

## **MINUTES OF 12/18/2024 SPECIAL MEETING**

Irvine City Council met in a special meeting on December 18, 2024.

Mayor James E. Gross called the meeting to order at 5:00 P.M.

**PRESENT:** Mayor James Gross, Councilman Justin Abney, Councilman Billy Arthur, Councilman Tommy Bryant, Councilman Tim Burkhart, Councilman Kris Lee and Councilman Aaron Raider.

Also present: Felicia Campbell, City Clerk; Carter Skipworth, City Attorney stand-in and Justin Patrick, Fire Chief. John Sturniolo, Police Chief was absent.

**VISITORS PRESENT:** Delores Rowland, Donna Whorley, Bryan Whorley, Margaret Lisle, James Woolery and Sharma Daniels.

### **COUNCIL MEMBER RECOGNIZED:**

Mayor Gross presented a certificate to outgoing Councilman Justin Abney. Mr. Abney was appointed to complete a term that was vacated earlier in the year. Councilman Abney's willingness to complete the vacant term as well as his efforts and dedication are much appreciated.

### **SAFE HAVEN BABY BOX:**

Councilman Bryant asked to speak first. He said he should have had more information before stating that the City should be fiscally responsible for the baby box.

Mayor Gross reported that he had done further research on the Safe Haven Baby Box (SHBB). The SHBB representative informed him that there was not a box ready to install. The boxes have to be paid in full before the order is completed. She said there was a potential donor that would sponsor the box, but payment had not been made. Completion of the box takes approximately one year. Mayor Gross then asked Fire Chief Justin Patrick to report his findings.

Chief Patrick reported that he had gone to Madison County, spoken to their fire chief and looked at their box. First Restoration did their installation work, but would not give a price quote without coming here and looking at the fire station. Chief Patrick shared the layout of the building and his opinion was the only place it could be installed would be the front of the building. That would require removing a section of the side door panel. Chief Patrick said the box would also require a generator. The fire station does not have a generator. Chief Patrick said he had a generator donated to the City some time ago. Because of the amp difference in the current electrical system and what the generator required; it had not been installed. It is expected to cost \$6,000 to install the generator.

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Chief Patrick had gotten Guidelines from the Richmond fire department, which he then changed to suit the City's needs. That was then sent to the insurance company. The insurance agent said the box would not add an additional cost to the current policy.

The expenses attached to the baby box include: yearly maintenance, generator installation, new locks on the doors, dedicated phone line requiring a monthly bill, installation of the box and any maintenance the box required going forward.

Councilmembers and newly elected councilmembers asked several questions including:

- would Bill Wesley's offer to pay the yearly maintenance be a contractual agreement
- if so, who would pay at the expiration of the contract
- community fundraising
- possible location of the box at the local hospital

Carter Skipworth, attorney filling in for Rodney Davis, reminded the Mayor and Council that the situation would be more difficult without someone on duty 24/7. Even though the fire department has personnel assigned 24/7, if they need to respond to a call, no one would remain at the fire station.

### **Safe Haven Baby Box Tabled**

Following the discussion, Councilman Lee made a motion to table any action regarding the Safe Haven Baby Box until all questions could be answered. Councilman Bryant seconded the motion and all present members voted yes.

### **Adjournment**

Councilman Raider moved and Councilman Burkhart seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:35 P.M. All present members voted yes.

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Mayor, James E. Gross

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City Clerk/Treasurer, Felicia F. Campbell