

**THE REGULAR MEETING
OF THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF BENSON, ARIZONA
HELD APRIL 25, 2016 AT 7:00 P.M.
AT CITY HALL, 120 W. 6TH STREET, BENSON, ARIZONA**

CALL TO ORDER:

Mayor King called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance. Mayor King then introduced Vicar Sarah Isakson of St. Raphael in the Valley church who offered the invocation.

ROLL CALL:

Present were: Mayor Toney D. King, Sr., Vice Mayor Lori McGoffin, Councilmembers Pat Boyle, Jeff Cook, Joe Konrad, David Lambert and Chris Moncada.

EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION:

Mayor King recognized Evelyn Tinsley for 15 years of service with the City. Mayor King then presented a plaque to Ms. Tinsley.

PROCLAMATION:

Mayor King read the proclamation declaring April 30, 2016 as Benson Poppy Day. Mayor King then presented the proclamation to Marilyn Wilharm of the American Legion Auxiliary, Unit 45.

PUBLIC HEARING: None

CALL TO THE PUBLIC:

Mayor King stated he was limiting speakers to 3 minutes due to the number of people signed up for the Call to the Public. Vice Mayor McGoffin then stated that due to the fact that her husband retired from the Benson Police Department and now has a part-time job at the golf course, she was not allowed to have an opinion regarding the golf course and its possible use to create more ball fields. Vice Mayor McGoffin then asked those in attendance to not think she was being disrespectful by appearing that she was not listening to someone if they were speaking on one of those items, adding again, she was not allowed to have an opinion.

Jim Cox, McNeil Road, Benson spoke in favor of keeping the golf course open, stating any comments he made regarding economic realities were based on studies by the Office of Tourism of Arizona and Arizona State University Carey School of Business, the Morrison Agricultural Resource Group. Mr. Cox spoke about the economic benefit of keeping the golf course and the negative effects of closing the golf course. Mr. Cox's statement will be retained with the Council packet.

James Weathers, Golf Links Road, Sierra Vista, stated he was a direct representative of the Military Order of the Purple Heart (MOPH) that represents combat wounded veterans and their families throughout all of Cochise County, adding it is estimated that between 1,000 and 1,300 Purple Heart recipients live in the County. Mr. Weathers stated one of MOPH's missions is an interstate highway program going coast to coast designating different parts of highways and interstates as Purple Heart trails in recognition of those who have sacrificed, especially those who paid the ultimate sacrifice in serving their nation. Mr. Weathers then stated MOPH then came up with the Purple Heart Cities, Towns & Villages program and he was here to support the resolution before the Council to declare the City of Benson a Purple Heart City. Mr. Weathers stated if the resolution is approved, Benson will be the third city in Cochise County to be so proclaimed, then stated Cochise County was recently proclaimed a Purple Heart City and this past January, Arizona was proclaimed a Purple Heart State and was the first state to be so declared with

all the counties also being so proclaimed. Mr. Weathers then stated he would like to point out that this part of our country's relationship with the U.S. military dates back to 1854, when the Butterfield Overland Stage was established in this part of the country and when the Mormon battalions marched through here, adding the Benson area has a long special association with the U.S. military. Mr. Weathers then thanked the Council for the opportunity to speak. Mayor King then thanked Mr. Weathers and all veterans for their service.

Rudy Barrera, 4th Street, Benson spoke in favor of keeping the golf course open, stating he was born in and loves Benson and he loves the golf course, where people can go to play, exercise, see waterfowl and see wildlife all in a park-like setting. Mr. Barrera stated there are now 84 members in the San Pedro Golf Course Women's Club and there are a lot of winter visitor golfers, who have said they wouldn't stay in Benson if it wasn't for the golf course. Mr. Barrera then stated there are groups in Sunsites and Corona de Tucson who travel and play golf in Benson 3 times a week, adding members and all non-member players not only spend money at the golf course and restaurant, but also frequent other businesses to purchase gas, snacks, sports equipment, food and many other things. Mr. Barrera stated he has family and friends who stay in hotels while they stay to play golf on vacations and noted towns need to have parks and golf courses to draw people in. Mr. Barrera then stated the golf course supports organizations such as the Benson school golf team, first tee, the VFW, the American Legions, the Benson Boosters, the St. David FBLA and several charities such as Meals on Wheels. Mr. Barrera then stated the golf course may not be able to stay in the black the whole year, especially when winter visitors are gone, but the Council should keep in mind what will happen to the rest of our wonderful town without the course, adding throughout the entire year, the businesses in town would look like they do during our lean summer months.

Virgil Mustain, Barrel Cactus Road, Benson, spoke in favor of keeping the golf course open, stating he has been a Benson resident for 8 years, adding when he and his wife were RVing, they were attracted to Benson because of the golf courses. Mr. Mustain then stated there is only one golf course now and fortunately, it's in outstanding shape. Mr. Mustain then stated he was a retired public works director, working over 20 years in 2 cities and while he was those cities, the ongoing theme was how to bring outside money in, adding development brings revenue, but it also brings costs for infrastructure, such as police, fire and schools. Mr. Mustain then asked what the City of Benson has that brings winter visitors besides the golf course, noting the golf course also brings people from the surrounding areas of Sierra Vista and Tucson into the community to spend money here. Mr. Mustain then stated as Mr. Cox mentioned in his earlier comments, the effluent from the treatment plan being used for the golf course could be used for ball fields, but the City would need to improve the quality of water, which would be an additional cost. Mr. Mustain then stated the City is way ahead on the ownership of the course, since the City didn't have to pay for land or construction, and while there is the ongoing maintenance, there are also many good things going on with the course such as having bent grass greens, which is a rarity in southern Arizona and is the most popular grass for people to play on. Mr. Mustain then stated the course layout is architecturally very pleasing, it has numerous tees for every level of player and the maintenance of the course is excellent, especially with limited staff. Mr. Mustain then stated the one significant negative he sees is the dust due to non-paved cart paths, adding if the Council could put up the money to pave the paths, he believes the money will be recovered in the long run because more people will play, noting a lot of play is lost on windy and rainy days because players don't want to fight with the dust, mud and dirty equipment. Mr. Mustain then stated paved paths would also help the golf carts last longer. Mr. Mustain then stated Benson golfers are part of the community and they support the schools, the library, the park, the bus systems and other City services through their tax dollars and they would like to see the same consideration given to the golfing community.

Reagan Wilmarth and Paul Green, Rincon, 4th Street, Benson, addressed Council concerning an event the Society for Creative Anachronism held in Benson. Ms. Wilmarth stated it was a pleasure working with the City to bring their event to Benson and she wanted to thank the Mayor and Council, City Staff and the Police Chief, adding the event was very successful, bringing in 225 people to Benson. Mr. Green then stated they were very pleased with Benson and loved Lions Park, adding all of the indications found on

social media are positive and they are already planning further events in Benson. Mr. Green then thanked the Council, the Police and Fire Chiefs and all City Staff involved in the preparation of the event, adding he looks forward to doing another event in Benson. Mayor King stated he had the opportunity to go to the event this weekend and had an amazing time, adding the people in the event are wonderful and thanked Ms. Wilmarth and Mr. Green for the great job they did cleaning up after the event. Ms. Wilmarth stated she was glad people, including the Mayor and Councilmember Boyle, were able to see the event, adding it's sometimes hard to explain what the event is. Ms. Wilmarth then thanked Chief of Police Paul Moncada and the Benson Police Officers for their work, stating there were 2 incidents of people driving through the park recklessly; the officers responded quickly and quietly and didn't even disrupt the event, adding she didn't even realize they were there. Ms. Wilmarth then thanked Recreation Coordinator Laura Parkin, adding Ms. Parkin was a pleasure to work with on forms, the application and the permit. Ms. Wilmarth then thanked Parks Supervisor Jose Ronquillo for the fabulous job he did.

Robert Tymusz, Flowstone Trail, Benson, spoke in favor of keeping the golf course open, stating the golf course is one of the finest things Benson has right now and anytime he gets company from out of town, they go to the golf course and all say it's the finest food they've eaten. Mr. Tymusz then stated if the golf course is running in the red, there are options such as asking El Dorado Holdings, who is planning on building homes on Highway 90 and putting in their own 9-hole golf course, to help the City by giving the City advice on the golf course. Mr. Tymusz then stated the City has been very gracious through all the development permitting process and they could perhaps help the City save the golf course, adding sometimes all people have to do is ask for help. Mr. Tymusz then stated El Dorado may come down and give the City some advisors and see how the golf course be turned around. Mr. Tymusz then stated without the golf course, the City could turn into a ghost town and no one wants that to happen, adding he is willing to work with the Council in any way he can to help save what we have.

Alfred Reyes, Jemez Place, Benson, spoke in favor of keeping the golf course open, stating he was representing the American Legion, who this year, had their 8th annual American Legion golf tournament at the golf course. Mr. Reyes stated by having the tournaments, the American Legion is able to award scholarships to kids in the Benson and St. David High Schools and the Junior High Schools, as well as being able to send kids to Boys and Girls State events. Mr. Reyes then stated closing the golf course would mean that the American Legion would not be able to send these kids for their education, which is very important. Mr. Reyes then stated he just received a letter from the Corona de Tucson golf group and read from the letter, "Dear Mayor and Council, The Corona golf group has been enjoying playing at the San Pedro Golf Course for about 4 years and our membership includes both the San Pedro passes and full year memberships. We're a group of men, women and kids that reach about 30 during the winter and ebbs to a core of about 12 in the summer. We have and continue to contribute significantly to the economic viability of the club. We do this through our membership, our purchases from the cart food service and by enjoying a round of food and drink in the restaurant. We support the various San Pedro tournaments sponsored by local organizations, such as the Legion groups and the VFW and often participate in other fund raisers and help from time to time. We remark often of the use of grey water to irrigate the fairways and greens and of your prudent use of inmates to help maintain and improve the course. These must be and should be tremendous cost savers to the club operation. We recognize these are crucial to the successful operation of the club. In the Tucson and Corona area, we have witnessed a closing of several golf courses and the lack of these measures, your operation has sustained. We were very dismayed to hear the Council would discuss a proposal to close the golf course, since such action would lay waste the taxpayer investment to the club. The question among ourselves: Why such a proposal regarding a vested tourist attraction should arise. Admittedly, further improvements can be made to the club and understandably, the club rates raise slightly to accommodate improvements. Although we are aware of the opportunity and cost, we urge the Council people to consider that under proper management, the potential is a greater revenue stream than you realize, Corona de Tucson."

T.J. Fitzsimmons, Bonita Street, Benson, spoke in favor of keeping the golf course open, stating he voted for everyone on the Council except Councilmember Moncada and now knows why. Mr. Fitzsimmons stated like the other people who spoke said, there are many reasons the golf course shouldn't be closed.

Mr. Fitzsimmons then stated he has lived in Benson for 7 years and has always enjoyed living here, adding it's a nice little town, but he can guarantee if the golf course is closed, he will leave and there will be some other people who won't even come to Benson anymore. Mr. Fitzsimmons then stated he has a sign on his car that asks where Benson is and he has had people in Tucson say they know where Benson is and Benson has a real nice golf course, but they won't be saying it anymore if the golf course is closed. Mr. Fitzsimmons then stated he sees no reason to close the golf course, adding there are other things that don't make enough money to keep going, such as the swimming pools, the parks and the bus system, noting there are all kinds of things that don't draw enough money to support themselves. Mr. Fitzsimmons then stated the restaurant is good and probably needs to be open more hours, but with advertising, people will come from Tucson to Benson to enjoy the restaurant and the golf course. Mr. Fitzsimmons stated when he lived in Tucson, some of his friends would say one of the best golf courses in southern Arizona is in Benson and he came to Benson because of it. Mr. Fitzsimmons then stated he would like to see the golf course stay open.

Rachel Flick, Highway 80, Benson, spoke about the golf course, stating most of what she wanted to say has been touched on and she didn't want to repeat the comments, so she would talk about the purpose, promise and future of the golf course. Ms. Flick then stated right now, she was on the fence about the issue, adding she is employed by the City at the San Pedro Golf Course and she loves it there, adding she sees faces coming in from all around the globe and they talk about how they love and enjoy the golf course. Ms. Flick then asked what Benson has to offer the youth, stating she understands that the baseball fields and Lions Park needs to be talked about, but she feels a cooperative agreement should be found so people on both sides of the issue could come together as a team and make both sides work. Ms. Flick then stated she has been in Benson for 5 years and she enjoys all the wonderful beautiful amenities the City has to offer, especially the golf course, adding it's a beautiful hidden treasure and every day she goes in and see the pond and golfers having a great time. Ms. Flick then stated the golfers are coming in from all over the place and are pouring money into Benson. Ms. Flick then stated she understands the golf course will need more investment, but asked how much has been invested that will be lost if the golf course is closed. Ms. Flick then stated she believes the golf course is worth the investment and the ball fields are worth fixing, adding she believes there is power in numbers and if people can come together and work as a team, they can make these happen. Ms. Flick then pledged to do the best she can to make this work and thanked the Council for their time.

Jim Gray, Quail Ridge, Benson, owner of Dillon's Corral in Benson spoke in favor of keeping the golf course open, stating the Council considered closing the golf course in the past and found out there was a lot of support for it then. Mr. Gray then stated golfing is one of the few things adults can enjoy in Benson, adding there are lots of things for the kids to do, with a new track and field, a new swimming pool, good ball fields, a good library, the skate park and golfing, which all take money to operate. Mr. Gray then stated in 1998, the City's budget was about \$10 million and in 2015, the budget was about \$20 million, then asked where that increase came from, adding it's not due to new citizens and homes because the population is about the same. Mr. Gray then stated a lot of it is due to RV parks that were built and promoted in Benson. Mr. Gray then stated a conservative way to judge the impact of the golf course for RVers is to add the sales tax and bed tax revenue from November 1 through April 30, which is the RV season and then add the sales tax and bed tax revenue from May 1 through October 31 and subtract the difference. Mr. Gray then stated all the RV magazines he subscribes to say that 27% of RVers play golf and want a golf course nearby, so the difference in those sales tax collections should be multiplied by 27% and the result is a conservative idea of what RVers contribute. Mr. Gray then stated the RVers coming to Benson also contribute to many jobs in the area and he would hate to see 27% of them leave and not be in Benson. Mr. Gray stated most of the business community makes their living in the wintertime and that is what they rely on. Mr. Gray then stated if future development around the golf course happens, it will have a great impact on future City revenue. Mr. Gray then stated the golf course is the most beautiful commercial setting in all of Benson, it is a positive benefit for everyone to enjoy and he hopes it continues.

Barbara Arney, Limestone Street, Benson, spoke about the Parks, Trails and Open Spaces Master Plan (PTOS Master Plan), stating she was a member of the PTOS committee that has been meeting since last October. Ms. Arney spoke about the benefits of the plan and asked the Council to wait for the presentation and action on the plan before committing to new proposals for park development in the City. Ms. Arney's statement will be retained with the Council packet.

Red Young, La Mesa Circle, Benson, spoke in favor of keeping the golf course open, stating he has been in Benson for about 40 years and he would like to reiterate what has been said in previous comments supporting the golf course. Mr. Young stated the golf course is instrumental in his decision to remain in this community, adding he retired about 6 years ago from the school system. Mr. Young then stated he and his wife discussed moving elsewhere, but decided to stay in Benson because they have just about everything they need or want in this community. Mr. Young then stated the golf course is instrumental in growing future residents, long-term winter visitors and short-term visitors from all of Arizona, adding it's one of the only nice facilities Benson has to host functions and events. Mr. Young then stated the golf course certainly maintains the beauty of this community and creates a long-term healthy sport for kids for the rest of their lives. Mr. Young stated the charity events mentioned earlier are a tremendous boost for the community and all those organizations, adding he probably plays in 10 of those a year and noted they wouldn't be available to raise money for young people and the various organizations in the community if the golf course closed. Mr. Young then stated he would appreciate Council's consideration in this matter.

Fred Comaduran, Cactus Street, Benson, spoke in favor of keeping the golf course open, stating everything he has to say is an echo of what people have already mentioned. Mr. Comaduran stated he thinks the golf course is an important part of what this community is about; it's good economically, for adult recreation, for service events and things like that. Mr. Comaduran then asked the Council to keep that in mind.

Dave Thompson, La Cuesta Drive, Benson, stated he wanted to speak about the environment, adding he did a little research and at the last meeting made a couple comments, which he wants to continue. Mr. Thompson stated environmentalists are really worried about the yellow-bellied cuckoo and the north Mexican garter snake, noting he talked a little about the habitat, which is water and trees. Mr. Thompson then stated he checked out the area for the proposed development and found there is no water and no trees now. Mr. Thompson then stated this kind of stumped him because those animals aren't in that area anyway since it doesn't match their habitat, but if the Villages at Vigneto come in and build as they plan to build, with trees, water features, ponds, lakes, the golf course and so on, it will provide a really attractive sanctuary for these animals. Mr. Thompson then stated he doesn't understand the argument against the proposed development since it will be building something that would attract these animals and provide them with what they need to be here. Mr. Thompson then stated he would like to talk about another topic; one a little more serious to him and stated Benson now has a City Manager that took the job a couple years ago at one of the lowest paygrades for a City Manager in Arizona to help Benson financially. Mr. Thompson then stated at that time, Benson was close to bankruptcy and in the last 2 years, Benson is now in the black and is survivable through furloughs, adding the furloughs were done with people management and skills the City Manager had from a previous occupation. Mr. Thompson then stated the City Manager has done a pretty good job in his opinion, but when the City Manager asked for support, he was blatantly turned down. Mr. Thompson stated he thought that was rude, adding the City Manager is doing a good job and is trying his best to help the City, then noted the City Manager is overwhelmed at times with commitments and needs the Council's support.

Barbara Nunn, La Cuesta Drive, Benson stated she would like to read a short quote from a magazine called "Road Trip." Ms. Nunn then read "Benson, population 5,105 was founded as a Santa Fe Railroad connection to booming Tombstone and the Mexican harbor town of Guymas. The trains still rumble through town, but there's not much to see. Thanks to the popularity of Kartchner Caverns, they have a number of motels at Hwy 90." Ms. Nunn then stated the golf course staff is wonderful, but here again, the Council is considering closing the golf course. Ms. Nunn stated the Council couldn't be serious and stated closing the golf course would give the snowbirds another reason not to come back to Benson. Ms.

Nunn then stated she realizes it's an election year, but it's the winter visitors who save Benson each year and they shouldn't be run off. Ms. Nunn then stated it is bad enough the Sierra Club is breathing down everyone's necks at every turn trying to stop all the progress in town and added the Sierra Club don't vote for Council, the residents do. Ms. Nunn then asked why the Sierra Club wasn't here whining about the pecan trees going in near Pomerene, added that project has the land stripped to the ground and has people there living in a virtual dust bowl. Ms. Nunn then asked how much water those trees are going to take, adding it will be a lot more than the proposed development will use. Ms. Nunn then stated the people from Sierra Vista against the development should stay in Sierra Vista and make those people miserable and should let Benson thrive and grow. Ms. Nunn then stated Benson is losing people to the Green Valley area on daily basis, adding there is no affordable housing here and no hospital with full services, but the development will have those if the Council lets it move forward. Ms. Nunn then stated the golf course townhouse project will also provide not only housing, but employment opportunities as well, which is another plus for Benson and added she will still help buy fish for the golf course.

Dave DiPeso, a non-resident of Benson spoke in favor of keeping the golf course open, stating he owns a business on 4th Street and like others have said, here we are again 2 years later, talking about closing the golf course. Mr. DiPeso stated the Council saw the same kind of reaction then; adding everyone wants the golf course. Mr. DiPeso then stated in the past, the Council discussed RFPs for the restaurant to be leased, but as far as he knows, it wasn't done, noting the RFPs for the FBO at the airport was also never done. Mr. DiPeso then stated the golf course staff is doing an excellent job and it's a great course with a great restaurant. Mr. DiPeso then stated the golf course has to be run as a business, adding it has to have an advertising budget and needs to be promoted and marketed. Mr. DiPeso then stated most governments just look at the bottom line and don't think about marketing, promoting and advertising, but these are things that must be done to run a business. Mr. DiPeso then stated most people don't even know the restaurant is there, adding they have great food but they don't have an advertising budget, noting the golf course had wine tasting for weeks, but no one knew about it, including him. Mr. DiPeso then restated that the golf course should be run as a business and if the City needs to lease it out to a private company, maybe they should look at doing that. Mr. DiPeso thanked the Council for their time.

Melissa DiPeso, a non-resident of Benson, spoke in favor of keeping the golf course open, stating she owns a business in Benson and has 5 properties in the Benson area, adding she was at dinner this Friday and was shocked to see the agenda for this meeting, noting she loves the golf course, the restaurant and the food they serve. Ms. DiPeso then stated she goes to the golf tournaments and stated if a tournament is run well, the hosting organization can make \$5,000 on a Saturday, which is a lot for an organization. Ms. DiPeso then listed some of the organizations that have held tournaments including the Booster Club, the Knights of Columbus and the American Legion. Ms. DiPeso then stated the golf course is a great gathering place and is great for reunions and weddings. Ms. DiPeso then stated as they sat there Friday night, the moon came up over the Dragoon Mountains and it was beautiful, adding the silhouette over the lake was beautiful. Ms. DiPeso then asked the Council to please advertise the golf course and the restaurant, adding she didn't know anything about the wine tastings. Ms. DiPeso then stated the City could use the marquis in front of the Visitor Center to help advertise those events. Ms. DiPeso then asked the Council to keep the golf course open, adding it's a great facility and it would be a shame to see it close.

Vicki Vivian, Jennella Drive, Benson, spoke about the upcoming 2016 City elections; the primary election being held on August 30, 2016 and the general election being held on November 8, 2016. Ms. Vivian stated the elections will be held to elect the Mayor and 3 Councilmembers and spoke about the June 1 deadline for completed candidate packets, the August 1 deadline for voter registration in the primary election and the October 10 deadline for voter registration for the general election. Ms. Vivian then spoke about the Potential Candidate Forum that would be held on May 2 at 7:00 p.m. for those people who were interested in the possibility of running for Council. Ms. Vivian stated the forum would provide information on City government, the services the City provides and the election process. Ms. Vivian's statement will be retained with the Council packet.

CITY MANAGER REPORT:

City Manager William Stephens addressed Council, giving the dates of upcoming meetings and events.

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| Monday, May 9, 2016 | – City Council Worksession, 5:30 p.m., City Hall |
| Monday, May 9, 2016 | – City Council Meeting, 7:00 p.m., City Hall |
| Tuesday, May 10, 2016 | – Library Advisory Board, 4:00 p.m., City Library |
| Wednesday, May 18, 2016 | – Community Watershed Alliance, 6:00 p.m., City Hall |
| Saturday, May 21, 2016 | – Historic Preservation Commission, 9:00 a.m., City Hall |
| Monday, May 23, 2016 | – City Council Meeting, 7:00 p.m., City Hall |
| Thursday, May 26, 2016 | – Planning & Zoning Commission Joint Worksession on CMP, 7:00 p.m., City Hall |
| | |
| Saturday, May 14, 2016 | – Benson Relay for Life, American Cancer Society, Lions Park, 10:00 a.m. |
| Monday, May 16, 2016 | – Registration for both swim lessons and summer camps will begin at the Benson Community Center |
| Friday, May 27, 2016 | – Benson City Pool Opens at 11:00 a.m., For more information on the pool and our other summer activities, go to www.cityofbenson.com and look for Parks and Recreation |
| Saturday, May 28, 2016 | – Dive in Movie featuring the movie, Good Dinosaur, rated PG, Gates open at 7:30 p.m. |
| Monday, May 30, 2016 | – Memorial Day Pool Party
Kick off the Summer swim season with the City of Benson's Forget me Not Memorial Pool Party Monday, May 30, from 11:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Join us for a fun day filled with music, prizes and food! Free swimming is sponsored by the VFW Women's Auxiliary. |
| Monday, May 30, 2016 | – Memorial Day, City Offices Closed |

Mr. Stephens then gave a brief update on the quiet zone, stating the City advertised the public notice and have had the first meeting to begin the discussions on the issue. Mr. Stephens then stated there is a timeframe that has to be followed, but it's underway already and he will have more updates at the next meeting, adding the City is moving forward on the quiet zone. Mr. Stephens then announced that Kartchner Caverns State Park won the best cave award, in the 2016 USA Today in the 10 best readers' choice awards, adding the Caverns are an incredible asset in Benson for people to come and see. Mr. Stephens then stated there will also be a public open house for the Parks, Trails and Open Spaces Master Plan at the Community Center, 705 W. Union Street, on Tuesday, May 3 with presentations being given on the hour beginning at 3:00, 4:00, 5:00 and 6:00. Mr. Stephens stated each presentation will be followed by a question and comment period. Mr. Stephens then stated for more events in Benson, the public could visit the City's website: www.cityofbenson.com under "What to do Today."

Councilmember Moncada asked what the worksession was for with Mayor King stating it was a budget worksession. Mayor King then invited the public to come to the worksession, adding it's a long process to finalize the budget and the Council takes it seriously and works hard on the budget and again invited the public to come and watch.

Mayor King then stated he has been to some of the Dive in Movies and they are a wonderful family activity. Mayor King then encouraged others to go to the activities at the pool, adding they are fun for kids, adults and seniors.

Vice Mayor McGoffin then stated she had heard that the Relay for Life had changed the time of their event, adding she believes it will only last 4 hours. Vice Mayor McGoffin then stated she knows the details will be published in the newspaper and people need to watch for the adjusted time in the announcement.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Discussion and possible action on the Consent Agenda

- 1a. Resignation of Michael Berryhill from the Benson Economic Development Committee
- 1b. Resignation of Annette Buechel from the Benson Economic Development Committee
- 1c. Resignation of Pat Boyle from the Benson Economic Development Committee
- 1d. Resignation of Jennifer Swindle from the Benson Economic Development Committee
- 1e. Resignation of Thomas Swindle from the Benson Economic Development Committee
- 1f. Resignation of David Yeager from the Benson Economic Development Committee
- 1g. Invoices processed for the period from April 2, 2016 through April 17, 2016

Councilmember Moncada moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Seconded by Vice Mayor McGoffin. Councilmember Konrad then stated he had seen there had been 3 post-accident drug tests done and asked if there had been any injury accidents or loss time accidents. City Manager Bill Stephens stated there were none, adding these were minor incidents and it's the City practice to perform post-accident drug tests.

Councilmember Lambert then stated 6 of the 7 members of the Benson Economic Development Committee had submitted resignations and asked City Clerk Vicki Vivian about the status of the remaining committee member. Ms. Vivian stated she did receive an email from the last member of the committee also resigning, adding that resignation would be on the Consent Agenda at the Council meeting on May 9 and then stated she would also be placing an item on the May 9 agenda for the discussion and possible action or direction to Staff regarding the status of the BEDC. Mayor King then stated he had spoken to the BEDC Chairman Mike Berryhill about the BEDC and Mr. Berryhill told Mayor King that the committee felt the City's restrictions were too much and the committee had decided it would be easier to form a 501c3 and do things on their own.

Motion then passed 7-0.

2. Discussion and possible action regarding the adoption of the Benson Area Transit Program Civil Rights Policies

Finance Director Dustin DeSpain stated these policies are for the Transit Department, adding the City is getting ready to apply for a new grant for the upcoming fiscal year and part of that process is adopting the revised policy, adding not much has been changed, but the new policy does contain a complaint form. Mr. DeSpain then stated the City has to comply and adopt the new policy or the City is not able to receive the grant. Councilmember Moncada moved to adopt the Benson Area Transit Program Civil Rights Policies. Seconded by Councilmember Lambert. Motion passed 7-0.

3. Discussion and possible action regarding Resolution 12-2016 of the Mayor and Council of the City of Benson, Arizona, authorizing the City Manager to apply for Arizona Department of Transportation Section 5311 Funds to operate a Rural Public Transit System

Finance Director Dustin DeSpain stated this item is asking permission to give the City Manager the option to apply for funds, for both the Dial a Ride and fixed route services, adding the grant pays over 85% of the City's cost of these services.

Vice Mayor McGoffin moved to approve Resolution 12-2016. Seconded by Councilmember Moncada. Motion passed 7-0.

4. Discussion and possible action regarding Resolution 13-2016 of the Mayor and Council of the City of Benson, Arizona, proclaiming the City of Benson as a Purple Heart City, and authorizing and directing the City Manager, City Clerk, City Attorney or their duly authorized officers and agents

to take all steps necessary to carry out the purposes and intent of this resolution

City Clerk Vicki Vivian stated the Military Order of the Purple Heart, who the Council heard from earlier at the Call to the Public, has requested the City of Benson be designated as a Purple Heart City. Ms. Vivian stated Sierra Vista and Huachuca City have been designated as Purple Heart Cities, Cochise County has been designated a Purple Heart County and the Council also heard that the State of Arizona has recently been designated as a Purple Heart State. Ms. Vivian then stated the county has recently placed a Purple Heart sign in Douglas and will be placing another sign in Bisbee depicting that Cochise County is a Purple Heart County. Ms. Vivian stated if the resolution is approved, Staff will coordinate the placement of a sign declaring Benson a Purple Heart City and schedule an event for the unveiling of the sign.

Mayor King stated this was an amazing idea and thanked Ms. Vivian for her work on this, adding he also appreciates the gentleman who came in and addressed Council; then thanked him and all veterans for their service. Mayor King stated it is important to honor those who have given their lives and made sacrifices of their time for the freedoms we have.

Councilmember Boyle asked about the benefits and responsibilities involved with the designation with Ms. Vivian stating the designation would involve the placement of a sign indicating the City has been declared a Purple Heart City. Ms. Vivian then stated if people are aware of the designation, they might look for the signs in cities they visit, adding if the sign is placed at Veterans Park, it would give veterans a little more recognition and if the sign were placed at the park or near the Mormon Battalion monument, it might encourage people to stop. Councilmember Boyle then stated the designation is mostly a gesture of goodwill with Ms. Vivian adding it is also a sign of recognition to Purple Heart recipients.

Councilmember Cook stated on the surface, he was in favor of the resolution, but that other cities had been declared one thing or another such as a sanctuary city, and he would like more detail, specially about the section of the resolution that reads, “take all steps necessary to carry out the purpose and intent of this resolution.” Councilmember Cook then stated he was uncertain what the purpose and intent of making Benson a Purple Heart City meant and if it just meant a sign or if there were more. Ms. Vivian stated the only intent is to recognize those Purple Heart recipients, adding the resolution gives Staff the ability to proceed with the placement of sign, deciding where to put it and ordering it from the County under the current Intergovernmental agreement.

City Manager Bill Stephens stated the designation is also an active positive statement on behalf of the City as a government entity, stepping up to support our U.S. government and military, especially those Purple Heart recipients who have sacrificed to the point of being wounded or injured, most during combat, again stating the designation would be an active positive statement of the City’s support.

Vice Mayor McGoffin moved to approve Resolution 13-2016. Seconded by Councilmember Konrad. Councilmember Lambert stated when the request first came out, he approached Ms. Vivian and talked to her extensively, adding he wanted to thank her for going out of her way and getting all the information and proper documents put together. Councilmember Lambert then agreed this would be a great thing for Benson, adding it would be great to put the sign at Veterans Park. Councilmember Lambert then stated on behalf of the American Legion, he knew they would be at the unveiling, supporting it and he knew the American Legion Auxiliary would be there also. Motion passed 7-0.

5. **Discussion and possible action regarding the job description for an Administrative Assistant to the City Manager**

City Manager Bill Stephens stated at the last Council meeting, at Council’s request, he brought forward a job description for an executive assistant, adding Council had a thorough discussion about the description and the salary range and then directed him to go back and redraft a job description and salary range to be brought back to Council, which is why it’s on the agenda. Mayor King asked Mr. Stephens if he was able

to get both job descriptions given to Council as he asked Mr. Stephens to do at the last meeting with Mr. Stephens indicating he had no. Mayor King asked if any of the Council had gone into City Hall to review those with the Councilmembers indicating they did not.

Councilmember Konrad stated he had brought up that the City already had an existing job description for an executive assistant, then asked if the Council approving the job description and salary range was the end of the story and no one would be hired at this time with Councilmember Moncada stating he imagined Mr. Stephens would try to fill the position immediately. Mr. Stephens stated Councilmember Moncada was correct. Councilmember Konrad then asked Mr. Stephens if he would seek to fill the position once the job description was approved with Mr. Stephens stating that was correct.

Mayor King stated he had been going back and forth on this issue, adding he thought about the last meeting, what was recommended with the previous executive assistant and other things and was still not sure, adding he bounced back and forth. Mayor King then stated he knows Mr. Stephens needs help and it's important to try and get someone for that, adding on one hand, current Staff could be moved around, but on the other hand, he didn't want to take away an employee from the other department, then again stated Mr. Stephens definitely needs help.

Councilmember Boyle asked if most of the requirements for the new position were based on the projected need of the development project with Mr. Stephens stating they were not. Mr. Stephens then stated he has no administrative support and at this point, he is the chief cook and bottle washer. Mr. Stephens then stated he was asked to bring this item to Council and he would continue to work in the capacity that he is in and do everything within the various realms that he has to deal with, which is just about everything. Mr. Stephens then stated there are some letters that get typed, but not to this level and there are more issues that need to be handled and research that needs to be done in order to provide Mayor and Council information on some of the subjects they want to debate, discuss and make decisions on. Mr. Stephens then stated to do that, he needs someone who can, while he is doing other things, go find information and take care of some of the other issues, not to mention, answer the phone and schedule his appointments, because he has people who make claim they can't see him, but noted it's usually because he has a lot of people who want to see him. Mr. Stephens then stated most people walk in and want to see him immediately and are not happy they have to make an appointment, but he needs someone who can handle that. Mr. Stephens stated right now he has the City Clerk and Deputy Clerk doing that, but it takes away from their jobs.

Mayor King stated he knows Mr. Stephens has a lot of comp hours and a lot are based on him staying late, adding just based on comp hours, the City could almost be paying someone to keep Mr. Stephens from having to stay late on most days. Mayor King stated Mr. Stephens stays late most days trying to get caught up. Mayor King then stated he thought about the issue a lot, about moving Staff around and about Mr. Stephens' comp hours, stating he knows Mr. Stephens needs help, but he's not sure how to do it. Mayor King then stated again, just based on comp hours alone, the City could almost pay someone.

Councilmember Boyle stated the Council was getting ready to talk about a new budget and is currently operating on a tight budget, which is why some of the other items are on the agenda. Councilmember Boyle then stated with the tax increase in place, the extra 1% has brought the City up to where it's just getting by and has a little bit of a cushion, but then the Council finds 100 different ways to spend that extra money on 100 different things, but the problem is, coming with the 2018 budget, half of the increase, the .5% drops off. Councilmember Boyle then stated the Council is already spending the money from the increase, and it's not a lot of extra, and if they spend it in all these different directions, then when the .5% drops off, the Council will be back before the public, with their hats in their hands and won't be able to fulfill the promises they made and will have to keep the .5% that was to sunset. Councilmember Boyle then stated he wasn't saying Mr. Stephens didn't need help, adding he knows Mr. Stephens is busy and he appreciates all he does, but the Council needs to think about this, because there is a lot of good reasons to spend the money, but the bill will be coming due.

Mr. Stephens then stated he appreciated Council's input, but he would like to clarify some things, adding the City is in the black as a result of furloughs, not the sales tax increase, noting the furloughs were borne on the backs of the employees who had to sacrifice at least 10% of their income for that particular period of time, which is what put the City in the black and built the reserve back up to over \$1 million. Mr. Stephens then stated past Councils committed the City to a \$250,000 a year to Wal-Mart for 10 years, which is \$2.5 million and the payment happens every year. Mr. Stephens then stated the bonds the City issued in the past for all of the infrastructure cost about \$300,000 a year, adding the reason the City is able to make that payment is because of the .5% sales tax that was instituted to pay that bond off for the building of the wastewater treatment plant. Mr. Stephens stated what happened since then, was there were some infrastructure problems that the City didn't have any funds built in to pay for and as a result of that, the City had to pay for more work to be done so the bonds were refinanced and the bond debt was extended to 2023, but the .5% sales tax still sunsets in 2018. Mr. Stephens then stated it was up to the Council, but the .5% sales tax was to pay off the bond, and restated the .5% sales tax expires in 2018 and the bond payment expires in 2023. Mr. Stephens then noted there is definitely a shortfall and either the .5% sales tax is extended to pay the bond off, which is what was originally committed to or the Council comes up with an alternative to continue to pay the debt that was created in order to keep the City running with past Council decisions. Mr. Stephens then stated he just wanted to clarify why the City is where it's at and how the City got the current revenue up and the additional funds the City has to pay those bonds and those debts.

Mayor King asked how many payments to Wal-Mart were left with Finance Director Dustin DeSpain stated the payment to Wal-Mart will end in 2018.

Councilmember Konrad asked how many employees have been lost in the last 18 months and how many had the City regained with Mr. DeSpain stating the equivalent of 15 employees had left and 8 had been hired. Councilmember Konrad then asked if the salary amount for the employees who left equaled the salary amount for those positions that were hired back with Mr. Stephens stating it had not yet. Councilmember Konrad then stated he agrees the City Manager needs some help. Councilmember Konrad then stated a long time ago, he brought up an administrative assistant and he thinks it's the right time to talk about it, adding he thinks the duties would be Mr. Stephens' responsibilities to spread them where he sees fit and if Mr. Stephens doesn't have the need for a full-time assistant, Mr. Stephens can find things for that person to do. Councilmember Konrad then stated one of the things he would like to see at all the Council meetings is for the City Manager to report on some of the action items the Council has assigned to Staff and updates on current projects rather than the events that are coming up on a monthly basis, adding he thinks the public would like to see what the City is doing. Councilmember Konrad then stated Mr. Stephens did a good job tonight to bring the Council us up to date on some things that are outstanding. Councilmember Konrad then stated he was in favor of getting someone in the Administration Office, but he wanted to be really prudent with the payscale vs. the responsibilities, adding he thinks the Council owes that to the taxpayers. Councilmember Konrad then stated he wanted to make sure the right person was hired because that person is going to be the face of Benson when the door opens at that office, adding it needs to be someone with a good attitude. Councilmember Konrad then stated he would expect that person to portray the image the Council wants Benson to be.

Mayor King stated he calls the Administration Office and Finance Office a lot and this employee will have to understand that there are a lot of calls coming into the office, adding he knows the Council interrupts Staff quite a bit. Mayor King then stated again, he was back and forth on the issue and this is something the Council needs to figure out. Mayor King then stated Mr. Stephens does need help and there is a lot of things this employee would be doing.

Mr. Stephens stated the job description is based off what the City currently has, and is not based on some projected future amount that might come in. Mayor King then asked if the Council would have a right to go back and change this job description to add more responsibility or take responsibility off, depending on what happens with the projected growth of the City with Mr. Stephens stated that idea can be explored. Mr. Stephens then stated he is glad the City has the Attorneys it does, adding the firm has a labor attorney

the City can tap into, because when job duties are changed, which impacts salary as well, there are certain labor laws that must be followed to make sure it's done right and labor law rights aren't violated. Mayor King stated he understood that, then stated as Benson grows, more and more will be put on Staff.

Mr. Stephens then stated if Benson grows, this won't be an issue, then stated if the City doesn't grow and something needs to be done, it can be done with through furloughs or layoffs or other actions. Mr. Stephens then stated the City needs to be reshaped, adding at this point, he doesn't see the City sliding backwards, but anything is possible such as an economic downturn. Mr. Stephens stated this is why the financial position of the City needs to be looked at and considered continuously.

City Attorney Gary Cohen addressed the ability to make some modifications to the job description, stating he sees some broad language in the job description that anticipates and allows for exactly what Mayor King was talking about and it's not something the Council needs to be concerned about.

Vice Mayor McGoffin asked how many job openings the City currently has with Mr. DeSpain stating there are currently 5 positions that are open and will be hired and there are 5 other positions that will remain vacant and won't be filled. Vice Mayor McGoffin then asked about the employees in the Gas Department and if the staff level was where it needed to be for compliance reasons with Mr. Stephens stating the employees needed have been hired and are being trained and certified. Mr. Stephens then stated in public works, there is 1 position that hasn't been filled yet, but 5 of the 6 vacancies have been filled.

Councilmember Boyle stated he has a contrary view when it comes to the economy and the future, adding he has studied and spent a lot of time looking at this. Councilmember Boyle stated a lot of people have faith in the stock market, but about 1/3 of the country's population is currently unemployed and there are 56 million people on food stamps. Councilmember Boyle then stated the Council is basing a lot of their decisions on perspective growth and things that might happen, but on the contrary, some horrible things could happen. Councilmember Boyle then stated he just wants to be sure the City is in a position that should things turn south, the City is nimble enough to dodge the bullet, adding last time, the City barely survived 2008 and 2009 and if there is a repeat of that or worse, the City is going to be in some dire financial conditions. Councilmember Boyle then stated he is concerned and the Council needs to be aware and be planning appropriately.

Mr. Stephens stated he wanted to add that at the last meeting, a new job description for the library was approved, adding after losing the Library Director, the job description was rewritten and the salary range was lowered. Mr. Stephens then stated he also brought a new Human Resources job description with that salary range lowered also, adding those changes resulted in approximately \$20,000 in personnel cost savings for the City. Mr. Stephens then stated if this job description is approved and the position is filled, a portion of that savings will obviously go towards funding this position, so it's not completely out of line and the City does have the funds at this current time.

Councilmember Konrad stated in last year's approved budget, there was an assistant position approved at a paygrade level 30, noting Mr. Stephens is proposing is a paygrade level 36, which equates to about a \$10,000-\$14,000 difference and asked if there was any flexibility there and if the proposed salary was based on market study of any kind. Mr. Stephens stated the job description and proposed salary were based on Council's request to him to write a job description that would fit all of the additional requirements Council brought to him, such as some media help. Mr. Stephens then stated right now, the City has no one that deals with the media, so multiple phone calls go to multiple people and multiple different answers are given, adding sometimes those answers aren't factual or have the right details. Mr. Stephens stated this is just one example of some of the duties that were brought to him to incorporate into the job description. Mr. Stephens then stated Council also discussed making the job also handling Human Resources duties and after the discussion, Council made the determination to keep the roles separate. Mr. Stephens then stated the old administrative job description was really based on executive secretary level duties, which is what the title of the job was when the Fire Department Assistant was in the

Administrative Office. Mr. Stephens then stated, as he mentioned last week, he could move that job back to the Administration Office, but he doesn't see that as productive, because a new job description will have to be written and filled at the Fire Department because there is a need for someone there, adding it doesn't help to rob Peter to pay Paul. Mr. Stephens then stated he doesn't see the point of that unless it's determined to not have one or the other. Mr. Stephens then stated if the Council wants the Fire Department to have the administrative support and not the City Manager's office, he will continue to work as he is now, but on the other hand, if the Council wants to save money and doesn't want to fund the position and wants to support him, something has to give. Mr. Stephens then stated he doesn't know if that means bringing that position back from the Fire Department, adding he wouldn't advise that, but it's not his call. Mr. Stephens then stated he could live with whatever decision the Council makes, adding he was asked to put this job description together and bring it to Council; that is all he is doing.

Mayor King stated he has had multiple media outlets contact him and he is very careful how he says things, adding Mr. Stephens, Ms. Vivian and Mr. Cohen assists him in the requests to make sure everything is factual and said in the best way to keep the City out of possible situations, but this takes them away from their job. Mayor King then stated this is important when someone makes a statement, adding he has learned over the years to be cautious with how things are said. Mayor King then stated with more development, there will be more of these media requests, adding he knows it's a small part of the job description, but that small part takes a lot of time.

Councilmember Konrad stated Mayor King was straying into an area that would be described as a Public Information Officer, which is far removed from an administrative assistant and the Council needs to be careful on what is expected. Mr. Stephens stated there are several things in the job description addressing inquiries and requests, adding there is broad language in the description to allow flexibility. Mr. Stephens stated the employee will be able to do research for public information requests, assist the City Clerk in that area and work on requests for information from media outlets for articles. Mr. Stephens then stated the job description includes several paragraphs on research, analysis, response to the public, inquiries, complaints and assisting in resolutions and alternative recommendations, adding the broad language will have the employee basically deal with a lot of the requests that come in in which Staff has to stop what they're doing and go find out what the answer is. Mr. Stephens then stated a lot of people won't wait for that and will skip right over the City Manager and call Council.

Mayor King stated this assistant will not only help Mr. Stephens, but will help the City Clerk also and asked Ms. Vivian how many requests for public information were received each year. Ms. Vivian stated the requests vary greatly with the political environment, litigation and other factors, adding some days she could spend the entire day doing nothing but records requests. Ms. Vivian then stated she would estimate she received 3 requests a week, noting some of the requests require information from other departments, such as requests for utilities at certain locations, adding those requests are taken to the proper department and come back to the Clerk for disbursement. Mayor King then asked Ms. Vivian about the amount of paperwork she has with Ms. Vivian stating the most time-consuming task is Council minutes and noted the complaints and requests and issues for the City Manager take her away from her duties as City Clerk.

Councilmember Cook stated the first job description was directed at a high-level executive assistant and now the job description is asking for an administrative assistant, adding one of his problems with the discussion at the last meeting was that some of the Council wanted to take away what Mr. Stephens needed and water down the job description to give Mr. Stephens something that would not be satisfactory to either him or the Council. Councilmember Cook then asked Mr. Stephens if the current job description would fill the needs he originally put forward to the Council. Mr. Stephens stated in a perfect world, the first job description would have been approved, but it's not a perfect world and the City has a limited budget and other concerns, then stated he believes the way this job description is written with some broad language, gives him some mobility to apply that person in different areas on different subjects instead of just having them type letters, answer phones or schedule appointments. Mr. Stephens then stated an example is the task to coordinate articles and communicate with the communication division, adding he is the communication division. Mr. Stephens then stated another task is to act on behalf of the City

Manager and do some of the things he needs them to do. Mr. Stephens then stated whether Benson grows or not, there will be the opportunity to adjust the job description, adding it's not locked in. Mr. Stephens then stated the City has the funding for the position and will have the funding for some time, but if Benson doesn't progress and grow as hoped, the job description can be readdressed, noting he was not talking about next week, but was talking about a few years from now. Mr. Stephens then stated in the meantime, this job description assists in moving forward with all the projects that are out there for the Council to consider in hopes of bringing them to a successful conclusion such as the Villages at Vigneto and the proposed development around the golf course, among other things.

Councilmember Cook stated he knows that Mr. Stephens has extensive education and experience in Human Resources and originally gave the Council the exact job description he wanted and asked Mr. Stephens if the new proposed payscale would give Mr. Stephens what he needed. Mr. Stephens stated in a better economic world, he might have a tough time finding someone willing to take a job at this payscale, but he believes there are people out there who would. Mr. Stephens then stated it's a balancing act between what is needed, who is available to hire and what the City can afford to pay, but he believes this is the right mix and right salary range and that there are some people out there who would do a good job in this particular position.

Councilmember Lambert stated he met with the City Manager multiple times on this issue and Mr. Stephens answered all his questions. Councilmember Lambert then stated he agreed with the first proposed job description, but he also agrees with Mr. Stephens trying to appease the Council as a whole to get the salary range down. Councilmember Lambert then stated he didn't think Mr. Stephens would be able to get the quality person he needs in the office at this lower rate, but he was willing to go along with the Council.

Councilmember Moncada stated he preferred to be very deliberate about the money the Council spends, adding that is why he put the next item on the agenda. Councilmember Moncada then stated the best scenario would be to split the duties between the executive assistant at the Fire Department and the City Manager's office, adding he knows that won't cover everything that everyone needs, but it would be a better situation at this time than filling this position. Councilmember Moncada then stated he knows that is not what the Council wants and that he is still uncomfortable with the salary range of this position, adding \$36,000 is the base, but that doesn't mean that is what the person will be hired at, noting potentially the City could end up paying more. Councilmember Moncada then stated next year, in the 2017-2018 budget, the Council will have to decide where to come up with \$250,000, adding every dollar spent now is another dollar the Council will have to find next year. Councilmember Moncada then stated he has been on both sides, with furloughs and a sales tax increase and he doesn't like either side, adding the more spending the Council can prevent now, the less painful it will be next year the year after that.

Mayor King asked if the job could be made temporary for a year and be renewed each year, stating he knew it wasn't a solution, but he was trying to figure out how to get Mr. Stephens the help he needs and watch the budget also. Vice Mayor McGoffin stated the City wouldn't get decent applicants for a job that has to be renewed every year. Councilmember Moncada then stated every position in the City is a position that is renewed each year with the approval of the budget, adding some jobs are required by statute, but every year, Council approves the positions that get funded in the budget process, again stating most positions could be cut from the budget, if needed. Mayor King then asked if it would be legal to eliminate the job in another year, if it weren't needed. City Attorney Gary Cohen stated no one has the right to have a job in perpetuity unless they have a contract that stipulates that, which would never be done, adding the Council could eliminate the job if they chose to do so and Councilmember Moncada was exactly correct.

Councilmember Konrad stated as it stands now, the Council has budgeted for an assistant position in the current budget at a salary grade of 30 and asked what action would need to be taken to approve the proposed job description at the new salary grade for the duration of the current budget and for the upcoming budget with Vice Mayor McGoffin stating the position would be approved in the new budget.

Councilmember Cook moved to approve the job description as presented to Council. Seconded by Councilmember Lambert. Councilmember Lambert then stated the Council hires the City Manager to manage the City and the City Manager works directly for Council. Councilmember Lambert then stated the Council has given the City Manager the authority to hire and fire all 116 people working at the City right now and he thinks it's the City Manager's duty to know if the City can afford this position. Councilmember Lambert then stated if it gets to the point that this position needs to be eliminated, it should be the City Manager's decision to eliminate it at any time, whether it's 2 months, 6 months or 10 years down the road. Councilmember Lambert then stated he thinks the Council needs to approve this and rely on the City Manager to protect the assets of the City.

Motion passed 5-2 with Councilmembers Boyle and Moncada voting nay.

6. **Discussion and possible action regarding closing the City owned Golf Course and Restaurant**

Vice Mayor McGoffin stated she had a conflict of interest since her husband works at the golf course and then removed herself from the dais.

Councilmember Konrad moved to enter into an executive session with the Mayor and Council, the City Manager, the City Attorney and the City Clerk. Seconded by Councilmember Moncada. Motion failed 3-3 Councilmembers Boyle, Cook and Lambert voting nay.

Councilmember Moncada stated he appreciated everyone's attendance and hearing from everyone. Councilmember Moncada then stated as brought up in the last item, everyone heard that the City is coming up on the budget, which is a tight budget even with the recent sales tax increase. Councilmember Moncada then stated the fiscal year 2017-2018 budget starts a year from now and the Council at that time will have to decide what they're going to do, noting the temporary .5% sales tax will be ending resulting in a \$500,000 decrease in revenue. Councilmember Moncada then stated that tax can be renewed by the majority of the Council, but there was a promise made when the tax was approved about 15 years ago, that it would sunset, meaning it would go away at a certain point in time. Councilmember Moncada then stated the City has a payment to Wal-Mart that ends about the same time, which is \$250,000 meaning the Council will still have to make up about \$250,000 in the budget. Councilmember Moncada then stated he sat on the Council and approved furloughs for employees as well as approving the recent sales tax increase, stating he doesn't like either one, but as a Councilmember, it was the job he signed up for. Councilmember Moncada then stated whoever sits on the Council next year will need to find \$250,000 in the next budget cycle which is the reason he placed this item on the agenda, adding currently, the golf course has lost roughly \$120,000 this year and is projected to lose up to \$200,000 for the fiscal year. Councilmember Moncada then stated he has had discussions with people who want to keep the golf course and they have suggested changing the management, but he thinks if the City had top pros managing the golf course, he doesn't think it would do a lot better than what it is doing now. Councilmember Moncada then stated golf courses are losing money, noting Oro Valley is \$2.9 million in the hole on their golf course. Councilmember Moncada then stated he doesn't want to take anything away from the people who work there and he apologized to the employees, because if this item passes, they will lose their jobs, but this is definitely a financial decision the Council has to make because the reality is that City has a budget and has only so much money that can go around. Councilmember Moncada then stated he has also had many discussions with people who support closing the golf course and turning it into something else, adding if the decision is made to close the golf course, the decision on what to turn it into will be made at a later time, but he couldn't imagine just letting the golf course die and not having the land being used for something else. Councilmember Moncada then stated he doesn't know what part of the golf course the City owns, but he knows it is the majority of the course and the building. Councilmember Moncada stated people have suggested selling the golf course and that is definitely a possibility, but the problem with that is a state law mandate that if a government owned asset is worth more than \$500,000, which may be increased to \$1.5 million depending on changes in the law, the City has to hold a special election. Councilmember Moncada stated it would cost about \$15,000 to hold a special election just to get voter authorization to sell the golf course, adding the City would still have to

find a buyer. Councilmember Moncada stated ideas people have supported turning the golf course into are an amphitheater, birding trails, ball fields, including baseball, football and soccer fields, which could be used for improving tourism by hosting tournaments. Councilmember Moncada stated Payson has 5 tournaments, noting the adult tournaments bring 50 teams to their City, with each team having 15 players and 5 coaches, adding they all typically bring their families to the tournament. Councilmember Moncada then stated he knows if the golf course is closed immediately, it wouldn't be field ready, but youth sports could use the property for practice. Councilmember Moncada then stated one other thing brought up to him was that the City owns the other side of Lions Park which isn't being used for fields, but stated the golf course is closer to being ready to use for fields than the west side of the park is. Councilmember Moncada then stated he knows closing the golf course isn't popular and he certainly understands the feelings on both sides, but he doesn't feel he would be doing his job as a Councilmember if he didn't at least bring this up for a discussion with the Council. Councilmember Moncada then stated he doesn't have a lot of ideas on how to turn the golf course around any more than what is being done right now, adding the City has had different management and different City Managers and he thinks everyone has given it their best. Councilmember Moncada then stated he's not sure if across Arizona, golf is becoming less popular or if it's because of the stagnant economy, but he feels there's not a whole lot of opportunity to increase revenue at the golf course, which means the City is going to have to put even more money into it, in a time when there will be even less money. Councilmember Moncada then stated he certainly understands and appreciates everyone coming out and talking about this, but this is something the Council has to at least discuss, adding he didn't think the Council would be doing their job if they didn't at least talk about this publicly.

Councilmember Boyle stated there was a great audience present and he appreciated their comments, noting they were slanted heavily toward saving the golf course. Councilmember Boyle then stated Benson has about 7,000 people and there is a very small number of people at the golf course. Councilmember Boyle then stated if the course was such an asset, it would be making money, and yet, all the time he has been on the Council and even before then, the golf course hasn't been making money. Councilmember Boyle then stated people always talk about the economic benefit to the City and all the golf course is doing for the City, but at the same time, the Council has the responsibility to be guardians of taxpayer money. Councilmember Boyle then stated those in favor of the golf course are a small group of people, and while they are very boisterous, they are a small group of people, adding the Council has to represent the whole community, which is a much larger group of people than just those present at the meeting. Councilmember Boyle then stated the comments included running the golf course like a business, but nowhere in the constitution does it say the government should be involved in competition against private businesses, adding the restaurant actually takes money away from other restaurants run by business owners who actually invest their own money and resources into their restaurants. Councilmember Boyle then stated other restaurants simply can't compete against the golf course restaurant because it's funded by the City and can lose money all day long, which it does, and is still funded. Councilmember Boyle then stated it is a fallacy to believe that the City, as a government, should be in business at all, adding the City should just take care of the basic core responsibilities, such as fire, police protection, city streets, water and those things, adding nowhere does it say a golf course, restaurant and things of that nature. Councilmember Boyle then stated he knew these were harsh words, but the City has lost somewhere in the neighborhood of \$500,000 or more in the last 4 to 5 years and there is an endless list of needs that are being neglected, such as streets and sidewalks for the sake of a small group of people. Councilmember Boyle then stated even though it brings business to the City, he's not sure it's enough to make up for the continuous loss and the cost to the whole community just to satisfy the needs of a small group of people.

Mayor King stated he did have a discussion with Finance Director Dustin DeSpain earlier and asked about the losses at the golf course over the last 5 years, which, if the money that was given to the City was not counted, comes to over \$800,000. Mayor King then stated with the money that was given to the City, the total loss was \$1.7 million. Mayor King then stated this is a hard decision, adding he has been wrestling with the issue. Mayor King then stated he heard the comments about running the golf course like a business and the Council looking at the bottom line, adding the Council is also responsible for

taxpayer money. Mayor King then stated the charitable events and fundraisers had slipped his mind, even though he had been to a few of the tournaments. Mayor King then stated the support for the golf course is amazing and it makes him wonder what can be done to fix the issue. Mayor King then stated \$1.7 million is a lot of money and when he thinks back on what could have been done with \$1.7 million, the Council could have developed the other side of Lions Park. Mayor King then stated he loves the golf course, loves the food and there are wonderful people there, adding he has taken people there and has had meetings there. Mayor King then stated he had met with Councilmember Konrad a little earlier and Councilmember Konrad had a suggestion.

Councilmember Konrad stated on Tuesday evening, he attended the Parks Master Plan presentation, adding anyone who hasn't gone, needs to go, noting there is a lot of information in that plan proposal that people need to be aware of. Councilmember Konrad then stated the plan addresses parks, trails and river access, adding many of the proposed sites bump up against the golf course. Councilmember Konrad then stated it hasn't been that long ago, that he would've been proposing closing the golf course, but after looking at the proposed Parks Master plan, he doesn't think now is a good time to just decide to close the golf course, adding he thinks a lot more thought needs to go into the decision. Councilmember Konrad then stated he doesn't think the City should be in the restaurant business or the liquor business and he thinks the Council needs to look at outsourcing, adding if the clubhouse is leased for \$1.00 a year, the City would have \$4,000 more a month due to just not running the restaurant, yet the restaurant could still be operational. Councilmember Konrad stated the school does the same thing and while there may be a shift in employment, there wouldn't be a loss of employment in that area and those services would still be provided, noting that would have to be included in the RFP process. Councilmember Konrad then stated until the Council reviews the Parks Master plan, he thinks it would be a bad idea to make this decision. Mayor King stated he missed the Parks Master plan meeting and this was the first time he heard about the tie in with the golf course. Mayor King then stated when he heard the numbers on the golf course losses, he was devastated, but now was considering the other things that are hinging on it and then asked how much longer it would take for the Parks study to be completed.

Recreation Coordinator Laura Parkin addressed Council stating she was planning to bring a draft to Council for approval on May 23, adding the first rough draft is being revised based on comments and suggestions provided during the open house held last Tuesday. Ms. Parkin then stated another open house will be held on May 3, and a final draft will be completed based on comments received then. Ms. Parkin then stated that final revision will be sent to the City Attorney for legal review and will be presented to the Council on May 23.

Mayor King suggested meeting with Staff and Councilmembers who wished to attend, as long as there wasn't a quorum present, to take a hard look at the possibilities concerning the golf course. Mayor King then stated when he heard the loss numbers, he was frustrated, but with other things being tied to the golf course, he would like to sit down with Staff and do some brainstorming in the next week or two and then bring the item back to the Council on an agenda.

Councilmember Konrad stated there were some civic leaders in the room that are passionate about this issue, adding it wouldn't hurt to draw on their knowledge and suggestions and noted he would like to have some input from the public. City Manager Bill Stephens stated this sounded like a Council worksession. Mayor King stated when this meeting is held, he doesn't want anyone shooting from the hip, adding he wants the numbers laid out and would like to have some ideas on what can be done to fix the situation, whether it is a long-term solution or the answer that nothing can be done to fix it because the Council needs to know that also. Mayor King then stated he didn't want to waste anyone's time, adding the brainstorming needs to be done as soon as possible. Mayor King then stated everything needs to be considered, the ideas, what can be done, advertising or anything else that can be done. Mayor King then stated if it fails, then the Council can bring this item back up and asked if the Council would be willing to wait a month before making a decision. Councilmember Moncada stated he thought the Council should vote but he understood if the Council decided to wait, adding he just wanted the Council to have a discussion on the issue. Mayor King asked if this was something that required a motion.

Mr. Stephens stated he would agree with Mayor King, then stated one of the things missing was some facts. Mr. Stephens then stated it has alluded to that the City has 15 acres of Lions Park undeveloped, adding that property is addressed in the Parks, Trails and Open Spaces Master Plan, but he would like to note that since the beginning of time, the City hasn't been able to fund the development of that property. Mr. Stephens then stated he wasn't sure where the City would get the funding to change the golf course into ball fields and stated the golf course property was to be surrounded by housing development, which may not occur if the golf course is closed, because that housing development is predicated on the golf course, adding these are some of the additional facts that need to be considered. Mr. Stephens then stated he also thinks the Council needs to consider all departments across the board when they look at reducing the budget, because except for the 3 utilities that make money, all other departments are supplemented by taxpayer dollars, such as the swimming pool, the Recreation Department, the Library, the Golf Course and the Airport. Mr. Stephens stated there is quite a bit of money spent on these and the Council can call it a loss, but he would call it taxpayer dollars supplementing amenities that taxpayers want. Mr. Stephens then stated all ideas are welcome and he realizes in any given community, there are those who want a golf course and those who don't, but there are also those who want an airport and those who don't; those who don't have children and really don't care whether there are any City parks and ball fields, those who don't have grandchildren and would prefer to have the other amenities, but on the other hand, there are a number of families here who have children, who have grandchildren and would like to have ball fields. Mr. Stephens then stated there's a number of different opinions and likes and dislikes and he thinks the Council needs to weigh all of those, because everyone pays taxes. Mr. Stephens then stated he thinks it is absolutely appropriate to wait to see what the Parks, Trails and Open Spaces Master Plan has proposed, keeping in mind that along with that plan comes a bill to try and develop all that, adding it's really a Parks, Trails and Open Spaces Master Plan for the projected future of the City and it should be looked at like a strategic plan for parks, which shows where the Council wants to go. Mr. Stephens then stated the funding will follow, but will be developed over a time period. Mr. Stephens then stated he thinks the Council does need a meeting to consider all the different angles and facts relative to this issue where it costs the City money and where the need is to potentially review and trim the budget, if that's what the Council proposes doing, adding a worksession with public input would be vitally important.

Mayor King stated he didn't believe the worksession could be over in an hour and proposed starting earlier, even though he knew the Council has a lot of upcoming worksessions and meetings. Mr. Stephens stated the worksession may need to be held on a night other than Monday due to the number of scheduled worksessions regarding the budget or the proposed development. Mayor King stated he anticipated a long worksession and wanted to have the public be able to give their input as well as having numbers and ideas for Council to consider.

Mr. Stephens stated he wanted the Council to know the worksession would not be limited to discussing the golf course, adding the entire cost of running the library, for example, with the exception of a few late fees on books, comes out of taxpayer dollars and asked if the Council wanted to consider cutting the library. Mayor King stated the information should be brought to the worksession, adding it would be better for the public to know the information.

Mayor King then stated he wanted this worksession separate from the budget and asked if the worksession could be held next Monday (May 2). Councilmember Lambert stated the City Clerk was hosting the Potential Candidate Forum next Monday. Mayor King then asked about next Tuesday (May 3) with Councilmember Lambert stating that was the date of the open house for the Parks, Trails and Open Spaces Master Plan. Mayor King then stated he wanted to have the worksession before the budget worksession, if possible.

City Attorney Gary Cohen stated if he was tracking properly, a suggestion for the Council to consider would be to move to deny a vote on closing the golf course and restaurant at this time and to instead, continue the discussion on these issues at a worksession to be scheduled as soon as possible. Councilmember Konrad then moved to postpone a decision or vote on the golf course closing this

evening and to continue the discussion at a special meeting to be scheduled as soon as possible. Seconded by Mayor King. Councilmember Lambert stated the motion was to postpone a vote, but Mr. Cohen's suggestion was to decline a vote. Councilmember Konrad then amended his motion to use the word "decline" a vote on closing the golf course and continue the discussion at a special meeting as soon as possible. Amended motion seconded by Mayor King.

Councilmember Cook stated he would like to repeat some of the things said at the Call to the Public that stood out to him, stating golfing one of the few things adults can do to enjoy themselves; 27% of RVers want golf nearby; the course draws visitors to the area; there are multiple golf tournaments that benefit Benson and there is a tournament that funds scholarships. Councilmember Cook then stated as far as turning the golf course into additional ball fields, as it is now, there are complaints that Lions Park is too far away as it is and moving fields to the golf course another 3 miles away is not a good idea. Councilmember Cook then stated the golf course lost \$1.75 million, and as he recalls, that was under previous Councils, not under the current City Manager Bill Stephens or the current Director of Golf Joe DelVecchio who have made major changes and improvements at the golf course. Councilmember Cook then stated the last time this came up, about 2 years ago, someone seized the opportunity to bring it up when work was being done on Interstate 10 and Highway 90 and it was keeping people from the golf course, adding the golf course lost extra money during that construction time. Councilmember Cook then stated now again, the golf course is losing money from construction at Davidson Canyon and the repaving project between Benson and Tucson and someone had the bright idea of closing the golf course. Councilmember Cook then stated another aspect on these figures is what Mr. Cox brought up to the Council during the Call to the Public, adding \$175,000 in taxes is what the golfers bring to Benson, which is just about a wash when compared to the loss this year. Councilmember Cook then stated he thinks those are the facts and figures that need to be brought to the Council at the worksession. Councilmember Cook then stated sales tax collections in the amount of \$175,000 equals a \$5 million impact on the City, just as Mr. Cox stated. Councilmember Cook then stated Benson isn't like Tucson where there are chains and other franchises from out of state that put their pizza parlors and other businesses into the community and then take that money back out of Arizona; most Benson businesses are cafés, restaurants, barbers, etc. run by local residents who leave most of that money in Benson's economy through wages, services and homes. Councilmember Cook then stated if the Council closes the golf course and lose that \$5 million, the City will lose businesses and residents, houses will be up for sale and prices will be depressed due to the exodus of people leaving and not a hoard of people coming in. Councilmember Cook then stated those facts and figures need to be kept in mind during the worksession. Councilmember Cook then stated the Council was sent a copy of an agreement for the City to take ownership of the golf course, and on page 3, under 3.2, it reads that the donee, which is the City of Benson, does understand that the donor, which is Mr. Hartley, intends to develop certain land surrounding the golf course property subsequent to the real estate closing. Councilmember Cook then stated he bet the City would be sued if the Council closed the golf course, adding there are a lot of things the Council needs to pay attention to, noting popular sentiment probably is not the best thing and bending to the will of people that have a political agenda to close the golf course is also not a good idea. Councilmember Cook then stated there are some serious things the Council needs to be considering and he thinks the Council should vote on whether they should close the golf course or not, but the motion has been made.

Councilmember Moncada asked what the motion was with City Clerk Vicki Vivian stating the motion was to decline a vote on closing the golf course and continue the discussion at a special meeting (worksession) as soon as possible. Motion passed 4-2 with Councilmembers Cook and Lambert voting nay.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: As per A.R.S. §38-431.03(A)(1), Discussion or consideration of employment, assignment, appointment, promotion, demotion, dismissal, salaries, disciplining or resignation of a public officer, appointee or employee of any public body, specifically, the City Manager

Councilmember Lambert moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:32 p.m. Seconded by Vice Mayor McGoffin. City Attorney Gary Cohen stated there was another item on the agenda and that the Council needed to address it, even if it was to table it, before adjourning the meeting.

Mayor King stated on the advice of the City Attorney, the Council would address the next item.

Councilmember Lambert then moved to table the last 2 items on the agenda. Seconded by Vice Mayor McGoffin. Councilmember Cook asked why the motion was made to table the items, adding he might be in favor of doing so if he knew, but at the moment, he was opposed. Vice Mayor McGoffin stated it was late and she would like to be thinking clearly for the next items. Motion failed 2-5 with Mayor King and Councilmembers Boyle, Cook, Konrad and Moncada voting nay.

Councilmember Moncada then moved to enter into an executive session with the Mayor and Council, City Manager, City Attorney and City Clerk at 9:34 p.m. Seconded by Councilmember Konrad. Motion passed 5-2 Vice Mayor McGoffin and Councilmember Lambert voting nay. (Councilmember Lambert left the meeting at 9:34 p.m. due to his employment obligation.)

7. **Discussion and possible action about amending the first paragraph under Section 3 of the City Manager's Employment Agreement**

Council reconvened at 10:16 p.m.

Vice Mayor McGoffin moved to table this item until the budget worksession and Council can discuss it at that time. Seconded by Moncada. Motion passed 6-0 (Councilmember Lambert had left the meeting at 9:34 p.m. due to his employment obligation).

DEPARTMENT REPORTS: No comments from Council.

ADJOURNMENT:

Vice Mayor McGoffin moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:17 p.m. Seconded by Councilmember Boyle. Motion passed 6-0 (Councilmember Lambert had left the meeting at 9:34 p.m. due to his employment obligation).

Toney D. King, Sr., Mayor

ATTEST:

Vicki L. Vivian, CMC, City Clerk