

MINUTES OF THE CITY OF COSTA MESA
FINANCE AND PENSION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
April 12, 2023
4:00 PM

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair Tom Arnold at 4:01 PM in Costa Mesa, California.

2. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Chair Tom Arnold, Vice Chair Lisa Buchanan, Members: Ralph Taboada, Wendy Leece, Altaf Wahid, and Boris Gresely joined at 4:07 PM

Members Absent: Jennifer Tanaka and Gary Craig

Council Liaisons Present: Mayor John Stephens from 4:04 PM – 5:15 PM and Councilmember Andrea Marr

Council Liaisons Absent: Councilmember Don Harper

Staff Present: Finance Director Carol Molina, Executive Assistant Stella Giragossian, City Manager Lori Ann Farrell Harrison, and Deputy City Clerk Stacy Teran.

Staff Absent: None

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Flo Martin spoke on appreciating the committee's volunteerism.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Meeting of March 8, 2023 – Regular Meeting

MOTION/SECOND: Wendy/ Altaf

MOTION: To push the minutes to approve next month after more detail is inputted

Motion Carried: 7-0-0-2

Ayes: Chair Tom Arnold, Vice Chair Lisa Buchanan, Members: Ralph Taboada, Altaf Wahid, Felice Shiroma and Boris Gresely

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Jennifer Tanaka and Gary Craig

5. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Committee Overview discussion with City Council Liaisons. Mayor John Stephens started by stating that he wanted to have an open discussion regarding the committee and its scope even though this topic was pushed out to be brought back to Council in July. In July each Committee will have a presentation and Council will accept, modify or reject. A clear scope and purpose, frequency of meetings, duration of meetings and number of members is to be determined at that time.

Vice Chair Buchanan stated that they are just volunteers who put their heart and soul into this committee and feels that they are just "treading water" and that there is "no forward momentum". Vice Chair Buchanan said that she is seeking

guidance of what the expectation and needs are of them. One of her concerns is that when things are brought to the meetings they don't get heard by anyone.

Committee Member Ralph Taboada read the Council goals in which he stated the only one they have even touched was to "develop and define a quarterly reporting format." Committee member Taboada also said he would like guidance from the Council and would like to know what the goals are for this committee.

Committee Member Felice Shiroma had mentioned that she feels as if the committee could provide more help for the City. She mentioned that they could brainstorm and come up with viable projects that could be of help. Committee member Shiroma stated that there is a lot of talent on the committee and is more than willing to put together an orientation and handbook for the committees.

Committee Member Wendy Leece said that "Felice brings up a point" and that years ago they had a handbook and an orientation. Committee member Leece mentioned that people don't realize the commitment and wouldn't attend the meetings and those people are no longer on the committee. Committee member Leece stated it was a big deal to have something appointed by Council that was their recommendation, when talking about the 115 Fund. Lastly committee member Leece said to scale back the number of meetings would be an over sight.

Mayor Stephens said that currently we have a very strong staff and a City Manager, who is an expert, Carol who is very good at explaining things. He said before we had this strong staff, this committee was much more important back then. The Mayor went on to say the Committee should not be working on any 'projects' unless they emanate from the Council.

Committee Member Boris Gresely requested that when the City Council is looking towards the goals, if they can be measurable.

Committee Chair Tom Arnold stated that he appreciates this conversation because he feels we are not in alignment because they don't have clear direction and from that comes frustration and friction.

City Manager Lori Ann Farrell Harrison stated that FiPAC is not an oversight committee but is an advisory committee and leans more towards policy recommendations to bring to Council.

Committee Chair Tom Arnold in response to the City Manager said that he appreciates that description and that direction is helpful.

Committee Member Taboada said that the comment of being advisory frustrates him because in order to be advisory they need information and states they are told that staff is too busy or the system prevents them from giving the information. Committee member Taboada said that in the past they received things much

faster and by the time they receive the budget book there would not be enough time to review to advise Council.

The Mayor then responded by saying that this team is trained and maybe in the past they had the information sooner but it wasn't anywhere near as good of a budget as ours.

Council Member Marr asked if it would make more sense to meet at times that make sense, such as when the ACFR is coming out or close to the closing of the books and before the budget etc., rather than focusing on wanting 10 meetings a year.

Vice Chair Lisa Buchanan responded by saying she is in agreement with Council Member Marr.

Mayor Stephens stated that these are the things he would like to see; he would like advice on the budget including the CIP "before we push the button", he would like FiPAC to have and listen to the investment result and policy, midyear decisions, end of year presentation, special projects; but if it will take more than four hours of staff time has to be approved by the City Council," and lastly the 3-5 year forecast. The subcommittees should be all gone and new ones established only after approval from the liaisons and City Attorney.

Committee Member Boris Gresely recommends for best practices within the committee to have the calendar presented at the beginning of the year.

Committee Member Leece added that maybe the Chairman can lead an orientation as to not take up staff time.

Lastly, Council Member Marr said that she is looking for suggestions and recommendations on how to make this work and make it more informal and more voluntary.

- b. FY 2023-24 Proposed Capital Improvement Program (CIP) was presented by Public Works Director Raja Sethuraman. Questions and answers ensued following the presentation.

6. COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS

Per the Chair, they decided to skip committee member comments as several comments were made in the open discussion portion of the meeting with the Mayor.

7. CHAIR COMMENTS

Chair Arnold also chose to forego his comments.

8. DIRECTOR UPDATES

Director Carol Molina mentioned that we will come back to FiPAC in the next couple of weeks with the Proposed Budget and may request the Public Works Director Raja Sethuraman to return if needed.

9. STAFF/LIAISON COMMENTS

No staff comments and no Liaison's present at this time of the meeting.

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:48 PM.

Tom Arnold, Chair

Carol Molina, Finance Director