

**TOWN OF YUCCA VALLEY**  
**SPECIAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**  
**May 28, 2013**

**OPENING CEREMONIES**

Mayor Abel called the meeting to order at 6:06 p.m.

Council Members Present: Huntington, Leone, Lombardo, Rowe and Mayor Abel.

Staff Present: Town Manager Nuaimi, Deputy Town Manager Stueckle,  
Community Services Director Schooler, Administrative Services  
Director Yakimow, Police Lt. Toms, and Deputy Town Clerk  
Copeland

**REPORT OF CLOSED SESSION**

Town Attorney Laymon reported that the Town Council met in closed session on May 28, 2013 at 5:02 p.m. regarding potential litigation with no reportable action.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Led by Mayor Abel

**INVOCATION**

Led by Pastor Wilcox, Evangelical Free Church

**PRESENTATIONS**

**1. Recognition of 2012-13 Youth Commissioners**

Community Services Director Schooler gave a brief review of the Youth Commission action during the current year under the advisement of Lynn Richardson, Candy Drake and Crystal Mason. The 2013-14 Youth Commissioners were presented with certificates and congratulations from the Town Council.

Youth Commission Chair, Nicholas Lombardo thanked the Town Council for the opportunity to volunteer with the Town and to collaborate with current issues facing the youth of the community.

**2. Recognition of Town retirees: Lynne Richardson, Janine Cleveland, Linda Wright and Chris Lewis.**

Mayor Abel presented a review of each employee's tenure with the Town and presented with a plaque and well-wishes from the Town Council.

**AGENCY REPORTS**

**3. Hi Desert Water District**

Mark Ban, Director of Operations presented the Water and Wastewater Treatment update for the month of April 2013 and fielded questions from the Town Council about proposed phasing of the community sewer project.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Town Manager ~~Nuaumi~~ Nuaimi requested that Item No. 6 be pulled from the agenda to be brought back to the Town Council at the June 4, 2013 meeting.

Ron Cohen, Yucca Valley inquired why a past request to place the discussion of Town Council benefits was not included on the agenda.

Curt Duffy, Yucca Valley agreed with Mr. Cohen and asked how items are placed on the agenda.

Mayor Abel explained the process of agenda preparation and clarified that often when an item is requested to be placed on the agenda, it often requires research to allow the Town Council to make an educated decision. There are two ways an item can be placed on the agenda, if there is Town Council consensus to bring an item forward or the second way is for staff to bring items forward in the course of doing Town business.

Town Manager Nuaimi clarified also that the process of changing the benefits for elected officials is quite involved and would not have an impact on the 2013-14 fiscal year budget.

Council Member Rowe moved to approve the agenda, with the removal of Item No. 6. Council Member Huntington seconded. Motion carried 5-0 on a voice vote.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

Council Member Leone asked for Item No. 7 and 8 to be pulled from the consent agenda.

- 4. Approve,** Minutes of the Town Council Meeting of April 30, 2013, as presented.
- 5. Waive,** further reading of all ordinances and read by title only.
- 6.** Item pulled and tabled until the June 4, 2013 meeting
- 7.** Item Pulled
- 8.** Item Pulled

Margo Sturges, Yucca Valley, spoke regarding the contents of the April 30, 2013 Town Council meeting minutes.

Fritz Koenig, Yucca Valley, presented the Town Council with transcripts of court proceedings.

Council Member Huntington moved to approve the consent agenda, Items No. 4 and 5. Council Member Rowe seconded. Motion carried 5-0 on a voice vote.

**Item 7- Museum Operating Hours**

Council Member Leone requested staff to present the item. Administrative Services Director Yakimow explained that with the recent reduction of staffing levels at the Hi Desert Nature Museum, the hours of operation need to be adjusted. Limiting the public hours at the museum is a short-term plan, and a long-term fiscally sustainable plan is being created. Museum staff analyzed current visitor levels and presented the short-term plan to accommodate peak visitor use.

Edith Jones-Poland, Yucca Valley spoke against the reduction of museum operating hours and suggested the consideration of charging admission.

Lori Herbel, Yucca Valley spoke against the reduction of museum operating hours and doesn't like the idea of trading the museum for new parks. Herbel asked for an ad-hoc committee to review the budget line-by-line to find money for the museum.

Administrative Services Yakimow explained that it is intended that the Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Commission (PRCC) will have the opportunity to review future programming for the Fall 2013 season. Alternatives to museum programming is being considered, however it is difficult to discuss until a full analysis is complete.

Mayor Abel expressed his appreciation of the educational element the museum provides and encourages volunteers to come forward for assistance.

Council Member Leone questioned the timing of the cuts in operational hours.

Council Member Huntington expressed he is in favor of restoring full staffing and to work with the PRCC for future programming. He agrees that we need to find supporting partners.

Mayor Pro Tem Lombardo moved to receive and file the Hi Desert Nature Museum's staff report outlining new museum operating hours. Council Member Huntington seconded, motion carried on a 4-1 roll call vote.

**AYES:** Council Members Huntington, Lombardo, Rowe and Mayor Abel  
**NOES:** Leone  
**ABSTAIN:** None  
**ABSENT:** None

**Item 8- Warrant Register, May 28, 2013**

Council Member Leone questioned the cost of the YVHS pool fire permit since it is Morongo Unified School District property. Deputy Town Manager Stueckle explained that this particular permit acquisition is a requirement in the current contract because of the chemicals stored at that location as part of the pool maintenance.

Council Member Leone questioned the cost of street sweeping and asked if it would be cost effective to bring in-house.

Ron Cohen, Yucca Valley inquired about several items on the warrant register.

Council Member Rowe moved to ratify the Warrant Register total of \$92,312.55 for checks dated May 16, 2013. Ratify Payroll Registers total of \$184,010.51 for checks dated May 8, 2013 and May 10, 2013. Mayor Abel seconded. Motion carried 5-0 on a voice vote.

**PUBLIC HEARING**

**13. FY 2013-14 Budget**

Administrative Services Director Yakimow presented the staff report and visual presentation explaining that this marks the sixth public review of the FY 2013-14 proposed budget. Yakimow reviewed the major changes in the draft since the previous review including an adjustment of property tax revenue, animal shelter operations, changes in the authorized position listing, fully funding road and parks crews, and an increase in tourism budget. Ongoing concerns with the proposed budget are that it does not address the request to fund the Sheriff's Safety Specialist position within the public safety contract, or any public infrastructure needs. The next step is to bring the entire budget before the Town Council on June 18<sup>th</sup> for adoption.

Mayor Abel opened the public hearing.

| Ron Cohen, Yucca Valley reported he is still waiting for [answers to](#) questions posed on May 13, 2013, and presented another written list of budget questions/suggestions to the Town Council Members.

Claude Short, Yucca Valley spoke in favor of Mr. Cohen's report and suggests that the Town Council review this information.

| Carey Harwin, Yucca Valley thanked the Town Council for their consideration is supporting Desert Regional Tourism Agency and spoke of funding disbursements.

Lori Herbel, Yucca Valley presented a document to the Town Council Members regarding proposed budget line items.

Cheryl Nankervis, Yucca Valley Chamber of Commerce presented a publication (California Roadtrip) to the Town Council Members and explained that the joint marketing funds are being spent wisely.

Margo Sturges, Yucca Valley, spoke in support of Mr. Cohen's comments and thanked Carey Harwin for his work. Sturges spoke against the refurbished sign at the town's west entrance.

L Hilary Slotta, Yucca Valley, thanked the Town Council members for their ability to make these hard decisions to be fiscally responsible.

Curt Duffy, Yucca Valley, supported recommendations by Mr. Cohen and spoke about property values in Yucca Valley.

Mayor Abel spoke about the current economy and how the Town of Yucca Valley is affected by it. Abel shared his appreciation for the residents who took the time and effort to review the budget and explained that Town staff is hired as experts in their field.

Discussion was held on local police services including transport and travel out of the area, alternatives for enforcement on state highways within Town limits, and the availability of a coroner.

Council Member Rowe requested clarification on property tax revenue as reported in the draft budget document.

Council Member Huntington commented that the budget seems much more conservative in revenue projections for the coming year and sees a structural problem in Code Compliance. Administrative Services Director Yakimow explained that Code Compliance staffing is being paid through CDBG funding per prior Town Council direction. Huntington continued by asking for clarification on the Authorized Positions List.

Mayor Pro Tem Lombardo inquired about franchise fees and other revenue sources.

Council Member Leone asked about the cost to place a TOT revenue measure on the ballot and voiced concern regarding the sustainability of area tourism.

Mayor Abel commented on the car allowances and stated he often sees Town staff using their own vehicles doing Town business and has not seen an abundance of travel reimbursements in recent years.

Town Manager Nuaimi briefly addressed concerns raised in public comment regarding proposed cost savings.

Council Member Leone inquired about street sweeping costs. Deputy Town Manager Stueckle responded; the street sweeping service is currently on an as-needed basis and is not on a regular

schedule. Expenditures for this service are paid out of the gas-tax fund.

Mayor Abel closed the public hearing.

Council Member Rowe moved to receive and file the staff presentation of the proposed budget for the General and Special Revenue funds for fiscal year 2013-14; to allocating revenues in excess of expenditures in an amount ranging from \$180,000 - \$190,000 to be reserved for use in meeting a portion of the Town's infrastructure deficit pursuant to Council authorization; and to incorporate the proposed changes into the Town's final proposed budget plan for fiscal year 2013-14, and return a proposed balanced budget for adoption with the implementing resolutions on June 18, 2013. Council Member Huntington seconded. Motion carried 5-0 on a voice vote.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Fritz Koenig, Yucca Valley spoke on the process of creating the Town Council meeting agendas.

Margo Sturges, Yucca Valley commented on the process of placing an item on the meeting agenda.

Lori Herbel, Yucca Valley spoke of several items on the proposed budget numbers.

Edith Jones Poland, Yucca Valley commented on plans for museum programming.

Curt Duffy, Yucca Valley expressed concern on auto allowances and spoke in favor of placing a TOT measure on the ballot.

Sarann Graham, Yucca Valley spoke of upcoming meeting dates for the Mojave Water agency and commented on the potential council member recall.

### **STAFF REPORTS AND COMMENTS**

Town Manager Mark Nuaimi thanked staff members, Jim Schooler and Jamie Anderson as this is their last Town Council meeting and they will be formally recognized at the June 18, 2013 meeting. Nuaimi thanked the community for its support with the recent loss of his father.

### **MAYOR AND COUNCIL MEMBER REPORTS AND COMMENTS**

17. **Council Member Leone** thanked the Youth Commission and expressed well-wishes to the retirees
18. **Council Member Rowe** thanked the Youth Commission and the retirees for their service; thanked all the volunteers who made the Grubstake Days event a success; and thanked Curtis for his work on preparing the budget.
19. **Council Member Huntington** thanked the retirees that they will be missed; thanked the Youth Commission with their enthusiasm and making Yucca Valley a better place to live;

thanked Curtis and staff for their hard work.

**20. Mayor Pro Tem Lombardo** congratulated the Youth Commission for their public service and wished the retirees well. Lombardo thanked the residents for their input on the budget.

**21. Mayor Abel** commented on the great public feedback on the budget and that even though times are tight, the Town has been able to bring several major projects forward. Abel thanked the community for attending and being involved.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Next Town Council Meeting, 6:00 p.m. Tuesday, June 4, 2013, Yucca Valley Community Center, Yucca Room

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lesley Copeland, CMC  
Deputy Town Clerk