



**“The mission of the City of Safford is to make Safford  
a great place to live, work, and visit”**

**CITY OF SAFFORD  
COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES  
Monday, October 27, 2014 @ 6:00 PM  
Safford Library Program Room, 808 S. 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Safford, Arizona**

**PRESENT:** Wyn “Chris” Gibbs, Mayor; Mary Bingham, Vice Mayor; Council Member’s, Richard Ortega, Arnold A. Lopez, Kenneth Malloque, and James D. Howes.

**ABSENT:** Gene Seale, Councilman

**STAFF PRESENT:** Horatio Skeete, City Manager; Sandy Findley, Executive Assistant; Joe Brugman, Chief of Police; Randy Petty, City Engineer; Dustin Welker, Planning and Community Development Director; Jenny Howard, Public Works Director; Terry Quest, Finance Director; Alma Flores, Senior Accounting Specialist; Eric Buckley, Utilities Director; LeAnne McElroy, Library Director; and Georgia Luster, City Clerk. Sam Napier and Dale Clark assisted with the audio/video recording of the meeting.

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Pastor Bob Gilford, Greg and Carol St. Hilaire, Steve McGaughey and others who did not sign in.

1. **WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER:** Mayor Gibbs called the meeting to order at 6:01: 16 p.m.
2. **ROLL CALL:** A quorum of the Council was present (6-1).
3. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG:** Mayor Gibbs led the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.
4. **OPENING PRAYER:** Pastor Bob Gilford offered the opening prayer.
5. **PUBLIC HEARING: The Board of Adjustment will hear an appeal from Chap Ministries requesting to allow the use of the motel located at 1050 West Thatcher Blvd. as a homeless shelter.** Mayor Gibbs opened the Public Hearing at 6:02 p.m.

City Manager Skeete explained that the Council is acting as the Board of Adjustments for this Hearing. He emphasized to the Council that they are sitting in a judicial capacity as the Board of Adjustment. He cautioned them to listen to the facts as they are presented and to make their decision on the facts as presented. He informed them that their decision as the Board of Appeals

may be appealed to the Superior Court. At this time he asked Dustin Welker, Community Development Director, to address the Board.

Dustin Welker stated he is acting as the Chairman of the Board of Adjustments. He explained the Board of Appeals hears two types of cases: 1) Appeals from citizens on staff decisions, and 2) variances to regulations. He pointed out that he is acting as the Zoning Administrator. He explained that on a weekly basis the Community and Development Department receives and hears several zoning requests which requires the department to look at the permitted use in the zone and whether or not the use is an appropriate use. The Safford Planning and Community Development Department received a request from Chap Ministries to utilize the existing motel as a homeless shelter. The property is located at 1050 West Thatcher Boulevard (property directly North of Firth Park and across Highway 70). The property is zoned C-2 (Highway Commercial) and a homeless shelter is not listed as a permitted use in the C-2 zone. He noted that an R-2 (Multi-Family Residential Zone) would accommodate homeless shelters. The purpose of the Board of Adjustment's Hearing is to hear an appeal from Chap Ministries to allow the use of the motel located at 1050 W. Thatcher Blvd. as a homeless shelter. He stated there is an absolute need in the community for homeless shelters. Chap Ministries provide an exceptional service to the community. He is familiar with their Program, "Homeless to Homeowner", a very successful program. However, the purpose of the C-2 zone is to provide for commercial uses and services where the density of traffic and building area is not conducive to desirable residential living. The C-2 zoned areas encourage heavier commercial establishments intended for highway locations. Property along Highway 70 and other heavily trafficked corridors provide the most opportune locations for businesses which provide the city sales tax and bed tax that is critical to the operation of the city. Locations along Highway 70, especially across from Firth Park and the Chamber of Commerce, are the most highly visible locations to residents and visitors of Graham County and should reflect the positive character of the community. The motel is not in that great of shape and Highway 70 is the City's most valuable commercial corridor which the City actively looks to recruit new businesses such as hotels and restaurant's appropriate for that site as a future use. Allowing the use of a homeless shelter in a C-2 zone would set an unfavorable precedent that would allow similar uses on limited commercial frontage properties throughout Safford. The City has limited commercial properties and is working diligently to create more commercial areas. He ended by requesting the Board of Adjustment to support the recommendation that the homeless shelter is not an allowable use for the property which is zoned Highway Commercial (C-2).

Mayor Gibbs received two requests to address the City Council about the homeless shelter.

**Greg and Carol St. Hilaire, 2417 E Highway 70, Safford, Arizona:** Mr. St. Hilaire introduced himself and his wife, Carol. They are the founding directors of Chap Ministries. He stated they are asking the Council to consider a variance on the zoning. He commented that “as soon as someone says homeless, they get a picture of someone pushing a shopping cart around, someone sleeping under the bridge, or somebody sleeping in a cotton field.” He described some of the homeless people that Chap Ministries has assisted since 2005: disabled veterans, individuals on social security (SSI), families going through divorce, couples breaking up, women with children receiving child support, someone passing through, those who have lost their jobs, those with medical problems, those released from prison or rehab, those who just moved here looking for work, those no longer living with relatives or friends, those who have lost their home from some disaster (fire), and those who are going through financial hardships. He noted that a lot of the people they have helped in the past lost their homes when the economy boomed because their rent was raised, some just lived on social security benefits and had additional financial expenses like medical bills, automobile expenses, etc. He added that the people they help are placed on an accountability schedule and usually become self-sufficient within three months and are no longer homeless and in their own place. The Program helps these people continue life skills training with the goal of helping them become a home owner. Since Chap Ministries started its business in 2005 it has helped twelve families - once homeless, but now are home owners. “It’s not like we are going to put up a sign saying this is a homeless shelter.” He stated Chap Ministries has a homeless shelter on Highway 70 and Barney Lane. Most people don’t know there is a homeless shelter there. They screen the people before allowing them to enter the Program. He pointed out that Chap Ministries has been sending homeless people to the motel since 2005 and paying their motel bill until they could enter their other facility. “It isn’t like big changes are going to be taking place.” He asked the Council to consider giving them the opportunity of allowing them to continue using the motel as a homeless shelter. He also added their program also helps individuals secure employment. The Program requires them to seek employment four hours a day, Monday through Friday, provide community service work and they also work with social service agency to assist them with employment. Those who are really looking for employment find employment within two weeks. “Chap Ministries are there to help those who want to change and succeed.”

6. **ADOURN PUBLIC HEARING:** Mayor Gibbs asked for further comments from the audience. There were no further comments offered. He adjourned the Public Hearing and entered open session at 6:14:58 p.m.
  
7. **It is the Zoning Administrator's recommendation that the homeless shelter is not an allowable use for the property which is zoned Highway Commercial (C-2).**

Councilman Howes expressed his appreciation to Mr. and Mrs. St. Hilaire for their services they provide to the community. He added that the City spent some time and completed a review and revision of the zoning ordinance. As he was a part of the committee, he has complete confidence in Community Director and Building Inspector. However, he is willing to look at revisions to accommodate a homeless shelter in the community.

It was moved Councilman Howes, seconded by Councilman Ortega, and carried unanimously to accept the Zoning Administrator's recommendation that the homeless shelter is not an allowable use for the property which is zoned Highway Commercial (C-2). **MOTION ADOPTED**

Mayor Gibbs commented that a homeless shelter is very much needed in the community. He asked the Community Director to work with them in an attempt to find a zoning use that would accommodate their request.

8. **The Arizona Commerce Authority will give a presentation on their Certified Sites Program.** City Manager Skeete stated the Arizona Commerce Authority was invited to make a presentation on their Certified Sites Program. Staff has been working with the Authority for months to identify certified sites ready within the city limits of Safford. He asked Dustin Welker to introduce the Presentation.

Dustin Welker stated he has been working with the Arizona Commerce Authority for some time now. When the Department of Commerce disbanded and the Arizona Commerce Authority was created, a rural component to the Authority was created. Certified Sites Program is a positive tool for rural communities to showcase properties to potential developers for industrial and office sites. He introduced Carmella Aja, Program Manager, Economic/Rural Development, who will explain the Program.

Carmella Aja stated she and Keith Watkins represent all of rural Arizona -everything

except metro-Tucson and Metro-Phoenix is considered rural "Greater Arizona". She explained the Commerce Authority is the state's economic development arm with a streamlined mission to grow and strengthen Arizona's economy. The Program is Co-chaired by Arizona Governor, Jan Brewer and a 19-member Board of Directors which include Arizona's Senate President, House Speaker and three public University Presidents, and various business CEOs from across the state. A Rural Business Development Advisory Council is an advisor council to the CEO and President. The Mission of the Arizona Commerce Authority is to grow Arizona's economy with three groups:

1. Business Attraction – to attract businesses from other states, out of the country.
2. Business Expansion Team – assist existing businesses in Arizona to grow, expand, and create jobs.
3. Business Development Team – help entrepreneurs

The Sales Process is to get on the list and to stay on the list. They showcase the State's most marketable industrial and office sites (shovel ready). There is also the eligibility to benefit from the ACA Rural Economic Development Grant. Target audience is corporate real estate executives and site selectors that are looking and could be a good fit for the Arizona Commerce Authority. She noted that they focus on jobs and not retail. . Requirements for becoming a certified sites are very stringent.

Mayor Gibbs inquired about number of certified sites. Dustin Welker responded that they are working on certifying two sites: 1. Industrial Loop area (10 acres), and working with Langley to certify some of their properties. As Carmella said, the Authority focus on jobs - office space, manufacturing and industrial uses that become certified.

9. **Quarterly Financial Report Presentation.** City Manager Skeete explained quarterly financial reports will be presented to the Council on a quarterly basis.

Terry Quest, Finance Director, provided an overview of the financial results of the City of Safford's operations. The First Quarter Report covers the period from July 1, 2014 to September 30, 2014. He explained the report is divided into four major sections: 1) General Fund; 2) HURF and Street Funds; 3) Enterprise Funds; and 4) Grants.

The General Fund Report compares Actual Revenues/Expenditures to the Total Budgeted amount and shows the Percent of Budgeted amount for each major category. Further, it

compares the current fiscal actual revenues and expenditures to the prior fiscal year amounts to evaluate operations.

A review of the First Quarter Report indicates that the overall financial results of the City were favorable. A review of the General Fund indicated that the City received approximately \$2,630,425 of revenues compared to the prior fiscal of \$2,431,317, resulting in an increase of \$199,108. Also, actual expenditures decreased from \$2,542,247 to \$2,108,999, thus spending less for the first quarter by \$307,506.

The HURF and Street Fund showed an increase in revenues over the prior fiscal year quarter of \$60,088 with a slight increase in expenditures of \$12,990, resulting in a positive \$47,098. This fund showed positive results for the first quarter of FY15 of \$152,714. Enterprise operations performed well for the first quarter of the fiscal year. Overall, Enterprise operations indicated positive operating income for the first quarter of FY15. Grants for the City continues to provide a viable source of resources to fund capital projects and programs.

Councilman Lopez attended the poetry event.

Councilman Howes attended the Firemen's Pension Board Meeting.

Mayor Gibbs attended the tour of the Buckeye maximum prison facility.

- 10. ADJOURN:** It was moved by Councilman Malloque, seconded by Vice Mayor Mary Bingham, and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 7:48:41 p.m. **MOTION ADOPTED**

APPROVED:

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Wyn "Chris" Gibbs, Mayor  
City of Safford

ATTEST:

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Georgia Luster, MMC  
City Clerk

STATE OF ARIZONA     )  
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County of Graham     )

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the Public Hearing/Special Council Meeting of the Safford City Council, Graham County, Arizona held Monday, October 27, 2014, and approved at a Regular Council Meeting on Monday, November 10, 2014. I further certify the meeting was duly called, held and that a quorum was present.

November 10, 2014

Date:

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Georgia Luster, MMC, City Clerk