



Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Winters City Council  
Held via Teleconference on ZOOM on August 25, 2020

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Mayor Cowan called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

Present: Council Members Harold Anderson, Jesse Loren, Mayor Pro Tem Bill Biasi, Mayor Wade Cowan  
Absent: Council Member Pierre Neu  
Staff: Interim City Manager Shelly Gunby, City Attorney Ethan Walsh, Police Chief John Miller, Fire Chief Brad Lopez, Associate Lisa Baker

Lisa Baker led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Agenda: Motion by Council Member Loren, second by Mayor Pro Tem Biasi to approve the agenda with no changes. Motion carried with the following roll call vote:

AYES: Council Members Anderson, Loren, Mayor Pro Tem Biasi, Mayor Cowan  
NOES: None  
ABSENT: Council Member Neu  
ABSTAIN: None

COUNCIL/STAFF COMMENTS: None

PUBLIC COMMENTS: None

CONSENT CALENDAR: None

PRESENTATIONS: None

DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. Update from Interim City Manager on Status of Fires and Declaration of Local Emergency

Interim City Manager Shelly Gunby said it has been a very stressful week. Daily updates are being received and the fire is mostly contained where the black lines appear on the map. A confirmation letter declaring a local emergency was created, and as there has been no fire damage inside the Winters city limits, the letter was withdrawn and not forwarded to the State. The community is rallying behind the firefighters and victims in Yolo, Solano and Napa counties.

Lisa Baker thanked the emergency responders for keeping the fires back and keeping us safe and thanked the community for stepping up. First Northern Bank, Yolo Federal Credit Union, WPNS, Turkovich, Steady Eddy's, Berryessa Gap are all taking donations for the fire victims. As of August 25, \$34,881 has been received in Facebook donations, \$3,500 has been received at First Northern Bank, and \$1,280 in gift cards and cash has been collected by local merchants, totaling \$39,661 to date. A shoutout to Supervisor Saylor and Davis City Council members for promoting this relief fund. An organizing committee has been set up to use these funds to address the immediate needs of the fire victims, as well as working on a long-term recovery plan. Mayor Pro Tem Biasi asked who is included in the committee to determine the strategy. Lisa Baker indicated the Rotary Club, which is a 501c3, as well as a greater working group who are also working on it, including Council Member Loren, Lisa Baker, Elizabeth Ehnat and Tico Zendejas from RISE.

Kate Laddish shared her heartfelt thanks for those fighting the fire as well as the relief effort. Emergency preparedness, evacuation preparation and disaster preparation are vital. A draft recommendation went to the Board of Supervisors in January, with a revised recommendation going before the Board next Tuesday. One issue is the importance of getting information out. There has been a lot of focus on Yolo County and Winters is well-placed to help solve problems. It's important to let people within the City limits know the safest thing is to stay right where they are. There is a culture of preparedness in the City and there is no such thing as over-alerting. Residents should be encouraged to access Everbridge so emergency notifications can be received.

Fire Chief Brad Lopez said the LNU Lightning Complex fires have burned 352,913 acres in and around Lake Berryessa. Winters fire crews have been involved since August 18<sup>th</sup> when they responded to a fire below Monticello Dam. When the Hennessy Fire in Napa County pushed east, 15 Winters firefighters

were involved directly. This is a very dynamic and complex incident. It has been wind-driven with a multitude of complexities, including evacuations. The State of California is stretched thin. Cal Fire relies on local agencies to provide protection with limited resources. Chief Lopez said he is proud of the hard and dangerous work folks have done. The City's strike teams just rotated, with Captain Baumgart's team coming in and Captain Schechla's team going out for 10-14 days. The crews are healthy and he is thankful for the support from the community, staff and Council members. On the County level, evacuations and re-populations are ongoing. As per Dana Carey at Yolo County OES, PG&E is providing the restoration of power throughout the county.

Police Chief Miller said the department became involved on Tuesday @ noon due to a mutual aid call from the Sheriff's Department and became critical on Wednesday. To accommodate the additional evacuations, staff opened the EOC as a rally point and pushed this information out on social media. For future incidents, it is suggested that we work with Dana @ OES to try and improve the channels of communication to disseminate accurate information ASAP.

Mayor Cowan said a big shout out goes to Winters Police Department Community Services Officer Gail Jimenez, who has been vital in pushing out correct information as it is being received. Everyone in town is helping out, including Sunny Ghai at Burger King, the Buckhorn, Putah Creek Café, and Carboni's. Mayor Cowan thanked all the groups in town for their efforts by coming together for the greater Winters fire relief, pitching in and helping out. The outpouring of aid has been tremendous. In addition to the local efforts, Mayor Cowan received a call from Julie @ The Jackery Company who said they would donate solar-powered units to distribute to those who can use them, so Mayor Cowan drove to Fremont and filled his pickup with 100 units.

Supervisor Don Saylor said "Winters Has Heart" and displayed a t-shirt that had been designed by rural Winters resident Susan Hamilton. He noted the Great Winters Relief Fund organized by the Rotary Club. The fire this year happened so abruptly it was like lava flowing over the hill and moving so fast with embers flying. Some engines were responding but couldn't get there. A family that has lived in Positas since 1972 has evacuated the last 5 of 6 years. Up in the Capay Valley, a floating bridge was once again installed over Cache Creek to allow emergency crews access to fight the fire. Thanks to Assemblymember Cecilia Aguiar-Curry for the funding for a permanent bridge. He urged everyone to sign on at [www.yolo-alert.org](http://www.yolo-alert.org) to receive alert notifications by registering your property and learn what evacuation zone you are in. Also, a rallying point, not a shelter is needed for those people who have been evacuated to see what they are going to do next. The fire that began Tuesday night was sudden, intense and fast. The Winters Fire personnel and volunteers were out in the middle of the night, under-resourced and under incredible pressure lasting for several days and we're not out of the woods yet. To date, this is the second largest fire in California history. Of the ten largest fires, six of those have happened in the last five years. The

Yolo County Facebook page contains updates, topical issues, and identifying points that need attention.

Mayor Pro Tem Biasi asked whether a reverse 911 call could go out to those who are not signed up through the Yolo County alert program. Chief Miller said through Everbridge, OES can circle an area on the map for folks to be contacted via telephone. Mayor Cowan said the zones are not fully understood and Chief Miller said the evacuation zones will be refined further. Council Member Loren said she was grateful for all of the comments and suggested that Solano County Supervisor John Vasquez join the conversation about cooperation and communication since WJUSD also serves residents from Solano County. It seemed that Solano County was keeping information in Solano County. Supervisor Saylor said the zones are organized by county lines and make sure residents are signed up for alerts in both counties. We must do better to make the notice systems work. Mayor Cowan said we need more communication with Napa County for Markley Cove and the Lake Berryessa area. These are big economic drivers that impact Winters. Mayor Cowan asked if an emergency declaration would help with the damage at Markley Cove, as the owners live in Winters but their business is in Napa County. Supervisor Saylor said unfortunately, it doesn't work that way. There is a lot of social media interaction and we have to harness it and figure out a way to validate those points and figure out how to network these posts. Capture insights, experiences and observations that people are having. Council Member Loren said she appreciated Supervisor Saylor's follow through and tone.

2. Discussion and Possible Action to Send Letter from City Council Seeking Funding Assistance for I-505 Overpass to Yolo County Supervisor Don Saylor's Office for Wider Distribution to Funding Agencies

Mayor Cowan gave an overview. Council Member Loren said she had been tasked by Supervisor Don Saylor to submit a signed letter of support as soon as possible. Following completion of the draft letter, research found that there are no parks available east of I-505 in the El Rio Villa subdivision. All parks are on the west side of I-505 within city limits. Council Member Loren said the tone of the letter is that capital projects are value statements and that she was glad the letter is being supported. Mayor Pro Tem Biasi thanked Jesse for providing the letter and asked if Council should consider including information regarding the study that was completed regarding the I-505 overcrossing. We have already done some of the legwork. This report will be submitted to Supervisor Saylor's office along with the fully executed letter provided by Council Member Loren.

Supervisor Don Saylor said this is a good opportunity for us and thanked Council Member Loren for providing several strong points in her letter of support. Additional letters of support have also been received from various sources,

including the library, RISE, Yolo County Housing, and Winters Healthcare Foundation. Bill Lagattuta is also putting together a video for submittal. Supervisor Saylor said he remains optimistic and if this campaign is unsuccessful, it won't be for lack of trying. In closing, Mayor Cowan said this is a much-needed project.

CITY MANAGER REPORT: It's been quieter today! Thank you to the community of Winters for taking care of our firefighters - watching community members bring things to the Fire Station to take up to the first responders was an amazing thing to see. Seeing what Jesse and Lisa have been working on and helping one another is inspiring and awesome. Grateful to be here and see everyone pulling together.

Council Member Loren said people are reaching out for answers, including information regarding FEMA guidelines and insurance. The City's website can continue to provide good information. Interim City Manager Gunby said information is continually updated on the City's website and Facebook page. Mayor Pro Tem Biasi confirmed the City's website includes FEMA assistance information.

INFORMATION ONLY: None

ADJOURNMENT: Mayor Cowan adjourned the special meeting at 5:30 p.m.



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Wade Cowan, MAYOR

ATTEST:



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Tracy S. Jensen, City Clerk