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SWEETWATER VALLEY CIVIC ASSOCIATION MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING March 2, 2022

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at approximately 6:31 by the President Judy Tieber at the Library Community room. She welcomed everyone to the meeting. We began with the Pledge of Allegiance. Judy asked for a moment of silence to honor the men and women of our Armed Forces, Law Enforcement, Fire and Safety Professionals; and an appreciation of those currently serving to protect us, including Health Care workers and Teaching Professionals.

Directors Present: Judy Tieber, Steve Stonehouse, Tony Tieber, Sharmane Estolano, Mike Clowers, and Sharon Coleman.

Members Present: Jim Woodford, Jim Groth, Prudence Prince, Mike Seiler

Guests Present: Bonita-Sunnyside Fire Crew (Richard Fosborg, Robert Maroon, Dan Gerevicz, Halley Schmiz), Andrew Harvey from Supervisor District 1, Nora Vargas' Office, Amanda Angulo from Council member John McCann's office, Sheriff Candidate John Hemmerling, Crime Prevention Specialist Julio Garcia, Other guests present were Ellen Freeno, and Greg Sandoval.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Judy asked for a motion to approve minutes. Stephen Stonehouse moved to approve; Mike Clowers provided the second. Minutes approved as written.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Stephen Stonehouse reported the February 2022 Treasurer's Report.

	<u>March</u>
Checking	\$ 598.19
Certificate of Deposit	\$2,464.55
Ending Balance	\$3,062.74

There was an expense for a payment to the Bonita Museum since we sometimes use their facilities. Stephen mentioned the possibility of withdrawing funds from the SVCA CD to pay future bills.

Fire Safety: Bonita Fire Chief Mike Sims: Mike was unable to attend but did send his engine crew. The following report was presented.

Crews have begun falling dead palms in the river bottom. It is slow going due to the tremendous amount of work required to move all the fallen fronds in order to get to the trunk. We will stick with it until it's done. The goal is 50 trees. Chula Vista Fire Dept's Ambulance Service is seeing higher call volumes and longer wait times at the hospitals. This is making it a challenge to maintain response times, but they are doing a good job of serving Bonita. We still have great compliance numbers that are well above the contracted requirements.

Our 911 Dispatch Center (Heartland Communications Facility) is preparing for a major and much needed move/remodel. They will be staying in the same building but moving upstairs to a larger

area with modern upgrades and a more worker friendly environment. They have been in the basement of El Cajon FD Station 6 with no windows since their creation. We have begun to reduce masking restrictions for personnel as the Covid-19 cases drop throughout the County. Crews will continue to wear masks as appropriate on medical emergencies but are no longer required to wear them at other times. The Crew reminded us that every firefighter is also a paramedic.

In Short, your Bonita Fire Department is running smooth and ready to serve the citizens of Bonita 24/7! There is a memorial on March 9th for a San Diego Fire Fighter who recently passed.

Law Enforcement Reports:

CHP, Officer Salvador Castro: Not present

Sheriff Dept. Crime Prevention Specialist, Julio Garcia: Julio reported that Bonita has the lowest crime rate in the County although crime is up in the County. Crimes are occurring close to the freeways in Cedarwood and Robinwood areas, parks, and Plaza Bonita. Cars were broken into. Julio handed out the following flyer: "Protect your vehicle". He also handed out a crime map showing the kinds of crime occurring in the Bonita area. He reminded everyone to lock their cars and not leave valuables visible in the car.

A discussion followed in which it was indicated that the western staging area and the cemetery parking area are locations where break-ins are occurring. Meeting attendees thought homeless residents were the problem and causing the break-ins. Meeting attendees thought homeless residents were stealing bikes. Julio reminded us that we must report crimes in order to have the sheriff take action. Judy asked if Julio could have the homeless encampment in Palm Canyon checked out. He replied that an outreach team would be sent to the area. In response to a question about "air gun" shootings, Julio explained that the Sheriff had not received any calls about this. In answer to a question about catalytic converter thefts, Julio indicated that none had been stolen in Bonita.

Chula Vista Police Officer: Not present.

Elected Representative Reports:

House of Representatives Sara Jacobs' Office Christopher Frantz: Not present

Council Member John McCann's Office representative Amanda Angulo reported that the Chula Vista City Manager and Chief of Police have received a special honor for jobs well done. Sharon McCann also received a special award designated to honor all women of Chula Vista. She also reported that rebates from Republic Services are on the way and trash service is back to normal operation. She also reported that Councilmember John McCann is a strong advocate for Bonita and is looking forward to having the citizens of Bonita participate in the development of a general plan for Rohr Park. About the golf course at Rohr Park, Amanda reported that all revenues collected by the golf course are being used to improve the condition of the course.

Judy mentioned that there will be a Chula Vista Mayoral forum soon and she would send out the URL for that forum. That way SVCA members can see and hear all the candidates.

Andrew Harvey, Supervisor Nora Vargas Representative:

Before Andrew's presentation on micro-enterprises began, an attendee wanted to complete a conversation that started with Julio Garcia regarding homelessness. Prudence asked Andrew what the County was doing to curb the homeless who are camping out at various parks. Andrew said the County sent a "hot team" to the area which offered resources to the people. They declined any help.

Andrew reported that the Board of Supervisors had approved the micro-enterprise ordinance which will allow vendors to provide up to 30 meals/day or 60 meals/week using their own kitchens.

Andrew also referenced the County Mobile Crisis Team which contacted 672 people regarding services and referred 110 to treatment.

Andrew noted opportunities regarding volunteering for community service, especially SANDAG which needs an advisory group and the County Traffic Advisory Group (TAC) which has positions available. At this juncture, the discussion went to the new vendor ordinance just approved. Jim Groth noted there was a BBQ vendor in his area that created a lot of polluting smoke and wondered if this was covered in the ordinance. Mike Clowers responded that road-side cooking is ok if the person has a permit. Andrew also responded that environmental health is also a consideration. Julio told us permits are necessary and that he was aware of a person cited who did not have a permit.

A meeting attendee referenced the selling of flowers at the intersection of Sweetwater Rd and Briarwood Rd. wondered if the proprietor needed a permit to operate. Andrew said he would investigate that. Both Andrew and Sharon Coleman noted that State Senator Ben Hueso has introduced a bill to eliminate the State Route 125 toll by 2027.

New Business. Guest Speaker. John Hemmerling, Candidate for the Office of Sheriff, San Diego County. Judy introduced the guest speaker.

I am pleased to announce our guest for this evening's meeting, San Diego County Sheriff candidate John Hemmerling. Mr. Hemmerling currently serves as the Chief Prosecutor in the San Diego City Attorney's Criminal and Community Justice Division. His professional background includes serving as a Marine Corp Reserve colonel, a decorated Gulf and Iraq War Veteran, and, more recently serving San Diego City for 9 years as a police officer. During this time, he attended law school at the University of San Diego and joined the City Attorney's Office in 2002. During his last 20 years in the City Attorney's Office he has risen up the ranks and now leads nearly 200 attorneys and staff who work in eight different units under his supervision.

While our Civic Association is a-political, in that we do not endorse candidates running for public office, we feel it is important to:

- know the candidates,
- what are their priorities,

- how best will they accomplish their stated objectives,
- and, perhaps most importantly, how responsive will they be to our local concerns and important issues.

With that in mind, our association crafted candidate discussion questions that have been forwarded to Mr. Hemmerling. We hope these questions will be the starting point for a meaningful discussion with time for questions.

John, please feel free to organize the rest of this meeting however you wish. I only add that we try to conclude our meetings by 8:30 p.m.

With that, I now turn the meeting over to John Hemmerling, Candidate for the Office of Sheriff, San Diego County.

John started his presentation by referencing the new vending law passed by the State that allows street vendors to operate. He then noted that individual municipalities can make rules if they are consistent with the State law. He said San Diego County has done that.

John noted the Sheriff position is open to a new candidate for the first time in 30 years. He would very much like to be elected to this position. John presented his credentials by centering on his leadership and professionalism. In exemplifying these two qualities, he noted that he:

1. Was the head of a Marine Battalion
2. Spent 8 years as a police officer and was a field training officer
3. Went to law school while working
4. Was the Prosecuting Attorney
5. Was the Legal Counsel to the Police Chief.

He further noted that he is vitally interested in public safety and knows:

1. How to protect people and human life
2. The criminal justice system
3. Victims of crime have been left behind
4. Problems have been created by decriminalization decisions by the State of California legislature

To exemplify his position on the State Justice System and his opposition to some state laws, he noted:

1. AD109 which did not send criminals to state prison, rather to county jails, or only wearing an ankle monitor.

2. Proposition 47 altered crime penalties.
3. Decriminalization of drug offenses which he believes has caused more homelessness.

The Police are understaffed and, thus, must decide what is important to enforce and what is not. Candidate Hemmerling wants to attack violent crime.

Candidate Hemmerling noted he cares about public service and has been meeting and talking with people who live in San Diego County to present his views. He still needs to talk to a lot more people because this county is very large.

A discussion was started about the Bonita Safety Center and the need to keep it open and better used. He thought this was an interesting issue and felt transparency and being seen and being available was important. People also discussed the Bonita Sr. Patrol and that volunteers for the organization were needed. People also noted that traveling to North County was problematic for training, and that a closer venue was needed for the Bonita Sr. Patrol. The Bonita Sr. Patrol needs a full-time coordinator. Candidate Hemmerling noted that volunteers are an important asset to the Sheriff's Dept. Meeting attendees talked about illegal dumping such as along Proctor Valley Road. John said, if elected, he would engage other County partners to stop the illegal dumping. He postulated that perhaps a camera might help with the solution. He further noted that, as with the dumping issue, he would endeavor to find out what issues are important to the people and figure out how to solve them.

Meeting attendees talked about the traffic in Bonita. John thought the Sheriff should have a traffic division, something it currently does not have. He thought this traffic division would help with traffic control and enforcement of vehicle codes and with special community events. He postulated as a candidate that "things have been the same for too long and changes are needed." Speaking of changes, he felt the Sheriff should have a domestic violence unit, make more effective use of personnel, and that drug users need help in the short and long-term to "kick" their habit.

Going back to one of his previous assertions, John noted that laws are the problem. He proposed the following:

1. Taking drug users to counselling rather than jail.
2. Cutting officer overtime
3. Prosecuting offenders
4. Being fiscally smart

Meeting attendees asked questions about the status of the jails. John responded that he was aware of the low morale of jail deputies and would be their advocate. He thought a new perspective is needed by someone outside the Sheriff's organization who could propose changes and knew the ground level for those changes. Judy asked what his plan is to recruit and retain more medical staff and officers for the jail system. He responded that the environment in the jail system needed to be improved. About medical personnel, he again thought taking drug users to rehab vs. jail was something that needed to be tried. He postulated that the 9/11 system could be revised to potentially handle the drug issue and mental health issues. He again indicated that other County agencies would have to be included and utilized.

Jim Woodford talked about the Bonita Sr. Patrol and their short staffing. Candidate Hemmerling thought a mutual-aid alliance could be formed with other areas of the county that had senior patrol members. For example, mutual aid could be between Imperial Beach and Rancho San Diego. This cooperative effort would serve to marshal resources. John indicated that both the Sheriff and Bonita Sr. Patrol would have to act to make mutual aid happen. Judy posed the issue of the Sr. Patrol training occurring only in Poway. John proposed a training location in south county. He opined that volunteer are important and we need to make it easy for them to get training. Tony brought up the issue of illegal cannabis dispensaries. John asserted that these illegal dispensaries are a problem and need to be shut down and proprietors arrested. About on-site use of cannabis, he noted this is a public safety concern. He indicated that he would engage the Board of Supervisors to enact laws that would protect public safety.

Mike Seiler brought up the issue of tax revenue and how the lack of that money affects what happens after laws are passed. He also brought up the issue of retracting laws at the State level. John indicated he would work with the California Legislature to enact laws that could be enforced and protect public safety.

In closing, Candidate Hemmerling said he wants the Sheriff's job to help the people of San Diego County and to give back to the County Community.

Continuing Business: None

Community Forum:

Traffic/Roads – Mike Clowers provide the following report.

The County Traffic Advisory Committee (TAC) approved a three-way stop in the Highlands at the intersection of Central and Country Trails. The TAC also approved the installation of an all-way stop on Proctor Valley Road at Jonel Way/Bonita Meadows Lane. These two items will go to the Board of Supervisors on May 18th for final approval.

Judy brought up the issue of speeding on Acacia and proposed that the county determine whether that street can be certified for a traffic speed limit that can be enforced by radar.

Meeting attendees also talked about the proposed Quarry Road storage facility and the potential traffic issue that could be cause by traffic from the facility, such as campers and trucks with trailers, turning from Quarry Road onto Sweetwater Road.

	County:	Chula Vista:
Pothole repairs, graffiti removal,	(877) 684-8000	(619) 397-6000
Burned-out streetlights:		
Illegal dumping:	(858) 694-2212	(619) 397-6000

Planning Group – Steve Stonehouse was in attendance but had no report.

Membership –Sharon Coleman reported that membership is needed, but she did register one new member and re-enrolled another. She than gave the following membership report:

Org/Profit Partner - 4, Org/Non-Profit Partner- 6 (includes 1 Gold), Silver/Family- 1 Family- 21, Individuals- 13, Gold- 18. She also mentioned the various costs associated with membership: Gold \$250, Silver \$100, Family \$25, Individual \$15, and Organizations \$50

Sr. Volunteer Patrol – Jim Woodford was in attendance. He had no statistical report.

Trails: Mike Kukuchek. Mark was not available.

Open Forum:

Tony reported that the Grant money from the county is being monitored and should be received shortly. Tony also talked about the possibility that the SVCA may have to request a time extension from the County to spend the Grant money.

Mike Clowers announced that the Bonita Vista Water Polo team had won the Division 3 championship and asked Andrew to obtain County congratulatory certificates to present to team members.

Sweetwater Valley Civic Association

List of Concerns for discussion with candidates for the Office of San Diego Sheriff

1. If you are elected Sheriff of San Diego County, how will you address our specific community safety issues related to living in an unincorporated area located in the middle of a large metropolis?
 - a) The only places we see a Deputy's car in Bonita are at Donny's Café and the Safety Center. Their visual presence is almost non-existent.
 - b) Our traffic issues are significant with Chula Vista through-traffic from the south and east and San Diego/National City traffic cutting through Bonita from the north. Bonita is a "free zone" with no consequences for traffic violations and unsafe driving.
 - c) The Bonita Safety Center is an important community asset, but it is closed. The door is locked even when Sheriff's vehicle(s) are parked outside.
2. We value our Sr. Volunteer Patrol, but we are seeing a downward trend in recruitment and retention. The location of the current training venue in Poway for 10 days on heavy traffic commute days (Monday-Friday) is a major deterrent for retired people. We try to avoid going anywhere during busy commute times. Would you consider rotating this training program between the Poway and the Rancho San Diego Substations?
3. Littering is against the law. How can the Sheriff's Dept. help to deter illegal dumping such as we see along Proctor Valley Rd (in the County area), Quarry Rd, Morrison Pond, and a few other places?
4. How can the Sheriff's Dept and the CHP communicate and cooperate to provide more continuous traffic control oversight? For example, during the busiest commute times in Bonita the CHP staff is busy on the freeways. The CHP officer can only spend mid-day patrolling in

Bonita one or two days/week and never on weekends. Can the Sheriff Deputies be covering the traffic violation hot spots during those times? We are desperate to provide safe school crossings for students both in the morning and the afternoon. We almost had a child and parent hit by a driver who did not stop for the red-light school crossing on Sweetwater Road at Valley Vista Elementary School. We have the same issue on San Miguel Road for the Sunnyside Elementary School students.

5. Would you consider establishing a Traffic Division within the Sheriff's Department?
6. Do you have a vision for the best way the Sheriff's Dept. can play a role in the on-going homeless issues plaguing our community? (Panhandling, littering, illegal camping etc.)

The meeting was adjourned at 8:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Anthony P. Tieber
Secretary, SVCA

Mission Statement: The Sweetwater Valley Civic Association is the direct conduit to local County elected and appointed officials, law enforcement and emergency first responders to discuss and resolve issues related directly to our quality of life within the Sweetwater Valley communities.