

**CITY OF ALAMOGORDO, NEW MEXICO  
SPECIAL MEETING – COMMISSION AND SENIOR STAFF  
STRATEGIC PLANNING RETREAT  
7:30 A.M., FIRE STATION 5  
1492 S. Florida Ave.  
AUGUST 3, 2013**

**SUSIE GALEA, MAYOR  
JASON BALDWIN, COMMISSIONER  
NADIA SIKES, COMMISSIONER  
ROBERT RENTSCHLER, COMMISSIONER  
JOSH RARDIN, COMMISSIONER**

**AL HERNANDEZ, MAYOR PRO-TEM  
JIM TALBERT, COMMISSIONER  
JIM STAHLE, CITY MANAGER  
STEPHEN THIES, CITY ATTORNEY  
RENEE CANTIN, CITY CLERK**

**CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL**

Mayor Galea called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. Roll Call was taken by the City Clerk. Clerk Cantin announced there was a quorum present. Others in attendance were Hubert Quintana executive director of SNMEDD/COG, Finance Director Ken Johnson, City Engineer Jason Thomas, Public Works Director Brian Cesar, Fire Chief Mikel Ward, Police Chief Robert Duncan, Human Resource Director Katie Josselyn, Assistant City Manager Matt McNeile and Janessa Maxilom representing the Alamogordo Daily News.

Mayor Galea thanked everyone for coming. City Manager Stahle pointed out Mr. Hubert Quintana, the Executive Director of the SNMEDD/COG was present and would be very helpful. He noted today's goal was to have the Commission as a group identify the things they would like the City Staff to work on.

Mr. Quintana expressed Staff input is critical to this conversation. He would like to see everyone work as a team in order to benefit the City of Alamogordo. He said planning is very important and goals, whether realized or not, give you something to strive for. Strategic objectives must be accomplished first in order to get to your goal. He stated he wanted to begin with defining roles and responsibilities in order for all to understand their role in working with one another. Your reality may be one thing, but the perception of the community and those you work with is more important.

Mayor Galea felt her role as Mayor is to represent the Commission and the City of Alamogordo. She works to maintain professionalism at all times, and identify what makes the City tick. City Manager Stahle felt the role of the Mayor is also to be a liaison of the City Staff and Commissioners, especially to the City Manager. He asked the Commissioners to remember they are elected by the public and thus need to convey their concerns to the Staff.

Commissioner Sikes felt her primary responsibility was to follow what the community says. She felt it important to keep her ear to the ground, listen to the people and be a funnel to the Commission of their concerns.

Commissioner Rentschler told the story of a commissioner in the 1950's who helped broker the purchase of Bonito Lake. He was a visionary and Commissioner Rentschler felt we need to be concerned with long-range plans for the future of Alamogordo. We need to take care of the short-term and mid-range things, of course, but we need to make the world better by planning for the future. He said they need to pay attention to how we as a Commission, Staff and Community communicate.

Commissioner Rardin saw the Commission's role as a policy making body that works with the City Manager. All the Commission can do is communicate in a timely fashion with the City Manager who gets things done. He felt there had been too much Commission involvement in the City and felt City Manager Stahle should be the one to handle situations.

City Manager Stahle responded to this by saying you are the conduit for your constituents to the Staff and City Manager, and his role as City Manager is to ascertain if it is a policy issue. Those short term needs are what you are there for and we, as Staff, are not in the community as much as you are. You must feel comfortable coming to the City Manager and Staff, but keep in mind the perception the community may have of your actions. You need to be able to communicate to your constituents what we can and can't do.

Mayor Galea said when she goes to the City Manager's office, it is usually to get his opinion on an issue. She hoped everyone understood when she goes to the City Manager it is simply to keep him informed.

Commissioner Rardin continued his thoughts by saying all seven commissioners represented their own districts as well as the whole city, and we need to let the City Manager handle the problems.

Commissioner Talbert said we must filter what we are hearing from the public and decide what is important enough to take to the City Staff.

Commissioner Baldwin said when elected he was told his job was policy and direction. After hearing the thoughts today, he felt his job was to process and weigh information and be the best representative to the City of Alamogordo as he can.

Mr. Quintana explained that 1% of capital projects totaling \$100,000 or more has to be set aside for art in public places in order to improve the appearance of a city. The real difference in communities comes in the amenities a city offers. He also noted businesses ask about these amenities, and the spouses play a big part in the decision of whether to come to your community or not based on this.

Commissioner Baldwin said this is one of the few times we get to meet together in an informal setting and he wanted to know what City Staff thought the Commissioners role should be.

Mayor Pro Tem Hernandez agreed with Commissioner Baldwin but said we are run by a Charter that directs what we are/aren't supposed to do. That's all there is. Mayor Galea felt Staff perception was important and Mayor Pro Tem Hernandez agreed, but felt we are bound by the Charter.

Mr. Quintana said he did a retreat for the City of Artesia and heard the concerns and problems from both the Staff and Commission. He expressed it was critical to hear from the Staff since they are on the front line.

City Manager Stahle felt the primary role of a Commission is to develop and encourage agency relationships – military, county, state as well as community agencies such as churches and clubs. Staff is usually around longer than a commissioner so it is easier for them to have long-term relationships with agencies. There shouldn't be any friction between different jurisdictions and it is absolutely critical for you, as commissioners, to build on these relationships.

Mr. Quintana told them to use the SNMEDD because we work with and for you. You are not in this alone, and since we work with 26 jurisdictions we might be able to help with issues. He gave some examples of how SNMEDD had helped with issues in other communities.

Mayor Pro Tem Hernandez noted the lack of communication concerning issues such as the Plaza Pub and Juniper, and how there was information not given to the Commission prior to voting. We vote on the information we have, and we need to communicate with each other and the City Manager. Communication is the most important tool we have. Hubert Quintana told everyone communication has to go both ways; it has to be bottom-up as well as top-down. He used the recent fiasco with the State and Capital Outlay and the audit issue. It was all because of lack of communication and lack of guidelines from NMDFA. He reiterated communication is critical.

City Manager Stahle addressed Commissioner Baldwin's request for Staff input by asking any of the

City Staff present at this meeting for their input.

City Attorney Thies stated we have an approximate \$45 million dollar operation here and part of our responsibility is to keep the operation going. Secondly, the commission sets policy and it is our responsibility that policy is carried out. That's our job.

City Manager Stahle said the \$45 million is the amount of revenue we received on an annual basis, while our budget is \$70 million dollars. Commissioner Rentschler said it is encumbered versus unencumbered, and it's the perception we give to the Staff, the unions/non-unions and the community. We have to be very careful that it doesn't go out unqualified.

City Manager Stahle said the City Attorney said we have to follow the policy set for us, and that's how it is. The Commission can change policy, and it is the role of all of us to tell you if we think a policy must be changed. It is the Staff's responsibility to chime in when needed.

Finance Director Johnson noted the City Mission Statement is posted in the finance offices and that is what will be followed until changed.

Commissioner Baldwin thanked him about bringing up the Mission Statement. It states we will provide the best possible service to our customers, the citizens of Alamogordo. That needs to be the sole guide to everything we do. Commissioner Rardin noted it was written in March of 1995 and maybe we should look at it. Mr. Quintana said we will get to that today and it should be revised.

Mr. Quintana said we need to speak about the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) that all of you see in your day to day business of running the City, whether you are a commissioner or one of the staff. We don't want to get into any debates, but please speak up and I'll write it all down. We won't get into priority strategic steps, but instead the goals and objectives and how they will be achieved.

**The following were listed as Strengths:**

Staff, Customer Service, Financial Stability, Location, HAFB, Volunteers, Educated residents, Safe Community, Recreation, Weather, Water & Water Rights, Size, Not a divided city – one community, Availability of jobs, Diverse & Multi- Agency Law Enforcement, Good Infrastructure base for Fire Fighting, Good Quality of Life, Good Vision, Organizational Capacity, Willing to Invest in Public Works & Infrastructure, Political Leadership, Unique Political representation – Number of State & Local representatives from our area, Communication through various medias and the genuine desire to see improvement, sincerity and dedication of staff.

**The following were listed as Weaknesses:**

Communication, National Economy (especially DoD), Lack of Economic Development, Overall Vision, Lack of Jobs, Lack of available Labor Force, Retirees – fixed incomes, Leave me Alone Mentality, Change of Culture, Cleanliness, Lack of follow through – dropping the ball, Lack of Vocational Classes at the High School, Lack of Amenities such as Recreation and Retail, Lack of Intergovernmental Relationships, High Taxes & Hold Harmless, the Way the City has estimated Capital Projects, Lack of Long Term Planning, We want a Ferrari & can afford a junk vehicle, No Strategic Plan to continue down the Same Road, Lack of Community buy-in, Employee Moral is Low, Turnover is High, Employee incentives, Infrastructure, Municipal Mentality – doing Minimal Work to get a Paycheck, Employee Outlook, Lack of Work Ethic in the General Work force and the "Good Old Boy" mentality.

**The following were listed as Opportunities:**

Revitalization, Economic Growth, Airport Service – Regional Jet service, Spaceport, German Air Force, HAFB missions and Growth of RPA's, Modernized IT internal systems, Online Services to Customers, Grants, Generational Training to Understand what each wants & how to get the best out of each Generation, Film Industry, Community Recognition & Rebranding, Community/Staff recognition.

**The following were listed as Threats:**

BRAC (threat of losing HAFB), Encroachment to Air space for military and area, Special Interest Groups, Minority interest, Lack of Continuity (employees ready to retire), City Infrastructure, Environmental, Economic, Drugs, Water, Lack of Trained Work Force, Hold Harmless, Sense of Security (not locking doors, etc.) is a threat, Property Upkeep, Investment in Fire & EMS response services - EMS is separate from City services, Regulation & Legislation and Other Agency relationships.

**The meeting broke at 10:10 a.m. and reconvened at 10:22 a.m.**

Hubert Quintana showed a PowerPoint presentation. He stated strategic planning is process oriented and not just product oriented. It is ongoing and helps you set an organizational strategy. Commission participation is a must and there is always a group or person who tries to stop programs. You have to have strong resolve to follow through, but you must be flexible and listen to all sides. He addressed the staff telling them try not to talk in 'plan speak' because not everyone understands. Be aware of community demographics and economic patterns and how they tie into the plan. Don't dwell on what you cannot change, and don't choose uninspiring goals. Commissioner Rentschler said not to set soft goals. Mr. Quintana next said not to expect government funds or other monies that you probably won't get. If you are going to do ICIP projects, you need to have a whole financial menu of opportunities and ideas of how they will be accomplished. Planning is a cycle and first you must know your mission, goals and values. Then you set your strategic objectives, your priorities, performance evaluation, and plan to plan. Commissioner Rentschler asked who creates the planning cycle, and Mr. Quintana said both Staff and Commission work on this. You need to decide where Alamogordo will be in five years.

He next addressed the COA Mission Statement which Commissioner Baldwin read:

*The City of Alamogordo is a Municipal Corporation that exists solely for the purpose of providing the best possible services to our customers, the citizens of Alamogordo. We are committed to providing these services with honesty, integrity, compassion, fairness, and a commitment to excellence.*

*We are committed to the long-term financial stability and responsible growth of the City and all decisions will be driven by our commitment to provide the best services possible in a financially sound and responsible manner given the economic realities facing the City.*

Mr. Quintana said your Mission Statement should be an elevator speech. If you're in the elevator with someone from out of town and he asks you what the Mission Statement of Alamogordo is, it should be concise enough to state in that length of time, and the person you are talking to should have a fairly good idea about Alamogordo when you are done. It should explain what you are doing and where you are going in a concise manner. What is your vision for Alamogordo for the next five years?

Commissioner Baldwin said he would like to see a mission statement that explains our day-to-day operations and a vision statement that explains where we want to be in five years. Mayor Galea wanted to see a Vision more specific.

**Those ideas listed to include in a Vision Statement:**

Quality of Life, Population growth to 50,000, Industry, Become a Destination, Infrastructure, Be an economically viable destination for business and retirement, the Number One Place to live in NM, Project Confidence as a Community, Become Regionally connected, Be Able to Fly out of the Alamogordo airport.

Mr. Quintana explained where the 50,000 number came from. It was developed by businesses looking to locate in a town. That number was used by the Census Bureau to define a small metropolitan area, and when a community gets to 50,000 it seems to grow on its own.

**Vision Statements were tossed out at this point, such as:**

Alamogordo will be an attractive, economically viable, recreational destination for all of the Southwest. Alamogordo will be a destination that all residents, industries and visitors will enjoy in NM, Tourism was discussed and the need for a stable industry, Residents are our primary function, To provide the best possible quality of life to our residents while attracting industry, Cleaning up the community, Provide the best quality of life for all, Safe, Clean, Productive destination serving as a gateway to education, culture, recreation and commerce.

City Manager Stahle said we will play with all of these and bring something back.

**Goal Statement ideas - A broad statement that will make you stretch and may not be completely accomplished:** (Mr. Quintana said these steps will be very critical so consider them carefully.)

Attain population of 50,000, Regional Water Plan, Expand Economic Development Opportunities, Customer Service Improvements, Stabilize Water Resources, Beautify Alamogordo, Prioritize Opportunities, Update Master Plan, Improve or Increase medical facilities, Improve Quality of Life, Improve Communication, Cut Taxes, More Community Events, Convention Center, Revitalize Downtown (city core), Air Force Museum, Cultural Arts Center, Expand Child Care opportunities, Enhance Traffic flow, Improve Public transportation, Reduce redundancy of Services (duplication), Use more Contract Services, Street improvements, Complete Drainage plan, improve Staff Education and Training, Improve reuse system, Coordinate volunteer efforts, Recognize volunteers, Improve relations with County, Improve housing opportunities, Create a promotable Brand, Incentives for economic growth, A Clean Rec. Center.

**Mr. Quintana asked for a short break while he compiled all this information at 11:28 a.m. The meeting reconvened at 11:34 a.m.**

Each Commissioner had five dots which they used to vote for priority of Goals.

**Everyone voted on each of the above and came up with the following:**

Expanding Economic Development Opportunities	6 votes
Improve Quality of Life	4 votes
Convention Center	3 votes
Beautify Alamogordo	3 votes
Stabilize Water resources	3 votes
Customer service improvements	2 votes
Regional Water Plan	2 votes
Reach population of 50,000	2 votes
Update Master Plan	1 vote
Cut taxes	1 vote
Revitalize downtown (city core)	1 vote
Strategically enhance traffic flow	1 vote
Reduce redundancy of services (duplication)	1 vote
Complete drainage plan	1 vote
Improve Staff education and training	1 vote
Improve Housing opportunities	1 vote
Incentives for economic growth	1 vote
Improve communication	1 vote

City Manager Stahle noted all these were important, but we will compile a report of the amount each received. Each idea that received four (4) votes or more will become principal priorities for the Staff. Next grouping of three (3) dots will be the next priority down. He asked for suggestions for each of these to guide Staff.

**Suggestions to Improve Economic Development were:**

The need to know how to utilize funds we have to bring about economic development.  
We need to get OCEDC to work with us and along side other agencies that do the same thing.  
We need to define economic development.  
Target infrastructure that would enhance economic opportunities.  
Take a look at zoning, and also look at our transportation plan.  
Expand the Small Business Association Hub Zone.  
Plan to help streamline City Staff policy for economic development.  
Create a full-time position for economic development.  
Streamline the City's roles and processes for economic development.  
Move Film Office from OCEDC and bring it in-house.  
Stabilize/Enhance/Improve DoD operations in our Region.

**Suggestions to Improve Quality of Life were:**

Market Alamogordo  
Recruitment  
Identify Quality of Life items in our region  
Research/survey the community to find out what people want – check with the newspaper about the survey they did.  
Define Quality of Life  
Beautification of City  
Improve the city facilities and infrastructure

**The meeting broke for lunch at 12:00 and reconvened at 12:30.**

Hubert Quintana told everyone we have a good sketch of what you want to do. He wanted everyone's ideas before wrapping up the meeting, and told City Manager Stahle he would compile all this information in a report that he would return to him in about two weeks. He said he could come back in the future to help out in any way.

Commissioner Rardin noted that 'improved communications with the County' only had one dot, but knew it was brought up more than once. He would like this addressed.

Commissioner Rentschler said streets/traffic concerns were important to the City of Alamogordo.

Mayor Galea hoped we would communicate and work together and she included the Staff in this. She voiced the concern the Commission needed to be civil when talking about each other.

Mr. Quintana agreed and said it would be good to sit down with Staff, and to get together like this again at least once a year. Have Staff report back to you in six months so you get an idea of what is happening. Keep reviewing your plan and don't let it collect dust or become irrelevant.

City Manager Stahle said we need to have one of these every year and certainly after each election when the dynamics will change. You will have updates regularly, and the Commission will see budget adjustments and recommendations concerning all we talked about today. Economic Development and Quality of Life are the two big goals and we will start focusing in on these things.

Mr. Quintana pointed out some information in their books that talked about focus, strong management, investments, regional cooperation, political will, patience and persistence. He said you can change the face of your community if you do this.

Mayor Pro Tem Hernandez noted that the City changes some commissioners after each election so how do you maintain that patience and persistence with the Staff. Mr. Quintana suggested having a session like this after each election.

Commissioner Rardin said numerous projects are started but not completed because of changes in staff. He hoped we would keep things going now that we have a permanent City Manager. Mr. Quintana said that is where your plan comes in.

The City Manager said not to be bashful about bringing up new ideas in the future. He was willing to talk at any time, and hoped the City would be run more smoothly from now on. We have a lot of dedicated, hard working staff and he hoped each commissioner would get that point across to the community and be proud of what all we do.

Mr. Quintana mentioned the Mayor's Summit in Alamogordo a year ago and he told them the Mayor's Summit program had been named as an award winning program.

**The meeting was adjourned at 12:51 p.m.**



ATTEST:

  
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City Clerk Renee Cantin

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor Susie Galea

*(Prepared by Nancy Jacobs, Deputy Clerk)  
Approved at the Regular Meeting held on August 26, 2013.*