

City Council Special Meeting Minutes of July 29, 2021

Enforcement of Decorum: The Chief of Police of the City of El Monte, or such member, or members of the Police Department as the Chief of Police may designate, shall serve as the Sergeant-at-Arms of the meeting. The Sergeant-at-Arms shall carry out all orders and instructions given by the presiding official for the purpose of maintaining order and decorum at the meeting. While members of the public are free to level criticism of policies and the action(s) or proposed action(s) of the body or its members, members of the public may not engage in behavior that is disruptive to the orderly conduct of the proceedings, including, but not limited to, conduct that prevents other members of the public from being heard when it is their opportunity to speak or which prevents members of the audience from hearing or seeing the proceedings.

Members of the public may not threaten any person with physical harm or act in a manner that may reasonably be interpreted as an imminent threat of physical harm. All persons attending the meeting must adhere to policies barring harassment based upon a person's race, religious creed, color, national origin, ancestry, physical handicap, medical condition, marital status, gender, sexual orientation or age.

m) Dr. Morales
s) Councilmember Herrera **4-0 (Mayor Ancona absent)**
Move forward on reading the comments
submitted with the exception of those that
have been verified by the City Clerk
to be fictitious or irrelevant.

Gabriel Ramirez – I know we have a special meeting an emergency meeting today which I find it ironically and this pertains to the agenda items 7.1 and 7.2 with the absence of Mayor Ancona and I know Vicky is over there via zoom. I would find it very appalling that this agenda whether it be true or not under based on what I read and basically, we received a text message about in regards to Councilwoman so I would respect that we would use that for the next meeting for transparency at the regular meeting with full body. This is not a need an urge to do this because again this is a waste of time for today for a special emergency meeting and that is really not transparency I really urge the Council to really change it for the next meeting and urge for a not a vote for today.

Angela Lee – Thank you so much for the opportunity just to speak and share as an invested resident of the City of El Monte I count myself as someone who measures my words very carefully, and does my best to only speak when I feel convicted to do so. I hope that it is with that heaviness that you hear my words tonight. It is with a heavy heart that I call in tonight and honestly, I'm calling asking for the humble resignation of Vicky Martinez Muela. Councilwoman Vicky Martinez Muela has been someone that I've respected as I've watched her career and service in El Monte. I've admired her dedication to the next generation so much, and how it appears as though her faith is really the force that propelled her to bring good to her community. [inaudible] endeavored in this effort in that beginning. As a woman of Christina faith honesty and confession are two huge parts for those of us who call ourselves Christ followers. Now I am not here to throw stones that is not what I do, I am not here to pass assertions. However Councilwoman Martinez Muela's integrity has been called into question badly and whether true or not as this story unfolds it's an unfortunate deterrent from the very pressing matters that face out City. As someone who is sworn to represent the people of El Monte Councilwoman Martinez Muela should not let anything not even alleged accusations against her get in the way of the business of the City going forward. Case in point all of these people on the dais who have

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very full lives who are leaders in our community are now together again today because of this issue. [inaudible] professional ministry's integrity and decency integrity decency should be her sole motivation here instead of self-protection and crime and even if all these turns out to be true then just tell us the truth and give us the opportunity as the community loves you to show you grace and forgiveness and show us how you can lead with truth and transparency. And if it comes up it's not true then trust the residents of El Monte to reelect you later on for the same reasons that we trusted to vote for you in the past if that's still an option. Councilwoman Martinez Muela please, please give us an opportunity to show other young people what to do when they have to face the consequences of their actions. Our children are watching, and I would ask that you show them what real integrity looks like, and step down in light of the allegations that have been made against you.

Anonymous – I find it odd and sad that Mayor Pro Tem Martinez-Muela was the subject of a Los Angeles Times article regarding several FPPC violations to which she admitted to the investigative reporter, is the same woman who criticized the former mayor of a lack of transparency. Where was her transparency in reporting her medical procedure, that if it truly was a medical issue, her health benefits would have paid. Having a lobbyist pay for a vacation that she obviously could not afford and did not report the gift. Where is her transparency in reporting of \$1500 for a non-profit start-up that did not happen or where happened to the donations collected as a fundraiser for veterans, children and seniors, deposited into her campaign account, yet another reporting violation. I am sure several or all of her supporters think these egregious acts will just go away or that they are lies made up by Team El Monte or the former mayor. These same people are thinking, no not Vicky, she couldn't do these things but yet the Times has documentation, they have fact checkers and attorneys to ensure the facts presented in the article are true. These are not lies but facts! So what happens next? The City is very limited to what they can do in regards to these violations. Censure is the only thing, a slap on the hand and told not to repeat your violations again. But there is a strong pattern set over the past several years of not following the law. Rules and laws that ALL elected must follow and sign under perjury of law. We have seen a South El Monte Mayor serve time for accepting a bribe. A former City of Rosemead Councilman and Mayor Pro Tem serve time for accepting a bribe. I am not sure if these two men were censured, if not, their violations warranted incarceration after an investigation an investigation by the District Attorney not the City where the bribes occurred. Her violations are a slap in the face to honest elected. Her mention of a medical procedure is a slap in the face to those who have struggled with real health issues. Her pattern of breaking the law has been proven, as a community we have no other recourse but to ask her to step down rather than the poor option of censure.

Anonymous – How many times does the City of El Monte have to come out in the news, in a negative light. 1st. US and World Report on News about El Monte Police Award. Now, this violation of the law and Trust by "OUR MOST SENIOR COUNCILWOMAN, Ms. Victoria Martinez-Muela., should have known better. Is it a Loan or a Gift? 1. Whether it was a loan it exceeded the amount that should have been reported by Law. If it was a Gift it also, exceeded the amount required by Law! It needed to be reported. As , the MOST SENIOR Council-member you should have known better. You represent over 118,000 Residents. I'm all the many decades I have lived here, this is a profound disappointment! As, Senior Council-member you should have known better.

Anonymous – Just in case the attorney again limits time for comment, I will get straight to the point. I believe this special meeting of the City Council was called because of the latest attempt of one side of the Council slandering the other by going to the press. I have read

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the article and am disappointed, not in Vicki, but in those that thought it was appropriate to air out personal matters. How dare Vicki need a friend in an hour of need? How dare she believe that she has the right to separate personal from professional relationships? In essence, how dare she be human? In other words, this personal matter is no one's business. I hope that when reviewing the article people remember the source. The allegations are coming from someone that somehow managed to secure not one, but two, of the very limited allotted business licenses for Cannabis sales. If anything, that is something worthy of investigation – how was she able to obtain two? It would be an understatement to say that here is a person who is, for lack of a better reference, bitter, that their potential windfall fell through. In addition, to allege that Vicki had anything to do with the Cannabis fiasco that feel apart is absurd. If you go back to the actual meetings, you would see that Ancona/Martinez frequently lost to the 3/2 vote on all these matters. The city would not be in this situation, with all these lawsuits, if it were not for the direction of then mayor Quintero. This is also likely one of the primary reasons Velasco and Quintero were voted off the council. I am nearly positive that the other party in play with this allegation and article is the El Monte Leadership Council. Individuals hiding behind the anonymity and claiming to consist of “everyday citizens, small business owners, and other community stakeholders” per their own website: elmonteleadershipcouncil.org. I believe the primary members of said leadership council is the former mayor, Andre Quintero, former councilman Jerry Velasco, councilwoman Maria Morales, councilwoman Alma Puente, perhaps councilman Martin Herrera and other “stakeholders.” Now I make that assertion because on the June 16, 2021 Facebook post from the El Monte Leadership Council – someone states “on behalf of us on the El Monte City Council” and I am fairly certain Mayor Ancona isn't going to slander herself. A funny thing though. When going to the website www.elmonteleadershipcouncil.org and clicks on the CONTRIBUTE link – you are sent to emcouncil.campaignrep.org. For those of you who watch the Council meetings, a few months back Mayor Ancona brought up vendors that who are skewed toward one side of the Council or the other. What needs to investigation is why was one of the City's vendors, CAMPAIGNREP INC, which was paid in excess of \$80,000 dollars since last year, receiving and managing the contributions for political candidates while being a vendor for the City. Forget being a contribution in kind, this is a misappropriation of funds and more accurately – pay for play. Moreover, this hypocritical, integrity lacking, leadership council has the audacity to go to the press because their political opponent needed a favor and thought she could reach out to a friend. In the words of one of the gentlemen who is a regular at these council meetings --- SHAME!

7. REGULAR AGENDA:

7.1 Discussion Regarding Reporting of Gifts and Financial Interests by Councilmembers and Direction Regarding the Establishment of Local Ethics and Lobbying Regulations.

RECOMMENDATION OF BUSINESS ITEM UNDER CONSIDERATION:

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. Provide direction to staff following discussion, questions and deliberation on the matter.

Total Cost: N/A

Account No: N/A

Is the cost of this item budgeted? N/A

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**m) Councilmember Herrera
s) Dr. Morales**

**3-0 (Mayor Ancon and Mayor Pro Tem
Martinez Muela absent)**

- 1. On August 3, provide examples of lobbyist related regulations registration and restrictions that have been implemented by other cities similar to the City of El Monte in California.**
- 2. Provide examples of local committees that have been formed by municipalities or any other public agency for the specific purpose of formulating ethics rules coming up with ethics policies and ethics initiatives and incident to that discussion there would be a discussion of the different sort of an overview of the different specific types of regulatory initiatives commissions like that have undertaken.**

**Break at 7:22 p.m.
Return at 7:44 p.m.**

Assistant City Attorney Richard Padilla – I want to announce that I was contacted by Mayor Pro Tem Martinez Muela during the break she wanted to let it be known on the record that she has been feeling very ill and under the weather and will not be able to participate for the remainder of the meeting so she will not be participating in the upcoming vote.

- 7.2 Overview and Discussion of City Censure Policy and Direction Regarding the Potential Initiation of the Censure Process as to a Councilmember.

RECOMMENDATION OF BUSINESS ITEM UNDER CONSIDERATION:

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. Provide direction to staff following discussion, questions and deliberation on the matter.

Total Cost: N/A

Account No: N/A

Is the cost of this item budgeted? N/A

**m) Dr. Morales
s) Councilmember Puente
move ahead with option 2
and move on to step two
option 2**

**3-0 (Mayor Ancona and Mayor Pro Tem
Martinez Muela absent)**

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8. ADJOURNMENT:

Without objection the meeting was adjourned at 8:21 p.m.

The next Regular Meeting of the City Council will be held on **Tuesday, August 3, 2021** at 6:00 p.m. This Agenda will be posted on the City's website, www.ci.el-monte.ca.us, and physically posted no less than 72 hours prior to the start of the subject regular meeting. Although it is the City's practice and desire to electronically post a copy of this Agenda along with supporting material as part of its website posting, the size or formatting of certain supporting materials may render their website posting infeasible. Nevertheless, all supporting materials related to any item on this Agenda, that is made available to the members of the council may be inspected by members of the public at the City Clerk's Office located at 11333 Valley Boulevard, El Monte, Monday through Thursday, 7:00 am – 5:30 pm. For more information, please call the City Clerk's Office at 626-580-2016.

All public meetings and events sponsored or conducted by the City of El Monte are held in sites accessible to persons with disabilities. Requests for accommodations may be made by calling the office of the City Clerk at (626) 580-2016 at least three (3) working days prior to the event, if possible. This Agenda and copies of documents distributed at the meeting are available in alternative formats upon request.

Catherine A. Eredia, City Clerk
City of El Monte

APPROVED:

Jessica Ancona, Mayor
City of El Monte