

Summary

Lewis Allen welcomed attendees and provided updates on missing campaign signs, meeting rules, and local projects. Scott Richmond from the fire department discussed wildland fire safety, accreditation, staffing, and live fire training, while Lieutenant Brandy Merrill reported on the meeting sign theft arrest and addressed ICE activity rumors. Melissa Bustamonte and Gregory Bucy from the water district detailed a rate adjustment, assistance programs, and the benefits of the Advanced Metering Infrastructure. The candidates Vincent Romo, Zachary Consalvo, and Christopher Shoults then introduced themselves and shared their perspectives on issues like warehouse oversupply. They further elaborated on warehousing, undergrounding electric lines, state spending, homelessness, water infrastructure, and First Amendment rights.

Details

- **Meeting Introduction** Lewis Allen welcomed attendees and outlined the meeting agenda, which included candidate presentations and reports from the fire department, police department, and water district. He also noted a new map displaying city council wards and thanked sponsor Clarissa Cervantes for the meeting space ([00:00:00](#)).
- **Missing Campaign Signs** Lewis discussed the issue of missing campaign signs, revealing that an individual was arrested after trackers and cameras were used to locate them ([00:01:28](#)). The person took approximately 30 signs over six months and was initially throwing them in a dumpster ([00:02:36](#)).
- **Meeting Rules and Updates** Lewis reviewed meeting rules, emphasizing respect, hand-raising to speak, and email for unanswered questions. Scott Richmond from the fire department then provided updates ([00:03:40](#)).
- **Fire Department - Wildland Urban Interface (WUI)** Fire Battalion Chief Scott Richmond explained the state's reclassification of land into fire hazard severity zones, increasing the City of Riverside's responsibility for fuels management in WUI areas ([00:05:46](#)). The fire department is nearing completion of a community wildfire protection plan to mitigate fire dangers ([00:06:49](#)).
- **Fire Department - Accreditation and Fireworks** Scott reported that the fire department maintained its Class One ISO rating and remains internationally accredited ([00:08:08](#)). He also addressed the issue of illegal fireworks, noting increased dangers and a city effort involving social hosting policies and increased fees to reduce hazards ([00:09:14](#)).

- **Fire Department - Master Plan and Staffing** Scott stated that a master plan is underway with Triton to assess and project the fire department's needs for stations and personnel ([00:10:35](#)). He also announced that the fire department is almost fully staffed after facing challenges in recent years ([00:11:48](#)).
- **Fire Department - Live Fire Training** Scott informed the community about live fire training burns scheduled for June 17th, 18th, and 19th in the Blackwood street area, advising residents not to be alarmed by smoke ([00:12:59](#)). He also addressed questions about fire engine procurement and the capabilities of fire department ladders ([00:14:01](#)).
- **Fire Department - Ready Riverside and Fireworks Legality** Scott directed residents to the Ready Riverside website for information on wildland protection ([00:17:32](#)). He reiterated that fireworks are illegal in Riverside due to the significant safety hazards they pose ([00:18:57](#)).
- **Police Department Update** Lieutenant Brandy Merrill provided an update on the campaign sign theft, confirming the arrest and court date of the suspect ([00:20:15](#)). She also addressed rumors about ICE activity in the city, stating it was not random raids and RPD did not assist. Additionally, she mentioned scheduled protests in downtown Riverside for the upcoming weekend ([00:21:31](#)).
- **Community Service Officer Announcement** Community Service Officer Lashon Halley announced a "Coffee with a Cop" event at the new Panera next Wednesday morning. She invited attendees to meet with officers and detectives and provided contact information for the police department ([00:22:23](#)).
- **Water District Rate Adjustment and Assistance Programs** Melissa Bustamonte from the water district announced that the board approved a four-year rate adjustment plan effective July 1st, with details available on their website. She also highlighted the low-income assistance program and reminded everyone to update their contact information for emergency alerts ([00:23:22](#)). Additionally, she mentioned a traveling art show at their headquarters from June 17th to July 1st ([00:24:33](#)).
- **Water District - Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI)** Gregory Bucy, a customer service representative for the water district, discussed the AMI project, explaining that the new digital meters provide hourly usage data and help detect leaks ([00:25:36](#)). This grant-funded initiative aims to minimize leaks, water waste, and high bills ([00:29:05](#)).
- **Water District - Proactive Notifications and Cost Savings** Gregory highlighted that over 3,300 proactive notifications about potential leaks have been sent to customers due to the AMI system ([00:29:58](#)). The electronic reads also help mitigate labor costs, reducing proposed rate increases, and have significantly reduced the time to identify and fix leaks, saving an estimated \$160,000 in avoided water costs ([00:30:53](#)).
- **Water District Portal Overview** Gregory provided a brief overview of the Western Water portal, showing how customers can access their usage data, set up alerts for high water usage, and

monitor their consumption hourly, daily, monthly, or annually. He encouraged attendees to visit his desk for assistance with registration or to call the office for help ([00:31:47](#)) ([00:36:42](#)).

- **Water District - Questions and Future Plans** Gregory addressed questions about microplastics in the water, stating it is monitored, and mentioned that while there isn't an app yet for the portal, it is being explored ([00:36:42](#)). He also explained the process of meter replacements and the importance of knowing how to shut off individual water meters ([00:38:30](#)). He confirmed the AMI meters are widespread among other water districts in the region ([00:39:21](#)).
- **March JPA and House Numbers** Lewis provided updates on the March JPA efforts to increase flights and a member's business offering reflective house number stickers as a fundraiser ([00:41:06](#)).
- **Local Project Updates** Lewis briefly mentioned the March API West Campus vote, the ongoing adventure park project, and the settlement of the Kmart project case, with details to follow ([00:42:51](#)). He also noted the AQMD vote against eliminating gas appliances ([00:44:22](#)).
- **Community Initiatives and City Council Action** Lewis discussed upcoming group tours and special classes, such as CPR training. He also informed attendees about the City Council's decision to eliminate audio/video support for public comment and a temporary sign ordinance workshop ([00:45:20](#)).
- **Future Meetings and Trash Bin Notifications** Lewis announced the schedule for upcoming meetings, including presentations from the police chief, Supervisor Medina, and the fire chief. He also asked attendees to report any Athens Trash notification tags received regarding incorrect trash disposal ([00:46:21](#)).
- **Fire Map and Candidate Introductions** Lewis displayed a fire hazard severity zone map. He then introduced the candidates present for the 63rd California Assembly District Special Election: Vincent Romo, Zachary Consalvo, and Christopher Shoults ([00:47:16](#)).
- **Candidate Opening Remarks** Vincent Romo introduced himself as a California history professor and former athlete, focusing on bringing money to the district, abolishing state income tax, and local control ([00:49:38](#)). Zachary Consalvo emphasized the need for representative government, uniting the district, and a state tax audit ([00:51:48](#)). Christopher Shoults presented himself as a career public school educator with a diverse background, concerned about affordability, education, and economic diversity ([00:54:08](#)).
- **Warehouse Over Supply Discussion** The candidates addressed the issue of warehouse oversupply. Vincent Romo stated his opposition, highlighting the role of lobbyists and the need for infrastructure contributions ([00:55:46](#)). Zachary Consalvo also opposed the overdevelopment and called for holding city and county officials accountable and reconsidering the city manager system ([00:58:27](#)).
- **Warehousing and Economic Future** Zachary discussed the need to attract businesses beyond warehousing due to oversaturation and trade war impacts ([00:59:28](#)). He suggested attracting biotech or tech industries and investing in infrastructure to support these sectors ([01:00:27](#)).

Zachary also mentioned the potential for converting warehouses to churches and allowing marijuana dispensaries in industrial areas for tax revenue ([00:59:28](#)).

- **Undergrounding Electric Lines** Chris acknowledged the push for undergrounding power lines for safety and aesthetics but noted the cost and Edison's rate structure as challenges ([01:01:14](#)). He stated that while it's a good idea, the cost would likely be passed to consumers. Chris expressed support for incremental and sustainable change that considers the consumer ([01:03:14](#)). Another speaker emphasized the long-term cost benefits of undergrounding lines, including reduced wildfire risk and potentially lower insurance costs, and advocated for changing state laws governing utilities ([01:04:12](#)).
- **State Spending and Utility Regulation** Vincent asserted that California has a spending problem, not a revenue problem, and highlighted potential waste in state spending. He criticized the negligence of Southern California Edison, leading to higher rates for consumers through fires and lawsuits ([01:05:14](#)). Zachary supported reversing a 1911 law that he believes grants too much power to private utility companies ([01:04:12](#)).
- **Partisan Politics and Local Needs** Zachary, running as an independent, emphasized prioritizing Riverside's needs over partisan pressures and proposed common-sense policies to gain support in a Democrat-dominated legislature ([01:07:09](#)). He suggested a tax audit and reducing regulations to lower costs and improve infrastructure ([01:08:27](#)). It was stressed the importance of listening to local voices and returning resources to the district based on local government needs ([01:09:26](#)). He criticized the lack of return on investment from the current representation and advocated for small government and local control ([01:11:11](#)).
- **Homelessness in Riverside** It was stated that the homelessness issue worsened with increased funding and advocated for redirecting tax dollars to effective solutions while being compassionate. He suggested addressing underlying issues like mental health and addiction and reducing incentives for the "homeless industrial complex" ([01:13:35](#)). Also pointed out the lack of accountability for homeless funds at the county and city levels and proposed allowing voters to direct tax allocations ([01:15:48](#)). Another speaker emphasized "housing first" as a solution and noted that a significant portion of allocated homeless funds remains unspent ([01:17:36](#)).
- **State Budget and Spending Accountability** Vincent stressed the need to prioritize existing commitments before initiating new spending and to ensure accountability for how public funds are used ([01:19:30](#)). He also noted the volatility of the state tax system ([01:20:16](#)). Another speaker reiterated the need for a tax audit to identify and redirect funds to essential city and county services, allowing for potential tax cuts on non-essential services and advocating for lower taxes on senior and military retirees ([01:21:03](#)).
- **Water Infrastructure and Desalinization** Zachary supported the concept that all water should be public and a public right. He agreed with the idea of desalinization plants along the coast and emphasized the need to improve water capture and storage locally ([01:26:09](#)). Brian Kerr

referenced a past proposition for water storage that has not been implemented and suggested the funds were reallocated ([01:29:12](#)).

- **First Amendment Rights and Government Overreach** Vincent expressed strong support for First Amendment rights and criticized what he perceives as an erosion of these rights at the state and local levels. He believes the current state government has become overly controlling and has significantly increased state spending without corresponding benefits ([01:30:20](#)). Vincent warned against government overreach and compared restrictions on speech to potential restrictions on other constitutional rights like the Second and Nineteenth Amendments ([01:32:28](#)). Another speaker echoed concerns about limitations on public speech at the local level and the failure to enact voter-approved measures ([01:33:20](#)).

Suggested next steps

No suggested next steps were found for this meeting.

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