

City Council Special Meeting of

8/4/2022 - Minutes

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Mayor Bell called the meeting to order at 10:49 am.

2. ROLL CALL

Keith Bell, Mayor

Kimberley Yancy, District A

Joe Compian, Mayor Pro-Tem/ District B (arrived at 10:51 am)

Michael Carlson, District C

Casey McAuliffe, District D

3. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Bell gave an invocation and veteran City Manager Garcia led the pledge.

4. CITIZENS PARTICIPATION

Sharon Sellers (103 Longridge), spoke to let the City know that tomorrow is her birthday, and is aware of the ongoing "saga" going on. She spoke of how the "two major players" once worked together and now the love affair is over. She states that whistleblowers often get "beat up pretty bad". This same person was once considered an asset to the community. "If you want racism to end stop making everything about race".

Terry Pettijohn (41 Borondo Stretch), submitted documentation questioning the validity of certain signature pages due to concerns regarding the residency of certain petitioners, and the validity of the affidavits that were signed regarding

Robert Michetich (24 N Curlew), questioned the additional certification. Says that they were released to the public, and had concerns regarding the public access to the petitions. If the Mayor decides against stepping down then this item should be on the next municipal election.

Joseph Lowry (2503 Cedar Dr.), "the lies of racism in this community have to stop". Stands before the council requesting the resignation of the Mayor, states that Councilwoman Yancy, is not fit to govern. Shared his concerns regarding the City Clerk's office, Police Department, and current public officials. He also asked for the termination of the City Clerk.

5. NEW BUSINESS

5.1. Recall Petition

***Mayor Pro Tem Compian presided over this item due to the nature of the item.*

Councilmember Carlson made a motion to accept the petition and the City Clerks certification as submitted. Councilmember McAuliffe seconded the motion. The motion passed with 3 ayes and 2 abstentions.

5.II. Review And Discuss Proposed Fiscal Year 2022-2023 Departmental Budgets And All Funds

****Mayor Pro Tem** spoke regarding the new tax rate calculations. He shared concerns regarding the calculations of both current and previous year's tax rates. Also questioned why the City of La Marque is the only one with two tax rate calculations. He asks that the 2021 tax rate calculations be recalculated, and then use those calculations to recalculate the 2022 calculations.

Robert Michetich (24 N Curlew), understands Compian's concerns regarding the recalculations, you don't ask the county to move backward, you do what you need to do and move forward.

Court:

Discussions regarding reduced staffing levels and the request for "extra help" among other clarifications of line items. It was determined that a reduction of over \$12,000 was made in this department for fiduciary reasons. Councilmember McAuliffe shared her displeasure with the Municipal Court team still being housed in conditions that were scheduled to be addressed in the current fiscal year.

James Osteen (2012 Jeridona), asked City Manager to review the Workers' Compensation line item for the department, the reduction in this item could be problematic as the department has gone over this line item for the past two years.

City Manager:

Discussions regarding the funding mechanism for the salaries of this department, due to the nature of their work the City Manager has allocated a portion of the salary funding to be done through the enterprise fund. Clarifications regarding the difference between the debt services fund and enterprise funds.

Discussions regarding city subscriptions and volunteers commenced.

James Osteen (2012 Jeridona), clarified questions regarding the retirement line item, group health insurance, funding for the summer internship, and the emergency contingency fund.

Animal Control:

There was a small increase in the cost.

****Mayor Bell recessed the meeting at 12:59 pm and reconvened at 3:03 pm**

Economic Development Corporation:

Chairman Ron Crowder gave a brief history of the EDC and explained that their budget is determined by .5 cent of sales tax collected in the City, as determined by a vote of the people over 20 years ago. He stated that at incorporation the EDC began with a little under \$300,000 and currently there is an estimated \$1.3 million. The EDC gives loans and grants to local businesses and assists with economic growth in the city.

Economic Development Director presented a balanced conservative budget, taking into account the major construction that is happening within the city. Council clarified items such as grants and donations, travel, business retention efforts, and the distinction between Economic Development

Corporations and Industrial Development Corporations. The La Marque Economic Development Corporation is a Type A sales tax entity, which determines the tax use, the means of altering the tax, and also the oversight of the corporation whereas Type B allows for the expansion of expenditures beyond just the limits given by Type A entities which are focused on the expansion of sales tax and/or employment.

A brief discussion relating to upcoming projects, incoming businesses, and future initiatives, as well as the viability of sales tax allocations, and potential partners for the corporation to utilize.

James Osteen (2012 Jeridona), the budget book shows more expenditures than revenues even though the trend shows more than enough to cover the difference. Director Getty shared that there are some differences in what the board proposed and what appears in the budget book. He also clarified other concerns regarding current balances, projection calculations, and funding of future projects.

Library:

The Library team (Director Amy Miller and Tom Hansen) gave an overview of trends in the Library over the last 3 years. Discussions regarding budget cuts and how these reductions of available funds will impact the services available to the community.

Jackie Pennington (924 Cypress), thanked the Library for all that they do and how they impact the community.

Council:

Councilmember McAuliffe suggested eliminating the Council's discretionary funds for the year in lieu of the 50% reduction proposed by staff.

City Clerk:

The City Clerk (Kierra Nance) gave a brief overview of the current status of the department, volume increases in workload, and upcoming projects. Discussions regarding the financial decision to reduce the department to a single-member staff ensued followed by a discussion regarding public information systems.

Councilmember McAuliffe shared concerns regarding the extreme increases in volume and lack of staffing in this area. Mayor Bell also shared concerns regarding staffing levels. Councilmember Carlson clarified questions regarding public information processes. Councilmember Yancy shared her dismay at the current financial constraints

Sally Austin (310 Newman), questioned if the additional requests were a result of overseeing police records. This was reclarified by the City Clerk to be one of the elements that contributed to request growth in 2021 and 2022 as the City Council formalized a request process in 2021.

James Osteen (2012 Jeridona), encouraged the City Clerk to utilize extension letters in public information processes.

Human Resources:

A small COLA increase was included but overall the Human Resources budget is standard. Human Resources Director Patty Rees shared her thoughts on the proposed COLA, the costs of bringing on new employees, revisiting the employee handbook, and other regular duties of the department. Council clarified questions regarding employee retention figures shown in the proposal.

Sally Austin (310 Newman Rd) questioned the employee Christmas Party, although it was cut is it necessary?

5.III. Items For The Good Of The Order

Mayor reminded the public of the regular City Council meeting on August 8, 2022.

City Manager Garcia announced that Tuesday's meeting will begin with the

There is a deadline of August 5, 2022 to accept funds from H-GAC

6. EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was no executive session.

7. ACTIONS TAKEN FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION

No actions were taken.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Councilmember Yancy made a motion to adjourn. Councilmember Carlson seconded the motion. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

***Meeting was adjourned at 5:59 p.m.*

DRAFT