



**CITY OF LA MARQUE
CITY COUNCIL
SPECIAL MINUTES
of
JULY 25, 2023**

Minutes of a Special Meeting held in the Council Chambers at 1109-B Bayou Road La Marque, Texas as well as via videoconference hosted through Zoom on July 25, 2023, beginning at 10:00 AM :

7/25/2023 - Minutes

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Mayor Bell called the meeting to order at 10:19 a.m.

2. ROLL CALL

All members of council were present with Councilmember Yancy arriving at 1:52 p.m.

3. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Pro Tem Compian gave the invocation and Councilmember Carlson led the pledge.

4. NEW BUSINESS

4.I. Review And Discuss Proposed Fiscal Year 2022-2023 Departmental Budgets And All Funds

City Manager began the day discussing the Youth Fund highlighting the Youth Summer Internship and desires to focus on more juvenile crime prevention, more youth programming, and potentially a collegiate-level internship.

Mayor Pro Tem Compian shared that he believes that some of the categories and line items shown in the budgets be "sunset" to provide more clarity since they are no longer being utilized.

4.I.i. City Council

This item was not discussed.

4.I.ii. Administration

This item was not discussed.

4.I.iii. Human Resources

This item was not discussed.

4.I.iv. Finance

Brad Angst of Stifel spoke regarding debt services and capital expenditures—discussions relating to additional debt, Maintenance and Operations vs. Interest and Sinking budgets, and the city's current debt services ensued, including comparisons of the City's processes and common practices across the state, which were in line with current operations.

The City currently has 8 outstanding debt obligations going back as far as 2014. These debts include, \$2.5 million (issued Dec. 2014), \$9.8 million (issued June 2016), \$2.5 million issued (issued Sept. 2017), \$3.3 million (issued Jan. 2018), \$6 million (issued Aug. 2018), \$1.3 million (issued Jan. 2020), \$7.6 million (issued July 2020), and \$650,000 (issued Feb. 2022).

***Councilmember Carlson exited the room at 2:46 p.m.*

4.I.v. Development Services

Discussions relating to increases in commercial development, updates on residential developments, permitting and impact fees, and the development of a city geographical information system.

City Manager Garcia presented the council with a current vacant building and lot list.

4.I.vi. Code Enforcement

Discussions relating to pay equity, staffing concerns, certifications, lien payoffs, and enforcement procedures.

4.I.vii. Municipal Court

City Marshall Washington, Court Administrator Bell, and Municipal Judge Pettijohn spoke for the department. Discussions relating to spacing, staffing, reinstating a juvenile case manager position, relocating to City Hall, and a proposal for centralized cashiering ensued.

Discussions were held relating to the apprehension individuals feel relating to municipal court being housed in the police department.

***Mayor Bell closed the meeting for lunch at 12:36 p.m. and reconvened at 1:52 p.m.*

4.I.viii. Police

This year the police department reintroduced Community Policing, 8 new community watch groups, working on Safe City Initiative, introduced CompStat meetings, received both COPS and TAPS grants, and reduced the crime rate by approximately 13%.

The department is working towards accreditation and anticipates completion by 2026.

Chief Aragon shared that there are spacing issues and areas of concern regarding the police vehicles and the inability to receive the 10 new vehicles that have been ordered.

Discussions relating to the spacing in the police station and staffing ensued.

4.I.ix. FIRE/EMS

***Councilmember Carlson entered the meeting at 5:01 p.m.*

City Manager Garcia gave a brief overview of the staffing levels of the department. Chief Merryman shared that a year ago, there were 9 vacancies in the department, and to date, all positions have been filled except for one.

Chief Merryman shared that the department has seen another increase in call volume, had multiple staff members successfully complete paramedics school, added 5 CPR instructors, increased the amount of child safety seat technicians on staff, created a mission statement, and improved morale in the department. He also shared that there have been issues with maintenance on service vehicles and more delays in the remounting of the two ambulances originally projected to have been received in October of 2021.

Discussions related to training ensued. Chief Merryman shared documents to show the certifications achieved by the department this year. The council congratulated Chief Merryman and his team for their hard work. This led to a discussion relating to requested personnel increases for the upcoming year.

4.I.x. City Clerk

This item was not addressed.

4.I.xi. Library

Library Director Miller shared that the library is working towards providing more social services for the community. Libraries are often thought to be a "storehouse for books," but they are growing beyond that, although those services are still available. There is currently a vacancy in the library for a Youth Services Librarian, and she would like to restructure that position to be a Youth Programming Coordinator. She has also proposed new job titles for department staff to better align with the work that is done.

Discussions relating to the possibilities of the Youth Programming Coordinator and the possibilities of implementing experiential learning ensued.

Discussions relating to utilizing park rental fees and potentially reinstituting community room rentals to support youth services better.

4.I.xii. Public Works

***Mayor Bell took a brief recess at 4:07 p.m. and reconvened at 4:30 p.m.*

City Manager Garcia gave a brief report of the first year of a dedicated parks division. Councilmember Carlson asked clarifying questions about the low overtime costs this year. City Manager Garcia clarified that most of the park's staff overtime budget is due to special events, and this year an effort was made to charge those overtime expenditures to the associated event budgets.

Councilmember Yancy shared that there is still no park in District A and questioned if land donations are acceptable. City Attorney Knebel shared that there is an avenue available if that is something that individuals would like to do.

Mayor Bell questioned what the plan is for clearing the service center. Public Works Director Sailer shared that some of the equipment is out for auction. However, none has been sold to date. If it does not sell at auction, the plan is to scrap them. Mayor emphasized that this is a project of priority this year. It is inefficient, a safety hazard, and is not a good position for the city to be in.

Discussions ensued regarding the safety and cleanliness of the Service Center.

Discussions relating to equipment dedicated to street repairs ensued.

4.I.xiii. Utility Billing

This item was not addressed.

4.I.xiv. Economic Development Corporation

This item was not addressed.

4.I.xv. IT

This item was not addressed.

4.I.xvi. Emergency Management

This item was not addressed.

4.I.xvii. Facilities

This item was not addressed.

4.I.xviii. Public Relations

Public Relations Specialist Pritchett spoke regarding the duties and responsibilities of the position and asked for clarity regarding the new direction that the office will take.

City Manager Garcia shared that he has tasked Mr. Pritchett with cultivating a professional image for the city and he has taken on the task head on.

4.I.xix. Citywide Expenditures

This item was not addressed.

4.I.xx. Boards And Commissions

This item was not addressed.

4.II. Organizational Chart

This item was not addressed.

5. EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was no executive session.

6. ACTIONS TAKEN FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION

No items were taken.

7. ADJOURNMENT

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

***Meeting was adjourned at 6:34 p.m.*

Keith Bell

Mayor

Kierra K. Nance, TRMC

City Clerk