

CITY OF VENTURA
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA

**Supplemental
Information
Packet**

Meeting of June 5, 2023

Received by June 6, 2023 by 8:30 a.m.

Supplemental Information:

Any agenda related public documents received and distributed to a majority of the City Council after the Agenda Packet is printed are included in Supplemental Packets. Supplemental Packets are produced as needed. The Supplemental Packet is available in the City Clerk's Office, 501 Poli Street, Room 204, Ventura, during normal business hours as well as on the City's Website – www.cityofventura.ca.gov
<https://www.cityofventura.ca.gov/1236/City-Council-Public-Hearing-NoticesSuppl>

1. CENSURE OF COUNCILMEMBER MIKE JOHNSON

Tracy Oehler

From:
Sent: Monday, June 5, 2023 4:03 PM
To: City Clerk
Subject: -EXT- Demands for Fairness, Transparency, and Accountability in Council Proceedings

Dear Members of the City Council,

I write to you as an unwavering resident and a staunch supporter of Councilmember Mike Johnson, expressing deep reservations about the forthcoming decision to censure him based on the investigative report. It is incumbent upon our municipal government to uphold the principles of fairness, justice, and due process, while ensuring the highest standards of integrity and transparency. However, it is with great disappointment that I bring to your attention the glaring deficiencies and potential misconduct that have characterized the proceedings thus far. Urgent and decisive action is now imperative to rectify these grave concerns.

1. **Timing and Context:** The timing and context of the investigation raise alarming questions regarding the integrity and accuracy of the findings. The Council's failure to provide a detailed and satisfactory explanation for the significant delay between the alleged incidents in 2022 and the subsequent investigation is simply unacceptable. The lack of transparency in this regard not only undermines the credibility of the investigative process but also raises suspicions of deliberate manipulation or external pressures. Immediate clarification is demanded to restore faith in the fairness and impartiality of the proceedings. Furthermore, a detailed account of the measures taken to ensure the accuracy and reliability of witnesses' memories, despite the temporal distance from the events, must be provided. Any attempts to dismiss or downplay the risks of distortions or misinterpretations due to the passage of time will be viewed as a flagrant disregard for justice.
 - i. I insist on a comprehensive explanation of the reasons behind the significant delay between the alleged incidents in 2022 and the subsequent investigation. Any indication of undue influence or external pressures that may have affected the timing must be disclosed.
 - ii. Given the temporal distance from the events in question, I demand a detailed account of the measures taken to ensure the accuracy and reliability of witnesses' memories. Without such safeguards, the reliability of the evidence and the overall integrity of the investigation are called into question.
 - iii. It is imperative to address the potential for distortions or misinterpretations of the facts due to the passage of time. Any steps taken to mitigate these risks must be made transparent to ensure a fair assessment of the allegations against Councilmember Johnson.
2. **Objective and Unbiased Assessment:** The Council's commitment to transparency and accountability necessitates a thorough internal evaluation of the methodology employed by the third-party investigations law firm. Any claims of objectivity and impartiality are hollow without substantial evidence to support them. It is your duty to provide unassailable proof that the methodology was free from biases, rigorously applied, and in strict compliance with established standards. Failure to do so

will render the investigative report fundamentally flawed and the ensuing decision suspect. Consequently, an immediate and detailed presentation of the evidence supporting the conclusions drawn in the report is non-negotiable. The Council's failure to provide such evidence will cast a dark shadow over the entire process, undermining the legitimacy of the forthcoming decision.

- i. I demand full disclosure of the Council's internal evaluation of the methodology employed by the third-party investigations law firm. It is essential to examine the validity and reliability of the investigative processes and ensure they meet the highest standards of objectivity and impartiality.
- ii. I request unequivocal evidence or assurances that the findings presented in the investigative report were arrived at through an impartial and unbiased assessment of the evidence. Transparency in the analysis and the soundness of the conclusions drawn are essential to establish the report's credibility.
- iii. c. I implore the Council to address any potential instances of interference or attempts to influence the findings or conclusions of the investigative report by the former City Manager or any individuals associated with the former City Manager. A thorough investigation into these matters is essential to ascertain the independence and integrity of the process.

3. The Poison of Political Bias: The inclusion of Council members who were not serving during the relevant period is deeply concerning, as it opens the door to potential biases and compromises the objectivity of the decision-making process. To uphold the principles of fairness and justice, it is paramount that each Council member participating in the decision is fully informed, unbiased, and capable of conducting an objective evaluation of the facts. The residents of our city demand an unequivocal guarantee that political biases will not taint the proceedings. Failure to ensure such guarantees will expose the Council's decision to legitimate accusations of partiality and render it null and void in the eyes of the public.

- i. I demand a thorough examination of the potential biases stemming from Council members who were not serving during the relevant period. The inclusion of these Council members in the decision-making process poses a serious risk to impartiality and fairness. Transparency in their involvement and measures to mitigate the potential impact of their biases must be undertaken.
- ii. I insist on full disclosure of any interactions, discussions, or directives between the former City Manager and all Council members regarding the allegations against Councilmember Mike Johnson. Any indications of undue influence or improper communication must be brought to light to ensure the integrity of the decision-making process.
- iii. I seek guarantees that the inclusion of Council members who lack firsthand knowledge and understanding of the historical context and dynamics surrounding the events will not compromise the objectivity and fairness of the decision-making process. Failure to address this concern could significantly undermine the legitimacy of the forthcoming decision.

Furthermore, I demand that the Council takes immediate action to address the troubling allegations of public corruption involving the Mayor, former City Manager, Interim City Manager, and executive staff. It is the Council's duty to refer the matter to the California Office of the Attorney General (OAG) and the Special Investigations Team (SIT) Program without delay. Failing to do so would be a gross dereliction of duty, suggesting a cover-up or an unwillingness to confront potential wrongdoing within our municipal government. The reopening of the Special Audit and a comprehensive examination of potential Brown Act violations are equally imperative steps toward transparency, accountability, and the restoration of public trust. Only by conducting a rigorous and independent review can the Council hope to regain the confidence of the residents.

Failure to address these demands would signify a profound failure of the Council's duty to uphold the highest standards of integrity and transparency.

1. Allegations of Public Corruption:

- i. I insist on an immediate referral to the California OAG and the SIT Program to conduct a thorough investigation into allegations of public corruption involving the Mayor, former City Manager, Interim City Manager, and executive staff. The seriousness of these allegations demands an independent and impartial examination to ensure the integrity of the government and the protection of public trust.
- ii. All relevant evidence, documentation, and information related to the alleged public corruption must be preserved and made available to the investigating authorities. Transparency and cooperation in this regard are critical to uncovering the truth and holding those responsible accountable.

2. Reopening of the Special Audit:

- i. Given the new information and concerns that have emerged, I demand the immediate reopening of the Special Audit to thoroughly examine any potential irregularities, misappropriation of funds, or improprieties within the City's financial practices. A comprehensive and independent review is essential to restore public confidence and ensure the responsible use of taxpayer funds.
- ii. The reopened Special Audit must be conducted by an impartial and experienced team that is free from any conflicts of interest. It is crucial to provide the auditors with unfettered access to all relevant records, documents, and personnel to facilitate a thorough and objective examination.

3. Examination of Brown Act Violations:

- i. I request a comprehensive review and examination of potential violations of the Ralph M. Brown Act during the decision-making process related to Councilmember Johnson's censure. The Brown Act is designed to ensure transparency and open government, and any violations must be addressed with the utmost seriousness.
- ii. The examination of Brown Act violations should include a detailed assessment of any improper communication, undisclosed meetings, or other actions that may have undermined the public's right to participate fully in the decision-making process. The

findings of this examination must be made public to restore trust and ensure compliance with the law.

Given the gravity of these demands, we expect immediate action from the City Council to address these concerns and initiate the necessary investigations and actions. Failing to take appropriate steps will irreparably damage the Council's credibility, erode public trust, and potentially expose the City to legal consequences.

I implore the Council to understand the gravity of the situation and the urgency with which action must be taken. The residents of our city are watching closely, expecting you to fulfill your responsibilities with the utmost diligence and integrity. It is essential that you prioritize the demands presented in this letter and demonstrate a commitment to fairness, transparency, and accountability in all Council proceedings.

Failure to address these concerns and take immediate action will not only erode public trust in the Council's decision-making process but also undermine the credibility and legitimacy of the entire municipal government. The consequences of such inaction would be far-reaching and irreversible, tarnishing the reputation of the Council and compromising the rights and well-being of the residents you serve.

The time for equivocation and delay has passed. The residents of our city demand a Council that operates with transparency, impartiality, and a steadfast commitment to the principles upon which our democracy is built. It is your duty to rise to this challenge and ensure that justice prevails.

I expect a prompt and comprehensive response detailing the specific actions that will be taken to address the concerns raised in this letter. The residents of our city deserve nothing less than a Council that upholds the highest standards of fairness, transparency, and accountability.

Sincerely,
George Amandola
Ventura Resident, District 2

Go

CAUTION: This email originated from outside the City of Ventura. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

>> Please verify all links and attachments before opening them! <<

Tracy Oehler

From: noreply@cityofventura.ca.gov
Sent: Monday, June 5, 2023 4:52 PM
To: City Clerk
Subject: -EXT- Online Form Submittal: Public Comment Form

Public Comment Form

Disclosure:

Providing your name/contact information is optional to participate in a Public Meeting. However by providing, it will allow staff to follow-up with you on your item. All emails submitted to any Legislative Body are Public Records. Copies of forms submitted are posted online, with name and contact information redacted. You may only submit one comment form per agenda item. You may submit more than one form per agenda to address additional topics.

Submission Deadlines:

Submit your Comment Form at least 2 hours prior to the scheduled/posted start time of the meeting, as stated on the posted Agenda. If submitting a comment during a meeting, please submit before the Agenda Item concludes, during a Live Meeting, to be considered part of the record. Select the Legislative/Hearing Body below to ensure your comment is emailed to the correct body.

Select Legislative/Hearing Body City Council

Meeting Date 6/5/2023

Select a Topic: Agenda Item Number/Topic

Agenda Item Number/Topic Censuring of Mike Johnson

Name Rosie Ornelas

Address

Phone Number

Email Address

Recommendation Against Recommendation

Written Comments

Councilmember Johnson is the most knowledgeable, prepared Councilmember at every meeting. He does his homework and is not afraid to ask difficult questions, especially when he is aware that staff is not being transparent or is being deceitful or unethical.

If a city manager is misspending public money, he should be called out. Councilmember Johnson was aware that our City Manager and Finance Director were not being transparent and were not spending money appropriately.

Councilmember Johnson asked hard questions of executive staff. That is his job. That does not constitute bullying. He is the City Manager's boss.

I ask the Council not to censure Councilmember Johnson. Councilmember Johnson has the utmost integrity and as a resident, I greatly appreciate the time and effort that he puts into his job as a Councilmember. He is willing to stand alone and stand up for what is right. And for that he deserves our respect, not a public admonishment for exposing the truth.

Upload Files

Field not completed.

Email not displaying correctly? [View it in your browser.](#)

**CAUTION: This email originated from outside the City of Ventura. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.
>> Please verify all links and attachments before opening them! <<**

Tracy Oehler

From: noreply@cityofventura.ca.gov
Sent: Monday, June 5, 2023 5:00 PM
To: City Clerk
Subject: -EXT- Online Form Submittal: Public Comment Form

Public Comment Form

Disclosure:

Providing your name/contact information is optional to participate in a Public Meeting. However by providing, it will allow staff to follow-up with you on your item. All emails submitted to any Legislative Body are Public Records. Copies of forms submitted are posted online, with name and contact information redacted. You may only submit one comment form per agenda item. You may submit more than one form per agenda to address additional topics.

Submission Deadlines:

Submit your Comment Form at least 2 hours prior to the scheduled/posted start time of the meeting, as stated on the posted Agenda. If submitting a comment during a meeting, please submit before the Agenda Item concludes, during a Live Meeting, to be considered part of the record. Select the Legislative/Hearing Body below to ensure your comment is emailed to the correct body.

Select Legislative/Hearing Body	City Council
Meeting Date	6/5/2023
Select a Topic:	Public Comments
Name	anonymous
Address	Field not completed.
Phone Number	Field not completed.
Email Address	Field not completed.
Recommendation	Against Recommendation
Written Comments	Field not completed.
Upload Files	Field not completed.

Email not displaying correctly? [View it in your browser.](#)

CAUTION: This email originated from outside the City of Ventura. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders. >> Please verify all links and attachments before opening them! <<

Tracy Oehler

From: Mike Anderson
Sent: Monday, June 5, 2023 5:30 PM
To: City Clerk
Subject: -EXT- Mike Johnson

I support city council and their decision to move forward with what they feel is best for the city. If it is censure, I support that.

Mike Anderson

--

Sent from Gmail Mobile

CAUTION: This email originated from outside the City of Ventura. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

>> Please verify all links and attachments before opening them! <<

Tracy Oehler

From: noreply@cityofventura.ca.gov
Sent: Monday, June 5, 2023 5:58 PM
To: City Clerk
Subject: -EXT- Online Form Submittal: Public Comment Form

Public Comment Form

Disclosure:

Providing your name/contact information is optional to participate in a Public Meeting. However by providing, it will allow staff to follow-up with you on your item. All emails submitted to any Legislative Body are Public Records. Copies of forms submitted are posted online, with name and contact information redacted. You may only submit one comment form per agenda item. You may submit more than one form per agenda to address additional topics.

Submission Deadlines:

Submit your Comment Form at least 2 hours prior to the scheduled/posted start time of the meeting, as stated on the posted Agenda. If submitting a comment during a meeting, please submit before the Agenda Item concludes, during a Live Meeting, to be considered part of the record. Select the Legislative/Hearing Body below to ensure your comment is emailed to the correct body.

Select Legislative/Hearing Body City Council

Meeting Date 6/5/2023

Select a Topic: Agenda Item Number/Topic

Agenda Item Number/Topic Formal Item 1 Censure of Councilmember Mike Johnson

Name John Malone

Address

Phone Number

Email Address

Recommendation Against Recommendation

Written Comments Honorable Councilmembers,

I strongly object to the censure of Councilmember Johnson, who represents my Council District. I believe that the censure is unwarranted and that Mr. Johnson is being unfairly targeted for doing his duty. It is unacceptable that residents of this

District will be denied the benefit of Councilmember Johnson's representation on external committees and boards for the remainder of 2023. Councilmember Johnson has selflessly served the City for years before his election and brings much needed honesty, integrity, and professionalism to City Council. Based on the publicly releases executive summaries of the investigative findings, it appears that Councilmember Johnson is facing retaliation for asking necessary questions of City staff to uncover facts about financial mismanagement within the City. I find this retaliation unacceptable and chilling and I ask that Council not adopt the resolution of censure.

Upload Files

Field not completed.

Email not displaying correctly? [View it in your browser.](#)

**CAUTION: This email originated from outside the City of Ventura. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.
>> Please verify all links and attachments before opening them! <<**

Tracy Oehler

From: Lori Steinhauer
Sent: Tuesday, June 6, 2023 5:47 AM
To: Council; City Clerk
Subject: -EXT- Re: Tonight's Council Item 1 re. Censuring Councilman Johnson

Good Morning Honorable Mayor and Council,

I awake with one PS on my mind I am compelled to share.... I hope Councilman Johnson will keep being every bit the diligent advocate he has always been - he is crucial in his role on the Council. And I hope that part of the council becoming better an stronger and bringing out the best in each other includes everyone committing to holding the same kind of accountability that Mike steadfastly holds as a city steward. Thanks again for listening.

Best wishes,

Lori

Sent from my iPhone

> On Jun 6, 2023, at 12:29 AM, Lori Steinhauer wrote:
>
> Thank you for hearing the community and finding a path forward, Honorable Council.
>
> Kudos to Councilwoman Campos, Mayor Schroeder and Councilman Halter for coming up with a motion that the majority could land on.
>
> I hope the training will provide a shared path forward and the future leads to a growing sense of team.
>
> I, as a citizen, surely appreciate the challenge and commitment that your service requires of you.
>
> Respectfully,
>
> Lori

> Sent from my iPhone

>> On Jun 5, 2023, at 6:05 AM, Lori Steinhauer wrote:
>>
>> Honorable Mayor and City Council Members,
>>
>> My message today is in support of an elected City Council member, Councilman Mike Johnson, and a request to restore his place in all of his positions.
>>
>> While election districting has limited all of us to be able to vote for only one council member, we still have 7 elected council members who represent us all. Councilman Johnson is one I would have voted for when his name was on the ballot. I would vote for him 100% today. He cares, he makes himself available and outreaches to the community constantly, he does his homework, he seeks accountability.
>>
>> We all need opportunities to make mistakes, improve our diplomacy, learn, improve and grow.

>>

>> However I believe in censuring Councilman Johnson, the City Council majority has gone too far and handicaps one of our elected officials. I say this from 1. knowing Councilman Johnson for years and having worked with him on the Ventura Community Council Congress; 2. having read and re-read the report on this censuring agenda item; and 3. watching him at many council meetings - I believe even the one in question - since from my understanding only one instance with one employee has had sustained findings by your independent counsel. And the finding is important for the Council to address.

>>

>> Respect, diplomacy and kindness matter.

>>

>> Accountability and accessibility matter.

>>

>> I want elected officials who passionately work for their values and mine, which won't always match 100%, but I want to match overall.

>>

>> Councilman Johnson has all of these traits. And yes, he speaks with great passion on the issues he cares about. Especially early in his council career there were times there was an edge in his tone and his passion.

>>

>> We all do best to devote our lifetimes to 1. perfecting our communication with mutual understanding, respect and diplomacy, 2. exercising patience, caring and forgiveness with ourselves and each other to our highest ability even in the tough stuff, and 3. working to our best ability to ensure accountability and justness in our actions and the actions of others.

>>

>> The training you have asked of Councilman Johnson is understandable and helpful and something all council members could benefit from taking.

>>

>> A conversation toward mutual understanding even agreeing to disagree and apologies from one human whose actions have been perceived as hurtful to another are always beneficial if and when they are sincere. And it is the right thing to have happen for accountability, so it makes sense that a human resources investigation took place and an apology is being sought.

>>

>> Just as important, a council member who challenges inappropriate spending as was the case in this matter is a council member I want as my elected official.

>>

>> The censuring goes too far, and I respectfully request that you end it immediately and restore the full abilities of our elected Councilman Johnson to fulfill the duties he was elected to fulfill.

>>

>> Thank you all for your service and your consideration.

>>

>> Respectfully and Gratefully,

>>

>> Lori Steinhauer

>> Ventura, California

>>

>> Sent from my iPhone

CAUTION: This email originated from outside the City of Ventura. Exercise caution when opening attachments or clicking links, especially from unknown senders.

>> Please verify all links and attachments before opening them! <<