



City of Prescott

City Council - Study Session

October 22, 2024 | 1:00 PM
201 N Montezuma Street
City Council Chambers, 3rd Floor
Prescott, AZ 86301

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Goode called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Phil Goode - Mayor
Connie Cantelme - Mayor Pro Tem
Lois Fruhwirth - Councilwoman
Ted Gambogi - Councilman (Arrived at 1:14 p.m.)
Brandon Montoya - Councilman
Eric Moore - Councilman
Cathey Rusing - Councilmember

3. DISCUSSION

- A. Presentation & Discussion from Legislative District I Representatives Selina Bliss and Quang Nguyen and Senator Bennett Regarding Legislative District Issues and the Upcoming Legislative Session.

Mayor Goode introduced the discussion and stated that it is his goal to hear from our representatives more regularly and to inform the public of what to expect in the upcoming legislative session. He welcomed Representatives Bliss and Nguyen and Senator Bennett who participated virtually.

Representative Bliss thanked Council for the opportunity to speak with them and the public today. After the November election, if she is re-elected, she will enter her second term in office and looks forward to continuing the work she began in her "freshman" year. She began with an overview of the structurally balanced state budget. There were no tax increases and no new debt, reducing it by \$1.7 million overall by re-prioritizing state dollars to focus on the most important needs. Public safety and water security were prioritized. Monthly projections show a positive balance for the upcoming year. Last year the session convened on January 8 and adjourned sine die on June 13, all bills passed became law on September 13. During the session, 1,660 bills were introduced, 332 made it to the Governor's desk, and 73 were vetoed. Representative Bliss sponsored 36 bills, 11 of which were signed into law. Moving forward, stakeholder meetings will be held and bills are beginning to be drafted for the next session balancing the needs of both sides of Yavapai County. She provided an overview of some of the proposals that representatives are discussing and said that there is no shortage of opportunity or work to be done in these areas.

Representative Nguyen continued the discussion with an update on the Rural Transportation Summit that took place last week. He encouraged local officials to communicate with their representatives, so their needs can be addressed. His goal is to continue to bring revenue back into Yavapai County. In the past legislative session, 110 bills were assigned to him, which was a significant task. Ultimately, they have to decide what will benefit most people and if it is constitutional, as well as whether the governor will actually sign the bill. He stated that at one point he was receiving 3,000 emails a day regarding the decisions made during the last legislative session. He plans to further tighten the fentanyl bill that was passed during the last session and hopes it will be passed. Also, there are a series of agencies that are up for sunset that they will be looking at.

Senator Bennett finished the discussion regarding specifics of the fiscal year budget. He stated that education, AHCCCS, universities and other state agencies took the biggest hits and those were still minimal one-time cuts. There is a bit of a "civil war" happening within the Republican Party which has made it difficult to get some things through, which is unfortunate. He added that he will not be continuing in the next legislative session, but there is still work to be done before he is out of office, and they will be focusing on that, including the sun-setting agencies that Representative Nguyen mentioned.

Mayor Goode reviewed the areas of focus and important items that he would like to see representatives focus on in the next legislative session, including:

- * An allocation for the on-ramp correction he has been advocating for at the Hwy 89 and Hwy 89A intersection
- * He is working on formalizing the Rural Groundwater Working Group to look at how groundwater is managed in our area
- * Support and funding for public safety needs, including facilities
- * Working with the League of Arizona Cities and Towns to advocate for a user fee for electric vehicles Level I Fast Charging Stations

Councilman Montoya thanked the representatives for their time today and stated that he would request they engage all cities they serve regarding the repeal of food tax and how that would affect local budgets. These are a lifeline to municipal budgets.

Councilman Gambogi echoed Councilman Montoya's comments and asked where the proposed mine stands as of today. He added that more revenue is needed for road repairs, and expressed his concerns regarding transportation in Yavapai County. He also asked about the status of their building off 6th Street.

Representative Bliss responded that it appears the mine has been abandoned. They are looking at bills to prevent operations like to from coming into Arizona in the future.

Representative Nguyen stated that he is not a fan of electric vehicles and funding going exclusively to those plans. There have been discussions regarding moving funds generated through Highway User Revenue Fund (HURF) to address the transportation issues, as well as taxes related to electric vehicles.

Mayor Pro Tem Cantelme commented that her takeaway from the transportation summit was discouraging. Her wish lists for our area would focus on quality of life, particularly related to traffic increases here. Studies are costing a great deal without even getting to do the actual work. She added that there is also a push for solar farms in the area, which is something that concerns her, particularly related to disposal. Finally, she stated that drugs in Yavapai County are a major problem, and she would like to see a comprehensive data collection program to look at what avenue is best to address these issues and whether diversion programs are actually working or not.

Councilmember Rusing continued and commented that it makes her happy as a voter to see elected officials at all levels working together for the communities. She echoed other Council comments about the issues in Prescott and Yavapai County, and commented on the importance of eco-tourism in our area and throughout the state. Also, she asked if the representatives were aware of Arizona state funds going to house and feed migrants.

Representative Nguyen responded that \$3.1 billion was spent on illegal immigration in the state of Arizona.

Senator Bennett commented that he is unaware of any direct appropriations to provide housing, transportation, food etc. for these issues. But, there are funds going into the prison system, the education system and the healthcare system that goes towards individuals that may not be here legally. The total of state funding will be approximately \$70 billion this year and a portion of that goes to these issues.

Councilman Moore echoed comments regarding the environmental issues and state parks. He would like to establish a permanent funding mechanism for open space purchases and hopes that the state will continue to help fund those issues because the city is unable to do so from of its own general fund.

Councilwoman Fruhwirth stated that she would be interested in a good process to apply in the process related to these types of discussions in the future. She stated that there are many citizen comments where people don't understand how taxing decisions are made by certain bodies. Moreover, she added to comments on the importance of food tax to local governments in maintaining local revenue bases, and finally, a more dynamic economy needs to be established in the city of Prescott and would appreciate any help from the state related to those things.

Member of the public Larry Springer asked about HB2648 regarding HOA common expenses and member expense fines.

Member of the public Patrick Fitzgerald echoed comments from Mr. Springer and stated that their HOA has expressed concerns regarding enforcing CC&R fines. There needs to be clarification on many of the terms within the law.

Member of the public Jay Ruby addressed the Council and stated that this type of civic engagement is important. He stated that the state legislature could set up adjacency limits so any project like the mine would require the city's approval,

which would allow a direct say in these types of projects. He added that conservation projects in Yavapai County would empower local control.

This item was for discussion only, no formal action was taken.

4. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, Mayor Goode adjourned the meeting at 2:27 p.m.



PHILIP R. GOODE, Mayor


ATTEST:



SARAH M. SIEP, City Clerk

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Voting Meeting of the City Council Voting Meeting of the City of Prescott, Arizona held on October 22, 2024. I further certify the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.



Sarah M. Siep, City Clerk

