

**STATE OF TEXAS
COUNTY OF BEXAR
CITY OF SAN ANTONIO**

A BUDGET WORK SESSION AND PUBLIC HEARING OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SAN ANTONIO WERE HELD IN THE MUNICIPAL PLAZA BUILDING, TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 2009.

The San Antonio City Council convened in a Budget Work Session at 2:00 pm Tuesday, **September 1, 2009**, Municipal Plaza Building with the following Councilmembers present: Cisneros, Taylor, Ramos, Cortez, Medina, Lopez, Rodriguez, Williams, Chan, Clamp, and Mayor Castro.

1. STAFF PRESENTATION ON THE FY 2010 PROPOSED BUDGET, FOCUSING ON, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, THE FOLLOWING:

A. LIBRARY SERVICES (WITH LIBRARY BOARD PRESENTATION)

Ramiro Salazar recognized Jean Brady, Chair of the Library Board, and Board Members Lora Eckler, Gloria Malone and Former Councilmember Debra Guerrero, who were in attendance. He provided a description of the Library System, noting that it was a comprehensive network of public service outlets serving all residents of Bexar County. For FY 2010, he noted that two new neighborhood branches and a new neighborhood branch partnership with the North East Independent School District were funded. He spoke of operating fund improvements totaling \$3.3 million over the past three years that included increased books and materials; an additional four hours of operation per week; and 361 replaced public access computers.

Mr. Salazar reported that over four million persons visit the Library System each year and check out nearly six million items. He spoke of the "Be One in a Million" Library Card Campaign and the success of the self check-out process. He stated that they had implemented a Laptop Checkout Pilot Program for in-library use and would be expanding it to all library locations. He noted that a new Bookmobile had been deployed to provide Library Services to areas of the community that were underserved. He discussed the telephone and email notification system that had been implemented to notify individuals of materials that needed to be returned which resulted in postage savings of \$170,000 over the past two years. He spoke of the partnership with the Economic Development and SCORE to enhance the San Antonio Public Library's Small Business Services.

Mr. Salazar stated that the Interlocal Agreement with Bexar County for Library Services had been renegotiated and that WiFi had been implemented at all locations. He spoke of the partnership with the Landa Gardens Conservancy in which the Conservancy has invested \$1.3 million for grounds work and to expand parking for the facility. He noted that in the last five years, three branch libraries had opened to the public and 14 major branch renovations had been completed. He reported that a System-wide Facilities Assessment Study had been completed in the Spring to prioritize needed repairs and renovations. A 5-year Budget History was provided noting a proposed 0.7% increase in FY 2010.

Mr. Salazar outlined FY 2010 Proposed Program Changes that included reduced hours of operation for the Texana and Government Documents Units resulting in \$235,000 in savings. He reported that all branch library schedules would be realigned to cover peak usage hours and that hours would be restructured to provide 7-day-per-week services. He spoke of the proposed branch hours, noting that the libraries would be open until 6:00 pm five days per week while two designated week nights would open until 8:00 pm. He explained that a comprehensive communication plan would be launched on September 17, 2009 upon Council Action. He provided FY 2010 Mandates that include \$536,000 for the Roosevelt Branch Library that will open on October 1, 2009 and \$115,000 for equipment for the Mission Branch and Parman Branch Libraries in anticipation of their opening in March, 2011.

Mr. Salazar reported that Branch Custodial Services would be outsourced as an efficiency and would provide significantly more custodial services at the same cost. He noted that restroom cleaning frequency would increase and that evening crews would enhance floor maintenance and carpet cleaning. He spoke of the Collection Agency and Notice Printing Contract to pursue material and revenue recovery, noting that outsourcing would improve same and maintain patron good will. He stated that accounts would be referred to collection at a minimum balance of \$25 and also when 60 days lapsed since the last payment activity. He added that no patron would be referred to credit reporting agencies.

Jean Brady, Chair of the Library Board of Trustees thanked the City Council for their significant commitment to the Library System and noted that the Library played a critical role in creating an educated, secure, and prosperous city. She reported that the Library Board of Trustees had accepted the staff recommended reductions totaling \$2.8 million in the proposed FY 2010 Budget. She stated that the Library System provided over \$360 million annually in services to the community and represented a ten-fold return on investment from the General Fund. She specifically spoke of the great services provided by staff to help individuals search for jobs; plan for a funeral; and assist small business owners. Ms. Brady reported that the greatest priority of the Board was to secure a base budget increase for books and materials and urged the Council to continue funding at the level of \$3.5 million. She spoke of the various library projects within each Council District.

Mayor Castro thanked Ms. Brady and the Library Board for their dedicated work in the community. He recommended that the city invest funds for marquees at all libraries to convey pertinent information to the community. He asked of the agreement with Bexar County for Library Services and the percentage of individuals utilizing the library from outside the City of San Antonio. Ms. Sculley stated that a settlement had been agreed upon with Bexar County with said funds allocated to the City's General Fund. Mr. Salazar reported that approximately 19% of library circulation was from Bexar County residents. Mayor Castro expressed concern that many suburban cities had not invested in a library system and recommended that a program be implemented to potentially expand the radius of services. Mr. Salazar reported that the library utilized social media as Myspace, Twitter, and Facebook to provide information. Mayor Castro asked of the opening of other cafés. Mr. Salazar stated that the only café in operation was at the Central Library and that the Semmes, Igo, and upcoming two new libraries would endeavor in cafés. Mayor Castro suggested that staff also invest in cafés for older libraries. Mr. Salazar

replied that there challenges with space but would review the possibility during future expansions.

Councilmember Ramos recognized Jean Brady and Debra Guerrero, District 3 Library Board Representative for their great work. She asked of the number of bookmobiles and their operational cost. Mr. Salazar reported that there was only one bookmobile in operation and that the cost for the vehicle and materials was \$200,000. Councilmember Rodriguez recognized the Library Board and spoke in support of the “One in a Million Library Card Campaign.” He asked of the Library Manager at the Forest Hills Branch Library. Mr. Salazar stated that the position was in the process of being filled. Councilmember Rodriguez expressed concern with the decrease in evening hours at branch libraries and spoke in support of installing marquees at all libraries. Ms. Sculley stated that they would be alternating late hours between branch libraries and that San Antonio ranked well in regard to hours of operation among other comparable cities.

Councilmember Clamp asked of the decrease in Full Time Equivalent and the minimal change in the budget. Ms. Sculley stated that a higher level of services would be provided; specifically in regard to custodial services. Councilmember Clamp expressed support for the installation of marquees at libraries and spoke of the possibility of providing library services on the property located at Thousand Oaks and Scarsdale dedicated for a Senior Center. Councilmember Chan recognized the Library Board for their work and asked of the Reagan High School Library. Mr. Salazar stated that the City had a contract with the North East Independent School District so that it served as a school library during the school year and as a public library on the weekends and in the summer. Councilmember Chan spoke of the importance of a long-term plan to increase the library material and book budget for the future.

Councilmember Cisneros recognized Jean Brady and the Library Board for their work. She asked of the status of the “One in a Million Library Card Campaign.” Mr. Salazar stated that Councilmembers Rodriguez and Clamp had initiated the idea of a challenge to increase the number of registered card holders. Councilmember Cisneros spoke of the success of the Sandra Cisneros book signing event and encouraged additional book signing events at the various branch libraries. She recognized staff and the Landa Gardens Conservancy on the great partnership and renovations.

Councilmember Williams asked of the possibility of utilizing store fronts for library services. Mr. Salazar stated that they would be exploring other services models during the strategic planning process. Councilmember Lopez recognized Lora Eckler for her commitment as the District 6 Library Board Representative. He asked of collaboratives with School Districts and Universities to share materials and resources. Mr. Salazar stated that they did not currently share materials but partnered with schools in other ways to include attending library workshops to ensure that resources were available. He noted that they would continue to work on strengthening partnerships and leveraging opportunities to maximize resources.

The Mayor and Council thanked Mr. Salazar for his presentation.

B. HEALTH SERVICES

Dr. Fernando Guerra provided an overview of the Metropolitan Health District, noting that it was the only public health agency serving San Antonio and Bexar County. He stated that it was formed as a Public Health District through an agreement between the City of San Antonio and Bexar County in 1965 and that he, as Director of Metro Health, was the Local Health Authority. He noted that Metro Health provided services to City and County residents and served administratively as a City Department. He spoke of the functions of Metro Health that included protecting residents and visitors from environmental and food-borne hazards through inspections, monitoring and code enforcement. He stated that they monitored and advised city and county officials on local, state, and national public health and safety policy issues and demographic trends. He outlined the public entities that represent the core of the local community health system that include Metro Health, University Health System (UHS), University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio, and the University of Texas School of Public Health. He spoke of the important role of the military and the great responsibility they had taken in the trauma system.

Dr. Guerra explained key health issues for Metro Health were to address the growing rate of obesity that contributed to chronic disease. He stated that the Diabetes and MRSA registry programs had been authorized during the 81st Legislative Session and that staff was working with community partners to address the high rate of uninsured individuals. He noted that staff was preparing for the implementation of a national accreditation system for public health in 2011 and continuing work to control the use of tobacco.

Dr. Guerra provided a five-year budget summary and noted that there was an increase in grant funds and a decrease in the General Fund due in part to the transition of Clinical Services to UHS. He explained that 125 positions had been transitioned to UHS, while the city's tax rate had been reduced by 0.516 cents in FY 2009 and 0.145 cents in FY 2010. He stated that the FY 2010 Proposed Budget was decreased by \$2.6 million and provided an overview of the major service areas and proposed reductions. He noted that services within Environmental Health included food establishment licensing and inspections, as well as vector control inspections and abatement. He referenced staff's work in providing communicable disease control programs, immunizations, and the vaccine research program. He reported that they promoted good health through chronic disease prevention programs and Project WORTH. He outlined the program strategy for Project WORTH for FY 2010, noting that they would be applying for grants through the US Department of Health and Human Services and would continue soliciting partnerships to help provide services. He stated that staff provided public health laboratory services and public health emergency preparedness and response.

Dr. Guerra spoke of H1N1 preparations, noting that Metro Health was working closely with all city departments to ensure that information was being communicated and that mass immunization plans were being developed. He reported that a communication plan was being finalized and that staff was meeting with all major health providers. He noted that antiviral medication had been purchased and that a Strategic National Stockpile of medications and

supplies were available. He spoke of the H1N1 Conference conducted August 14, 2009 and the Pan Flu Exercise scheduled on August 27, 2009 at Fort Sam Houston.

Councilmember Cisneros asked for an update of H1N1. Dr. Guerra stated that it was a relatively new virus and that it continued to spread throughout the world. He added that there was not a vaccine that they could effectively use for protection and that some of the viral strands were resistant to anti-virals that were available. Councilmember Cisneros inquired of the high numbers of teen pregnancies and the work of Project WORTH. Dr. Guerra stated that city staff worked with Dr. Realini on policy issues and that teen pregnancy was a shared responsibility and required the collaboration of numerous partners. He noted that they would continue to work with area agencies to provide training and presentations to teens and parents. Councilmember Cisneros asked of the 125 employees that were transitioned to UHS. Dr. Guerra stated that those individuals had been transferred and no jobs had been lost.

Councilmember Medina expressed concern with the staff reductions in Project WORTH and stated that there should be continued investment in the program due to the high teen pregnancy rate. Dr. Guerra noted that they were engaging medical students and faculty to help provide services to youth. Councilmember Medina asked of staff collaboration with local churches. Dr. Guerra stated that they worked with churches in regard to chronic diseases such as Obesity and Diabetes and had met with many church groups regarding teen pregnancy over the years. He noted that they would have to cast a wider net and focus on Abstinence Programs. Councilmember Medina expressed the importance of abstinence and the need to educate the youth in the community. Councilmember Taylor asked of the proposed reductions to Project WORTH and noted the importance of continued education on Abstinence Plus. Councilmember Ramos also expressed concern with the reductions to Project WORTH and asked that conversation continue with Highland Park Lutheran regarding the Woman, Infants and Children (WIC) Program.

The Mayor and Council thanked Dr. Guerra for his work and presentation.

C. ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

Ms. Sculley reported that the Office of Environmental Policy had been created two years ago to provide policy guidance to the city on important environmental issues. Laurence Doxsey, Environmental Policy Director provided an overview of the department and noted that they were funded by the Solid Waste Fund (74%) and the General Fund (26%). He spoke of the department objectives that included advancing sustainability practices and improving resource efficiencies within City Operations, as well as implementation of Mission Verde Initiatives. He stated that they would be developing and managing Stimulus and other grant-funded projects. These are to be coordinated via the Citizens' Environmental Advisory Committee to advise the City Council on environmental issues.

Mr. Doxsey reported that the FY 2010 Proposed Budget was \$527,000; a decrease of \$280,000 from FY 2009 due to one-time funding that was no longer available. He spoke of FY 2009 Accomplishments, noting that they supported the development of the Mission Verde Sustainability Plan. The Solar America City Designation included the development of a Solar

2015 Plan that was 40% complete. He stated that they had facilitated energy and water code improvements adopted by the City Council in March, 2009 and produced 14 sustainability studies and operational policies. He outlined the Hike and Bike Program, noting that the goal was to increase cycling viability for daily, casual and recreation use by improving safety and building awareness and support infrastructure.

Mr. Doxsey stated that in FY 2009, \$175,000 was allocated toward the operation of a Revolving Energy Fund to support lighting and detailed energy audits to determine viable building improvements. He reported that 105 facility audits had been completed and seven facilities had been retrofitted and that annual kilowatt hour savings totaled 3,744,759. He mentioned that 63 buildings were fast-tracked to apply for stimulus funding and that detailed energy audits would be used to submit a proposal to the State Energy Conservation Office's Loan Star Revolving Loan Program. He stated that 31 Fire Department facilities had received water audits and retrofits that could save 3,191,110 gallons of water annually.

Mr. Doxsey spoke of the grant support received by the Office of Environmental Policy to implement Mission Verde Initiatives. He stated that House Bill 1937 had passed in the legislative session and allows a property assessment as a method of funding energy improvements on property taxes. He noted that staff was in the process of conducting a Solar Lease Potential Study and would be conducting training for staff and the community on updated Energy Codes. He reported that the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs would be providing the City with stimulus funds in the amount of \$12.3 million to weatherize over 1,400 housing units for an estimated annual energy savings of \$1.06 million.

Assistant City Manager Sharon De La Garza provided an overview on Fleet Efficiency, noting that current city policy replaces vehicles at the end of their life cycle which was typically 96,000 miles or ten years. She stated that there was no formal policy requiring the purchase of Fuel Efficient Vehicles (FEV). She added that administrative practice was to purchase FEVs based on availability, suitability for service, and budget. She reported that there were approximately 5,000 vehicles in the City Fleet that included 852 FEVs and over 4,000 gas/diesel vehicles. She added that of the gas/diesel vehicles, 1,500 were eligible for FEV replacement.

Ms. De La Garza stated that FEVs could impact the budget if they were more costly than the gas model and that some FEVs cost up to 50% more than the budgeted model. She noted that projected fuel savings did not always offset the additional cost and that the Return on Investment for most hybrid vehicles was not currently projected to be realized over the life cycle based on current fuel pricing. She reported that 196 vehicles were eligible for FEV replacement in FY 2010 at a total cost of \$5.6 million. She stated that funds in the amount of \$4.1 million were available and that the difference in funds could be offset by increasing the budget or decreasing the number of vehicles purchased. She noted that in the future, alternative funding strategies would be to include an analysis to down-size citywide fleet and to solicit grants and other funding sources. She added that FEV options would increase and be less expensive in the future.

Councilmember Rodriguez expressed concern that a city policy had not been developed regarding the purchase of FEVs for vehicle replacements. He requested that staff review policies of other comparable cities and develop a policy for the City of San Antonio. He asked of the

Citizens Environmental Advisory Committee. Mr. Doxsey stated that the Committee would begin meeting in the new fiscal year and would be provided with information on the Mission Verde Plan and the initiatives that had been implemented. Councilmember Cisneros requested copies of the sustainability studies and operational policies and asked of the endorsement of Mission Verde Plan. Mr. Doxsey reported that the Mission Verde Plan had been presented at Mayor Hardberger's State of the City Address and at a B Session but not formally adopted. Councilmember Cisneros requested that the Mission Verde Plan be placed on a future agenda for formal adoption.

Councilmember Ramos expressed support for the Hike and Bike Program and asked of bike racks for all city facilities. Mr. Doxsey stated that they were conducting an inventory of current facilities but they should be incorporated at all new facilities. Councilmember Ramos asked of the completion of the facility lighting audits. Mr. Doxsey reported that a contract had been approved with Johnson Controls to conduct full energy audits at the Convention Center, Alamodome and Airport and could utilize said contract for other such audits and that the 105 lighting audits had been completed by a local contractor. Councilmember Chan asked of the increase in personal services for FY 2010. Richard Varn explained that the positions had been filled in June, 2009 and the amount for 2010 reflected the full annual cost of employees. Councilmember Chan asked of the status of the study conducted by Jeremy Rifkin. Mr. Doxsey stated that the white paper was due in September. Councilmember Chan asked of the Solar 2015 Plan. Mr. Doxsey explained that it was the objective associated with the grant received from the Department of Energy and involved taking the community through a process of making San Antonio Solar Friendly.

Councilmember Clamp asked of the Revolving Energy Fund and the credit of fuel savings being placed in the replacement fund. Mr. Varn explained that they established a baseline of what they would have otherwise paid in either case and had discussions with the Finance Department in regard to tracking energy savings. He noted that they would build a model based on the annual predictions of what energy usage should be and that realized savings would be used to finance energy conservation needs. He added that they would utilize grant funds to implement projects to generate savings and reduce the cost of operations. Mr. Doxsey stated that they were still working on the components of crediting fuel savings to the replacement fund.

The Mayor and Council thanked Mr. Doxsey for his work and presentation.

There being no further discussion, Mayor Castro adjourned the Budget Work Session at 5:38 pm.

The San Antonio City Council convened in a Public Hearing at 6:00 pm, Tuesday, **September 1, 2009**, Municipal Plaza Building with the following Councilmembers present: Cisneros, Ramos, Cortez, Medina, Lopez, Rodriguez, Williams, Chan, and Clamp. **ABSENT:** Taylor and Mayor Castro.

2. PUBLIC HEARING ON THE FY 2010 PROPOSED BUDGET – PRECEDED BY STAFF PRESENTATION SUMMARIZING COMMENTS MADE DURING THE TEN COMMUNITY BUDGET HEARINGS HELD IN EACH CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT

Mayor Pro Tem Medina called the meeting to order and stated that a Budget Public Hearing was being held by the City of San Antonio City Council to receive comments on the FY 2010 Balanced Proposed Operating and Capital Budgets.

He also stated that the Budget Public Hearing was complemented with 10 Community Budget Hearings that were held in each of the City Council Districts that took place from August 19 through August 31, 2009. He stated that the City Manager would provide a summary on the 10 Community District Hearings held on the FY 2010 Proposed Budget. He added that following her presentation; citizens that had registered to speak would be heard. He noted that individuals would receive 3 minutes and groups would receive 9 minutes to address the City Council. Lastly, he stated that all comments were important as the Council approaches the adoption of the City Budget on September 17, 2009.

Ms. Sculley presented an overview of the FY 2010 Community Budget Hearing process and provided a Summary of Comments compiled from the hearings. She noted that over 600 individuals had attended the hearings and 150 had provided comments. She outlined the hearing results by topic and reported that a survey would be administered to receive feedback on the process for continuous improvement.

Mayor Pro Tem Medina declared the Public Hearing open and called upon those registered to speak.

Larry Johnson, President of the Alamo Council of the Blind stated that in order to become fully active and participating members within the community, blind persons had to rely upon accessible, available public transportation. The transportation must be supported by a walkable community of existing and well-maintained sidewalks and the installation of audible pedestrian signals at dangerous and high volume traffic intersections. He expressed concern that only 30% of sidewalks in San Antonio were ADA Compliant and that only 10 intersection locations were scheduled to have audible pedestrian signals installed in FY 2010. He recognized Councilmember Clamp for funding two additional audible pedestrian signals and requested funding for other signals from the City Council.

Robert Hernandez, Alejandra Aguilera and Stephanie Felix of Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local #5 addressed the Council. Mr. Hernandez thanked the City Council for their work and recognized all City Employees for their work and dedication to the City. He stated that they were opposed to the City Manager's FY 2010 proposed budget recommendation to stretch the pay plan from four years to six years and requested that the final phase of the Pay Plan remain as scheduled for FY 2011. He added that there was still time to engage in discussions with employee representatives to the consultation process on the impact to civilian employees regarding modifications required for FY 2011.

Cynthia Herrera Chavera thanked the City Council for their support of Project Quest and requested continued funding as recommended in the FY 2010 Proposed Budget. She spoke of her positive experiences with Project Quest and the great need for employees in the medical field.

Baron Herdelin-Dougherty of the YMCA of Greater San Antonio thanked the City Council for their support of the YMCA and spoke of their Childcare and Youth Sports Programs. He noted that through the City's assistance, they helped many young persons and their families and that they focused their efforts on caring, honesty, and respect. He introduced Barbara Clack, Board Chair of the Davis-Scott YMCA. Ms. Clack spoke of the importance of the services provided by the Davis-Scott YMCA, noting that they enriched the lives of many individuals. She requested continued funding for the YMCA. Rose Ann Barajas, Chair of the Westside YMCA thanked the City Council for their financial support to renovate the Westside YMCA and spoke of the great sports programs they offered. She noted that exercise was key to addressing Diabetes, a disease prevalent in the Westside Community and requested continued funding for the YMCA.

Bill McGarry stated that he was blind and mobility impaired and expressed concern with the lack of sidewalks and access to businesses near the intersection of Springtime and Prue Roads. He noted that he did not have walking access to the veterinarian and that he would never be able to access the Leon Creek Hike and Bike Trail due to the lack of sidewalks. He requested funding to address needed sidewalks and audible pedestrian signals and recognized Councilmembers Cisneros and Williams for their support.

Shelley and Joe McMullen addressed the City Council. Ms. McMullen stated that she served as advocacy chair and second Vice President of the Alamo Council of the Blind and expressed concern with accessibility of her neighborhood near the intersection of Eisenhower and Harry Wurzbach. She noted that the City was inaccessible for independent travel for the blind and visually impaired, and spoke of the dangerous intersection and heavy traffic in the area. She requested audible pedestrian signals and sidewalks for her neighborhood and recognized Councilmember Clamp for funding two audible pedestrian signals in District 10.

Ann Stevens, President of BioMed SA stated that BioMed SA was a non-profit corporation founded by Henry Cisneros and the Greater Chamber of Commerce to promote the growth of Healthcare and BioScience. She noted that the Healthcare and BioScience Industry contributed over \$16 billion each year to the San Antonio Economy. She thanked Mayor Castro and the City Council for their continued support and thanked Councilmember Chan for serving as the City's Liaison to BioMed SA.

Cam Messina recognized City Staff for their work on the FY 2010 Proposed Budget and noted that he had attended many of the Budget Community Hearings. He stated that Voices for Children was an advocacy organization concerned with outcomes for children and spoke of the projections of former State Demographer Dr. Steve Murdock. He noted that if current trends continued, the percentage of the work force with no high school diploma would increase from 19% in 2000, to over 30% by 2040. He asked that the City increase their investment in early childhood development.

Mariana Peña-Flores thanked the City Council for their previous support of early childhood training but noted that there was still more to be done. She stated that she had received her Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential, earned her Training Certificate from the State of

Texas and was mentoring other childcare providers in San Antonio. She spoke of her experiences with her children and noted the great need for additional childcare training dollars.

Guadalupe P. Peña stated that she had previously addressed the City Council to support funding for early childhood training and thanked the Council for their support. She noted that she had received her CDA and participated with a number of organizations to provide childcare. She requested additional funding for childcare instructors to earn their Bachelor's and Master's Degrees.

Faris Hodge, Jr. expressed concern that the Fire Department was not inspecting fire extinguishers in schools and noted that the sidewalks along McCullough between Rampart and Rexford needed to be replaced. He stated that the carpet should be cleaned and lighting issues needed to be addressed at the Central Library. He spoke in support of funding for additional library materials. He requested additional lighting in the Downtown Area and expressed concern with the environment at Travis Park. Lastly, he requested additional Police presence in the Museum Reach at the Riverwalk.

Lita Salazar, Ruben Cortez, Gary Johnson and Former Councilmember Jimmy Hasslocher representing the San Antonio Restaurant Association (SARA) spoke in support of funding for the Metropolitan Health Department. Ms. Salazar requested that the Health Department be exempt from the hiring freeze and proposed budget cuts. She noted that there were over 8,000 restaurants in the city and that a hiring freeze would be detrimental to the restaurant and tourism industries. She spoke of the great work of the Health Department in educating restaurateurs on changes and understanding of the Food Code. Mr. Cortez spoke of the great partnership among the Health Department, Pico de Gallo, and SARA to implement a healthy child menu at his restaurant. He urged the Council to reconsider the proposed hiring freeze and budget reductions for the Health Department. Mr. Johnson thanked the City Council for their commitment and dedication to the City and spoke of the great partnership with the Health Department. He noted that a Task Force had been created with members of SARA and the Health Department and worked toward a common goal of Public Health. He spoke of the various health issues that they had addressed and requested continued funding for the Health Department. Mr. Hasslocher spoke in support of the Health Department and noted the great partnership and working relationship with staff.

Mary Jean Hoover recognized Kent Hickingbottom and other city staff for working with her in regard to audible pedestrian signals. She stated that she lived near the intersection of Huebner and Babcock and that it was an extremely busy area. She noted that audible pedestrian signals had been installed in the area and that sidewalk and ADA issues had been addressed but there was still more work to be done. She thanked Councilmember Williams for his support.

Jim Casey noted that he was a military veteran and thanked the City Council for the opportunity to address them. He also thanked the individuals that took the time to attend the Public Hearing and spoke of the great work of city staff throughout the budget hearing process.

Nick Peña of the El Mercado Merchants Association stated that he had been a merchant in the area for 33 years and spoke in opposition of two city positions being proposed for elimination

within the FY 2010 Budget. He noted that El Mercado was a large tourist attraction and that dedicated staff was needed to manage the area. He expressed concern with the maintenance at HemisFair Plaza and the proposed increase in parking fees.

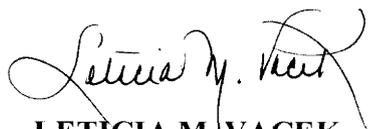
There being no other individuals registered to speak, Mayor Pro Tem Medina declared the Public Hearing closed. He thanked all that attended and adjourned the meeting at 7:15 pm.

A P P R O V E D



DAVID MEDINA, JR.
MAYOR PRO TEM

Attest:



LETICIA M. VACEK
City Clerk