

CALL TO ORDER - ROLL CALL- PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Rob Schroder called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. with all members present except Vice Mayor Ross, who arrived shortly after roll call.

PRESENT: Rob Schroder, Mayor, Mark Ross, Vice Mayor, AnaMarie Avila Farias, Councilmember, Lara DeLaney, Councilmember, and Debbie McKillop, Councilmember.

EXCUSED: None.

ABSENT: None.

PUBLIC COMMENT (Comments are limited only to items listed on the Agenda)

Mayor Schroder stated the Council would be adjourning to Closed Session regarding Public Employment - Title: Chief of Police. He indicated there would be no appointment made tonight, and he reviewed the recruitment process so far. He stated seven candidates were being considered, including Interim Chief Eric Ghisletta. He explained in order to allow enough time for the Council to deliberate, public comment would be limited to 15 minutes, and then the Council will adjourn to Closed Session. He indicated when the Council reconvenes, he will re-open public comment. He requested the public to limit their comments to one minute.

Mayor Schroder opened public comment.

Mike Benson stated Eric Ghisletta is the best candidate for the job, and the only one the Council should consider because he was born and educated in Martinez. He could not understand why the Council needed to spend so much on a recruitment firm when Mr. Ghisletta was already here, willing and able to do the job.

Nina Breinig expressed support for Mr. Ghisletta as well, reviewing his history and experience qualifies him for the position of Police Chief.

Phyllis Loya indicated she was dissatisfied with how the City is being managed. She was concerned about the City's decline and the poor handling of public safety issues, resulting in Mr. Ghisletta's resignation and a blow to the morale of the Police force. She noted the bond among current police officers, including Mr. Ghisletta, following the deaths of two officers in the line of duty.

Carol Youngman commented on Mr. Ghisletta's courage, integrity and stellar performance, as well as his pride in Martinez. She expressed he should be rewarded for his hard work with the position of Police Chief.

Gay Gerlack said she was very disappointed with the Council's actions, and she asked the community to express themselves in the next election. She thanked Mr. Ghisletta for his 25 years of service to the City.

John Stretch noted he was hired by the City in 1987 and has worked with Mr. Ghisletta. He stated Mr. Ghisletta was the best candidate for the job. He questioned the validity of the process since Richmond's Chief of Police was on the review board and a Captain from Richmond is the recommended candidate. He cautioned the Council they may have just committed political suicide.

Mike Smith said he has worked for the City for 31 years and he agreed Mr. Ghisletta was the best man for the job. He added Martinez used to be like a family, but not so much anymore.

Bill Nichols was also supportive of Mr. Ghisletta, and he commented on his many community involvements. He expressed disappointment in three specific members of the Council. Mr. Nichols commented if Mr. Ghisletta has resigned, the City should add the title of Police Chief to his record, not just Interim Chief.

Felix Sanchez indicated his support for Mr. Ghisletta as the best qualified candidate for the job. He reminded the Council they could be subject to a recall from the voters, and he urged them to do the right thing and offer Mr. Ghisletta the job.

Mayor Schroder closed public comment until after the Closed Session.

The Council adjourned to the City Manager's Office.

CLOSED SESSION (Adjourn to City Manager's Office)

- A. Pursuant to California Government Code Section 54957: PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT - Title: Chief of Police PUBLIC EMPLOYEE APPOINTMENT - Title: Chief of Police

RECONVENE

Mayor Schroder reconvened the meeting at 8:40 p.m. with all the Councilmembers present. He stated they met in Closed Session and reported there will be another meeting continuing the same discussion on Friday, May 29th at 2:00 p.m.

Mayor Schroder reopened public comment.

Cookie Telles spoke about Interim Chief Ghisletta and his strong community bonds, based on his family connections and personal history in Martinez. She also asked whether there are six candidates being considered or only two.

Mayor Schroder confirmed the City Manager received a letter of resignation from Eric Ghisletta effective June 25th.

Diane Boyle said she thought the Council has done a grave injustice to the Police Department, given their support and respect for Mr. Ghisletta. She questioned whether the Police Department was asked about their recommendation for the job, and whether the community was consulted. She expressed it is a sad day for Martinez, and a recall for three Councilmembers will be started as a result.

Cheryl Grover noted Ms. Boyle has been the leading force in raising money for a police dog, and she thanked Ms. Boyle for her efforts.

Julian Frazer stated when he was on the Council, they had hired two Police Chiefs through the ranks of the Department, which is how it is generally done. He was displeased with the fact not all public comment was heard before the Closed Session. He also expressed all City meetings should be recorded with video and audio, especially Special meetings. He was concerned about the summarizing of the minutes and how difficult it is to tell at times what was actually said. Mr. Frazer requested these minutes be verbatim. He was concerned the process followed resulted from political conflicts among the Councilmembers.

Elizabeth Alvarado, a lifelong resident of the City and a public servant in the court system, stated the role as public servant is to work on behalf of the community, and the Council has failed. She asked whether any of the Council had taken the time to get to know members of the Police Department and their families. She also asked if the Council had stood by a Police Officer's side when delivering news of the death of a family member to a loved one, or especially, the death of a Police Officer to his family. She urged the Council to listen to the public and ask Mr. Ghisletta to reconsider his resignation.

Marshall Cochrane commented on the role of the new City Manager, which should primarily focus on economic revitalization. He noted, in every measurable way, Mr. Ghisletta has performed his job more than satisfactorily with crime statistics, etc., down, as a result of his efforts. He stated the City Manager could trust Mr. Ghisletta to do his job well and would not take time away from the City Manager's other duties.

Robert Patrick commented on the minimum qualifications other cities in Contra Costa County require of Police Chiefs, including a Bachelor's Degree. He noted the emotions tied to Mr. Ghisletta's connection with the community need to be set aside, and the Council should logically consider who is the best man for the job.

In response to Mr. Patrick, John Stevens said he has a Master's Degree, but he is not qualified to be Chief of Police. He was confident Mr. Ghisletta's PhD in life makes him more than qualified.

Robert Perry asked whether the next meeting, on May 29th would be a regular meeting or a Special meeting. Mayor Schroder confirmed it would be a Special meeting and will include time for public comment.

Councilmember Avila-Farias indicated the recruitment process resulted in thirty applicants, with seven considered qualified and interviewed by the recruitment board. She further indicated the Council was reviewing notes for the seven, but since Mr. Ghisletta submitted his resignation, the Council will continue its decision-making with the remaining six.

CITY COUNCIL

1. City Manager and/or Council Comments.

Councilmember Avila Farias indicated this evening was the first time Council has reviewed and discussed the outcome of the independent panel and Friday is a continuation of the same. As reported in the paper, there were seven applicants from the 30 who applied. Unfortunately, and to Council's surprise, Mr. Ghisletta resigned, and the Council will contend with 6 applicants in Closed Session.

ADJOURNMENT

Adjourned at 9:00 p.m. to a Special City Council meeting on May 29, 2015 at 2:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers, 525 Henrietta Street, Martinez, California.

Approved by the City Council,



Rob Schroder, Mayor

Mercy G. Cabral, Deputy City Clerk – 7/1/15