

**MINUTES OF AN ADJOURNED REGULAR
MEETING OF THE TORRANCE CITY COUNCIL
AND THE TORRANCE REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY**

OPENING CEREMONIES

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Torrance City Council and the Torrance Redevelopment Agency convened in an adjourned regular meeting at 5:30 p.m., on Wednesday, May 28, 1997, in the Council Chambers of Torrance City Hall for the purpose of conducting the First Workshop Session for consideration of the City Manager's Proposed 1997-99 Budget.

2. ROLL CALL

Present: Council members Cribbs, Lee, Messerlian, Nakano, O'Donnell, and Mayor Hardison.

Absent: Councilman Walker.

Also Present: City Manager Jackson, City Attorney Fellows, City Clerk Herbers, and staff representatives.

3. AFFIDAVIT OF POSTING

MOTION: Councilman Lee, seconded by Councilwoman Cribbs, moved to accept and file the report of the City Clerk on the posting of the agenda for this meeting. There being no objection, Mayor Hardison so ordered.

4. PRESENTATION OF 1997-99 PROPOSED BUDGET

4a. CITY MANAGER'S OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED 1997-99 BUDGET

City Manager Jackson reviewed the format of this First Budget Workshop and noted the major change in the presentation of the budget. Proceeding with an overview of the budget documents (as per written material), Mr. Jackson elaborated on the six focus areas that were defined after round table discussions and town hall meetings with the community as well as feedback from the City's executive staff.

Finance Director Tsao called attention to format changes such as the inclusion of department directors' messages, 10-year budget forecast, "snapshot of Torrance," census data, and volunteer report, all found in the Summary of the Proposed Budget (Book 1). Advising that this is a balanced budget, he highlighted the 1997-99 budget and indicated there are no significant cutbacks and no user fee increases. In a financial overview (per material of record) he elaborated on major revenue sources, noting variances for 1996-97 and projections for 1997-98 and 1998-99; commented on expenditures, including the usage of one-time monies to fund capital outlays; and discussed program modifications.

Mr. Jackson provided further details of the proposed modifications relating to the Private Industry Council (PIC); City Manager's Office, Utility Billing, Transit Department, Street Services and Parks & Recreation Department (per material of record). He thanked the Budget Review Team and City staff and briefly noted the format of the Second and Third Budget Workshops.

4b. QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, DISCUSSION

For Councilman Nakano, Mr. Jackson confirmed that the addition of a .5 naturalist position added up to funding for one full-time naturalist.

Councilman Lee voiced objection to the installation of Plexiglas screens in the Treasurer's Office. While understanding the need for security, he related his concern that it would look like a fortress and requested that other options be explored. He complimented the new format of the budget and mentioned that he looked forward to the quarterly review of goals and objectives by the departments.

Councilwoman Cribbs also applauded the new presentation of the budget but suggested that some of the information in the Summary (i.e. vehicle replacement policy, composite rates) could be moved to Book 2 and requested there be some notation as to why the non-recommended program modifications were turned down. Noting her experience with the Private Industry Council, she expressed disagreement with the PIC organization chart and strongly recommended they incorporate a central accounting function. Calling attention to the City's growing senior population, she proposed programs be devised to help protect them from fraudulent schemes. Mrs. Cribbs expressed concerns regarding the Parks & Recreation Department taking over some of the maintenance responsibilities from the Street Services Department. She questioned the inclusion of the disaster early-warning system and the remedial clean-up of properties under the City Manager's Office. In response, Mr. Jackson advised that once these programs are established they may be moved to other departments. He agreed with Councilwoman Cribbs that the title "Leisure Services" for Library and Parks & Recreation was not appropriate and reflected an old budgeting concept.

Concurring with Councilwoman Cribbs with respect to senior citizens, Councilman Messerlian pointed out there are only two Parks & Recreation staff persons allocated to handle senior services; urged the exploration of staffing and funding sources to better serve our aging population, if not this year possibly for the 1998-99 budget; and recommended seniors be considered as a focus area in future budgets. He voiced the opinion that the proposal for Parks & Recreation to take over certain Street Services operations needs to be looked at more carefully in order to take advantage of each department's area of expertise and avoid duplication. He stated that he had hoped to see more emphasis in the Transit Department program modification on the benefits to our citizens in terms of savings and efficiency.

Councilwoman O'Donnell, referring to the downward trend in property tax revenues, suggested a conservative estimate be used to avoid a shortfall. She noted that Parks & Recreation Department already has tremendous responsibilities and care should be taken not to overextend their capabilities. She agreed with Mrs. Cribbs with regard to the label "Leisure Services," and believed it to be somewhat insulting. She also concurred on the need to educate seniors about fraudulent activities and telephone scams.

Mayor Hardison commented that she appreciated how each department took the six focus areas and addressed them only if appropriate, not trying to make them fit if they were not. She noted with pleasure City Clerk Herbers' recommendation for the staffing of the Information Desk at City Hall. Remarking that several departments had addressed property maintenance as a priority area, the Mayor questioned how it all fit together and whether this was an effective use of resources. She requested further information, which Mr. Jackson agreed to provide.

In response to questions from Mayor Hardison concerning the implementation of the major organizational changes, Mr. Jackson advised that both the Transit and the Private Industry Council proposals are ready to be carried out as of July 1, but, based on issues raised by Council members, the Street Services/ Parks & Recreation plan and the City Manager's Office reorganization need more investigation and evaluation, and that changes in Utility Billing must still go through the RFP process.

Mayor Hardison suggested that a graphic be included in the 6-page summary of the budget that illustrates the amount of each property tax dollar the City actually gets, in order to inform the public of the value received for their money. Complimenting the new format, she commended all involved in preparing the budget.

Councilman Nakano pointed out the wealth of information contained in the budget, calling it the most comprehensive he has seen. Drawing attention to the volunteer hours listed in the statistical information in Book 1, he proposed that a monetary value be included to show the money saved by the City through the service of volunteers. He questioned whether anything is being done to correct the serious problem the year 2000 poses for computer systems. In response, Finance Director Tsao advised he planned to have some information to bring to Council in August.

Suggesting it might be emphasized in the summary, Councilman Lee noted that the City's trash pickup fees compare favorably with neighboring cities. Councilwoman O'Donnell called attention to the locations where citizens can review the budget books (City Clerk's Office and libraries) and requested this information be included in the 6-page summary.

Councilman Messerlian noted with pride the openness with which the City operates as reflected in the information available in the budget documents, and suggested the title "Citizen Enrichment Services" as an alternative to "Leisure Services."

Although past practice has been to limit public input to the Second and Third Budget Workshops and Public Hearings, Mayor Hardison welcomed anyone wishing to address the Council, at this time, who may not have the opportunity to attend those Workshops/Hearings.

4c. WORKSHOP FORMAT AND FOLLOW-UP FOR NEXT WORKSHOP

City Manager Jackson advised that at the Second Budget Workshop responses to questions asked this evening, or submitted to his office will be briefly outlined (per written material), providing clarification and elaboration where needed, then the meeting will be opened up to the public for presentations, questions and comments. He requested that groups wishing to make presentations submit written material in advance so it can be shared with the Council.

5. CLOSING REMARKS

No additional comments.

6. ADJOURNMENT

At 6:50 p.m., this meeting was formally adjourned to Tuesday, June 3, 1997, at 5:30 p.m. for the purpose of a Second Budget Workshop with the regularly scheduled City Council meeting to convene at 7:00 p.m.



Mayor of the City of Torrance



Clerk of the City of Torrance

Sue Sweet
Minute Secretary

City Council
First Budget Workshop
May 28, 1997