MINUTES OF A SPECIAL MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF HAWTHORNE, CALIFORNIA HELD AUGUST 22, 2012.

Mayor Juarez called the City Council meeting to order jointly and concurrently at 6:05 pm in the City Council Chambers of the City Hall, 4455 West 126th Street, Hawthorne, California.

ROLL CALL-Present: Councilmembers English, Michelin, Valentine, Vargas, Mayor Juarez.
Absent: None.

1.

Under oral communications, no one expressed a desire to be heard.

Mayor Juarez ordered oral communications closed.

Councilmember Valentine requested that the following comments be **on the record** for this meeting.

At the May 22, 2012 City Council meeting, that's when I learned that a special meeting would be held on May 29th to review the City Manager applications. I stated my objections to the process by which the original decision by the City Council to have a professional consultant perform the screening of applicants had been scrapped by the present City Council. First, the public was advised that it was too expensive to hire a professional consultant because of the budget. It was stated that the staff could perform the screening just as well, and Mr. Robert O'Brien was queried by Council and it was determined that he was both qualified and available to perform the screening of the 70 candidates whose applications had been received. Then that process was abruptly scrapped in secret and we learned on May 22nd that it was the Council that was going to perform the screening. This is completely lacking in transparency as the selection process has been kept secret from some members of the Council and from the public. I do not agree with the way the hiring process was changed, first from having a professional consultant to do the initial screening, to having the staff do the screening, and finally ending with the council performing the screening in a secret process. The secrecy and lack of transparency of the process lends itself to the public having a lack of confidence in its government. Councilmember Vargas asked the question, raised the issue of has the city manager been preselected? It almost doesn't matter because the secrecy of the process lends itself to the public having a lack of confidence in the government. So regardless of who is selected, even if what we do behind closed doors, and I can assure you that what I do behind closed doors is open and above board, but regardless of what we do behind, if secrecy is behind closed doors, the public and the next city council may well have no confidence in this new city manager and believe that the process is flawed and it could affect the confidence in the city manager's decisions and his future effectiveness. So some may ask, if I do not agree with the process why am I a participant in the process? Because the public did not elect me to sit out one of the most important hiring decisions the City can make. I may not be able to choose the selection process, but hopefully I can influence it to whatever extent possible.

Councilmember Vargas requested that the following comments be **on the record** for this meeting.

I oppose tonight's closed session regarding "Appointment of a City Manager" for the following reasons. Last year the City Council voted to have staff approve a consulting firm to conduct the recruitment process. Staff did their job and selected Roberts Consulting Group. A few months ago, without much discussion, three members of the City Council voted to change the process by having the RFP process performed in-house. All city manager candidate applications were due on Thursday, May 24, 2012. At the end of the City Council meeting recently on May 22, 2012, the Mayor announced that he wanted to have a closed session to review all of the applications. I am concerned about the lack of transparency in this process. We have a professional staff to review the applications and to present to the City Council members the most qualified candidates. Instead, we are by-passing professional staff in the false belief that we are better qualified to review these applications. My lack of trust in this Closed Session is because of what happened a few years ago. In April 2010, a city manager was terminated and interim city manager was hired. There was no recruitment process. One person on the City Council pre-selected him and "groomed' him to be the new city manager. There was no transparency. History appears to be repeating itself, although we are now disguising the process as a closed session. The question that begs to be asked is whether another person has been pre-selected or groomed to be the next city manager. The

odds are great that if this person has been pre-selected, it is likely that this person has little or no city manager experience. It is likely that this candidate will be a "yes" person to the Mayor. It is likely that this candidate has been contacted by someone on the City Council to turn in his or her résumé. Was their hesitation to trust professional staff to provide the City Council with the applications of the most qualified people because this preselected candidate would not make the cut? These are the issues that I ask the public to consider.

2.

Mayor Juarez recessed the City Council meeting to conduct a **Closed Session**: Public Employee Appointment Pursuant to Government Code §54957**.** Title: City Manager

Mayor Juarez called the City Council meeting back to order following recess with all Councilmembers present except for Councilmembers Vargas and Reyes English. He announced that the **closed session** was to discuss a Closed Session regarding Public Employee Appointment Pursuant to Government Code §54957**.** Title: City Manager. Mayor Juarez announced that no reportable action was taken.

3.

Mayor Juarez adjourned the meeting at 7:45 p.m.

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Monica Dicrisci
Deputy City Clerk