

**City of Alpine
Special City Council Meeting
Thursday, January 29th, 2015
11:00 A.M.
Minutes**

1. **Call to Order, Invocation and Pledge of allegiance to the flag** – Mayor Rangra called the meeting to order.

2. **Determination of a quorum and proof of notice of the meeting** –Mayor Rangra, Councilors Salas, Fitzgerald, Gonzales and Stephens were present. Councilor Bermudez was absent to attend a family member's funeral. The meeting notice had been posted on January 22nd, 2015 at 4:30 P.M.

3. **Presentations, recognitions and proclamations** – None

4. **Reports** – None

City Mayor's Report -

City Manager Report –

City Staff Updates –

5. **Citizens Comments (on agenda items)** – (limited to 3 minutes) – None

6. **Public Hearings** – None

7. **Consent Agenda – (Minutes, Financial reports, Department written reports, board appointments, etc.)** – (Notice to the Public – The following items are of a routine and administrative nature. The Council has been furnished with background and support material on each item, and/or it has been discussed at a previous meeting. All items will be acted upon by one vote without being discussed separately unless requested by a Council Member, in which event the item or items will immediately be withdrawn for individual consideration in its normal sequence after the items not requiring separate discussion have been acted upon. The remaining items will be adopted by one vote.)

None

8. **Information or Discussion items** – (Citizens are allowed to comment – limited to 3 minutes – after being called upon by Mayor.) –

- A. Workshop – Ivan Jaime from Union Pacific will be present to give feedback, answer questions and discuss concerns about the Union Pacific train activity and stopping durations in town. (E. Zimmer, CM) –** Ivan Jaime was present, as well as David Luevano and Rodney, all with Union Pacific. Ivan Jaime is out of the San Antonio office, David is out of The El Paso office and Rodney lives in Alpine. Ivan gave a brief history of the Railroad, a System, State and Local Operations Overview, discussed Community Involvement, Environmental Benefits, Quiet Zones and Depot Swap. He talked about the Pacific Railway Act of 1862. He said in 1881, TX&NO RR established Osborne Station on the way to El Paso to meet with the Southern Pacific Railroad. In 1883, the station was re-named Murphyville as part of the contract. In 1888 the station was re-named Alpine. In 1929, Alpine was incorporated. He said in 1970, the Rail Passenger Service Act eliminated the role of local ticket agent. He said in 2015, UPRR is the largest railroad in the country. He talked about the strength of UPRR as a unique franchise. He said in 2013 the revenue was 22 billion dollars, there were 32,000 route miles in 23 states, 46,500 employees, 4.3 billion dollar annual payroll, 10,000 customers and 8,300 locomotives. He said there were 6,314 miles of track, 726 million dollar payroll, 2.45 billion dollars in-state purchases, 589 million dollars in capital investment, 8,196 employees, 36,882 U.S. jobs Supported, 1.5 million in community giving and 304 charitable organizations. He showed the council a map of the San Antonio Service Unit (route). He said one UP Train can take 300+ trucks off of the highways. He said who pays for freight transportation capacity? He said one mile of highway costs the taxpayers \$15 million dollars. He said one mile of rail costs \$2 to \$3 million dollars to private industry. He said the railroad is three times cleaner than trucks on a ton-mile basis. He said the railroad is four times more fuel efficient than trucks, hauls one ton of freight and averages 484 miles on one gallon of fuel and has moved double the freight on the same amount of fuel since 1980. He said each train can take up to 300 trucks off the highways. He said Intercity Freight Transportation (Based on Ton Miles) was 43% for Freight RRs, Trucking 31% and Other Freight 26%. He said Transportation Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Trucking was 78.1% and other freight was 13.9%. He said Freight RRs was 8.0% (Source EPA, AAR). He said concerning Alpine Operations, it is a crew change location and away from home terminal for San Antonio and Sunset Service Units. He said the active main tracks are Sanderson Subdivision and Valentine Subdivision. He said train traffic on average in Alpine is 6 to 10 per day. He said there are 12+ employees based here in Alpine. He said the primary markets are international trade with Asia and Mexico. He said the commodities are automobiles and auto parts, consumer goods and industrial products. He said concerning community involvement the UPRR is in frequent communication with area leaders including the City of Alpine, Brewster County and State and Federal Representatives. He said UPRR has given

foundation grants to Historic Alpine, Fiesta del Sol and Alpine Public Library. He said UPRR has given no cost or nominal cost leases for public benefit. He showed aerial maps which showed the Alpine Crew Change Operations. He said the locomotive horn is mandated by the Federal Railroad Administration. He said the horn must be sounded at all crossings, except in quiet zones recognized by the FRA. He said the horn uses a standardized pattern, unless there is an emergency situation. He said dependent on the train speed, the horn blowing starts ¼ mile or 15-20 seconds before the crossing. He said the sound is 100 to 110dBa, long, long, short, long and repeated until the locomotive clears the crossing. He said a "Quiet Zone" is a segment of rail line where locomotive horns are not routinely sounded. He said a Quiet Zone must be at least ½ mile in length. He said each crossing included in the Quiet Zone must be equipped with flashing lights and gates at a minimum. He said the process is mandated and overseen by FRA. He said Union Pacific believes Quiet Zones may compromise the safety of railroad employees, customers and the General Public. He said while the Railroad does not endorse Quiet Zones, it does comply with provisions outlined in Federal Law. He said if a Quiet Zone were to be constructed in Alpine, the city would need to identify funding, conduct a study and submit notice of intent (NOI) to Union Pacific. He said per Federal guidelines, there can be no intersections or driveways within 60-100 feet of a crossing. He said the City of Alpine proposes to close the Union Pacific Employee entrance, which may affect traffic on Holland and the existing city lease. He said Union Pacific is willing to partner with the City of Alpine in funding a mutually agreeable solution. He said a relocation of the Union Depot has been previously discussed. He said there have been preliminary conversations/discussions dating back at least two decades to the 90's. He said the City of Alpine cited a lack of funding which stalled the project. He said Union Pacific is willing to partner to find a mutually beneficial solution, including but NOT limited to adequate office space and ability to operate to current standards, only railroad funding tied to crossing closures and ability to align internal logistics (i.e. Union Agreements, etc.).

City Manager Zimmer said there were comments from the community about allowing 5th Street to remain open. He said we have emergency needs. He said the police department has emergency situations and we have no stop light in town. Ivan said if 5th street is blocked, 7th street will be open and if 7th street is blocked, 5th street will be open. He said the federal inspection on the trains is done in Alpine. Ivan said the Railroad has a 24/7 phone number for emergencies. It was suggested that the Railroad employees, who stated that they had almost been run over crossing the street on 5th street, walk down to the stop sign to walk across the street on 5th street by Councilor Stephens. Councilor Salas said her father was having a heart attack and the ambulance had to wait on the train to get him to the hospital. **Mayor Rangra suggested that the**

East Bound train should stop where Amtrak stops so that all streets East of there will be open for traffic, including 5th Street. He also said the West Bound train should stop where they normally do so that 5th Street is always open and all the streets on the West side are open for traffic. Councilor Gonzales suggested that the arms come down on the railroad crossing so that the railroad employees could cross the street. Ivan said the arms for the railroad crossing are specifically for the trains. Councilor Fitzgerald suggested that the Railroad Employees look both ways before they cross the street. He said that is what we all have to do. Beginning discussions again about relocating the depot was discussed. The feasibility of a Quiet Zone in Alpine was discussed. Councilor Gonzales said the train sounds at 4 in the morning. He said they did not stick to the horn blowing pattern. Marathon's Quiet Zone was discussed. Ivan said an Application for a Quiet Zone would need to go through the Federal Railroad Commission. The noise level for the horns was also discussed. Regulating the speed of the train was also discussed. 45 miles per hour is the speed limit for the train going through town. Ivan said that was regulated by the Railroad Commission. Ivan said a lot of this information can be accessed through the FRA website. He said one way to check the history of a train's speed is the black box on every train. He said they can get reports from the black box. Elva Torres with the Alpine Housing Authority voiced her concerns about the trains. Ivan said Federal law does not say whether an inspection must be done in or out of town. Safety training was discussed for Alpine's citizens and schools. Ivan said they would do that again.

9. Action Items to be accompanied by a brief statement of facts, including where funds are coming from, if applicable. (Action items limited to (up to) 10 per meeting.) (Citizens are allowed to comment—limited to 3 minutes – after being called upon by Mayor) - None

10. Council Members Comments –

11. Executive Session – None

12. Action – After Executive Session – None

13. Adjournment – Meeting was adjourned at 12:25 P.M.

NOTICE: The City Council reserves the right to adjourn into Executive Session at any time during the course of this meeting to discuss any of the matters listed on the posted agenda, above, as authorized by the Texas Government Code, Sections 551.071 (consultation with attorney), 551.072 (deliberations about real property), 551.073 (deliberations about gifts and donations), 551.074 (personnel

matters), 551.076 (deliberations about security devices), and 551.086 (economic development).

I certify that this notice was posted at 4:30 P.M. on January 22nd, 2015, pursuant to Texas Open Meetings Act. (Texas Vernon's Annotated Civil statutes, section 551.043 Texas Government Code.) This facility is wheelchair accessible and accessible parking space is available. Requests for accommodations or interpretive services must be made 48 hours prior to this meeting. Please contact the city secretary's office at (432) 837-3301 or fax (432) 837-2044 for further information.

Dr. Avinash Rangra, Mayor

Attest:

Margaret "Molly" Taylor, City Secretary

I, Margaret "Molly" Taylor, City Secretary, do certify that this notice was posted at 4:30 P.M on January 22nd, 2015, and remained so posted continuously for at least 72 hours preceding the scheduled time of said meeting.

Margaret "Molly" Taylor, City Secretary