

La Verne City Council
League of Women Voters of Mt. Baldy Area
Observer Report by Gwen Carr
May 2019

My report covers observing the La Verne City Council from May 2018 through February 2019. During my leave of absence, it was covered by League Vice President Barbara Nicoll.

La Verne City Council Members are Don Kendrick, Mayor; Muir Davis, Mayor Pro Tem; Robin Carter, Charlie Rosales, and Tim Hepburn.
Regular Meetings are held the 1st and 3rd Mondays at 6:30 p.m. The meetings start on time, members attend regularly and are attentive. Members appear to have done their homework. The Brown Act is followed, and there is no time limit for speakers, unique among our area's city councils.

After roll call, awards are given to local businesses, scouts, school sports groups, emergency personnel and community members for their contributions to the community.

In May of 2018, the City Manager and Council began discussing next year's budget. Budget hearings were held during June and July to discuss strategies to reduce costs and ways to generate income in order to meet rising pension obligations. The City Manager discussed having to dip into savings and having to delay some projects in order to balance its budget.

For the past two years, the City Council has been in a public dispute with the La Verne Firefighters' Association, Local 3624 with union members attending the Council meetings regularly.

The union filed two lawsuits against the City. Over time, some community members began to take sides and voice their concerns. One of the Council Members was accused of disclosing information discussed in a closed session that was related to the firefighters' lawsuit. This caused the Council to limit that member's participation in confidential meetings. This caused some residents to be upset. The following meeting was well attended that the meeting had to be moved to the Community Center. During the past two years, many in the audience were loud and spoke without being recognized. At times there was name-calling. After a few months of this type of behavior, some residents asked for more civil meetings. The Council prepared a statement to be read at the beginning of Council meetings asking for civility and respect for others.

There were questions about the line of credit the City gave to one of the local restaurant owners. After a few months, the City presented its policy as one the City will use in order to keep business in the City.

On April 24, 2019, the City settled its suit with the firefighter's union. They agreed to a \$5.5 million settlement that included a purge of documents on alleged misconduct.

The Council received a special presentation by the census bureau on the importance of the census.