

**CITY OF BUENA VISTA  
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
June 15, 2023, 6:00 P.M.**

The City of Buena Vista City Council met for a Regular Meeting on Thursday, June 15, 2023, at 6:00 p.m.

**Members Present:**

Melvin Henson  
Tyson Cooper  
Steve Webb

Mayor Bill Fitzgerald  
Vice-Mayor Cheryl Hickman  
Stanley Coffey  
Danny Staton

**Members Absent:** None.

**ADG #1: PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND PRAYER**

Councilman Coffey delivered the opening prayer.

**ADG #2: APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

Vice-Mayor Hickman made a motion to amend the agenda to include the discussion of ARPA funds as NB #3. Councilman Coffey seconded, and the motion was carried by Council.

Vice-Mayor Hickman then moved to approve the agenda as amended, seconded by Councilman Webb, and carried by Council.

**ADG #3: MINUTES DELAYED**

**ADG #4: RECOGNITION/COMMUNICATION FROM VISITORS**

**Citizens who desire to speak to council will be recognized at this time. Please limit your statement to three (3) minutes.**

Ms. Traci Montgomery, 811 W 29th Street, addressed Council on behalf of the Wastewater Treatment Plant. She stated that she was under the impression that the ARPA funds were discussed and there may have been some misconceptions about their request for a new digester cover. She conveyed that she was originally told that to replace the digester cover would cost approximately \$300,000. She said that she had then spoken to EVOQUA, who manufacture and repair the covers, regarding the safety concerns with the digester. They have been operating with the digester as it is right now, but she was informed by their EVOQUA representative, Steve Childers, that because of the methane gas that is being produced and released from the digester building that it has become not only a safety hazard for the employees but also for the citizens and anyone who may be walking the floodwall or visiting the park. She noted that methane gas is highly flammable and explosive. She further mentioned that conditions of the digester continue to deteriorate. This means the new quote that was given for \$3M would be for a complete revamp of the digester. They would completely gut the digester, take out all damaged piping, put on a new cover and install a new system. They don't know what the interior damage of the digester is right now, but they do know that there is a chemical reaction going on because they have a white substance that has started to form in the basement of the digester. She has been told that the employees should not be in that building unless absolutely necessary because of the dangers of methane gas.

Vice-Mayor Hickman asked when Ms. Montgomery had spoken to Mr. Childers about this, and she

responded that it was a few weeks ago. Ms. Montgomery also stated that Mr. Childers said they could come and just replace the cover and clean it out but do no repairs. However, she said, that because of the sludge line and gas line both damaged, when they end up doing the upgrade, they would have to remove the cover and clean out the tank all over again. Which basically means that the money we would spend as a temporary fix would be a wash because we would be paying for the same thing twice except for the cover.

Councilman Coffey questioned if this was an OSHA concern. Ms. Montgomery said that she was unsure at this time. But she feels that if OSHA were to come in right now, they may force them to either shut down or fix this before they can operate. She then stated that the DEQ is different in that if they have a plan, they can present that to them so that they would know there is a plan in place to correct the issue. Vice-Mayor Hickman noted that Hunter Young would be coming in to assess the concerns. Mr. Tyree furthered that there is some additional testing equipment that Mr. Young can use to see exactly what is going on. Councilman Coffey asked if there was still a gas meter in the building that they could use to detect the gases; Ms. Montgomery said that there is one. Mayor Fitzgerald assured Ms. Montgomery that we would find out what is going on when Mr. Young comes in. Vice-Mayor Hickman advised Mr. Tyree to ask Mr. Young to get in there as soon as possible to complete the testing.

Mr. Bryson Adams, 2505 Laurel Avenue, brought the Director's Report for RARO. Spring sports are finishing up. Everyone had a good season, and the numbers were decent. The adult programs are going well and RARO Adventures had 21 kids in the kayaking program. Fall registration is now closed, you can still register for fall sports, but they are basing their numbers off what they have now but are expecting those numbers to go up. Right now, they are significantly higher in participation than they were last year which means they are going to be able to add a couple of teams to each age group.

## **ADG #5: REPORTS**

### **1. Mayor**

None.

### **2. City Manager**

Mr. Tyree began his report by reminding everyone that Juneteenth is a holiday, so City offices will be closed as we follow the State holiday schedule. He also announced that our Finance Director, Charles Clemmer, is now a licensed CPA. He stated that not only is this a huge accomplishment for him but will also help the City out in different areas.

Mr. Tyree noted that the emergency procurement that Council approved regarding the campground is almost complete and Dominion should have everything installed on their end on Monday, June 19th.

### **3. City Attorney**

None.

### **4. Council Committees/Representatives**

Councilman Henson began his report by stating that he had been to several meetings and events at the double decker lately and oddly enough people are coming up there saying that they have lived here their whole life and never knew that it was up there. He reminded everyone of the Maury River Fiddler's Convention this coming weekend on Friday and Saturday.

**ADG #6: CONSIDER APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, AND COMMITTEES**

None.

**OLD BUSINESS**

None.

**NEW BUSINESS****NB #1: COUNCIL CONFIRMATION OF NEW CHIEF OF POLICE**

Councilman Webb made a motion to confirm Chief of Police Handley. Councilman Staton seconded, and it was carried by Council.

**NB #2: KRISTINA RAMSEY TO UPDATE COUNCIL ON EDA ANNUAL MEETING**

Miss Ramsey began her update of the EDA annual meeting, stating that they reappointed Brent Styler as the Chair, John Dryden as Vice-Chair, and herself as Secretary. During the meeting she gave updates on economic development projects, they heard from Austin Rehl about his project, from Bobby Slagle of Rockbridge Recovery about Hope House, and from Brooke Dalton about MSBV. There was a lot of discussion from the group about the EDA's role and how they can become more active. Following that they decided to establish a committee of two members to explore the powers of EDAs per state code and look at what other communities do so they can try to do more. They plan to pursue more funding options and complete more training as well. She mentioned that EDAs have a lot of opportunities to help the business community and grow our economy and she is very excited to work with the group and empower them to take some action and better the community as a whole.

**NB #3: DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL OF ARPA FUNDS**

Mr. Tyree stated that there was a list of items discussed at the Budget and Finance Committee meeting on Tuesday. There are some needs in Public Works, the Wastewater Treatment Plant, the Police Department, and we need a new City website. The total cost for all of these is \$330,640.

Councilman Cooper moved to approve the ARPA funds, Vice-Mayor Hickman seconded, and it was carried by Council.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

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Sarah M. Burch, Clerk of Council

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William H. Fitzgerald, Mayor