Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Mayor and Council of the City of South Tucson, Arizona, held Tuesday, November 19, 2019, at 6:00 p.m. at the City of South Tucson Council Chambers, 1601 South 6th Avenue, South Tucson, Arizona.

Staff Present: John Vidaurri City Manager
Veronica Moreno, City Clerk
Bobby Yu, City Attorney
Manny Amado, Public Safety Director
Commander Shonk, Police Dept.
Sgt. Chris Toth, Police Dept.

Council Present: Bob Teso
Herman Lopez
Paul Diaz
Akanni Oyegbola
Rita Rogers
Anita Romero
Robert Romero

Others: Lin A. Rodriguez, 31 W. 34th St.
Sevine Lupillo, 101 W. 34th St.

Mayor Teso called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m., and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ITEM #03 – MISSION STATEMENT

Councilwoman Rogers read the City’s Mission Statement.

ITEM #04 – ROLL CALL

All members of the Council were present.

ITEM #05 – CALL TO THE AUDIENCE

Mayor Teso: Speakers are limited to a three-minute oral presentation to address the Mayor and City Council on any issue within the jurisdiction of the Mayor and Council, except for items scheduled for a public hearing at the meeting, and may submit written comments of any length for the City Clerk’s files. Is there anybody here who would like to speak in the audience? No? Okay. For the record, you speaking? Please come up and, to the podium here.
Ms. Rodriguez: My name is Lin A. Rodriguez. First name is spelled L-I-N. I live at 31 West 34th Street. There’s been a lot of traffic in my area for drugs, sales out of the houses going in and out. The police aren’t doing their job. We need new blood in the force, as we do new blood on the Council. We need new patrolmen. We need new Councilmen, okay? Also, there is an eyesore on 33rd and 10th. I brought it up to the, can’t remember or pronounce his name. His last name starts with a “Y”, (inaudible). He works for you all. I think his name is John (inaudible).

Mayor Teso: The Manager?

Ms. Rodriguez: Yeah, this guy. I spoke to him about that eyesore. It’s still there. There was a tag on the vehicle in the front of the house for supposedly residents that had been tagged for the longest. It was just removed a few days ago. It doesn’t take much to remove a car. Is it because you don’t have a abandoned car, or whatever, available? If not, I have a son-in-law that does that. It’s just up there for you guys. Is there anything gonna be done about that eyesore? It looks like Sanford and Sons. I told him about that. Okay? And also, at 2414 South 7th, there is a, an abandoned building that is frequented by many juveniles using it for a party house, shooting gallery, and I’m talking about narcotics. They got in there through the back door. They jump the neighbor’s fence and they waltz out through the front door. I have reported several times. They had opened up the gate, make it easier access in and out. All it would take is a lock and board up the back door. Or, tear it down. I would prefer to be torn down. It’s detrimental to the police force to have to go in there and inspect when we call them, ‘cause I have called and told ‘em there’s traffic going in. I just saw them. And they caught two guys a while back, after I had called twice ‘cause I said another guy just walked in there with a backpack. I live on this side of 7th on 34th and 7th, right there on the corner. And I call when I see guys, girls going in the gulley to do whatever, and I’ve told ‘em, I says a while back there was a lot of needles in my yard. I have a dog that likes to go in the yard. If anything happens to my dog because of those damn needles, I’m gonna come out very angry and I will take care of things on my own ‘cause I’m protecting my property against you guys. I spoke to two young guys about that. No, we’ll watch that. Do you have a jar that we could put the needles? For what? So you can use ‘em again? I have a dispenser that you can through ‘em out. I said I’ll put it on my side. You gotta break the needle off and drop it in. Oh, no, no. We want to put it out here. No. Is my time up? I reckon so, huh? I went out beyond it. Yes?

(Simultaneous conversation)

Ms. Rodriguez: I could go on for days.

Acting Mayor Diaz: And ...

Ms. Rodriguez: Okay.

Acting Mayor Diaz: ... I do need to apologize, too, that we really can’t get in, us, into a discussion with you. What we can do is get the information that you’re providing us and refer it either to the proper department which is right ...

Ms. Rodriguez: And I spoke ...
Acting Mayor Diaz: ... now is ...

Ms. Rodriguez: ... to him ...

Acting Mayor Diaz: ... (inaudible) ...

Ms. Rodriguez: ... of all the things that I’m speaking to you all right now.

Acting Mayor Diaz: Okay. Okay. So, thank you for, ...

Councilwoman Rogers: Thank you.

Acting Mayor Diaz: ... you know, all the information ...

Ms. Rodriguez: Especially the abandoned business. It needs to be torn down.

Acting Mayor Diaz: Okay.

Ms. Rodriguez: Thank you.

Acting Mayor Diaz: Thank you.

Councilman Romero: Thank you, ma’am.

Mayor Teso: Is there anybody else in the audience that would like to speak?

Ms. Lupillo: Hello. My name is Sevine Lupillo. I reside at 101 West 34th Street. I’m a homeowner there, three years now. Alright, we’re gonna push the 3-minute clock now? Alright, let’s do it. Officials of South Tucson, government is a business. Historically, American government has been run like a business going out of business, spend until it’s gone and then borrow more. Debt is not a foundation for growth. Refinancing South Tucson’s debt was a move in the right direction, but will it be enough? The answer is no. We need an injection of income, revive South Tucson and we need it quick. It’s ironic that the paramount reason, the first incorporation of South Tucson in 1936 was to prevent paying higher business taxes, but here we are today at 11.1% combined sales tax, and inflated permit and licensing fees. We’re currently paying 21.6% higher sales tax than the City of Tucson. I don’t know about you, but I don’t like to pay 21.6% more for anything, especially if it means the difference of travelling outside of a one-square mile radius to pay less. Raising taxes and fees are not attracting business, it’s crippling it. The only people that are paying these taxes have no means of transportation to travel outside of City limits, or are loyal customers to the few good food and beverage businesses that we possess. Our local economy and culture are vastly different from 1930 to now. The City of Tucson just elected its first Latina Mayor. Tucson has many successful Hispanic businesses. Downtown is adorned in beautiful Mexican-inspired murals. The most recent reason I hear of South Tucson residents wanting not to dissolve its municipality is to preserve our culture. As a Hispanic woman, I’m extremely proud
of my heritage and my culture. I know what this means to South Tucson. I can tell you now, no one talks about our culture. They talk about how unsafe it is and how our taxes are too high. Public Safety should be the number one most important service to any city. I've never had to call 911 as many times as I have this year alone. We're down to a skeleton crew of two officers per shift and that is not safe for not only the residents and businesses, but the officers themselves. How can we fix it? We certainly can’t afford it. It’s time to dissolve. We need to incorporate to the City of Tucson. We can do this without sacrificing the local culture and history. In fact, we can add to it and if we do it right, we can do it soon. I would like to call a meeting to discuss dissolving the City of South Tucson. Thank you.

Mayor Teso: Thank you. Is there anyone in the audience who would like to speak?

(No other speakers from the audience)

Mayor Teso: Let the record show there’s nobody else, no one else in the audience that will be speaking tonight.

ITEM #06 – APPROVAL OF MINUTES: REGULAR MEETING, NOVEMBER 5, 2019

Mayor Teso: Do we have any additions or corrections?

Acting Mayor Diaz: Mr. Mayor, if there is no additions or corrections to the minutes of the Regular Meeting of November 5th, I move to approve.

Councilman Romero: Second.

Mayor Teso: Okay. Is there any discussion about the minutes?

(No discussion from the Council)

Mayor Teso: Okay, we’ll move onto Roll Call. Councilman Oyegbola.
Councilman Oyegbola: Aye.
Mayor Teso: Councilman Romero.
Councilman Romero: Aye.
Mayor Teso: Councilman Diaz.
Acting Mayor Diaz: Aye.
Mayor Teso: Councilwoman Romero.
Councilwoman Romero: Aye.
Mayor Teso: Councilwoman Rogers.
Councilwoman Rogers: I abstain because I was not present for those minutes.
Mayor Teso: Councilman Lopez.
Vice-Mayor Lopez: Yes.
Mayor Teso: Aye. Motion carries.
ITEM #07 – MAYOR AND COUNCIL MEMBERS: REPORTS OF CURRENT EVENTS AND FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Mayor Teso: Does anybody have a current event they would like to discuss?

Councilwoman Rogers: Mr. Mayor, I sort of have a current event. It’s not an event, but it’s a place where I can talk to seven people instead of two. Just maybe, maybe the City Manager will be able to answer under his reports, or whatever, but I’ve had about three or four reports on the arson, or not arson, or the fire, or yes, the fire at 2:00 a.m. on Sunday morning in the Spanish Trail. Many different reports. I don’t know if it even happened, but all the people wanna know. I said I have no information or knowledge about it. I know that I was there at 2:00 a.m., but not in the area where, where it’s being reported and I didn’t want to go to 9 On Your Side about any of this (inaudible) approaching me because I happen to have lived there for 28 years, and so I’m reporting. Maybe somebody knows around here, so I’m not an ignorant Council member.

Mayor Teso: Do we have any other current events?

Acting Mayor Diaz: Mr. Mayor, I’d like to report that the Pueblo Optimist did have a cleanup on 6th Avenue and there was quite a bit of trash because of the wind and stuff like that on 6th Avenue. We picked up two big bags of trash.

Mayor Teso: What day was this? Do you have a date?

Acting Mayor Diaz: It was last Saturday.

Mayor Teso: Okay. Any other reports or current events?

Vice-Mayor Diaz: Mr. Mayor, yes, last night I attended the Pima Council on Aging. They had a grand opening in their brand new facility right there on Tucson Boulevard. It’s a real nice beautiful facility there. Hopefully, we’ll be able to utilize some of their services for some of our citizens here in the City. And then I happened to run into the newly elected Mayor of the City of Tucson. And she’s very interested in meeting with the Council and wants to set up an appointment with us in the near future. And then the other thing that I have is for our Study Session, I think that I personally would like to know what, what everyone is doing pertaining to the Council. Say, like for instance, like Councilman Oyegbola is working with Management on, with the interns.

Mayor Teso: Marketing Plan.

Vice-Mayor Diaz: Yeah, the Marketing Plan. And then Mr. Diaz, I’m sure he, Councilman Diaz has his, his thing going on. So, all I wanna do is be able to, formulating idea as to what everyone is doing so that we can write it down and see how it, it proj-, your ideas are projecting into the, some plans that we may develop in the future. So, that’s it, Mr. Mayor.
Acting Mayor Diaz: I have another one. I just, you know that I’m always after animal control. And I’ve been pursuing this for quite a while and I finally got a hold of the, the Director of the Pima Animal Control. And she was gonna have her assistant call me regarding for traps for large dogs because we counted 17 on one night, running through our neighborhood there. And they were all different. And it’s breeding season for them. And they’re all breeding. But anyway, so I am pursuing area so that we trap ourselves because Pima Animal Control cannot do it. There’s just too many of them and they don’t have the staff to do it anyway. So, I’m following that up. And it’s not just for our area. I see ‘em all over the place, so.

Mayor Teso: Okay. Any other items?

Councilman Romero: Mr. Mayor, I understand we’re gonna give two of our finest ten year awards today, for being here employed for ten years? I just wanna bring it up to the Mayor and Council the tension that we also have other employees that have been here for over 20 and they’re not being acknowledged. I think we ought to do something about that also. Thank you.

Mayor Teso: Okay. Okay. If there are no other items, agenda items, future agenda items, we’ll move onto Item #08.

ITEM #08 – CITY MANAGER AND DEPARTMENT HEADS: REPORTS TO MAYOR AND COUNCIL

Mr. Vidaurri: Mr. Mayor, members of the Council, we do have plaques the Police Chief would like to present to a couple of our employees in P.D. that have ten years with the City. And those are Commander Shonk and Sgt. Toth. And so with that, I’ll let the Chief make a presentation, if I may.

Mayor Teso: Thank you.

Chief Amado: Mr. Mayor, members of the Council, first a comment and then I’ll go to my presentation. To Councilwoman Rogers’ point about fire calls or police calls, for that matter, if you just send me an email, or get a hold of the City Manager (inaudible), I can get that information for you. Residents do that all the time. Other Council members do it. If there’s anything that happens around your area that you’re concerned about or curious about, certainly if I have the information, I’ll give it to you. If I don’t, I’ll find it.

Councilwoman Rogers: Okay.

Chief Amado: The Fire Department doesn’t report to me every single fire call that they go to, or every medical call. Otherwise, my phone would be blowing up. But they do keep records of it. So, I can certainly find out for you if there was even a fire that night.

Councilwoman Rogers: I heard there were five fire, fire fighter trucks.

Chief Amado: Five fire trucks? We only have two.
Councilwoman Rogers: I know. They said Tucson was ...

Chief Amado: Well, it could be that ...

Councilwoman Rogers: ... (inaudible).

Chief Amado: ... Tucson Fire might have responded to it. But anyways, I can find that information ...

Councilwoman Rogers: Okay.

Chief Amado: ... for you.

Councilwoman Rogers: Thank you.

Chief Amado: As far as the plaques go, okay, it is unfortunate that we have 20-year employees here that haven’t received plaques, but obviously, I was not their supervisor. Otherwise, we would be recognizing them.

(Simultaneous conversation)

Chief Amado: So, I am recognizing my two employees that is coming from their supervisor, their director. The two employees, as City Manager Vidaurri mentioned, is going to be Commander Kevin Shonk and Sgt. Chris Toth. Would you please come up, gentlemen? So Commander Kevin Shonk actually began his employment with the department on November 8th of 2009. He came to us from the Tohono O’odham Police Department where he served as a SWAT and Operations Commander. Sgt. Chris Toth began his employment with the Police Department September 13th of 2009. Now he actually came to us from what I think was, at the time, Union Pacific Railroad. He was a train conductor. And before that, he was a Tucson Police Officer. I guess a train conductor was pretty boring.

Sgt. Toth: Yes, it was.

Chief Amado: So, anyways, I’m gonna go ahead and read the plaques and just so you both know, they both say exactly the same thing, so don’t be comparing to see if I wrote something special on (inaudible).

(Chief Amado read and presented the plaques)

(Applause)

Councilman Romero: How long did you work at the UP?

Sgt. Toth: About three and a half years.

Councilman Romero: Really? Yeah, I put in 25 there.
(Simultaneous conversation)

Mayor Teso: Do we have anything else, Mr. Vidaurri?

Mr. Vidaurri: Yes, sir, we do. In response to the other employees that have tenure with the City of South Tucson, I’ll work with Human Resources and maybe this is something that can be discussed at the Council work session. If you all would like to consider awards, plaque awards to other employees with tenure, that would certainly be something that would be most agreeable to at the management level, so …

Councilwoman Rogers: Thank you.

Mr. Vidaurri: … we can certainly do that. I have one item because there had been some discussion regarding future agenda items and so I worked with our City Clerk Veronica Moreno, and we prepared this handout for you, which basically is a summary of everything that’s been discussed at Council meetings since March of this year, which is when I came on board. Some of these items have been completed and some of these items are still pending or in progress. So, if you would please review these, offer your comments, which I would appreciate, we can go back and clarify anything on there that you may have a question with regard to. And then proceed with completing those projects that haven’t been completed yet.

Acting Mayor Diaz: Are we gonna have items or issues in regards to the working meeting?

Mr. Vidaurri: Well, I think that that’s a platform that the Mayor and Council maybe should discuss setting.

Councilwoman Rogers: It has to be open.

Mr. Vidaurri: It has to be open and so maybe we can set a date for a Special Meeting and then have Council consider how they want to handle the discussion and what format you would like to take as part of that Study Session. So, if I may suggest, maybe we can have a preliminary item on the agenda for December 3rd and let you select a date that is agreeable to all of you, or we may be able to set the stage and the agenda for a Work Study Session.

Councilwoman Rogers: Mr. Mayor, just a comment that Mr. Vidaurri, he, he arrived March of 2019. Right?

Mr. Vidaurri: That’s correct.

Councilwoman Rogers: And I was elected March of 2018, so I would like to add all the things that were supposed to be done between March of 2018 and March 2019, if I may, besides when he started because I don’t think they were done. In terms of do you want to keep with ‘em, or cross ‘em out, or we’re just making it up, or whatever. So, I’ll try to get that ‘cause that’s a whole year of different topics than from when he came till now. So, I just want it in the minutes.

Mayor Teso: Okay.
Councilwoman Rogers: Thank you.

Mayor Teso: Okay. Is that pretty much it?

Mr. Vidaurri: No, sir, I have a couple of other things. I wanted to report that the republication of the City’s Municipal Code is now underway and we expect, from the estimate that was given to us by (inaudible) Code, that that process is going to take about three to four months. And so hopefully by the end of the third or fourth month, we’ll have the (inaudible) Code updated all the way back to 2007. And we can go ahead and publish that on the Internet for our citizens to be able to view, as they may have questions about City ordinances. So, it will be very helpful to get it out to them through the Internet. There was a fairness hearing for the Valenzuela case that was held in Phoenix that past Friday. It went very well. They’re working on dates for disbursement of proceeds to the plaintiffs. Those proceeds that aren’t actually dispersed because there is no claim by the plaintiff, will be credited to the City’s account against the loan that was taken out from Pima County. The Mayor and Vice-Mayor, I believe, are going to be meeting with Chicanos Por La Causa this coming Monday. It’s a tentative date. The idea is to meet with them to discuss projects that they may be interested in doing here in our community. And they’ve done community economic development projects. They’ve also done affordable housing projects, so we’re continuing a dialogue that was started about a month ago, which the Mayor, Vice-Mayor, Mick Jensen, and I attended and were introduced to some new staff that they have at CPLC. We have completed interviews for the Grant Writer position and we expect to come back to City Council in the month of December for consideration of a contract to hire a part-time Grant Writer for a six-month period. We’re hoping that we’ll be able to generate some revenue to the City through hiring of that particular position. Also, there’s going to be a public hearing presented by ADOT tomorrow evening at 5:30. It’s going to go until 7:00 p.m. and the discussion is going to center around relieving congestion and improving traffic flow on Interstate 10, and improving access to and from the downtown Tucson area. Some of what’s being proposed is going to affect us and so the Mayor, Vice-Mayor, Mick Jensen, and I will be there tomorrow to attend that public hearing. And that’s all I have from my report, Mr. Mayor, members of the Council.

Acting Mayor Diaz: I’d like to add that for the CPLC meeting, Chicanos Por La Causa, there was an article regarding the community, well, it’s actually a barrio, Santa Cruz, that they were able to lower their crime rate and homelessness and everything else, the problems that they have with crime, through, due through the, fixing their infrastructure with the help of the City of Tucson. I think, you know, ‘cause I’ve talked before that our streets are really, you know, the signs, everything, needs to be replaced. We’re so far behind. And being too conservative ‘cause, really hurting the City. And so, you might say also, too, that I guess there’s rumors of recall on three people on the Council because of our, you know, that we’re not fixing some of the stuff that can be done. So, just FYI.

Mr. Vidaurri: Mr. Mayor, Acting Mayor, if I may, as you know, we are in the process of, of going through a refunding of some old 2007 Excise Bond Tax Funds that were awarded, not awarded, but that were loaned at a 6% interest rate. And so, we’re working on a refinancing to achieve a much lower interest rate than that, and we’re looking right now at about a 2.5% to 2 and three quarter percent interest rate on a new refinancing of that old debt. We’ve had some previous discussions at other Council meetings about the fact that that is going to create a pool of funds that the City Council can then look at and discuss and decide how they would like to appropriate. And so, that might be a good item to discuss at the Council Work Session, come to an
agreement as to, so that you can set your priorities and decide what you think is most important to the community and what should be addressed first.

Acting Mayor Diaz: Thank you.

Mr. Vidaurri: Yes, sir.

Mayor Teso: Do we have any other questions for Mr. Vidaurri?

(No questions from the Council)

Mayor Teso: Okay. In that case, moving onto Item #09.

ITEM #09 – ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Teso: Do we have a motion to adjourn?

Councilwoman Rogers: So moved.

Councilman Romero: Second.

Mayor Teso: Councilman Oyegbola.
Councilman Oyegbola: Aye.
Mayor Teso: Councilman Romero.
Councilman Romero: Aye.
Mayor Teso: Councilman Diaz.
Acting Mayor Diaz: Aye.
Mayor Teso: Councilwoman Romero.
Councilwoman Romero: Aye.
Mayor Teso: Councilwoman Rogers.
Councilwoman Rogers: Aye.
Mayor Teso: Councilman Lopez.
Vice-Mayor Lopez: I abstain.
Mayor Teso: Aye. Motion carries.

The meeting adjourned at 6:33 p.m.
Minutes presented in verbatim format from recorded audio.

Minutes of Regular Meeting
November 19, 2019
Page 11 of 11

ATTEST:

_______________________________________
Veronica Moreno, City Clerk

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Regular Meeting of the City Council of South Tucson, Arizona, held on the 19th day of November, 2019. I further certify the meeting was duly called and a quorum was present.

Dated this _______ day of ______________________, 2019.

_______________________________________
Veronica Moreno, City Clerk