



**CITY OF LA MARQUE
PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING COMMITTEE
REGULAR MINUTES
of
December 2, 2024**

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:03 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Present:

Dashiel Cantu	Member
Jose Divora	Member
Jamie Loftis	Member
Robert Michetich	Member
Wilmon Smith	Member
Sally Austin	Alternate
Jackie Pennington	Alternate

Staff Members

Joseph Lowry	Councilmember District C
Cesar Garcia	City Manager
Joshua Pritchett	Deputy City Manager
Kierra Nance	City Clerk
Randall Aragon	Police Chief
Gilberto Rodriguez	Police Lieutenant
Forrest Gandy	Police Lieutenant

Absent:

Conan King	Alternate
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3. CITIZENS PARTICIPATION

There was no citizen participation.

4. NEW BUSINESS

4.1. Electing a Committee Chairperson and Vice Chairperson

Committee member Michetich made a motion to elect Committee member Cantu as Chairperson. Committee member Divora seconded. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Committee Member Divora made a motion to elect Committee Member Smith as

Vice Chairperson. Committee member Loftis seconded. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

4.II. Scheduling subsequent meeting dates

Chairperson Cantu made a motion to schedule the next meeting for January 6, 2025 at 5:00 p.m. Committee member Divora seconded. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

4.III. Reviewing the assessments of the 2022 Public Safety Building Committee

Committee member Michetich shared his concerns with the previous recommendation, citing lack of parking and elevated costs.

Chairperson Cantu questioned if everyone is on the same page that a new station is needed. It was determined that the a new station is needed.

Committee member Michetich cited a need to assess current city owned facilities. He proposed considering 2 buildings for court and the police department starting with a review of buildings the city currently owns to see if they would be a viable location.

Vice Chairperson Smith questioned if funding something that the committee is to consider.

City Manager Garcia clarified that the committee is to do a needs assessment and make a recommendation.

Discussions regarding the inclusion of municipal courts ensued.

In an effort to create a structure for the committee Chairperson Cantu recommended that the committee first begins with selecting a location.

Committee member Michetich asked Chief Aragon if the current proposal of the previous committee is sufficient for their needs.

Chief Aragon recommended refurbishing a building, and there are properties within the city that could meet the needs of the department if refurbished correctly. He did believe that the current proposal would be sufficient to meet the needs of the department.

Committee member Loftis asked if some of the buildings that the chief has seen or recommends, would be available for the committee to review and possibly recommend an agreement.

Chief Aragon stated that he knows of a few buildings that would be large enough but he not sure that they are "worthy", that would take more review.

Vice Chairperson Smith questioned the size of the building the previous committee recommended.

It was determined that the previous committee recommended a space of 28,000 sq. ft.

Committee member Michetich stated that the previous committee focused on retaining the station in the current location. However, with the growth is on the west side of the city, and the larger tax base, he felt that there should be a police presence there.

Deputy City Manager Pritchett spoke, sharing that this has been considered. He then raised the question, if the station moves to a new location, does the current station remain a La Marque Police Department asset? Even with the growth on the west side, the city cannot ignore the needs of the east side of the town.

Discussions regarding locations and operations' effect on response time ensued.

Committee member Michetich questioned the use of the "ABC" buildings. Chief Aragon reported that one building is storage, another is currently being used as office space for the police department, and the other houses public works. The building currently being used for storage, is slated for youth activities in the future. He also would like to hear the chief's recommendations regarding the other properties within the city.

Chairperson Cantu is curious to know what the citizens would like. Some residents may want the station nearby, while others do not. He also addressed the flooding concerns in the "ABC" buildings, stating that it would need to be addressed before any movement.

City Manager Garcia shared that the geographical center of the city based on current population growth and trends would make the center of the city near the "Kelley's" area. He also identified some areas of concern in the current facility. Committee member Michetich cautioned that the committee needs to be cognizant of what is to come in terms of the city's growth pattern.

Chief Aragon shared that the committee could have the greatest plan, but there are concerns if it has to go to a bond. The city has never passed a bond before. City Manager Garcia informed the committee that there are additional funding capabilities such as a United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) loan which is similar to a Certificate of Obligation, the method the city used to build the central fire station, but at a lower interest rate.

Committee member Smithy recommended that the city/committee involve as many stakeholders as possible, it shouldn't feel like a decision is being "forced down their throat".

Discussions regarding bond elections, timing, and the need for community engagement ensued.

Committee member Smith asked questions about the RFP process for the architect. He also spoke regarding the process that the City of Hitchcock utilized, commissioning engineering students to draw up the design of their new facility. He recommended touring other agencies through this process.

Committee member Loftis shared her belief that the current station, with some rehabilitation, would be a nice substation.

Discussions regarding the use of substations ensued.

Committee member Divora questioned if there are any buildings in the city that would be sufficient currently.

Lieutenant Rodriguez spoke of the current facility that the Special Response Team has been using for training. It is a 28,000 square ft building, and if the layout is set properly, it would definitely be a sufficient space.

4.IV. Requesting items to be added to future agendas

Discussions regarding inviting the financial advisor to the next meeting ensued. However, it was determined that the committee should focus on location first.

Committee member Divora requested a list of viable buildings.

Discussions ensued regarding the role and responsibilities of the committee.

Committee member Loftis requested that the previous architect attend next meeting.

Committee Member Michetich requested a tour of the city properties known as

the "ABC" buildings and the property being used for Special Response training immediately preceding the 5:00 meeting on January 6.

5. REQUESTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no requests or announcements.

6. ADJOURNMENT

***Meeting was adjourned at 6:40 p.m.*

Dashiel Cantu, Chairperson

Kierra K. Nance, TRMC City Clerk