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P.O. Box 232, Bonita, CA 91908 www.sweetwatervalleyca.org



SWEETWATER VALLEY CIVIC ASSOCIATION MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING April 6, 2022

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at approximately 6:32 p.m. by Vice President Sharmane Estolano at the Library Community room. She welcomed everyone to the meeting. We began with the Pledge of Allegiance. Sharmane 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: Steve Stonehouse, Tony Tieber, Sharmane Estolano, and Mike Clowers.

Members Present: Prudence Prince, Daryl Hern, Mark Kukuchek, Tom Pocklington, Harriet Taylor

Guests Present: Amanda Angulo from Council member John McCann's office, Sheriff Candidate Dave Myers, Crime Prevention Specialist Julio Garcia, Other guests present were David Corcoran, Mary Pittman, Savannah Sturges

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Sharmane asked for a motion to approve minutes. Stephen Stonehouse moved to approve; Tony Tieber provided the second. Minutes approved as amended.

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

	<u>April</u>
Checking	\$ 170.83
Grant Received	\$ 9,928.00
Certificate of Deposit	\$ 2,464.58
Ending Balance	\$12,563.41

There were expenses for a Web Services, supplies, web fees, and the Kiwanis fee for posting the SVCA emblem. Besides the grant, other income was from dues paid to the SVCA.

Stephen talked about a changed needed to some *IRS* document(s). Apparently the SVCA is listed as a 501C3 when it should be a 501C4.

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

- Crews are continuing to work on the palm trees along the Bonita and Sweetwater corridors.
- We hosted a Firehouse Dinner that was part of a community group fund raiser

- Very bad head-on car accident between two vehicles on Sweetwater Road occurred Saturday March 26th. All four occupants were transported to the trauma centers for serious injuries.
- We will be purchasing a new state of the art Medical Defibrillator with American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds within the next couple months.

Law Enforcement Reports:

CHP, Officer Salvador Castro: Not present

Sheriff Dept. Crime Prevention Specialist, Julio Garcia: Thefts from cars is a serious problem in Bonita. Julio recommends that people should never leave belongings in plain sight and remove them whenever possible. Julio also told us that catalytic converter theft is not a problem in Bonita but still is a problem in North and East County. He told us the Sheriff's Dept is working with car dealers to eliminate the theft of converters. He further stated that bicycle theft is a problem, and most thefts occur when there are homeless people in the area. The Sheriff and San Diego County are working together to solve the homeless crisis by offering housing and county services to these homeless people.

Sharmane Estolano asked about neighborhood watch programs, and Julio replied that he would be happy to help set one up in any area of the County. Julio reminded us that the Sheriff can only investigate crimes if they are reported. Calls to the Sheriff can be confidential. He continued by saying that people converse about crimes on social media, but they never file a report.

Meeting attendees discussed the crime report presented by Julio especially in the areas of Briarwood and Robinwood. Again, Julio reiterated, report the crimes to the Sheriff. See the attached crime report.

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

Amanda reported that both she and Councilmember McCann want to wish everyone a Happy upcoming Easter and Passover.

She reported that while, she had discussed this in previous meetings, she wanted to reiterate that the Councilmember led efforts to stop the worker interruption and have Republic Services resume operations. He assisted in negotiating a credit on bills for Chula Vista customers and has been successful in doing so. However, there are a few people who have yet to receive those credits. If you know anyone who happens to be in this position, please reach out to Councilmember McCann's office with all your contact information, and bill to escalate the refund.

Amanda further reported, on the political side, that Republic Services signed a contract with the City of Chula Vista in 2013, a year prior to Councilmember McCann joining the Council, and the contract will be over in 2024. These past months provided several lessons learned from the

work stoppage, so the Councilmember wishes to correct these contract issues through a transparent selection process as mayor of Chula Vista in 2024.

Councilmember McCann has been putting his Master's degree into use by implementing a plan to eliminate the City's \$350 million pension obligation debt. His efforts were unanimously approved, which has resulted in saving the City of Chula Vista \$14 million a year.

Councilmember McCann helped create the Enterprise Fund, which allows the revenue generated by the Golf Course to be reinvested back into the Golf Course.

Since Councilmember McCann grew up in Bonita and attended Bonita Vista Middle and Bonita Vista High School, he continues to be an advocate for preserving the quality of life in Bonita. His accomplishments for Bonita have been mostly in Rohr Park. He spearheaded the resurfacing of the basketball courts, added the dog park, and upgraded the play equipment for the children. Councilmember McCann will continue to protect Rohr Park's amenities, including generating a General Plan for the park. He wants Bonita residents on the committee that generates the general plan.

Lastly, this Saturday, April 9th, Chula Vista will be hosting the South Bay Earth Day at Memorial Park from 11 am to 4 pm. It's a free event in which they will have several activities, products, and services.

Tony asked Amanda to see if the Parks department could view the soccer field lines at Long Canyon Park. Tony was concerned that the end lines and side lines are within 3 feet of trees creating a dangerous situation for the players.

Andrew Harvey, Supervisor Nora Vargas Representative:

Andrew was unable to attend the meeting.

New Business. Guest Speaker. Dave Myers, Candidate for the Office of Sheriff, San Diego County. Sharmane introduced the guest speaker for this evening's meeting, San Diego County Sheriff candidate Dave Myers.

Candidate Dave Myers gave a shout out to Crime Specialist Julio Garcia whom he has known for a long time. He congratulated Julio on a job well done.

Candidate Myers reminded us that all eligible voters in San Diego County will get to vote for the new sheriff. He also reminded us that the Sheriff is responsible for the County jail system and highlighted that the San Diego County jails have the highest death rate of all jails in California. Candidate Myers postulated that San Diego County's funding for the Sheriff's Dept is inadequate since the dept is responsible for 4,500 employees and must protect 1.2 million people. He talked about the low morale among law enforcement, and that people don't trust law enforcement like they used to. As a result of these facts, response time by law enforcement is longer than it used to be, and people are frustrated with the situation. Dave referenced studies about policing but did not identify individual studies. He indicated the studies show that minorities are stopped more often than others and stated because of this, equity in policing is needed. Dave went into detail regarding responsibilities of the Sheriff's Dept. which includes staffing the courts, and handling evictions. There was an eviction moratorium during the Covid pandemic. None-the-less, he said the Sheriff's Dept Civil Division prioritized the eviction of certain people, and this action caused mistrust in the community. Candidate Dave Myers talked about the failure of leadership within the

San Diego County Sheriff's Department. This failure in leadership has led to low morale and low recruitment levels. The Sheriff's Dept must return to a situation where management is trusted. Dave cited examples of poor leadership. In the last two years, the Sheriff's Department has paid out \$100 million in wrongful death claims.

Dave further indicated the Sheriff is prioritizing the wrong solutions for situations that require a different approach. A good example is sending officers into situations for which they are not trained. Thus, people are going to jail when they should really be going to a hospital. Overtime is excessive because of the shortage of personnel. Mark Kukuchek asked Dave about the priorities Dave was referencing. The candidate replied that not everyone needs to be taken to jail such as people with mental health issues. Most are currently taken to jail and due to the shortage of mental health professionals, the mental health issues never get evaluated. For example, at the women's jail where a woman who was a human trafficking victim was taken and isolated and did not receive mental health help. Without going into details, Dave indicated this person died in the jail.

Dave wants to use a County of San Diego program that funds a mobile crisis response team as first responders in certain cases such as mental health issues. Sharmane Estolano asked the candidate to address issues other than jails where the people are apparently normal citizens or citizens who called the Sheriff with a problem that needs a law enforcement solution. In response to this he talked about reduced liability and reduced response time once the citizen calls the Sheriff's Dept. Dave also recommended additional funding so more deputies could be hired and overtime for existing deputies decreased. Dave Corcoran, a meeting attendee, posed the following question in response to a mental health procedure supported by Dave Myers: If the dispatcher makes a decision that the "call for service" is a mental health issue, but when the mental health team arrives the situation turns violent, what happens then? Dave responded that a lot of training is required before a mental health team is sent alone to an incident. Until that training is available, both a deputy and the mental health team have to respond to the incident. Tom Pocklington commented that jails have changed a lot in the last 30 years. Jailers used to work the streets before they became jailers, but not now. Tom suggested that the Marshall's Office should be part of the Sheriff's Department. Tom felt passionately that integrity must be fostered in the Sheriff's Dept. Dave said that the classification of Sheriff employees definitely needed to be reviewed. He also felt that training of Sheriff personnel was required to lesson citizen complaints. Back to Tom's statement, Dave also referenced the need to revisit the current supervisory authority for the medical staff. Dave also referenced the Community Oversight Board and felt that was the way forward. Dave reiterated that employee classifications and the salary scale needs to be revised. He felt this revision would help foster better morale.

Mike Clowers talked about traffic enforcement and that the CHP is understaffed and unable to provide traffic enforcement. Mike wanted to know if the Sheriff could enforce traffic laws. Dave indicated that the Sheriff could enforce traffic laws in the future and even write tickets to reduce auto accidents. Mike Clowers mentioned that he works with County on road certification and speed reduction, but no law enforcement is available to enforce the speed limits. The conversation ended with someone mentioning that the Sheriff used to enforce traffic laws. Harriet Taylor talked about State Route 125 and the excessive toll which causes the toll avoidance traffic coming through Bonita.

Tony Tieber asked Dave to state his position about cannabis, its use, and current regulations. Dave felt that legal cannabis reduces crime, but the current cost of legal cannabis is too expensive under existing regulations. Dave felt reducing taxes on the products would help eliminate illegal shops and provide safer access to the products for consumers. He also said he had no problem with on-site consumption of cannabis. With regard to on-site use, Dave said that if a person is

stopped, we should use County regulations; Unfortunately, in this County, regulations differ by community. Harriet Taylor talked about on-site consumption and how Bonita is surrounded by other communities, including cities, who do not appear to have resources to enforce cannabis regulations and laws. Consequently, every aspect of on-site consumption needs to be discussed including people consuming on the black-market sites. Dave responded that the County has a responsibility to enact enforceable regulations.

A meeting attendee asked the candidate about the current staffing in the Sheriff's Dept. Dave responded that he had no current statistics regarding staffing because he retired in 2018. He estimated the Dept was 285-300 deputies short. The attendee then asked Dave if elected, would he offer bonuses to hire more deputies since it appears that other communities are hiring the deputies because they can offer more attractive salaries. Dave responded that if elected, he intended to approach the Board of Supervisors to get more funding. Dave also said that retirement benefits are too low, and that also contributes to the retention problem. Dave continued to talk about benefits indicating this is an issue when it comes to hiring and retaining quality employees. He specifically mentioned medical benefits which don't continue after retirement.

A meeting attendee asked Dave to explain his wellness plan for the medical health of all deputies on the Force. Dave responded that the stigma of seeking mental health services needed to be lessened and hopefully eliminated. He also said the Sheriff's Department does not supply enough mental health services. Another meeting attendee gave a shout out to Dave when it came to mental health of the deputies. He said that Dave always checked on employees involved in critical health situations and that the current Sheriff is not attending to deputies with mental health issues. Dave thanked the SVCA for this invitation to meet and discuss such important issues.

Continuing Business: None

New Business: Sharmane Estolano reported about a call she and Harriet Taylor participated on with the County of San Diego. This call related to a transformative grant to be awarded. There were educational portions of this grant split between Spring Valley and Bonita. Apparently, there is money available to submit the grant application with the winning entry eligible for a large grant award. Sharmane reported that Supervisors Vargas and Fletcher will file the necessary paperwork for the grant. According to Sharmane, she represented the SVCA and Harriet represented the Sweetwater Community Planning Group on this call. Hopefully Sharmane can further update us at the next meeting.

Community Forum:

Due to time limitations, we did not conduct the usual community forum segment of the meeting.

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

Membership –Sharon Coleman was not available for the meeting but did file a membership report; that report follows:

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

Meeting was adjourned at 8:28 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.

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.)