



This morning, the plenary hall of the Formentera Council was the scene of the November plenary session. The first order of the day was a vote to grant definitive approval for the Formentera Council's 2015 budget, already given initial approval as part of last month's plenary.

The three votes that touched this issue received eight votes to approve (six cast by members of Gent x Formentera, two by the PSOE) and three abstentions (one by the PP and two by the Grup Independent de Formentera [GUIF]).

The next agenda item included a vote on the constitution guiding the new public waste tip and another on preliminary approval for its guidelines of use. Like for the budget vote that preceded them, the two measures received the same eight votes of approval and the three abstentions. The waste tip's guidelines of use cover such matters as public opening times (Monday through Saturday) and the types of waste to be accepted by the plant. The Formentera waste tip is currently under construction in the island's fledgling industrial park.

Two issues garnered the unanimous support of all those in attendance at the plenary. First, the signature of a deal between the Formentera Council and the Xarxa Digital de Comunicacions, an entity of the Balearic Islands autonomous community working to improve communication between local public safety forces and emergency services and those in the rest of the archipelago.

Also met with unanimous approval was the revision of an accord between the Council and the Port Authority concerning fire prevention, lifeguard and civil protection services in the area of the La Savina port considered under the Port Authority's jurisdiction.

In addition to up to €10,000 in material aid for emergency response services, Autoritat Portuària de Balears will, as part of the accord, provide Formentera an annual sum of €20,000 for the provision of fire prevention, lifeguard and civil protection services.

Also achieved thanks to yay votes by the governing party and the GUIF: ratification for the motion to provide services and preliminary approval of the regulations of use for the second-hand market historically held in el Jardí de ses Eres. The PP abstained from voting on this issue.

Of interest among the regulations of use for the market, its establishment on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10 am to 3 pm. The regulations also establish the Association of Second-Hand Markets (Associació de mercats de segona mà) as the managing entity of the market. The code of regulations will serve to guide participation in this public point of sale of used goods. Forbidden at the markets, however, is the sale of CDs, food, cosmetics, pornography, live animals and advertising.

Next, thanks to yay votes that came from the governing party and the PP and despite the abstention of the GUIF, approval was granted for a revision of the ordinance regulating hours of operation and live musical entertainment. The motion was conceived to favour those island establishments that remain open throughout the winter months and host live music.

Rather than allowing businesses to have live entertainment from 7–11pm or 9–11pm – a distinction that depended on the establishment in question – a broader time range was adopted that will allow performances from 5 pm to midnight. The administration defended the measure as an incentive for winter businesses, a positive move creating leisure activities for residents and a helping hand to local musicians.

This voting trend – unanimous yay votes minus abstention by GUIF members Javi Serra and Cristina Costa – was repeated for the measure to grant definitive approval for the Consortium of Social Services and Healthcare Workers of the Balearic Islands (Consorti de Serveis Socials i Sociosanitaris de les Illes Balears) and ratify the nominations of Formentera council members in other administrative bodies.

During the plenary two propositions were put forth by the PP. The first – a measure to help property renters on the island – had the support of the GUIF but not of the governing party. Bartomeu Escandell explained the rejection of the measure, saying that “[the proposal] didn't take into account the authority of the Govern on this matter. Moreover it is an issue completely out of the control of the local councils. 'La Llei de racionalització' forbids the councils from entering into matters that out of their jurisdiction.”

In a similar motion, the GxF and the PSOE put forth a proposal to ask the IBAVI, the regional housing authority, to take measures to solve the serious housing problem that exists on the island. Although all the parties in representation agreed that lack of affordable housing on Formentera was an issue requiring attention, and despite a favourable vote by the GUIF, the PP preferred abstention, claiming “pursuit of such a measure [was] already being studied for the first trimester of 2015.”

The second proposition by the PP was a rebate of the property tax (Impost de Béns Immobles) and the tax on waste collection for island businesses that remain open in the winter. The measure received three votes for and eight against. Speaking for the Council, councillor Escandell explained: “The law specifies the conditions for which an entity can receive tax rebates, and unfortunately these conditions do not include status as a commercial establishment. We cannot vote for something whose application would be illegal.”

The next issue to be raised was a petition to the Govern in Palma to remove the name of Jaume Matas from commemorative plaques that adorn Formentera municipal buildings. Despite differences of opinion during the debate surrounding the motion, the final vote was unanimously in favour.

Also approved unanimously: a official declaration by the Council regarding 25 November, celebrated as the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

Finally, President Jaume Ferrer appeared before the plenary to give a report his actions as head of the presidential cabinet and of Formentera local police.