



**CITY OF CORNING
SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**

**TUESDAY, MARCH 1, 2011
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
794 THIRD STREET**

A. CALL TO ORDER: 7:00 p.m.

B. ROLL CALL:

Council:

Vacant

Toni Parkins

John Leach

Darlene Dickison

Mayor:

Gary Strack

All members of the Council were present.

C. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Led by the City Manager.

D. BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR:

Mayor Strack welcomed everyone to tonight's meeting and asked if there was anyone in the audience wishing to speak on an item not listed on tonight's Agenda. He invited those wishing to speak to come to the podium, identify themselves and briefly present their information to the Council informing audience members that should the matter require more time or formal action by the Council, the law requires it be placed on the printed Agenda for a future meeting so that interested members of the public will have the chance to appear and speak on the subject. He then stated that should members of the audience have questions regarding the item listed on tonight's Agenda, please obtain the Mayor's attention and state your question prior to Council beginning the interview process explaining that once the Council begins interviewing prospective Council Candidates, there will be no more audience participation. Questions to Candidates will be asked by the Mayor and Members of the City Council only.

With no questions from the audience, the Council moved forward with the interview process.

E. REGULAR AGENDA:

1. Applications for Vacant City Council Position: Review, Discussion and Selection for Appointment to Fill Vacancy.

Mayor Strack outlined the interview process stating that the process will consist of:

- Each Candidate introducing themselves and stating why they are seeking this appointment,
- Mayor and Council will then address questions to the Candidates, with each Candidate responding to each question.
- Concluding the interview process, each Candidate will be given the opportunity to make a final statement of why they believe they are best qualified for appointment to the City Council.
- Mayor and Council will then deliberate and hopefully a motion will be made for a selection, followed by a second and a vote.
- The individual selected will be sworn into office at the March 8th City Council Meeting.

Introduction:

Melodie Poisson: Stated she was a candidate for the City Council during the November Elections and has gone through this process for quite a few months now and is looking forward to a conclusion. She and her husband Richard own DM-Tech, a local internet service and

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computer repair service serving the Community. She stated that in 2008 she became very interested in the City Council and issues relating to the City. She stated that she really has a heart for this City and feels that if you have an interest in and a desire to not only know what is going on but have an opinion on it you should be willing to serve. She wants to serve our Community so she began to educate herself about the issues and the people by coming to meetings and pouring over the Agendas. She stated she has been in the process of preparing herself for the possibility of serving on the Council. She looks forward to the privilege and honor of serving at some point.

Lorenzo Casia: Stated he has been a local citizen since 1965 and working at Corning Lumber for the last 31 years. He stated that during the last Election he believed he needed to offer another choice for the people of Corning, but never followed through. He stated he would do the best he can and hopes he can provide the right decisions for the citizens of the City and for the local businesses.

Doug Hatley: Stated that he has been around Corning for quite some time and has been employed at Corning Ford for 21 years in the Service Department. He currently serves as a Commissioner on the City's Planning Commission and has for about three years. He is a member of the Corning Chamber of Commerce where he has served on the Board of Directors, Chaired the Car Show for many years, and put on the mixers at Corning Ford. He stated through his experience in business and on the Planning Commission he believes he could bring a lot to the table to serve the City of Corning.

David Linnet: Stated he is a business owner in town, has had his business for twenty years now, was born and raised here, worked for Dudley and Petty for eighteen years and then started his own shop. He stated that he just wants to serve Corning more, he can spend the time now; his business is at a place where he can now do that and that he put his name in to help the City.

John Richards: Stated he has been a Corning resident for the last 13 years, has a couple of kids in High School still. He has been in construction for about twenty years between manufacturing and in the construction part of it, currently he is doing estimating. He feels with his background he can bring different ideas to the Council because he doesn't believe there has been much of that on the Council that's why he put his hat into the ring. He stated that he works well with people and believes he is a pretty good problem solver and works well with others. He stated he would be honored to serve.

Each of the Candidates responded to the following questions:

- **The City is currently facing a deadline for setting up guidelines for the dispensary of Medical Marijuana in the City of Corning, do you feel you could bring an open mind to the Council on this issue and what are your thoughts on this issue?** (Mayor Strack)

Richards: Stated that he himself is against it. He knows it brings some good to some people that actually need it. He stated that with whatever solution comes up you will not be able to make everyone happy, however with everything he has seen he believes it is here to stay and stated he believes there will end up being more and more of it. He stated it will take the effort of all of the Council to come up with a common solution. He believes that the one we had could have possibly worked if it had been under different circumstances, different location and more willing to work with the City. The key thing is everyone putting their heads together to come up with a solution that will best protect the City along with the residents.

Linnet: Stated he is not against Medical Marijuana, however he is leery about the way the scripts are issued other than by a medical doctor. He said he could see where they say it really helps them when they use it, so he wouldn't be against having someplace zoned for it if the kids couldn't get around it. He stated he was really upset when he saw three teenage girls looking in the window of the one downtown when he was driving home one day. He wished it was in a

location where kids didn't walk by it all the time, he wouldn't be against zoning it if it was in a location where kids weren't walking by it all the time.

Hatley: Stated that the key is to have an open mind on the issue and he believes he can do that. He stated he has done a lot of research on the issue as a Planning Commissioner and it is a real touchy situation where you are damned if you do and damned if you don't and there is no cut and dried answer, it will take everybody's input in order to decide how we are going to do it. He stated he believes it is inevitable, that somewhere down the line we will have to make some kind of zoning regulations and decide where to zone for it. It is a no win situation.

Casia: Stated that he was unaware that the City was under the gun to make a decision on this. He stated that he is kind of lukewarm on the subject. He would like to see a better regulation, however he doesn't know if we are capable of that as a local government. He stated that the State and Federal Government should give the City some pretty good guidelines on this issue, stating he is not sure exactly what they are. He stated if we look at the Federal and State guidelines on the issue that we have to work with he thinks we should be able to make a viable decision, whichever way it goes.

Poisson: Stated that it is unfortunate that Medical Marijuana is in a different category than other medical dispensary items that are needed by people. She stated that she thinks it is too available to young people, and that the regulations are lax in California because there are so many people that want it to become Recreational. We are in this position where we have the Federal and the State and we are trying to come to a compromise. Whatever we can do as a City to keep it out of the hands of children and teenagers while still following State and Federal guidelines she would be in favor of. She stated that she has seen a lot of young people treat it with such casual disregard that it has enveloped their lives causing them to become non-productive, so because of that she would like, as a City, to find ways to keep a regulated eye on it. She stated that she believes that the Police Department did a great job this past year with this issue however, the City does not have the finances to be the regulators of this issue. She stated that her opinion is to find a location that is under the most control and is the least available to young people and find out what resources are available for regulation besides our own Police Department. The answers will come, it isn't a matter of pleasing everyone, but rather a matter of doing what is right.

- **Do you have any new ideas on ways to save money in the City Budget?** (Councilor Dickison)

Poisson: Stated that there were some ideas suggested during the campaign which she believes are good. The ideas about obtaining competitive bids which she believes the City currently does, but maybe widening that ability to do that. She stated she believes we could make money with some of our resources that we currently are not making as much as we could. We have land and facilities that we rent out, stating she thinks we could get graduated increases in those incomes that would provide the City with more income. There are resources that we could possibly tap that we have been utilizing past tables of what we are expecting to come in that we could increase. She stated that she would like to learn more about the current City jobs to see if a savings could be found there.

Casia: Stated he believes that most of the monies the City receives are dedicated funds, when money comes in from certain sources and the funds are from a dedicated source it should be utilized for that purpose only.

Hatley: Stated that he can't say that he has any specific ideas because he is not familiar with the City's finances. What he can bring is a different perspective to the issue because that is what he currently does on a daily basis through his job at Corning Ford with their many dealerships. During the current economic times they have survived when many dealerships are

closing their doors. He stated that he could bring his experience to the table and possibly come up with some new ideas.

Linnet: He stated that he has no new ideas, from what he can see the Council has done an excellent job so far, and the steps taken by Steve and Tony has made it a little easier that way. The only other option is cutting wages.

Richards: Stated that with his background he believes that accountability is a big part. Supervisors need to do their job to make sure their employees are out doing what they need to be doing. He suggested obtaining supplies through competitive price quotes. He stated that there is no easy solution. He noted that it will take some work on his part to learn more about it however, he believes he has a pretty good aspect of some things and suggestions he could make to help the Council.

- **John Leach stated that we did have a General Election last November, two of the candidates tonight ran for the position during that time, took out papers, spent money on a campaign and between the two received about 800 votes. Is there a reason that three of you didn't run?**

Linnet: He believed that there were enough candidates running at that time.

Hatley: He didn't because of health issues at the time, it was noted that he did run for City Council six years ago.

Casia: It was late in the season and he needed to speak to his wife about it. He stated that he really wanted to do this but decided to hold off. After the Election, and after continual talks with his wife, she warmed up to the idea. With Mr. Lopez resigning he thought this is another opportunity.

- **In the last Election, because of the budget Council discussed a possible tax to support the Fire Dispatch. Since this issue could come up for discussion again in a few months, would you support and what is your opinion on a possible tax to support the Fire Dispatch, should it be funded by a separate tax?** (Mayor Strack. Councilor Parkins asked if this question is a violation of the Brown Act and Mayor Strack stated he didn't believe it was because they are not an elected official and are offering an opinion.)

Poisson: Since the tax would be associated with a property tax and paid by property owners, she would like to see a mail out vote of the property owners for a decision, she believes that would be the most appropriate. As a property owner she is in favor of the tax as she supports the Fire Department.

Casia: He stated that at one time he was a Volunteer Fireman for the County, and at that time a "Volunteer" meant volunteer, since that time things have changed. He stated that if we offer it to the public they would give the Council direction.

Hatley: Stated he doesn't know if he is for or against it. During these economic times, for some people out there they are barely making ends meet, yet we want to tax them more. However, we need the service. He believes the people should have a voice on this issue.

Linnet: Stated that he has always been against taxes, however when you talk about firemen, he believes he would be in favor of it. He stated that possibly after tomorrow he will be a member of the Fire Department and would not be able to vote on this issue should he be selected.

Richards: Stated that he is in favor of the tax, however it is a touchy situation. He supports our Fire Department and Fire Dispatch. As a homeowner he would support it, he is not crazy about a tax increase, but he would do it to support the Fire Department. It is something that needs to be looked at. He stated that the Fire Department has an excellent rating, they have one of the

best response times of any of the ones he knows of. He stated regarding a tax, he would be in favor of it.

- **Mayor Strack stated he had one question of John Richards. During the last budget discussion, he supported a budget proposed by Concerned Citizens that supported cutting some Management Positions. If you were to get appointed to this position, you would have to have a working relationship with people you were critical of, or wanted to be laid off. Do you see that as being a problem?**

He stated no. In his job he has to work with people that he doesn't agree with and is not crazy about, but in his position he has to come up with solutions for the problems. When it comes to the decisions he has to make it comes down to what is best for the Company he works for. In this situation it would be what is in the best interest for the City and its residents.

- **Should the financial situation of the City change within the next year, how would you approach the situation, would you consider lay-offs, taking a portion of the employees PERS, etc.** (Councilor Leach)

Richards: Stated that you don't know what's going to happen until it comes and you have to be able to make the hard decisions even if it is not a popular one. You have to make a decision that is in the best interest of the City and its residents.

Linnet: Stated that he has talked with a lot of the Staff and they are familiar with the current budget situation. He believes things will turn around and the Council has already taken the steps necessary.

Hatley: Stated that he agrees with Dave, the Council has already taken the necessary steps. The Council will do what is necessary at the time.

Casia: Believes people will step up and do what is necessary.

Poisson: Stated that she is very impressed with the way the City has kept a spirit of cooperation and unity through some of these hard times and hopes that we can continue that spirit when it gets to harder things. The City needs to continue researching methods of saving. The energy costs are astounding. She stated that there has got to be a way to save on the energy bill.

- **Do any of you have any problems with the current City Employees?** (Councilor Dickison)

All of the Candidates stated no.

Councilor Parkins voiced her appreciation to all of the Candidates, informing them that serving as a member of the Council is stressful and you have to do the homework.

Candidates Final Statement:

Melodie Poisson: Stated that she believes she would be good in this position due to her teaching background. She has had to negotiate all kinds of situations with Staff, School Boards, and Parents. She is good at studying, she knows all about homework from both sides. Through her business she believes she knows the heartbeat of the public and wants to serve. She stated she believes she could be impartial, judging each situation as it comes up. She is fiscally responsible and possibly can help with new businesses in Corning.

Lorenzo Casia: Believes most of the Council knows him and he would like to offer up his knowledge and skills and would do the best that he could to serve the Community.

Doug Hatley: Stated that when you have a job to do, you have to get it done. He stated that he can bring a lot of different angles and knowledge to the table. He is good at reading material to prepare and could bring a lot of experience to the table and be a good team player.

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Dave Linnet: He was born and raised here and loves this town. He is a small business owner here for twenty four years. He has donated a lot of time and money to the Fire Department, he and his grandson are involved in community service through graffiti removal and is here to serve the community and will serve whether chosen or not.

John Richards: Stated he believes his background in construction could benefit the City. He works well with people and believes he works well with people to come up with a solution to a common problem. He informed the Council that this is new to him. He stated that he has been involved with the kids and the Skateboard Park Committee and at the Senior Center.

Mayor Strack then called for a motion from the Council. Councilor Parkins moved to appoint Doug Hatley.

Councilor Leach stated that it is a difficult situation to see each of the five sitting here because no matter what the decision someone will be unhappy. He then stated that he would lean towards appointing John Richards because of his construction experience. He further stated that two of these people spent a lot of time and money on the election and did receive votes from the public.

Councilor Dickison stated that each of the Candidates tonight is qualified to serve and that it is a difficult decision.

Mayor Strack requested a second on the motion currently on the floor. Councilor Dickison seconded the motion made by Councilor Parkins. **Ayes:** Parkins and Dickison. **Opposed:** Leach and Strack. **Not passed by a 2-2 vote.**

Councilor Leach then moved to appoint John Richards to the Council. Mayor Strack seconded the motion. **Ayes:** Leach. **Opposed:** Dickison, Parkins and Strack. **Not passed by a 1-3 vote.**

Councilor Parkins then moved to appoint Dave Linnet. Councilor Dickison seconded the motion. **Ayes:** Parkins, Dickison, Strack. **Opposed:** Leach. **Approved by a 3-1 vote.**

Mayor Strack announced that Dave Linnet will be sworn into office at the March 8, 2011 City Council Meeting. He thanked all of the Candidates and welcomed them to apply for appointment to the various Commissions stating that we do have some openings.

F. ADJOURNMENT!: 8:10 p.m.

Lisa M. Linnet, City Clerk