



City Council Agenda Item

City Council Meeting Date: September 17, 2019

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

FROM: James Throop, City Manager
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SUBJECT: Adoption of Resolution No. 6283(19) to Close City Hall and Suspend Certain Field Operations on December 23, 26, and 27, 2019

Recommendation:

Staff recommends the City Council adopt Resolution No. 6283(19) permitting the closing of City Hall, Library (including Vandenberg Village [VV]), and suspending certain City field operations on December 23, 26, and 27, 2019 (attached). December 24 and 25 are City holidays, and City offices will be closed.

Background:

The City observes eleven holidays each year, including Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. This year Christmas Eve is on a Tuesday and Christmas Day is on a Wednesday. Therefore, City Hall is scheduled to be closed on Tuesday, December 24, and Wednesday, December 25, in observance of the Christmas holidays. Likewise, many other employees engaged in "non-24/7" field operations will observe those holidays as well.

Staff is recommending, in addition to the two holidays that week, City Council approve the closure of City Hall and Library (including VV), on December 23, 26, and 27. Likewise, Staff recommends the suspension of certain field operations on December 23, 26, and 27.

Discussion:

As one of several strategies to balance the Biennial Budget Fiscal Years 2019-21 (Budget), the City Council approved the concept of encouraging voluntary furloughs among employees in certain situations where workforce hours could be reduced without significant impact on service levels. Because City Hall and the Library (including VV) are scheduled to be closed December 24-25, and January 1 and low customer traffic volume is expected December 23-27, staff is recommending City Hall and the Library (and other "non-24/7" field operations) be closed and operations suspended.

At a minimum, a reduction of operating costs will be experienced as a result of the closure. In addition, if any employees do opt to take voluntary furlough (time off without pay), then some labor costs will be avoided. Even if no employees take voluntary furlough time and instead use paid leave for the December 23, 26-27, period, there will be an eventual savings to the City due to a reduction in leave balances. Employees opting for voluntary furlough will not experience a reduction in accrual of benefits.

Many operations in the City will not be impacted by this measure; 24/7 operations such as police, fire, water treatment, and wastewater treatment will remain on full normal scheduling. Solid Waste collections and landfill operations will continue as normal. Public Transportation (COLT) will operate on a normal schedule to meet the needs of the ridership. Parks with gates will have those gates open and closed by park hosts as normal. The Aquatic Center was already scheduled to close (as it normally does during this time) for annual maintenance. The Dick DeWees Community and Senior Center and Anderson Recreational Center will open for scheduled programs and rentals only with minimal staffing. Certain functions inside City Hall, including payroll, finance, and treasury will operate with minimal staffing. Payments received via mail and the drop box will be processed and bank deposits made. Certain field operations (Streets, Urban Forestry, etc.) will work on standby schedules, as they normally do on holidays and weekends.

Miscellaneous support services (Information Technology, Facilities, Fleet, Human Resources, etc.) may also be staffed as needed. Planning and Building services would be staffed according to customer needs, but again, with the understanding City Hall and the associated counters, as well as the Library, will be closed. For instance, if a construction or development project is at a critical stage or needs a final inspection that particular week, then staff will work to coordinate with those customers who contact them in advance, rather than have their project held up due to the closure.

This concept is not unique to Lompoc; many other cities, including cities larger in size, will be closing their city hall and “non-24/7” field operations for the same entire week. The City also did something similar last year.

For this closure to be successful, several steps must be taken in advance and during that week, including:

- Management staff will conduct Meet-and-Confer with the impacted labor association (IBEW);
- Advance notice will be provided to the public through a variety of means, including lobby postings, website announcements, utility bill messages, social media broadcasts, and traditional media releases;
- Customary utility account shutoffs occur every week for customers with unpaid and delinquent charges. The cutoff process for the week of December 23-27 will be delayed to the following business week.

Minor variations in the plans listed above and scheduling of employees ultimately remains with the City Manager to make alternate decisions as the needs arise.

Fiscal Impact:

The closure itself and cessation of operations for the three business days, December 23, 26, and 27, will yield an overall estimated savings in the thousands of dollars. Additional labor cost savings will depend on how many employees, if any, opt for voluntary furlough time. Savings due to the closure will be realized in many, if not all, program areas of the City government, including, but not limited to, the General Fund. Budgetary savings are anticipated for the General Fund as one of several cost saving options employed to attempt to balance the Budget.

Conclusion:

Resolution No. 6283(19) will enable the closure of City Hall, Library (including VV), and suspension of certain field operations December 23, 26, and 27, 2019. Employees taking time off during that period will either use their accumulated vacation and/or holiday leave during that period, or if they opt to, employees may take voluntary furlough (unpaid time off) without otherwise impacting their benefit accumulation.

Respectfully submitted,

James Throop, City Manager

Attachment: Resolution No. 6283(19)