



COUNCIL MINUTES

March 4, 2004

The City Council of the City of Mesa met in a Study Session in the lower level meeting room of the Council Chambers, 57 East 1st Street, on March 4, 2004 at 7:30 a.m.

COUNCIL PRESENT

Mayor Keno Hawker
Rex Griswold
Kyle Jones
Dennis Kavanaugh
Janie Thom
Claudia Walters
Mike Whalen

COUNCIL ABSENT

None

OFFICERS PRESENT

Mike Hutchinson
Debbie Spinner
Barbara Jones

1. Hear a presentation on the March 9th primary election vote tabulation procedures.

City Clerk Barbara Jones and Deputy City Clerk Cindy Barris addressed the Council relative to this agenda item. Ms. Jones provided a brief overview of materials distributed to the Council regarding the upcoming Primary Election including a list of the City's polling places, a "2004 Election Central Fact Sheet," and a sample computer printout of election night results generated by the Maricopa County Elections Department.

Ms. Jones reported that the City Clerk's Office has implemented various means by which to inform Mesa voters of their polling places on Election Day including mailing out publicity pamphlets and postcards to all registered households. She also stated that the City of Mesa and Maricopa County would provide voters with general election/polling place information on their web sites. She added that Mesa Channel 11 intends to display polling place information, provide a short synopsis of the various ballot propositions, and air the unofficial election results on election night once they are transmitted from Maricopa County.

Ms. Jones advised that as of March 3rd, the City Clerk's Office had processed a record 33,633 requests for early ballots, with 16,126 ballots returned as of the same date. She noted that this is a lower return rate compared to previous elections. Ms. Jones also commented that voters who wish to drop off their early ballots on Election Day could do so at any polling place or in the lobby of the Mesa City Plaza Building.

Ms. Jones informed the Council that the City contracts with the Maricopa County Elections Department to handle various aspects of Mesa's elections such as providing election equipment and ballot tabulation services. She emphasized, however, that the City Clerk's Office actively

participates to a much greater degree than other jurisdictions in the processing of early ballot requests, securing its polling places and “troubleshooting” and responding to voter concerns.

Ms. Jones reported that on election night, Election Central would be located in the Upper Council Chambers, 57 East 1st Street. She invited the candidates, their supporters and interested citizens to view the unofficial results that would be aired on Mesa Channel 11 once County Elections’ personnel transmit them.

Discussion ensued relative to the fact that early ballots dropped off at the polls on Election Day would be counted post election; that the outstanding ballots on election night would include early ballots dropped off at the polls rather than returned to the City Clerk’s Office, and provisional ballots (ballots that must be verified due to voter registration issues); and the fact that if an individual received an early ballot but did not return it and wished to vote at the polls, he/she would be permitted to fill out a provisional ballot.

Ms. Jones explained that because there are several write-in candidates, on election night the County’s computer-generated tally will reflect the number of write-in votes (those voters who connected the arrow next to the space for write-ins) only and not the name of the candidates. She clarified that it is insufficient to merely write in a declared write-in candidate’s name on the ballot and added that the voter must also connect the arrow. Ms. Jones commented that a write-in board would be convened post election to manually verify and tally which candidate received the most legal votes. She added that the remaining items on the ballot would be tabulated electronically and not held back because of the write-in matter.

Further discussion ensued relative to scenarios regarding “under votes”; the City Charter’s definition of a majority vote; the fact that it is anticipated that the write-in board would complete its task of determining which write-in candidates received the most legal votes by Friday, March 12th, in anticipation of the Council adopting a resolution to canvass those votes at its March 15th Regular Council Meeting; and that candidates cannot participate in the write-in board process, but are permitted to send a representative to observe the proceedings.

Councilmember Whalen, on behalf of the Council, commended Ms. Jones and her staff for their efforts and hard work relative to administering the upcoming election.

In response to a series of questions from Councilmember Whalen, Ms. Jones clarified that if a voter requested an early ballot and has not yet received it, he/she should contact the City Clerk’s Office to address such concerns. She also stated that early voting would continue in the City Clerk’s Office until Friday, March 5th at 5:00 p.m.

Ms. Jones concluded her presentation by commenting that many polling places do not want campaign signs and/or electioneering to take place on their private property on Election Day, even outside of the 75-foot limit. She urged citizens to honor the wishes of those property owners who are allowing the City to utilize their facilities and to avoid having signs and people removed from the site. Ms. Jones added that polling places are compensated very little for providing a great civic service and stressed that it is becoming more difficult to retain such sites.

Additional discussion ensued relative to hypothetical voting scenarios in District 3.

Mayor Hawker thanked Ms. Jones for her presentation.

2. Hear reports on meetings and/or conferences attended.

The following members of the Council provided brief updates on various meetings/conferences they attended as follows:

Councilmember Walters	Lehi Community Involvement Meeting
Councilmember Thom	Arizona Homebuilders Association Annual Luncheon; ADOT/neighborhood meeting regarding freeway sound walls and artwork
Councilmember Griswold	ADOT/neighborhood meeting regarding the expansion of the Red Mountain Freeway from Higley to Power
Mayor Hawker	Tour of Va Shly'ay Akimel Salt River Project Restoration Project

3. Scheduling of meetings and general information.

City Manager Mike Hutchinson stated that the meeting schedule is as follows:

Thursday, March 11, 2004, 7:30 a.m. – Study Session

Monday, March 15, 2004, TBA – Study Session

Monday, March 15, 2004, 5:45 p.m. – Regular Council Meeting

Thursday, March 18, 2004, 7:30 a.m. – Study Session Cancelled

Thursday, March 25, 2004, 7:30 a.m. – Study Session

Mr. Hutchinson informed the Council that Fire Chief Harry Beck recently underwent successful lung surgery. He stated that the entire organization wishes Chief Beck a speedy recovery.

4. Prescheduled public opinion appearances.

There were no prescheduled public opinion appearances.

5. Items from citizens present.

There were no items from citizens present.

6. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Study Session adjourned at 8:15 a.m.

KENO HAWKER, MAYOR

ATTEST:

BARBARA JONES, CITY CLERK

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Study Session of the City Council of Mesa, Arizona, held on the 4th day of March 2004. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

BARBARA JONES, CITY CLERK

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