

MINUTES
Work Session
San Luis City Council
San Luis Council Chambers
1090 E. Union Street
March 15, 2023
6:00 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Mayor Nieves Riedel called the Work Session to order at approximately 6:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Mayor Nieves Riedel
Council Member Tadeo A. De La Hoya
Council Member Javier Vargas
Council Member Gloria Torres
Vice-Mayor Luis E. Cabrera – via Zoom
Council Member Matias Rosales
Council Member Maria Cecilia Cruz

OTHERS PRESENT: Ralph Velez, Interim City Manager
Jenny Torres, Assistant City Manager
Kay Marion Macuil, City Attorney
Sonia Cornelio, City Clerk
Adela Cortez, Director of Human Resources
Alexis Gomez, Code Enforcement Officer
Angel Ramirez, Fire Chief
Axel Chayra, IT Technician
Carolina Corral, Accountant I
Derek Dueñas, IT Manager
Domingo Sosa, Graphic and Media Specialist
Edgar Esparza, Billing & Collections Manager
Eulogio Vera, Director of Public Works
Fernando Corona, Network & IT Security Administrator
Francia Alonso, Assistant to Council/PIO
Glenn Gimbut, Assistant City Attorney
Joaquin Campa, Building Official
Jose A. Guzman, Director of Planning & Zoning
Jose L. Cisneros, Acting Assistant Director of Parks and Recreation
Jossue Cerda, IT Help Desk Technician
Manuel Hernandez, Project Manager
Marco Santana, Police Lieutenant
Margarita Dominguez, Administrative Coordinator
Maria Sabori, Risk Manager
Melissa Lopez, Deputy City Clerk
Miguel Ramirez, Finance Accounting Manager
Monica Castro, Director of Finance
Olivia Jenkins, Government & Foreign Affairs Coordinator

Roman Pacheco, Planning Technician
Roula Encinas, Finance Operations Manager
Ruben Lopez, IT Technician
Viviana Briones, Office Assistant
Adelaida Buchanan, Resident
Alberto Leon, Resident
Christian Cuevas, Interpreter
David Lara, Resident
Mark Concha, Resident
Nydia Mendenhall, Resident

2. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION ONLY:

2. A. Presentation, discussion, and possible directions to staff on any and all matters regarding the information on proposed rate adjustment for the water, wastewater, and solid waste services. (Edgar Esparza, Billing and Collections Manager)

Mr. Edgar Esparza, Billing and Collections Manager, made a PowerPoint presentation regarding the 2023 Proposed Utility Rate Study. This presentation included the following information, Water, Waste Water, Solid Waste Overview and Needs, Financial Outlook, and the Proposed Rate Schedule. This presentation was done by Mr. Esparza, Eulogio Vera, Director of Public Works, Manuel Hernandez, Acting Assistant Director of Public Works, and Monica Castro, Director of Finance. A copy of this presentation is included in the complete agenda packet filed in the City Clerk's Office. Mr. Esparza invited the public to attend the Public Hearing to be held on March 22, 2023, where the Mayor and City Council will consider the increase of the proposed adjustments.

Mayor Nieves Riedel invited the public to make comments during this meeting. She thanked staff for the great presentation.

Mr. Mark Concha, 1310 N. Quintero Avenue, San Luis, Arizona, asked why there had never been any type of increase in the utility rates if the city is in such a bad shape.

Council Member Maria Cecilia Cruz replied that the last increase was done in 2017.

Mayor Riedel asked Council Member Tadeo A. De La Hoya if he could reply to Mr. Concha since he was the City Manager during those years when the utility rates were not increased.

Council Member Tadeo A. De La Hoya replied that the city operates in a council-manager type of government where the Mayor and City Council are the decision-makers. The City Manager and staff just follow directions. He added that this topic was brought before for consideration.

Mr. Glenn Gimbut, City Attorney, commented that Mr. De La Hoya worked hard to bring the utility rates up, studies were done by Mr. Dan Jackson, however like any other staff member, the topic is proposed to the city council, but nobody likes increasing rates. The response back then was the idea was bad timing.

Mayor Riedel informed that the city paid \$95,000.00 for utility rate studies that were performed from 2017 to 2022 and nothing was done. She stated that as an elected official, the council is elected to take care of the community and make sure that there is public safety, good water, etc. She added that elected officials are not elected to just come and sit and worry about being re-elected. Furthermore, she added that she is in favor of the increase, and she would like the council to consider the increase and make the right decision.

Council Member Matias Rosales asked when was the last increase done.

Mr. Esparza replied that the last increase was adopted in 2013, which was a five (5) year rate plan increase that ended in 2017.

Mayor Riedel mentioned that the last time the before the 2013 utility rate increase was done was in 2004 when she was in office.

Council Member Rosales stated that this time the community is aware and understands what needs to be done. He mentioned that he agrees with Mayor Riedel this needs to be done.

Council Member Maria C. Cruz asked if on this date numbers are in red on the enterprise funds.

Ms. Monica Castro, Director of Finance, replied that currently, the only division with a loss is the wastewater, in the situation that the city is in and because the city has been postponing expenditures such as the purchase of a new solid waste truck, this situation will put them in red numbers. She mentioned that at the end of the current fiscal year if nothing is done, then all three (3) divisions will be in red numbers.

Council Member Cruz mentioned that when she was on City Council the utility rate was increased, it was not like nothing was done.

Mayor Riedel replied that it was not done and asked Mr. Vera to please provide that information to Council Member Cruz.

Mr. Vera informed that the last increase was done in 2013 and was adopted for five (5) years.

Mr. Alberto Leon, 1686 N. 9th Avenue, San Luis, Arizona, commented that everybody knows that the city is in red numbers, the city is lacking backup solid waste trucks, police are not getting paid enough, the city is backed up in maintenance and that shows that the city is in red numbers. He stated that this could have been done seven (7) years ago with a slight increase every year, to prevent doing it all at once.

Council Member Cruz replied that she understands the frustration and made it clear that she is not against the increase.

3. Adjournment

Mayor Nieves Riedel adjourned the meeting at approximately 6:45 p.m.

APPROVED:

Nieves Riedel, Mayor

ATTEST:

Sonia Cornelio, City Clerk

Certification

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the Work Session minutes for the City Council of the City of San Luis, Arizona, held on March 15, 2023. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

Sonia Cornelio, City Clerk