

**Pomona City Council**  
League of Women Voters of the Claremont Area Observer Report  
By Observer Jennifer Stark  
May 24, 2018

**Purpose of the agency:**

The City Council serves a vital role in the democratic process: the Council conducts regular meetings where the laws, policies, and basic program decisions are made for governing Pomona. The City Council provides the staff with goals and directions that are implemented on a day-to-day basis by employees and City Officials.

Meetings are held the first and third Mondays of the month; there are also some special meetings held (usually to make up for Monday holidays).

Meetings begin promptly at 7:00PM in the City Council Chambers; closed-session meetings are at 5:30PM.

Residents are encouraged to attend meetings and public comment is facilitated. Agendas are available to the public Thursday afternoon prior to the meetings. The agendas are emailed to the Observer on the Thursday before the meeting. Meetings have a Spanish-speaking translator available for citizens wishing to make their public comments in Spanish.

I was able to observe 20 meetings. It is not unusual for a meeting to go past 11:00PM.

The mayor is exceptionally courteous and most of the Councilmembers are usually courteous. Most Councilmembers are well prepared and passionate about representing their districts and their constituents. The meetings are always well attended by a diverse and interested citizenry. There are several citizens who speak regularly, advocating for issues specific to a variety of communities. I feel fortunate to have served as the League's Observer for the Pomona City Council this year. Not only was this an opportunity to observe the democratic process, it was also a pleasure to observe the spirit and tenacity of a city that is poised to revitalize. As an observer, I was inspired by the service-based leadership and the dedicated, willing commitment of the community.

**Current Pomona City Council Members:**

**Mayor Tim Sandoval** (elected in 2016)

Attended Pomona public schools: Montvue Elementary, Emerson Middle School, and Pomona High School before finishing his education at University of California, Riverside. Before running for mayor, Tim Sandoval was active in the community. He led Pomona Valley Community Development Center's youth programs, then taught English at a nearby school. In 2001 he became a founding member of Bright Prospects, a mentoring organization that has helped more than two thousand low-income youth become part of the first generation of their family to complete their bachelor's degrees. Many of these young people come back to Pomona and give back to their communities.

**District 1 Council member Rubio R Gonzalez** (elected 2016)

Rubio Ramiro Gonzalez was born in Fullerton, CA but raised in Pomona, CA. His grandparents came from Zacatecas and Jalisco, Mexico, to this country as part of the WWII “Bracero” Program. His family raised him in a farm worker/factory worker household with an emphasis on higher education. He has been a Pomona resident for over 35 years and is a proud alumnus of the Pomona Unified School District, having attended Kellogg Elementary and graduated from Ganesh High. He has multiple degrees, earning a Bachelor’s in English from Cal Poly Pomona and a Master’s in Anthropology from Cal State Fullerton. He is finishing up both the Teacher Credential program and a Master’s in Education at the University of La Verne. He began his career as an educator with the Pomona Unified School District where he continues to work. Rubio Gonzalez has been active in the community and has been a generous volunteer.

**District 2 Council Member Adriana Robledo** (appointed in 2013)

Adriana Robledo is a lifelong resident of the City of Pomona. Currently, Ms Robledo works for Kaiser Permanente, assisting members with their benefits and enrollment in the Affordable Care Act. As part of her continued community involvement, she has participated in reviving and improving the Miss Pomona Scholarship Program and assists in organizing the annual Pomona Christmas Parade, as well as helping with other community activities and organizations.

Councilwoman Robledo is a graduate of Cal State Fullerton having earned degrees in political science and in Chicano studies. She also obtained a certificate to teach English as a Second Language from UCLA Extension.

**District 3 Council Member Cristina Carrizosa** (elected 1993-2002 & 2006-current)

Cristina Carrizosa was born in Tepic Nayarit, Mexico. She made Pomona her home in 1963. She worked in various jobs such as picking strawberries, playground supervisor and Instructional Aide. **She is now retired from her career with the Pomona Unified School District.** Mrs. Carrizosa earned a B.A. and M.A. from California State Polytechnic University Pomona. After receiving her teaching credentials, Mrs. Carrizosa began teaching at Philadelphia Elementary School, where she is now a Resource Teacher.

Mrs. Carrizosa’s interest in another aspect of public service was born out of concern for the students she served and their families. She ran for Pomona City Council and was elected to represent District Three in 1993. She served in this position until 2002.

In 2006, Mrs. Carrizosa decided to return to the political arena and was again elected as Council Member for District Three. Aside from serving her community as an educator and Council representative, Mrs. Carrizosa and her husband Raul raised three children and are the proud grandparents of four grandchildren. They have lived in Pomona 44 years.

**District 4 Council Member Elizabeth Onteveras-Cole** (elected 2016)

Elizabeth Ontiveros-Cole has lived in Pomona for six decades. She attended Pomona schools. She has worked for Pomona Unified School District Health Services for 22 years.

As a dedicated Pomona citizen and District Four resident, she has been an active volunteer and community member. Public safety, maintaining urban forest and neighborhood watch programs are among her interests. Her priorities are the improvement of streets and alleyways; promoting community safety, crime prevention programs and neighborhood watch groups; addressing and alleviating homelessness; beautifying Pomona parks and recreation areas; bringing new projects and developments to the City; promoting and funding the Pomona Public Library; and preserving historical landmarks and buildings.

**District 5 Council Member Ginna Escobar (elected 2010)**

Ginna E. Escobar was elected in November 2010 to represent District Five, covering the Phillips Ranch, Westmont, and Cal Poly areas. Ms. Escobar is an entrepreneur in her own district. In June 2011 she opened her dance studio located in the Phillips Village Shopping Center.

She is the daughter of Ginna and Cesar Escobar and has lived in Pomona her whole life and attended local schools such as Decker Elementary, Lorbeer Middle School, Pomona Catholic High School, Mt. San Antonio College, and the University of La Verne. She was an Activities Assistant at Inland Valley Care and Rehabilitation Center in Pomona and is an active volunteer for a variety of causes. Ms Escobar is a delegate for the California Contract Cities Association, a member of the Blue-Ribbon Committee of the Los Angeles County Fair Association, an alternate delegate of the Downtown Pomona Owners Association, and part of the Four Corners Transportation Coalition. She is also on the City Council Budget Ad Hoc Committee, and City Council Cultural Planning Advisory Committee.

**District 6 Council Member Robert Torres (elected in 2016)**

Robert Torres has dedicated his life to public service. Mr. Torres is a 30-year resident of the City of Pomona and a graduate of Cal Poly Pomona. He volunteered on the Vehicle Parking Commission and the Planning Commission and served as District Director for the California State Assembly.

On November 8, 2016, Robert Torres was elected to the Pomona City Council representing the 6th district, which includes Ganesha Park, Fairplex, Casa Colina and the Pomona Valley Hospital. He was also an Elector for the State of California during the 2016 election for President and Vice President of the United States. He is currently a governing board member for the Foothill Transit and an alternate board member for the Foothill Gold Line Project. He is the eldest son of Louis and Norma Torres and lives in North Pomona with his family and son.

## **Some Accomplishments that relate to League Issues:**

### Homelessness:

The City Council voted unanimously to fund a year- round emergency shelter and centralized service center for homeless residents. Council allocated \$4 million to the project. The center will be built at 1400 E Mission Blvd., a 2.61-acre property that the city purchased. A major component of the facility is to be an adaptive tent-like structure — like those used for entertainment events — that would be constructed easily and could accommodate 175 people. The tent will allow officials to re-evaluate and adjust as needed. The semi-permanent structure will be insulated, equipped with windows, heating and air conditioning systems and will use a system of dividers to create areas for men, women and LGBT residents.

The service center’s goal would be to help homeless residents move off the streets and provide basic physical health and behavioral health services. All individuals who seek shelter at the facility will be entered into the Los Angeles County information system where their progress will be tracked. This facility is a significant step in addressing one of the many facets of the homelessness crisis.

The city is in partnership with many different nonprofits, churches, social service agencies and others who are working together on the problem of homelessness.

Every homeless resident has a story that led to living without shelter, Councilman Rubio Gonzalez said. “Each one has a different set of needs,” he said. “It’s a matter of (asking), ‘How did you get there and how can we help you?’”

### Immigration:

The Council adopted an ordinance to keep Pomona in conformance with SB 54, known as the California Values Act.

Pomona City Council members voted unanimously for the proposed ordinance, which came back to the council Dec.18 for a second reading and was unanimously approved.

Mayor Sandoval reiterated that the City Council is “in full support of all our residents in the city,” he said. “We are going to do everything that we can to protect you.”

The Mayor and Councilmembers are consistent in their compassionate and humanitarian values when it comes to issues of immigration.

The Council routinely celebrates Pomona's diverse cultural background.

**Most crowded meeting:**

March 19, 2018: To establish a minimum wage for housekeeping personnel employed by Pomona Valley Hospital and Casa Colina Hospital.

At the Pomona City Council's Jan. 8 meeting, Councilman Torres requested city staff and workers' representatives to draft an ordinance that mirrors the initiative they seek to put before voters. "I would like to see the issue come to a rest," he said. "There are things we can do on our end. We can help better the wages (for employees) and staffing levels." Mr. Torres requested city staff "come up with a piece of legislation that will benefit the hospital workers and the city." Council members supported the idea of developing language that would come before them for a discussion and a vote at a later date.

Hundreds of people attended the March 19th meeting. The council chambers and the entrance and the courtyard were filled beyond the capacity. The public stayed late to weigh in on whether the city should adopt an ordinance mandating a higher wage for hospital workers. The ordinance mirrored the potential Nov. 6 ballot measure which seeks to establish a minimum wage for housekeeping personnel employed by Pomona Valley Hospital and Casa Colina Hospital.

Some speakers sought the support of the City Council to establish a minimum wage, some advocated for the city to stay clear of labor and management negotiations, some were critical of SEIU/UHW's tactics, some spoke about the questionable legality of a City ordinance over non-governmental agencies, others suggested if there were to be a wage ordinance it should be for city employees. The meeting went well into the night. Councilmembers Escobar and Torres were notably uncourteous in their comments to hospital executives.

Mayor Sandoval continued the item.

### **Issue where I sought out the League President:**

I observed behaviors that appeared to be not in compliance with Roberts Rule of Order, so I got in touch with the President of our local League and had a subsequent meeting with her and the Observer Coordinator. The Mayor had stated he would like to review the performance of the city's attorney, a law firm that has been representing the city since 1989, apparently without annual evaluations. The mayor stated he would like the discussion to be placed on the agenda and made public. At the following meeting Councilmember Torres motioned to table the discussion which was supported by three other Councilmembers. The situation appeared to have been coordinated with three other Councilmembers because throughout the meeting there were excessive sidebar conversations. The LWV President and the LWV Observer Coordinator advised the Observer to email the City Manager and ask about the date of the last Brown Act training and ask if the current Council had had a Robert's Rule of Order training. The City Manager replied that the current council had had a Brown Act Training recently.

There is sidebar whispering, and Councilmembers leave their seats to follow public speakers out of Council chambers. I actually kept a tally of how often council members left their seats and was left to wonder, why is this council member leaving the dais and leaving Council chambers to follow a speaker during a public meeting? I do not want to conjecture but the wandering around and whispering during a meeting was unsettling.

Overall it is my observation that Pomona City Council is functional, and discussions are sincere. Council Members are dedicated to the districts they serve. I found this experience to be educational, interesting and inspiring.