SPECIAL MEETING
ATASCADERO CITY COUNCIL
Building Public Trust Workshop - Part 2
Thursday, May 22, 2008, 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

DRAFT MINUTES

Welcome and Introductions 9:00 a.m. – Mayor Brennler

Mayor Brennler called the meeting to order at 9:20 a.m.

ROLL CALL:

Present: Council Members Clay, Luna, O’Malley, Béraud, and Mayor Brennler

Absent: None

Others Present: City Clerk / Assistant to City Manager Marcia McClure Torgerson

Others Present: City Manager Wade McKinney, City Attorney Brian Pierik, and facilitator Dr. Tom Shanks

Building Public Trust Workshop - Part 2:

Mayor Brennler asked for Council consensus to adjust the agenda by moving the discussion of campaign finance reform to the morning session. Council Members Clay and O’Malley opposed because they did not want to change the agenda that had been circulated to the community. Council Member Luna stated that as long as we get to the topic, he was okay with leaving it in the afternoon. Dr. Shanks stated he would make sure the topic was discussed in the afternoon. Council Member Béraud said that she wants to make sure that all issues are discussed today.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- Keep the current agenda – this will help in achieving the public’s trust.
- Campaign finance reform is important
- Changing the agenda now will limit the public’s ability to have input as some people were planning on attending only in the afternoon.
- Keep the current agenda but allow the public flexibility for input

Mayor Brennler stated, for the record, that he feels it was a grave mistake to not audio or video tape these workshops. He also stated that he was not part of the decision making process concerning taping. Council Members O’Malley and Clay stated that they agreed with Mayor Brennler concerning the taping of these workshops.

**Morning Session**

Facilitator Dr. Tom Shanks explained his background. He then reviewed Atascadero history concerning Campaign Reform since February 2007 when the Council set Campaign Reform as a goal.

Dr. Shanks led a discussion on the lack of public trust between the public, staff and City Council. He also explained why we are considering a full Campaign Reform Program and not just campaign finance reform.

The Council discussed how they deal with issues concerning staff, including complaints from the public and their own concerns.

*Mayor Brennler called a recess at 10:20 a.m.  
Workshop resumed at 10:28 a.m.*

The discussion of how to address staff issues continued.

Council Member O’Malley asked Mayor Brennler to share the progress he has made with the creation of his list of concerns and obtaining closure on his concerns. Dr. Shanks stated this was not the appropriate time to address this topic. Mayor Brennler offered to make a statement concerning the issue.

Mayor Brennler stated that he has met with City Manager McKinney and City Attorney Pierik regarding his concerns. He explained that they discussed his concerns, and he now feels that he and Mr. McKinney have a better understanding of each of their positions on the issues facing the City.

City Attorney Pierik added that he felt some of the issues were a result of lack of communication, and Mayor Brennler now plans on meeting regularly with Mr. McKinney to improve their communications.

Council Member O’Malley stated that the Council needs a system in place to address future concerns. The other Council Members agreed.

Council Member Clay asked Mayor Brennler to update his website to reflect the current status of his concerns.
Mayor Pro Tem Béraud asked all Council Members to address individual conflicts between each other, that do not pertain to the Council as a whole, outside of Council meetings to save time.

There was a lengthy discussion concerning the possible details of a complaint process.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- We need to remember that we all care about the City and are all amateurs with government.
- Council needs better communication
- This workshop is difficult to watch – How do we trust the Council?
- Was harassed while circulating Referendum petition last year
- City needs process for a member of the public to place an item on the Council's agenda
- Facilitator, please take charge!

Mayor Brennler called a recess for lunch at 12:10 p.m.
Workshop resumed at 12:50 p.m.

Afternoon Session

Dr. Shanks talked about respectful listening and how this practice can improve relationships.

Dr. Shanks asked the Council for their dreams for the next election.
- Staff should be kept out of it
- Only speak the truth
- Have evidence for statements made
- Candidates accountable for their statements
- Expenditures from all sources to be disclosed
- Resources should be sufficiently reported to the community
- Resources should be sufficient for each candidate to get information out
- Large contributions should be disclosed
- Contained cost of $10,000
- Less divisiveness
- Election of good members
- Candidates be more prepared for media pressure
- Diverse group of candidates
- Go beyond FPPC timelines & reporting
- Tough on issues if there is a credible foundation
- Campaign contributions should be on City website
- Candidates should avoid large contributions from developers coming before Council
- City supports fair public forums
- Candidates see each other as a post-election team
- Expenses should be reported on the City’s website promptly
- Campaigns rely on volunteers, not paid consultants
- Small campaign contributions that represent broad cross-section of community ($250 per individual per cycle)
- Civility among PAC’s
- No “hit” pieces (includes informal organizations)
- If it’s not broke, don’t fix it
- Unintended consequences
- All candidates should collectively repudiate attacks on individual candidates

**Mayor Brennler called a recess at 2:13 p.m.**
**Workshop resumed at 2:23 p.m.**

City Clerk/Assistant to the City Manager Marcia Torgerson explained upcoming City-hosted Candidate forums:

- June 26 – Candidate Pre-filing Forum
- August – Executive Management/Candidate Conference
- Early October – Televised Public Candidate Forum
- November 1 – Televised Public Candidate Forum

Dr. Shanks led a lengthy discussion of the options available for campaign finance reform.

**There was Council consensus for:**

- Public forums described by City Clerk
- City Attorney to come back to Council with information and options concerning:
  - Voluntary ordinance or Ballot measure
  - Elected mayor
  - Voluntary expenditure limits
  - Ballot measure concerning candidates running for individual seats
  - Contribution disclosure place on the City’s website
  - Council disclosure of contributions at Council meetings

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

- Place candidate filings on City website
- Council should disclose campaign contributions that relate to items on Council agendas at the Council meetings
- Encouraged voluntary finance reform
- Council will build public trust by adopting a campaign finance reform ordinance
- The disclosure of contribution is important, not contribution limits
- Adoption of a campaign finance reform ordinance will divide the City even more
- Time vs. money should be considered
• Focus on other issues that currently exist, rather than adding another
• Education of public about campaign ethics
• Involve community in ethics/campaign reform development
• Can't limit self-funding, which is hard to compete with
• Be sensitive to potentially conflicting contributions
• Televise forums
• Cap on spending
• Public declaration of receiving contributions from someone involved on project before Council
• Discussion of available contribution data & trends
• Televise more forums & training sessions

Mayor Brennler adjourned the Workshop at 4:12 p.m.

MINUTES PREPARED BY:

__________________________________
Marcia McClure Torgerson, C.M.C., City Clerk