

COUNCIL ACTION ON PUBLIC SAFETY COMPENSATION: In separate actions, City Council members voted to postpone action on contracts for the city's 61 firefighters and impose the City's "last, best and final offer" on 103 police officers. The Council voted unanimously to continue action on terms of the contract for the firefighters until Oct. 18.

On a 3-2 vote, the city passed an imposition resolution for the police officers which:

- Establishes a new retirement tier for new hires of 3% at 55 on the highest three consecutive years of employment instead of the current 3% at 50 in the single highest year.
- Discontinues the disability avoidance program, which saves 2.1% of wages incentive;
- Gives one less floating holiday, and;
- Imposes a 2.1% decrease to the annual salary.

Vice Mayor Amy Shuklian and Council Member Mike Lane cast the dissenting votes.

Terms of an agreement with 26 police managers were settled earlier in the day. The agreement also includes the new retirement tier, discontinuation of the Disability Avoidance Program, and a 1% salary increase and additional 20 hours of paid leave. These employees did not receive a wage increase last year. In addition, the City Manager, Department Heads, and unrepresented employees received no wage increase in 2009/10. Public safety and miscellaneous groups—520 employees—received a 4% pay raise in 2009/10 according to their respective contracts.

The rationale for asking for wage concessions stems from the City's reduced fiscal position. The City Council has taken the position that this year's budget solution must include a permanent reduction in employee compensation because the fundamental resource for providing services (sales tax) has diminished and the City needs to permanently reduce its expenses to the level of current revenues. The alternatives—cutting more positions from the City—means less service for a growing community. The use of one-time resources, such as reserves, or one-time employee reductions does not correct a long-term structural problem in the City's budget.

COUNCIL MOVES TO ANNEX LAND NEAR RIVERWAY SPORTS

PARK: On a 3-2 vote, with Mayor Bob Link and Vice Mayor Amy Shuklian dissenting, the City Council voted to authorize the processing of an annexation of 130 acres located on the east side of Dinuba Boulevard, between the Shannon Parkway alignment and the St. Johns River, currently designated for low-density residential land use. The annexation process includes a review by the Planning Commission for conformance with the General Plan and a public hearing before the City Council to approve or deny the annexation. If approved, the annexation will then go to the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO), the state agency which approves boundaries, including annexations, among the various jurisdictions in the area.

DOWNTOWN PARKING LOTS IN 'CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT' TO CHANGE FROM 2 TO 3 HOURS: Council members approved implementing additional changes to downtown parking at the Oct. 4 meeting. On Aug. 16, Council approved the conversion of on-street parking from 2- to 3-hour parking. Staff recommended implementing this change (2-hour to 3-

hour) to City owned parking lots in the same area. All existing “20-minute” and “All Day” parking spaces in Downtown Visalia will remain. This action will only change all 2-hour parking to 3-hour parking. All “Permitted All-Day Parking” will be unaffected. The changes would be in essentially the “Central Business District” (from east of Giddings Street, west of Bridge Street, south of Center Avenue and north of Noble Avenue). All public 2-hour parking lots will be converted to 3-hour parking and are in the same area where on-street parking has been converted to 3-hour parking. Changes will be made in the next 30 days, and staff believes the change will help reduce any parking limitation confusion in the Downtown Area and allow a more equal distribution of parking in public parking areas. Results of these downtown parking changes will be reviewed by Council in February/March of 2011 when they may take steps for any needed amendments to these parking conversions.

OTHER COUNCIL NEWS: Council members lauded efforts by mental health and child-abuse advocates to bring The Lisa Project, a free interactive exhibit about child abuse, to Visalia’s Convention Center. The number of child abuse cases in Tulare County has spiked as the economy has slumped, and city officials were lauded for a “fast and compassionate” response to get the exhibit up and running. The exhibit will be on display through Oct. 29, next to the Visalia Convention Center at 303 E. Acequia Ave. Hours: Thursdays and Fridays from 5 to 9 p.m.; Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and; Sundays from 1 to 5 p.m. For more information, go to www.thelisaproject.org.

BUILDING PERMITS SEE 1% DECLINE: The number of building permits issued from January through September was down 1% from the same time period in 2009. A total of 2,340 permits were issued in 2009, compared to 2,356 in 2010. Declines were seen in permits for new single family dwellings (-23%), multi-family units (-73%), and new commercial projects (-21%). Increases for residential additions and alterations (11%), commercial additions (6%), and miscellaneous permits (1%) rounded out the permits issued for the year to date. Total valuation of all permits was off 17%, from \$107,910,633 in 2009 to \$89,756,652 in 2010.

FIRE PREVENTION WEEK: The week of October 4th marks the beginning of National Fire Prevention Week throughout the United States. National Fire Prevention Week began in response to the Great Chicago Fire of 1871 which claimed 300 lives and destroyed more than 17,000 structures. During this year’s National Fire Prevention Week, the Visalia Fire Department will provide presentations to all elementary schools within the Visalia City limits. In addition, the Visalia Fire Department will conclude the week by hosting Open Houses at three of the City Fire Stations on Saturday October 9th from 10 am to 2 pm at Fire Station 51 at 309 S. Johnson, Fire Station 54 at 440 W. Ferguson, and Fire Station 55 at 6921 W. Ferguson. The Open Houses will allow citizens the opportunity to tour each station and interact with the on duty fire personnel. A bounce house will provide entertainment for the children and a hot dog lunch will be served. In addition, there will also be members of other city departments, such as Parks & Recreation, Crime Prevention, and Natural Resource Conservation Division will be at Station 55 to answer questions about related city services. For more information on Fire Prevention Week, call Battalion Chief Charlie Norman at 713-4265.

VICE MAYOR TO HOLD MONTHLY OFFICE HOURS: Vice Mayor Amy Shuklian will hold her regular monthly office hours on Wednesday, Oct. 6, to allow the public to meet and discuss issues one-on-one. Office hours will be held from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. in the large conference room at City Hall, at 707 W. Acequia Ave. The first hour, from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. will be a time for drop-in visits, and appointments can be scheduled in advance for the second hour, from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. To schedule an appointment, contact Office Assistant Tina McHenry at 713-4314. Shuklian can be reached through 713-4400, then enter 8313, or by email at ashuklian@ci.visalia.ca.us. Mayor Bob Link can be reached at 559-713-4400, Ext. 2313 or by email at blink@ci.visalia.ca.us. Council Member Warren

Gubler can be reached at 559-713-4400, Ext. 3313 or by email at wgubler@ci.visalia.ca.us. Council Member Michael Lane can be reached at 559-713-4400, Ext. 4313 or by email at mlane@ci.visalia.ca.us. Council Member Steve Nelsen can also be reached by calling 559-713-4400, Ext. 7313, by email at snelsen@ci.visalia.ca.us.

THIRD TOWN HALL MEETING SET: Council Member Warren Gubler will moderate the third in a series of four Town Hall Meetings, scheduled for 6 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 27, at Annie Mitchell Elementary School, 2121 E. Laura St. This meeting is specifically for citizens in southeast Visalia, but is open to the general public. Council Member Gubler and staff will be available to answer questions on issues related to Public Safety, Transportation, Planning and Economic Development.

DUMP-ON-US FOR FREE ON OCT. 23: Take advantage of this event on Saturday, Oct. 23, from 7 a.m. to noon at the Visalia Corporation Yard, 335 N. Cain. Dump-On-Us is limited to City residents, and proof of residency is required. Doors must be removed from all large appliances, and participants are limited to one visit. Commercial waste is not accepted. For more information, go to www.dumponus.org.