

Rosamond Municipal Advisory Council



Minutes of Meeting – March 18, 2021

1. **Meeting was called to order at 7:11 pm.** This is the sixth regular meeting after the transition to a Zoom virtual meeting platform. There were 21 people in attendance.
2. **Flag Salute:**
3. **Roll call of the Directors and Attendance:** Directors Bill Parkman, Brennan Riley, Donna Morris, Lisa Sanchez, and Tim Blakeley were in attendance. Director Dennis Shoffner checked in after the meeting commenced.
4. **Adopt Agenda:** A motion was made by Tim Blakeley to adopt the agenda and seconded by Brennan Riley. Vote was unanimous.
5. **Approve Minutes:** The Minutes for the February 18, 2021 meeting were approved on motion by Lisa Sanchez and seconded by Tim Blakeley. Vote was unanimous.
6. **Guest Speaker(s):** Kern County District Attorney Cynthia Zimmer. DA Zimmer thanked the Council for the invitation to speak at the monthly meeting. She added that with the coronavirus in play that she has not had an opportunity to do much visiting in the eastern part of the county. She continued by noting that she had been a prosecutor for the Kern County District Attorney's office for 36 years. She ran in the 2018 election for the position of District Attorney and has served in that capacity now for two years. DA Zimmer noted that she is halfway through her term and that she believes that have had some successes and challenges during that timeframe as things have changed in the world as it relates to public safety. She added that she had some priorities when she came into office, the first being to reduce violent crime. In 2019, they formulated a newly formed homicide unit at the DA's office which lead to the prosecution of more homicides than ever before and achieving more murder convictions than the County had ever achieved before. This led to the number of homicides going down in the County in 2019. She noted that the majority of murders are committed by recidivists (gang members). The County was very happy with this new trend. Kern County has the dubious distinction of having the highest homicide rate, per capita, in the State of California which in 2018 was 11.1 homicides per 100,000. That is very high and higher than Los Angeles County. DA Zimmer said the numbers bear out their successes with the homicide rate dropping significantly until the coronavirus pandemic hit. In 2020, the pandemic has had a really negative effect on public safety in so many ways and so many reasons the amount of crime. Some of the reasons include kids not being in school, the Governor effecting the early release of 30,000 inmates. Law enforcement personnel being hit with COVID-19 and agencies were not able to keep up with the burgeoning crime. For example, in Rosamond in 2018 had 2 homicides and 0 homicides in 2019, then in 2020 there were 4 homicides and, so far, in 2021 after two months, Rosamond has already had 2 homicides. It is a concern but we are going to continue concentrate on violent crime. Specifically, violent crime meaning homicide and sex crimes. We have been able to do a lot because we have aggressive prosecutors and progressive-based use of crime labs. As a result, we have gotten difficult convictions in several major cases. DA Zimmer noted that she had gotten a conviction in 2019 on a 2001 cold case homicide of a woman at McDonald's in Rosamond by two LA gang members. We have a few other Rosamond high-profile cases currently pending in court. One is the Bennett case that happened in January 7, 2021 where there was a kidnapping. The Danielle Yen case that happened in October of 2020. It was a murder case in Rosamond and was solved through the use of doorbell camera video. The use of technology and videotaping is helping us to solve crimes. The Perez case we got a First Degree murder conviction in the case of Kyle Ramirez and the defendant was sentenced to 25 years to life. We did have one unsuccessful prosecution in Rosamond that resulted in the acquittal of Lila Rosema in 2020 who was accused of murdering her husband. It was an interesting case with a lot of twists and turns. DA Zimmer also advised that they had stood up a group for "Crimes against Peace Officers". It is the first unit of its kind. She added that when she took office, she made a commitment to boost up staffing in the regional courts including Mojave and Ridgecrest. She is proud to note its accomplishment and that it has led to better results. She added that they are sending highly qualified prosecutors out to the east county. She mentioned Craig Kohler who has 30 years of experience and is now working the regional court in Mojave for the DA. DA Zimmer mentioned that she puts in a lot of effort to inform the public of the work that is being done by her office on behalf of the public and does a lot of interviews. She added they use Facebook and other social media platforms to bring attention to the work being done by the District Attorney's Office. We have also brought onboard a Public Information Officer because they are committed to transparency. A lot of people do not know what the District Attorney does, most folks think we are only defense attorneys to get people out/off. She noted that the DA's Office is an advocate for victims and their motivation is to get justice for them and the community. We are also involved in the "Use of Force" review and we have had 14 "Use of Force" meetings when law enforcement officers shoot or uses force against someone that results in injury or death. That has been an issue of great debate in recent years and also is what probably caused the loss of the DA's job in Los Angeles County. DA Zimmer advised that she was also going to talk about the recent change in the District Attorney in Los Angeles County and what it means to residents of Rosamond. We also had a few challenges ahead of us but not many of these relate to Rosamond. The "Summer of Civil Unrest" that followed the death of George Floyd that started back in May or June of 2020. The rise of such groups as "Black Lives Matter". There were 51 prosecutions that arose out of activities by Black Lives Matter in the Tehachapi area that continued into the time of the November election. A lot of conflict between groups, a lot of attacks on police officers,
7. **Community Leader Reports:**
 - A. Kern County Sheriff's Office: Lt Kraft attended on behalf of the Sheriff's Office (Rosamond Substation). He started his presentation by noting that at the meeting last month there seemed to be a great deal of interest in what is happening with the Cannabis Shops and that he did not have much to share at that session. He advised that he had mis-spoken about Code Enforcement's role. So, tonight, he recapped that last year that the Special Investigations Division and the Sheriff's Office had visited 9 shops and closed them. He added they had planned to raid a few this month because several of the shops had reopened. He noted that the "Department of Taxes and Fees, a California State Agency, accompanied by the California Highway Patrol, were supposed to be raiding a few shops either yesterday or earlier today but that they had not gotten back to him. Lt Kraft advised that they (DOTF) would be doing a "till tap" wherein they seize the money in the

Rosamond Municipal Advisory Council - Minutes for March 18, 2021 Meeting

register and all money that comes in during that day of business. The pot shops are still on the radar but the Sheriff's Office is not getting to these businesses as often as they would like but they do have plans to make their presence known. He asked if there were any questions and Chairman Parkman responded that Director Donna Morris was the lead questioner on the Cannabis Shops but she has been excused from the meeting this evening. He added that he and Laura Wyatt would bring Donna up to speed on Lt Kraft's reporting. Jack Miller asked for a clarification on the money seizure and Lt Kraft clarified that it was the money and their merchandise. He added that the DOTF procedures differ from the methods used by the Sheriff's Office.

B. California Highway Patrol: No representative in attendance.

C. Assemblyman Tom Lackey: Brandon Roque advised that they were not able to attend due to legislative matters.

D. Kern County Supervisor's representative: Laura Lynn Wyatt

E. Rosamond Community Services District: No representative in attendance.

F. Rosamond Chamber of Commerce: Jack Miller advised

G. Southern Kern Unified School District: Superintendent Barbara Gaines attended on behalf of the School District. She provided

H. Antelope Valley Citizens for Responsible Use of Water: Randy Scott provided this month's update.

I. Edwards Air Force Base (EAFB):

J. Others – Chairman Parkman asked

8. Rosamond Municipal Advisory Council – Fifteenth Anniversary – March 7, 2021.

A. Foundation and History of the Rosamond Municipal Advisory Council – Chairman Parkman

B. Recognition Award for Dedicated Service for Mr. Dennis Shoffner – Kern County District-2 Supervisor – Zack Scrivner

9. Public Comment Period: None.

10. Business Meeting - Old Business – New Business – In recognition of the Fifteenth Anniversary of the Rosamond Municipal Advisory Council (RMAC), the Chair requested that the Council give consideration to skipping the balance of the Agenda and adjourning the meeting. If the majority of the Council approves, he would move to adjourn the meeting upon completion of the vote. The motion was offered by _____ and seconded by _____. The meeting was adjourned at 8:59

11. Adjournment: A motion to adjourn was made by Lisa Sanchez and seconded by Dennis Shoffner. The vote to adjourn was unanimous. The meeting adjourned at 8:51 p.m.

Reminder: The next RMAC meeting will be held on April 15, 2021 on Zoom at 7:00 p.m.

California Government Code, Section 31010: The Board of Supervisors of any county may by resolution establish and provide funds for the operation of a municipal advisory council for any unincorporated area in the county to advise the board on such matters which relate to that area as may be designated by the board concerning services which are or may be provided to the area by the county or other local governmental agencies, including but not limited to advice on matters of public health, safety, welfare, public works, and planning. Unless the board of supervisors specifically provides to the contrary, a municipal advisory council may represent the community to any state, county, city, special district or school district, agency or commission, or any other organization on any matter concerning the community. The board may pay from available funds such actual and necessary expenses of travel, lodging, and meals for the members of the council while on such official business as may be approved by the board.