

Winchester/Homeland Municipal Advisory Council

MEETING MINUTES

Date: March 8, 2018

Place: Winchester Community Center, 32655 Haddock Street, Winchester

Attendees:

Winchester MAC:

Andy Domenigoni, Chairman; Dirk Meredith, Vice-Chairman; James Horecka, Secretary; Jeff Logan; Jimmy Sheldrake.

Ex Officio:

Opal Hellweg, Legislative Assistant for Third District Supervisor

Members of the Public

Call to Order: Call to Order by Andy Domenigoni at 6:30 PM.

Approval of Agenda:

Motion to approve agenda: Motion by Meredith; second by Sheldrake. Approved unanimously.

Approval of February Meeting Minutes:

Motion to approve: Motion by Meredith; second by Sheldrake. Approved unanimously.

Guest Speaker: Jon Christensen, Treasurer-Tax Collector for Riverside County.

Mr. Christensen introduced himself, and gave a brief bio. He is the 5th generation of his family living in Riverside County, and his grandson marks the 7th generation. He was a VP at Morgan Stanley, and also AG Edwards. His aim is to assure sound investment of public funds. He works with the Auditor/Controller and Assessor. The Assessor determines values. The Auditor/Controller adds other line items. The Collector (his office) then bills and collects. They mail about one million bills out, seeking \$3.5 billion in taxes. Their public service staff answers many questions & concerns. About 76,000 people visit the offices in person; 250,000 call. One million visit the website. There are two billing cycles per year. He noted that paying by credit card incurs a fee; those who choose this method pay this fee (this is the fairest way).

Where do the taxes collected go? 54% goes to schools. 8% cities; 18% counties, etc. The County's pooled investment fund is the largest investment management in Riverside County. 22% of the pool is discretionary investment. They also manage cash flow: paying 70,000 people, every two weeks. They process \$15 billion receipts in, ~\$8.2b out.

Christensen stated priorities: 1. Safety of principal (in contrast to Orange County's issue some years ago). 2. Liquidity; this is largely governed by government code. Riv. Co. has a AAA rating by Moody & Fitch. During the recession, Riverside County rated higher than the State & Country! There is also an investment oversight committee, etc. He noted that he believes we are heading into a "rising interest" market, and stressed the importance of staying liquid. This year, \$100M in interest is expected. Christensen also sits on the Park Commission & Pension Review. He has personally managed the Pool since 2012.

He then opened the floor for questions, briefly summarized here:

Q: Will you transition from paper bills to other? A: Someday. Their system is VERY old. The main computer is a mainframe over 44 years old! But they are working on it. They hope the new system will "go live" in October, but all this change is complex and takes time.

Q: Will there come a time when we can use Apple Pay? A: Perhaps; looking into various means.

Q: Pool endowment fund? Services? A: 50% of General Fund Revenue can only go out five years, by law. As interest rates rise, more will come in. Christensen noted that the Tax Collector has only a

1.53% delinquency rate, which is excellent (due in part to the way the bills are connected to mortgages). Their Customer Service Ratings are 98%; again, excellent.

Q: Discuss taxes on apartments vs taxes on homes. A: It is the property itself that is taxed. The value of the lot, facility & units; value of building and value of rents. Residential: Secured Property Tax. Businesses are different. Also Business Personal Property Tax (equipment & fixtures). There is also a TOT: Transient Occupancy Tax (in unincorporated county areas only; similar to hotel taxes within incorporated cities).

Q (Angela D.): Will we ever be able to set up a 'personal account'? A: As property often changes hands, this would be very difficult for them to manage. However, with the new system, there may be some similarities. You would be able to log in, then see all your bills. But the system would remain more bill-oriented than account-oriented.

Christensen noted that the County Payment Portal currently has 47 departments; he is aiming to have one central place. This is in process, through IT. They have been working on the new system for 12 years. Among other things, they are striving to make the process more user-friendly.

Q (Opal H.): How can people get help? A: Send an email, call, visit the office. The Tax Collector has a robust public service staff.

Q (Andy D.): We know the County has some financial problems; discuss. A: The Retirement/Pension fund is a big one. There have been some large lawsuits paid out. The county was forced to build a new jail, to the tune of \$400 million. The State has pushed unfunded mandates, burdening counties. The County is in the hole for \$108M.

C (Dirk M.): With the upcoming workshop on marijuana, there may be possible tax revenues. A: there are 58 counties in California; some of these are making money. Christensen noted, however, that most the businesses will be located in big cities, NOT in unincorporated counties. That means the taxes will go to those cities, not counties. Further: The bank that serves the County has stated that they won't touch the money: To participate is perceived as conspiracy and money laundering. Christensen noted that he took an oath when he took office: To defend the Constitution of the United States (etc.). He must follow US law.

Old Business:

A. General County update; Opal Hellweg, 3rd District Legislative Assistant:

- There was no Board of Supervisors meeting last week. The Supervisors were back in Washington, DC, lobbying. Supervisor Chuck Washington is promoting Childhood Development, especially via his "Lift Up Riverside County" program, featuring four points: Education, public safety, housing & jobs. Opal brought a newsletter from Chuck Washington's office, highlighting current activities and such.
- There will be a "211 Connect" community event, April 5th, 9-1, at La Sierra University.
- On March 20th, the County will hold a workshop covering cannabis. Attend, be heard!
- Marr of Code Enforcement reported on the status of local collectives: Homeland Collective – closed. Homeland Choice – in litigation.
- Marr's Code & DSO MET report: MET = Marijuana Eradication Team. Cleared out 5 travel trailers, 24 vehicles. They are cracking down on unlicensed roadside vending.
- June 6th: There will be an Elder Abuse Symposium. This is a free event at the Riverside Convention center in downtown Riverside. Lots of seminars, etc.
- Up in Anza, many of the locals are fighting to control marijuana farms: C.O.W.W.: Crime, Odor, Waste, Water (also: Electricity; their supply is small & limited). The impacts of thousands of acres of marijuana cultivation are having heavy impacts on their small community.

B. Sheriff Department update; Corporal Kamal Kabbara:

- Calls: Jan – 206 calls, 3 arrests (2 felonies); Feb: 178 calls, 5 arrests (2 felonies), 3 burglaries. Four Part-1 Crime calls. "Don't make yourself a victim." Lock up, remove mail, etc.

C. EMWD Updates; Kevin Pearson:

- Ongoing issues at the state level. A new bill is proposing a tax on municipal water systems, to fund water systems in poor districts; based on meter size. While EMWD supports the intent of clean water, they are not in favor of the proposed tax to achieve it. Also: AB 2050: This would create a Small System Water Authority, with the ability to get financing, bonds, etc., as well as consolidate. This is as a better way to address the issues than taking public funds for private systems & not addressing the root cause. In California, there are 329 non-compliant system, serving ~800,000 people; mostly in the Central Valley, mostly rural. High nitrates, etc. EMWD is advocating for an alternate bill.
- D. Highway 79 Realignment update: No news.
- E. Land Use update; Cindy Domenigoni not present, so no report from her on items 1-4.
 - 1) TTM 37119 (went to Board of Supervisors on Feb. 27, 2018).
 - 2) Winchester –Homeland General Plan Amendment #1207: In process still.
 - 3) Stone Creek (TR 36365): Pending Planning Commission hearings (early 2018).
 - 4) Villages North (TR 36504): to Board of Supervisors.
 - 5) Also: An upcoming commercial development, at the SE corner of Leon & Domenigoni Pkwy. To include self-storage (CUP) and a gas station (CUP).
 - 6) Greg Lansing will bring in a new project. He will visit the Land Use Committee. The project will be by Heritage High School.
 - 7) Jeff Logan noted that our website now has the Menifee North General Plan available.
- F. City of Hemet update; Jeff Logan:

The next Planning Commission meeting will be about the General Plan update.
- G. City of Menifee update: Andy Domenigoni & Jeff Logan: No significant news.
- H. Assemblywoman Melissa Melendez' Office Field Representative: Not present.
- I. Senator Stone District Director, Darrel Connerton, advised us of various activities at the Capitol.
 - SB 1352 proposed by others: Could affect 90% of Californians. If a person makes <\$100K single or <\$200K filing jointly, no state tax would be due. This is a concern. If over \$200K jointly, the couple would pay 40% on the amount of income over \$200K.
 - He noted that already other tax costs are hurting many citizens. The automobile registration tax, for example.
 - The Cap & Trade bill passed. Allegedly will reduce temperatures 8/1000th of one degree. Yet will raise/cost \$200 billion.
 - He noted that last year we lost 350 million trees, not including the recent fires.
 - Senator Stone is promoting a bill aimed to help victims of the recent wildfires: Those who rebuild their homes after the fires would not see their property taxes shoot up. See proposed bill for specifics, of course.
 - To contact Supervisor Stone's office: Call 951-894-3530. Visit: Office is at 25186 Hancock, Murrieta, Suite 320.
 - Connerton also advised us of an initiative against the Gas Tax, which is gaining signatures.
- J. Other Old Business: None.

Open Forum:

Slated for our next WHMAC meeting: Juan Perez, Riverside County TLMA, regarding roads & bridges. Later, in May, The HUSD Superintendent may appear, regarding an upcoming bond issue

Next WMAC Meeting:

The Next WHMAC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 12, 2018, 6:30 PM, at the Community Center.

Adjournment: The WHMAC adjourned at 8:08 PM.