clifton, Interim Police Chief Randon Matthews and Peggy Loyd.

City Manager George Duncan offered the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Councilor Finch moved to approve **the Agenda** and Councilor Pennington seconded. Approval was unanimous.

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

New Business:

The Accounts Payable were reviewed by Mayor Atencio. Councilor Pennington moved to approve Accounts Payable and Councilor Lynch seconded. Approval was unanimous.

Public Works Director Jason Thomas requested Council approval of Resolution 2018-19 Authorizing the Assignment of Authorized Officers and Agents for Agreement CWSRF-091. The Resolution assigns signatory authority for a Clean Water State Revolving Loan to support planning and design for the Water Reclamation Facility improvements. Councilor Finch moved to approve the Resolution and Councilor Lynch seconded. Approval was unanimous.

Public Works Director Jason Thomas requested Council approval of a Public of a Notice of Intent to Adopt an Ordinance to Accept a Grant/Loan (\$100,000) from the Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund to Support the Planning and Design of the Water Reclamation Facility Improvements. Councilor Pennington moved to approve a Public Notice and Councilor Finch seconded. Approval was unanimous.

Unfinished Business:

City Manager George Duncan asked for a Discussion and Possible Approval of the Partial Closing of Sixth Street. City Manager Duncan said more than 1,300 vehicles each day use that street and it is the biggest problem (street) in the city. Councilor Lynch requested additional

police presence in that area. Councilor Pennington and Mayor Atencio said they are reluctant to close the street because those who are using Sixth Street on a regular basis might just move to another street, which could create additional problems. The Mayor and Council and the City Manager said the street is a safety issue and the conclusion was to look for other ways to solve the problem. Councilor Finch moved to table the approval until all solutions are researched and Councilor Lynch seconded. Approval was unanimous.

Department and Public Input:

Councilor Pennington said there were many people in attendance at the meeting of the Council to show their support of making Interim Police Chief Randon Matthews the permanent Chief. Councilor Pennington also stated that approval of naming IPC Matthews as the permanent chief had been requested to be on the meeting agenda, but that request was denied. **Mayor Atencio** said she removed the item because she believed it should be discussed and voted on by the entire Council and Councilor Hare was out of town and not in attendance. There was also a discussion on whether the San Juan County Sheriff's Office should take over the Bloomfield Police Department. **Councilor Lynch** stated that it was former Police Chief Randy Foster who made the initial contact and started the discussion with the Sheriff's Office. **Councilor Lynch** stated that the Mayor and Council, faced with a lack of funds in the General Fund, looked at many options to save money and the discussion with the Sheriff's Office was part of that discussion. Mayor Atencio and Councilor Lynch both stated that it was never the desire of the elected officials to partner with the Sheriff's Office, but they felt that discussion was important to ensure the Bloomfield Police Department has the resources it needs to protect and serve the residents of the city.

Councilor Pennington offered his support of IPC Matthews and of the officers who serve the City of Bloomfield. He said he is not in favor of going with the Sheriff's Office and that he believes the Council needs to make a decision regarding the Police Chief's position. Councilor Pennington also requested that the Approval of Naming IPC Matthews as the permanent Chief be placed on the agenda for the December 10, 2018, meeting of the Council. Councilor Pennington said he thinks the Council has put the Police Chief's position and the naming of a new Chief, off too long and it is time to make a decision.

Mayor Atencio said she would like to post the Police Chief's position and go through the hiring process and that IPC Matthews will be part of that process.

Sam Mohler stated that he believes IPC Matthews has done a good job as the Police Chief, but he is in favor of going through the interview/hiring process because it is the right thing to do.

Jason Crawford offered his support of IPC Matthews.

Former Police Chief Mike Kovacs said he, too, was an Interim Police Chief after former Chief Drew Standley left, and he was told he would have to go through the hiring process and, while he believes IPC Matthews has done a good job, it is only fair to let IPC Matthews go through that process. Mr. Kovacs also stated he is against letting the Sheriff's Office take over the Police Department.

Bloomfield Police Officers Derek Booker, Logan McKinney, and Michael Wells also spoke in support of IPC Matthews. Officer McKinney presented the Council with a letter of support of

IPC Matthews, which was signed by 13 officers and members of the Police Department's civilian staff.

Rebecca Munoz said her son expressed his desire to go into law enforcement so he can join the Bloomfield Police Department. Mrs. Munoz said she was not in favor of her son's decision until she spoke with IPC Matthews, but after her visit with IPC Matthews, she is at peace with her son's decision.

Robert Olbert offered his support of IPC Matthews and encouraged the Council to make a decision regarding IPC Matthew's appointment.

Dwane Robinson said he is in favor of the Council moving on with the interview/hiring process and the process should begin immediately.

Rob Hammond offered his support of IPC Matthews and believes IPC Matthews should be appointed the permanent Chief.

Jeannie Rudder, owner of the Roadside Restaurant, asked the Council to keep the Police Department as part of the city and not let the Sheriff's Department take it over. Mrs. Rudder also offered her support of IPC Matthews.

Randy Cooper said he selected the City of Bloomfield in which to retire and asked the Council to name IPC Matthews as the permanent Chief.

Lea Smith stated she is 100 percent behind keeping the Police Department with the City. She also said she believes the City should go through the interview/hiring process for a permanent Chief.

Pat Wilson stated that going through the process "legitimizes" the process, but it needs to be done quickly.

Kathy Schlapp said she supports the interview/hiring process. She also said the Mayor and the Council talked about being transparent and, by going through the process, they offer that transparency.

Louie Munoz said he supports Mike Kovacs's comments about going through the interview/hiring process.

Mike Mattson offered his support of IPC Matthews, but is also in favor of going through the interview/hiring process. He also expressed his support of the Mayor and Council.

Bonnie Hammond offered her support of IPC Matthews.

Jesus Munoz offered his support of IPC Matthews, but agrees the City needs to go through the process.

Councilor Lynch reiterated his comments about not wanting to contract the Police Department out to the Sheriff's Office and that former Police Chief Randy Foster was the one who began the discussion with the Sheriff's Office.

Councilor Finch stated her support of IPC Matthews and for keeping the Police Department with the City.

Mayor Atencio thanked City Manager George Duncan for his dedication to the City of Bloomfield and for his service.

Mayor Atencio and the Council agreed to have City Manager George Duncan and Human Resources Specialist Donna Clifton begin the task of the interview/hiring process. The Approval to Post the Position will be on the December 10 agenda of the Council.

Councilor Finch thanked the members of the Bloomfield High School Student Council for their help with the Christmas lights for the Celebration of Lights display at Salmon Park, which will be officially lit by Mayor Atencio after the Bloomfield Chamber of Commerce Christmas Parade on December 3.

Mayor Atencio encouraged everyone to support the Bloomfield High School Bobcats football team when the team travels to Taos for the 4A Championship game on December 1.

Peggy Loyd, Bloomfield's Librarian, invited everyone to attend the Sagit Zilberman Song of Peace event at 6:30 p.m., Thursday, November 29.

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 Finch moved to go into Closed Executive Session to discuss those issues and Councilor Lynch seconded. Approval was unanimous. The council went into Closed Executive Session at 7:33 p.m. At 7:56 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. Councilor Lynch moved to return to the regular meeting and Councilor Finch seconded. Approval was unanimous.

Adjournment:

Mayor Atencio called for adjournment at 7:57 p.m. All were in favor.

Mayor Cynthia Atencio

ATTEST:

Dorothy Nobis, City Clerk