

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COTTONWOOD, ARIZONA, HELD APRIL 7, 2011, AT 5:30 P.M., AT THE COTTONWOOD RECREATION CENTER, 150 SOUTH 6TH STREET, COTTONWOOD, ARIZONA.

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CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Mayor Joens called the special meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. Roll call was taken as follows:

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT

Karen Pfeifer, Vice Mayor  
Linda Norman, Council Member  
Tim Elinski, Council Member  
Darold Smith, Council Member  
Terence Pratt, Council Member  
Duane Kirby, Council Member  
Diane Joens, Mayor (via Telephone)

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT

Doug Bartosh, City Manager  
Steve Horton, City Attorney  
Matthew McLean, Deputy Clerk  
Dan Lueder, General Services General Manager  
Chief Casson, Chief of Fire Department  
Chief Jody Fanning, Chief of Police  
George Gehlert, Community Development Director

CONSIDERATION OF AUTHORIZATION TO FILE A BLANK ANNEXATION PETITION FOR THE VERDE SANTA FE SUBDIVISIONS

Mr. Gehlert presented to Council for direction to staff a proposal to annex the Verde Santa Fe subdivisions. Staff had received a letter submitted by Jim Iacovacci, a Verde Santa Fe property owner and resident, requesting annexation of the community by the City of Cottonwood. On January 13, staff participated in a meeting at the Cottonwood Recreation Center devoted to this topic, at which more than 200 participants attended. Verde Santa Fe is a golf course community composed of a series of gated and ungated residential areas arranged around a 18-hole golf course. The area includes approximately 967 homes and an approximate population of 1,800 to 2,400 residents. Staff is requesting approval to start the annexation process which will start with filing a blank petition with the County Recorder's office together with a map and legal description of the annexation territory. Once the petition is filed, there is a 30 day waiting period before signatures from residents can be collected. During the 30 day waiting period, the City must also hold another public hearing.

Vice Mayor Pfeifer opened the floor to the public.

The following people spoke in favor of starting the annexation process: James Iacovacci, Jerry Bahr, David Alton, Bernie Long, Rosemary Swantek, Brian Stanley, Pamela Willis, Dwight Mills, Robert Donze, Judith Peebles, and Patrick Burke.

The following people spoke against starting the annexation process: Deborah Segall, Bill Larseberger, Deanna King, Cheryl Spagelo, Linda Chamberlain, Gary Chamberlain, Aileen Smart, and Phyllis Ventura,

Bob Oliphant spoke on the subject but was neutral on the subject. He pointed out to the Council the real cost of the annexation has not been disclosed and the Council does not have enough information to make a proper decision. He urged the Council to table the matter until a cost analysis has been preformed.

Vice Mayor Pfeifer closed the floor to the public.

Council Member Pratt stated he has heard a lot interesting things and would like to see the entire cost breakdown for the annexation, including the library. Ultimately he believes in democracy and it almost seems we are not deciding as a Council whether or not we annex Verde Santa Fe or not, all we are doing is saying to the people of Verde Santa Fe is you have a democratic process to decide if 50 percent of the homeowners want to be part of the city. It is not the Council's decision and it leaves it up to the people.

Council Member Smith stated he has received 19 emails against the annexation, which concerns him also. However, there are a lot of different questions he would like answered, as what does it cost to the city and what are the benefits. He would like to postpone this to a later date for the new Council in June.

Council Member Kirby stated he has been playing golf out there for the last ten years and knows the golf course is privately owned and not an adjunct of the city nor should it ever be. The city has no intent of taking over the golf course. He does not want to postpone it any farther and allow the process to start with the petition.

Council Member Elinski thanked everyone for showing up. This is not a city venture, the city is not pushing for this and the city is giving the community an opportunity and venue to share what the citizens want for their community. He is in favor of filing the petition to start the democratic process to take place. Once he has that information back, then he can make a decision how he feels about annexation Verde Santa Fe, but until then there is a process to allow the citizens to make that decision.

Council Member Norman stated it is up to the citizens to make the decision.

Mr. Bartosh stated he would like to respond to the cost analysis presented by Mr. Oliphant. Staff has done an analysis of the cost of annexation. The reality is that we are right across the street from Verde Santa Fe, and there is a cost benefit from the additional numbers being so close. We know approximately how much we will receive in state shared revenues.

The three areas staff looked at specifically was police, fire, and road maintenance. In terms of road maintenance, staff would budget a minimum of \$350,000 and might end up budgeting more, but it is really based on the condition of the roadway. In terms of police, Chief Fanning has looked at the call log to Verde Santa Fe. The calls for service are very minimal and might require a couple of additional officers and we will begin to look at that as we take that service on and look at the impact. If we were talking about thousands of calls per year, then we would be talking about significant cost. In terms of fire service, we have already been planning Bella Montaña and they are running out of lots in Verde Santa Fe and they are anxious to start developing in Bella Montaña. We have taken that into consideration and have a fire station planned for 89A and Cornville Road. We have already brought on staffing to staff that fire station. Staff feels we can absorb the additional workload where it doesn't have an impact on city's residents.

Council Member Pratt thanked the city manager for clearing that up. He believes in democracy and letting people make their decision. He is not for or against it right now, but believes in giving people their voice. And people can vote either yay by signing the petition or voting no by not signing the petition.

Mayor Joens thanked everyone for attending. She stated the fire department has twice the staff and can easily handle that workload out there. The library use is already from 60% outside the city and the library receives about \$160,000 a year from the county for the library. We are still one community, we all go to the same churches, go to the same schools, we play sports in cottonwood, we are very connected no matter what. This is a democratic process and up to the citizens of Verde Santa Fe to make a decision, and that does not mean that it will happen.

Mr. Horton stated the first legally required public hearing in this process doesn't take place until the last 10 days of the 30 day waiting period after the petition is filed. So his observation is the Council has already convened two public hearings and brought itself, the community and staff together to hear from the public two times that are not required by law and would not likely happen in many other communities.

Vice Mayor Pfeifer stated she has watched a lot of annexations come and go, and they are very emotional and they bring out the best and worst in people. She would hope that both sides stay civil in all this and tell the real truth, not opinions, and put the real numbers out there. This is a democratic process and if we ask the city to move forward with the annexation process, then that is just the beginning, then both sides will have the same opportunity to get the signatures or not and get their facts out. Everyone should make an individual decision whether or not it will benefit you and your community.

Mr. Horton stated that Council Member Smith made something of a motion in his comments.

Council Member Smith moved to postpone consideration of this request to a later date until a new Council is in place. No council member seconded the motion and the motion failed.

Council Member Pratt moved to direct staff to initiate the Verde Santa Fe annexation with the filing of the blank signature petition, map, and legal description with the County Recorder's office. The motion was seconded by Council Member Elinski, and carried unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

The special meeting adjourned at 6:59 p.m.

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Diane Joens, Mayor

ATTEST:

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Matthew McLean, Deputy Clerk

CERTIFICATION OF MINUTES

I hereby certify that the attached is a true and correct copy of the minutes of a special meeting of the City Council of the City of Cottonwood held on April 7, 2011. I further certify that the meeting was duly called, and that a quorum was present.

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Matthew McLean, Deputy Clerk

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Date