

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

Special Joint – The City Council and Firebaugh-Las Deltas Unified School District
Vol. No. 22/02-23

Location of Meeting: Firebaugh High School Library Media Center
1976 Morris Kyle Drive
Firebaugh, CA 93622

Date: February 23, 2022/6:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Board President Ronald Parker called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

School Board of Trustees: President Ronald Parker
Board Member Fernando Campa
Board Member Gilbert Coelho
Board Member Abel Serrano
Board Clerk Eliseo Gaminio

Absent:

City Council Members: Mayor Brady Jenkins
Council Member Freddy Valdez
Council Member Elsa Lopez

Absent: Mayor Pro Tem Felipe Perez, Council Member Marcia Sablan

City of Firebaugh Staff: Sal Raygoza, Chief of Police; Ben Gallegos, City Manager.

School District Staff: Roy Mendiola, Superintendent and Board Secretary; Susan Ramirez, Recorder; Anthony Catalan, Firebaugh High School Principal; Manuel Perez, Technology Director; Maria Calderon, Business Manager; Danny Barragan, MOT Director.

Others: Bethany Matos, West Hills College North District Center Dean; William Davis, Amanda Fleming, Ariana Ayala, Parents, and other Community Members.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Motion to approve agenda by School Board Member Abel Serrano, second Board Member Fernando Campa; motion passed by unanimous 4-0 vote.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Board President Ronald Parker

NEW BUSINESS

1. FIREBAUGH LAS DELTAS UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT UPDATES.

Dr. Roy Mendiola, Superintendent shared his appreciation for the support from the City and especially the Firebaugh Police Department with the recent need for their presence for the safety of our students and staff. We recently had some break-ins that ended with a couple arrests; along with some individuals coming through our community that are not residents. The district wants to provide our PD partners with more resources along with access to our sites which will provide a safer environment for staff and students.

Dr. Mendiola shared information on the upcoming projects that will be taking place in the district the next several months. At Mills we will be adding 3 additional classrooms along with a couple relocatable buildings that are being donated to the District from West Hills College. These two relocatable buildings will not be used for classrooms but for offices for Mills administration and support staff. The Firebaugh Middle School will be painted, and the project will begin over spring break and will be finished over the summer. The Bailey Kitchen and Multi-Purpose room will receive a make-over during the summer. At Firebaugh High School we will be removing two relocatable classrooms and replacing them with two permanent stick buildings that will house 2 classrooms and 4 offices. The Auto Shop at

Firebaugh High School will be remodeled over the summer as well. We are working on replacing our district intercom system; install vape detection devices and adding more cameras to sites. All these are for the safety of students and staff. We are looking at go-green projects, with some of the items being electric buses, charging stations, plumbing upgrades, etc. We are looking for funding for a new aquatic center and will be asking the city for support. If no funding is found, we may consider a Bond in the future.

Dr. Mendiola noted that he has talked to the City about their current facility where city hall is located. Once the city buildings are vacated.

Dr. Mendiola discussed the current mask mandate which is required for all students and staff. He noted that the Governor is scheduled to make an announcement on Monday, February 28th with regards to masking guidelines for schools. It is likely that the new change will allow mask wearing to be optional. The new language might state that masks are strongly recommended, but no longer required for anyone indoors.

Our District has been conducting in-person Board meetings and will continue to do so. We are proud that we have been able to keep our students in school, participating in athletics and extra-curricular activities. This is what is best for our students, and we have been able to do this with the support of our Board and staff as we had testing protocols in place and were able to keep our doors open and activities moving forward. We are seeing the positivity rate start to drop. We will be conducting in-person graduation this year. We will continue to do what is best for our students and staff, as this is our number one priority. There are two new banks of COVID leave for staff; one is for 5 days for any staff who has tested positive for COVID-19; the second bank is for staff caring for a family member who is COVID positive or for someone who receives the vaccine and has a reaction. Both of these are retroactive to January 1, 2022.

City Manager Ben Gallegos shared that the City is also looking for grants for the aquatic Center. He shared that there are grants for Parks; he noted that there are a lot of grants out there and they are trying to go after all that they can. He will invite our elected officials to look at our pool and parks and encourage them to support the City and District on securing monies for our needs. He thanked the district for bringing the Food Distribution to our community, it is another great resource for our families.

Trustee Eliseo Gamino shared that he is glad to see the City and District working together. We need our police to help us educate our kids on their mistakes. Our kids had too much time on their hands during the pandemic and may have not made good decisions during that time and will need some help to turn themselves around. Dr. Mendiola shared that the district has brought back the All-4 Youth program as well as Prodigy which not only is available to help our students but also their families

2. CITY OF FIREBAUGH UPDATES.

City Manager Ben Gallegos shared information on the upcoming projects that will be taking place within the City. There will be alleys paved behind Don Pepe's, by the US Post Office, and the New Fire Station. There will be street paving work on 14th, J Street, and 10th Streets. There will be a press conference on Friday announcing the project for the new Police Department. The new Fire Department was supposed to be completed by March, but it won't be finished until December. The Electric Panel is holding up the completion and occupancy. The City will be revitalizing Dunkle Park playground and the basketball area. They have pulled the permits for the Greystone apartment project. This will be a 64-unit complex. There will be a beautification project on "O" Street from 14th to 10th Street. New lights, shrubs, etc. Highway 33 will be paved from Morris Kyle Drive to Douglas Avenue. City Manager Ben Gallegos shared there is a potential developer interested in building more housing in Firebaugh. They will be repairing sidewalks around the schools and are already looking for grants for next year. There will be bridge projects taking place down Highway 33. Board President asked about sidewalks between Eastside Acres and the City for those kids who walk to school? Ben noted he would need to reach out to Madera County since that would need to be a project within Madera County. Trustee Abel Serrano asked about speed bumps, we have some streets that need them before someone gets hurt. Ben shared that he would need to reach out and discuss with our first responders as they cause a delay when they are responding to calls. President Ronald Parker asked with the additional apartments and housing coming into town will we need to add more officers to our police department? Chief Raygoza noted that we are staffed according to our population. Ben Gallegos shared that a new domestic sewer plant will be coming in. He is working on an industrial wastewater plant so we can put the water from Toma-Tek into the canal so that it can be used for farming. Superintendent Dr. Mendiola noted that we need to be aware of any new family housing developments so that we can

plan accordingly for potential growth. We are looking to expand our preschool program. He asked about the intersection by Mills, this is a major safety concern. Ben shared that the Habitat for Humanity is wanting to finish the project across the street from Davis Drier. City Manager Ben Gallegos shared information on the upcoming projects that will be taking place within the City. There will be alleys paved behind Don Pepe's, by the US Post Office, and the New Fire Station. There will be street paving work on 14th, J Street, and 10th Streets. There will be a press conference on Friday announcing the project for the new Police Department. The new Fire Department was supposed to be completed by March, but it won't be finished until December. The Electric Panel is holding up the completion and occupancy. The City will be revitalizing Dunkle Park playground and the basketball area. They have pulled the permits for the Greystone apartment project. This will be a 64-unit complex. There will be a beautification project on "O" Street from 14th to 10th Street. New lights, shrubs, etc. Highway 33 will be paved from Morris Kyle Drive to Douglas Avenue. City Manager Ben Gallegos shared there is a potential developer interested in building more housing in Firebaugh. They will be repairing Sidewalks around the schools and are already looking for grants for next year. There will be bridge projects taking place down Highway 33. Board President asked about sidewalks between Eastside Acres and the City for those kids who walk to school? Ben noted he would need to reach out to Madera County since that would need to be a project within Madera County. Trustee Abel Serrano asked about speed bumps, we have some streets that need them before someone gets hurt. Ben shared that he would need to reach out and discuss with our first responders as they cause a problem for them responding to calls. President Ronald Parker asked with the additional apartments and housing coming into town will we need to add more officers to our police department? Chief Raygoza noted that we are staffed according to our population. Ben Gallegos shared that a new domestic sewer plant will be coming in. He is working on an industrial wastewater plant so we can put the water from Toma-Tek into the canal so that it can be used for farming. Superintendent Dr. Mendiola noted that we need to be aware of any new family housing developments so that we can plan accordingly for potential growth. We are looking to expand our preschool program. He asked about the intersection by Mills, this is a major safety concern. Ben shared that the Habitat for Humanity is wanting to finish the project across the street from Davis Drier.

3. EXPLORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIP.

Councilman Freddy Valdez shared that he would like for the Board to allow Dr. Mendiola and possibly a Board member to attend the Legislative Action Day in April to collaborate with our legislative representatives. Attending this with our Council members would show them the legislators the collaboration that we have developed. Dr. Mendiola shared that he would like to have a timeline on projects. He is excited with the relationship being built between the District, City and Police Department. He said he looks forward to working with everyone to align our growth with the City growth so we can stay ahead of it. He hopes we can continue to work on a resolution for the Mills intersection.

Councilman Freddy Valdez shared that Mr. Rangel with the Department of Homeland Security is willing to come and review our community and schools and to share his thoughts on security. He also hopes that everyone will utilize the new city text for communication. If you see something, send a message back to the city or better yet, send a picture and let us know what it is that you see and where it is. Freddy also shared that there are Micro grants available for small businesses and hopes that our community will take advantage of them. Board President Ronald Parker noted that at our next meeting we should include West Hills College on the agenda so we can collaborate with them as well. Bethany Matos, Dean of the North District Center was in attendance and shared she would be happy to be a part of our meetings.

4. VIRTUAL OPTION FOR JOINT MEETINGS.

Dr. Roy Mendiola Superintendent noted that the District is committed to in-person meetings and when we host the meeting they will be in-person. If the City wants to hold virtual joint meetings, he invites them to host the meeting. Council member Freddy Valdez shared that he wanted to do a hybrid model as he sees the opportunity for those who aren't comfortable or able to attend in-person meetings the option to attend. Elsa Lopez, Council woman shared that she agrees with in-person meetings and wished the City would do the same thing.

5. PUBLIC COMMENTS.

Mayor Brady Jenkins said it has been great working with the school and then working with the police department as a school employee. Trustee Abel Serrano stated that this is a beautiful partnership that has been developed. We are all

here for the same reasons our students and community and we need to work together. We want our kids to appreciate and respect our officers and are glad they are making their appearance on our campuses. Chief Raygoza thanked Dr. Mendiola and the administration for allowing his officers to go onto the schools and talk to the students. He has encouraged his officers to make their selves visible. A parent in the audience asked if there are workshops for parents to learn about drugs and things to look for with their children. She feels there needs to be more things for our kids to do in our community. She would like to see group meetings held for parents. Dr. Mendiola shared that we have not had a good turnout at our group meetings especially during the pandemic, but we do have Migrant, Special Education, Community and Site Parent meetings. Dr. Mendiola shared that any parent can ask for a meeting to discuss a specific topic; once that has been done, they would discuss with the administration at the district level, and we could move forward from there. He also shared that we have the After School Program, Athletics, Music, Youth Empowerment, Mariachi's will soon be an extra-curricular option for our students. Trustee Fernando Campa noted that the Police Activities League offers softball, soccer, an Explorer Program and Fire Cadet Program. Freddy Valdez shared that at our Migrant Mini Conference we have had topics on Drugs, Immigration, and other topics of interest. Ben Gallegos shared that there is a group of parents that meet every Wednesday at the Community Center at 6:00 pm that she may want to participate in. Chief Raygoza noted that he has a grant officer that is working to meeting with parents and students to educate them on topics of smoking, drugs, etc.

6. BOARD MEMBER and CITY COUNCIL MEMBER COMMENTS.

Trustee Eliseo Gamino thanked the city for their leadership roles, as well as West Hills College for their support of our dual enrollment program. Amanda Fleming shared that the quality of life is important, Clovis dropped their mask mandate. She said what is concerning her are the clinics that the city and school district are offering. She would like us to pull back and not offer the vaccination clinics to our community. Dr. Mendiola stated that the clinics are optional; and masks may become optional as well. Amanda asked if the City and District are required to hold vaccination clinics. Trustee Abel Serrano noted that the clinics are optional, and we are not required to have them, but we want to offer this resource for our families and community members that want it. No one is forced to go and get the vaccination. Freddy Valdez noted that we have a community of 8,300 people and we need to represent and offer what we can to our community, it is their choice to take advantage of it, but they are not forced. Anthony Catalan, FHS Principal thanked the Chief of Police and his officers for all the things that they do that people don't see or hear about. These past two weeks were rough ones at the high school and his officers came in and did an amazing job. Mr. Catalan also shared with the parent requesting meetings that he will let her know when he continues with his meetings, and he invited her to attend. He said he covers a variety of topics and has had good feedback from those who attend. Manuel Perez, Director of Technology shared that we need to have a cyber bullying presentation for parents, this is an area that parents need to be made aware of and the trouble that it can and has caused. Trustee Fernando Campa noted that it is a pleasure to have these meetings; he knows that for everyone here the quality of life is a goal for us. We don't always know what is going on in the background, and we only hear the negative. He thanked everyone for attending. Council woman Elsa Lopez asked if the district has thought about adjusting their employee's salary since the cost of living is so high? Dr. Mendiola said the district has discussed salaries and has the desire to be competitive. We are fortunate that we have administrators that are Firebaugh alumni and, also, have hired many teachers this year who are also alumni. Freddy Valdez spoke as President of the CSEA that this has been discussed for several years now and we knew it was going to have to be addressed. Dr. Mendiola shared that we can only compensate our staff so much and we are looking at an increase to get to the median, but it may take 2-3 years to do this. Our staff know what the district has in mind, and we don't want our salaries at the bottom, but we also know that we can't be at the very top, but we will work to be somewhere in the median range. Our teachers seem to understand where the district is headed and seem to be supportive of what we are doing. City Manager Ben Gallegos noted that he has lived in the city and went through our school system, and he is the first city manager to do so. He also stated as a parent of students currently in the system thanked the district for offering our kids opportunities that some students in larger districts may never have. President Ronald Parker thanked everyone for attending and their comments this evening. He stated we are one district and one community. He also said that by working with the city we will continue to improve the quality of life for residents together.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Motion adjourned by Abel Serrano, seconded by Fernando Campa; Motion was carried unanimously at 8:13 p.m.