



**CITY OF LA MARQUE
CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MINUTES
of
March 10, 2025**

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Mayor Bell called the meeting to order at 6:05 P.M.

2. ROLL CALL

PRESENT:

Keith Bell	Mayor
Joe Compian	Mayor Pro Tem/District B
Kimberley Yancy	District A
Joseph Lowry	District C (arrived at 7:14 p.m. via zoom - 2503 Cedar Dr La
James Ross	Marque, TX 77568)
	District D

3. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Interim City Manager Joshua Pritchett gave the invocation and Councilmember Ross led the pledge.

4. AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

4.I. Proclamation - Fix A Leak Week

Members of the Public Works Department, including Oscar Del Bosque, Kaleb Allen, Esteban Martinez, and Michael Jackson, received a proclamation honoring Fix A Leak Week.

4.II. Proclamation - Autoimmune Awareness Month

Resident Delon Delafosse accepted a proclamation recognizing Autoimmune Awareness Month.

5. CITIZENS PARTICIPATION

Harvey Freebird shared his discontent with asking people to give up their 4th amendment rights, when there are individuals who will use this information. He shared that the police have not arrested him and the DA won't prosecute him, because he hasn't committed a crime. He spoke about an incident regarding himself and a council member. He spoke to his discontent with policing in this country.

Justin McDonald (3 Pine Cir) spoke to a neighbor in a dispute regarding trees in the neighborhood. He questioned liability and citations. He and the other residents of the street would like this neighbor to stay off their street.

James Daniels (Texas City, TX) "commissioned" the Mayor and Council, saying the community is "tired and fed up" with the negativity of a Councilmember regarding La

Marque, and it has now spilled over into Texas City. He did not like the push for a "trifecta of recalls" of local officials. The community does not need this type of negativity. "We have had enough". He asked the council and attorney to speak with the individual. He told the council to keep doing what they are doing, not to let one person ruin it.

Robert Michetich (24 N Curlew) requested that the council amend the heavy industrial ordinance to put a boundary limited to the east side of Interstate 45. There is a lot of residential development on the west side and this would kill that. He is glad that the ethics ordinance has not been removed as he has some for each Councilmember and the attorney.

Re'Chard Loftis (309 Johnson St) asked the council to take a ride through District A to see the streets, trash, and ditches. He has reached out to city administration and Councilmember Yancy and all have been responsive. He also advocated for Public Works to receive a raise this budget season. He also spoke regarding the ethics issue on the agenda: "this community has been under attack for 4 years... people are getting tired of it". He feels that eventually someone will get hurt, and then someone will want to do something, but by then it will be too late. He felt that the council needed to step up and not be scared.

6. PRESENTATIONS

6.1. Axon Presentation

Brayden Herrera, Account Representative of Axon, gave a brief history and overview of the company. The police department already utilizes Axon products. This new proposal will upgrade the equipment: body cameras, and dash cameras. This proposal allows for the products to be renewed every 2.5 to 5 years depending on the product. It also includes cloud storage, to prevent potential threats to the system.

The proposal is a 5-year contract with 34 new body cameras to be refreshed every 2.5 years, 8 docking stations to be refreshed every 2.5 years, and unlimited storage. There are also 27 fleet systems to be refreshed every 5 years, with unlimited storage. Axon also provides 24/7 customer service and product trials. Mayor Pro Tem Compian questioned the "pre-event buffer" time and questioned the placement of the in-car cameras.

Mr. Herrera, shared that this is customizable. This timing can range from 30 seconds to 3 minutes.

Mayor Bell questioned the connectivity of the tasers and cameras.

Mr. Herrera, shared that this is also customizable by department, including having the cameras being automatically turned on at the time of activating lights, crash, speed, etc.

Interim City Manager Pritchett advised council that this item would be addressed for action later in the meeting.

7. PUBLIC HEARINGS

***Mayor Bell recessed the Regular Meeting and entered into Public Hearings at 6:48 p.m.*

7.I. Ordinance No. O-2025-0003

Robert Michetich (24 N Curlew) reiterated his request to limit this zone to the east side of Interstate 45. This includes properties already owned, and keeps heavy industrial near the refineries without "killing" the current and future development. "You may not see it in 10 years, but in 15 years you will not recognize this area."

7.II. Ordinance No. O-2025-0004

There were no public comments.

7.III. Ordinance No. O-2025-0005

There were no public comments.

8. OLD BUSINESS

***Mayor Bell closed the Public Hearings and reconvened the Regular Meeting at 6:54 p.m.*

8.I. Ordinance No. O-2025-0003

Councilmember Yancy made a motion to adopt Ordinance No. O-2025-0003. Mayor Pro Tem Compian seconded.

Mayor Pro Tem Compian asked that the boundary of Main St and Interstate 45 as well as Interstate 146 be included.

Attorney John Hightower spoke, identifying that this would be creating a false assurance, as all anyone would need to do to change it is to create a new ordinance.

City Attorney Knebel shared the process of having a property rezoned reiterating that regardless of the owner, this process would need to be followed in order to be rezoned into the new heavy industrial classification.

Discussions regarding the necessity of the boundary amendment and the legalities of it ensued.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

8.II. Ordinance No. O-2025-0004

Councilmember Ross made a motion to adopt Ordinance No. O-2025-0004.

Councilmember Yancy seconded.

Mayor Bell identified that this is a rezone request from Land & Sea who is looking to expand their business.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

8.III. City Attorney Services

City Attorney Knebel shared that this item is a continuation of the discussion from the previous council meeting as Mayor Pro Tem Compian wanted to finalize the discussions on the City Attorney position first.

Once it was determined that the discussion could continue, City Attorney Knebel reiterated that his bills had increased over the past 12 months and it caused him concern, so he wanted to bring it to the council's attention.

***Mayor Bell addressed a disruption from a zoom participant, and requested that the Information Technology personnel mute the individual.*

***The individual disrupts again.*

***Mayor Bell asked the Interim City Manager to address the concern further, up to and including law enforcement intervention if there is another disruption.*

City Attorney Knebel proceeded, stating that he has separated his bills for the past 6 months in order to assist in budgeting the city can pinpoint exactly where his hours are being spent. He recommended that the council consider setting limits on unauthorized communications in order to reduce spending.

Councilmember Ross proposed a revision to the council budget converting each district's budget into an operating budget, that will "literally nickel and dime" the council to be transparent with the citizens. He stated that if there is a limit of 3-4 hours on each council member, then add \$1000 to their budget and that

Councilmember would need to have the council approve any additional spending. Mayor Pro Tem Compian had conflicting thoughts about the recommendation, but is always for financial planning. He asked everyone to remember legal services have a hefty hourly charge, so \$1000 would only likely be approximately 3 hours. City Attorney Knebel clarified that this limit would not be related to items that had been brought before the council, as he would have already received clear directions on the council's desire to move forward with the item.

Mayor Pro Tem Compian requested examples of other cities that have taken a similar position.

Councilmember Yancy requested the average bill for a Councilmember or to produce the highest cost for the council to create a limit.

***Councilmember Lowry entered the meeting virtually at 7:29 p.m.*

Councilmember Lowry shared his discontent with Attorney Knebel, stating that he particularly doesn't like speaking with the attorney, as he prefers to "hire reputable ones". He feels that he has been "on a blackout" since Mr. Garcia left and feels that the attorney does not like to be challenged.

Mayor Bell requested that Councilmember Lowry speak to the agenda item.

***After a brief disagreement Councilmember Lowry was muted and exited the meeting.*

Councilmember Ross again proposed the itemized budget solution.

Mayor Bell asked City Clerk Nance if the city currently had a policy to address this topic. It was determined that at the time of the meeting no such policy existed. City Clerk Nance assured him that there was not one on file for this particular situation.

Mayor Pro Tem Compian shared his discomfort with moving forward without having another city as a reference that has implemented this policy.

THIS ITEM WAS TABLED.

8.IV. Boards and Commissions

Mayor Pro Tem Compian nominated Robert Young for Parks Board, in place of Ms. Tamara Smith.

Councilmember Ross nominated Bim Crowder to the Cemetery Board for reappointment, in light of the news that he is currently a residential property owner.

Councilmember Yancy seconded all nominations.

NOMINATIONS CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

9. NEW BUSINESS

9.I. Ordinance No. O-2025-0005

Brent Berthier of Adico Engineering gave a brief overview of the amended impact fees before the council, citing a location on Newman Road that presented an opportunity due to utility needs. He recommended impact fees in the amount of \$8448.70.

Discussions regarding local municipalities assessed fees ensued.

Mayor Pro Tem Compian questioned if current builders and current plans could be "grandfathered" at the current rate.

City Attorney Knebel shared that the government code states the property is assessed at the rate in effect at the time of submission.

Councilmember Yancy questioned the current rate.

It was determined that the current rates are approximately \$3770.

Members of the council including Mayor Bell, Mayor Pro Tem Compian, and Councilmember Yancy, shared their discontent with the stark contrast between the current and proposed rates citing various reasons why the increase is too expensive.

Mayor Bell requested that ADICO bring back a rate that is more appealing.

NO ACTION TAKEN.

9.II. Resolution No. R-2025-0016

Councilmember Ross made a motion to adopt Resolution No. R-2025-0016. Mayor Pro Tem Compian seconded. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

9.III. ARPA #2647 Bid Award for LM 24-16

Councilmember Ross requested an updated ARPA expenditure list.

Councilmember Yancy made a motion to approve the purchase DuraPatcher P2 Trailer from Monmouth Solutions, Inc. in the amount of \$144,499.00.

Councilmember Ross seconded. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

9.IV. ARPA #2232 Bid Award for LM 24-17

Interim City Manager Pritchett stated that this purchase is the city's effort to be lean in its street repair and maintenance expenses.

Mayor Pro Tem Compian questioned why this award was not being awarded to RB Everett, as they are listed as the lowest bidder.

Interim Public Works Director Breaux stated that the company RB Everett actually submitted an incomplete bid.

Mayor Pro Tem Compian pointed out a discrepancy between the statements made by Interim Public Works Director Breaux, and the submitted documentation.

Mayor Bell questioned who would have been responsible for the complete or incomplete designation.

City Clerk Nance clarified that while her office received all the bids, the grading was done by a panel. She would need time to discover who was on this particular panel.

It was determined that the grading panel was Assistant Public Works Director Amanda Hobby and Finance Director Christine Turner, witnessed by Deputy City Clerk Kasey Lott.

Extensive discussion regarding the submissions received ensued, regarding the receipt of multiple bids from RB Everett, the number of bids received, and the

need to clarify with Assistant Public Works Director Hobby.
THIS ITEM WAS TABLED.

9.V. Wisteria Drainage Improvement - Award Bid

Interim Public Works Director Shannon Breau clarified that the department received 2 bids on this project and would like to move forward.

He did clarify that this project is over budget, by approximately 75,000, meaning the city would need to either modify the project, pay the difference, or eliminate the project overall.

Grant Administrator Alex Sievers reiterated that the city received \$500,000 in grant funding with a \$75,000 match.

Councilmember Yancy made a motion to award a contract for the Wisteria Drainage Improvements Project to Mar-Con Services, LLC for the amount of \$535,088.50. Councilmember Ross seconded.

Discussions regarding the cost of engineering, administration, and construction ensued. After the cost of engineering and administrative fees, there are approximately \$325,000 available for construction.

***Councilmember Yancy exited the meeting at 8:03 p.m.*

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 3 AYES 1 ABSENT (YANCY)

9.VI. Purchase of Cameras

***Councilmember Yancy returned at 8:08 p.m.*

Brief discussions regarding payments ensued, to include grant funding, seizure funds, bond money, and budgetary funding over the next 4 years.

Mayor Pro Tem Compian made a motion to approve the purchase of Body-Worn Cameras and In-Car Cameras with Axon Enterprise, Inc. in an amount not to exceed \$620,000.00. Councilmember Yancy seconded. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

9.VII. Texas Police Chiefs Association Best Practices Accreditation Program

***Mayor Pro Tem Compian exited the room at 8:14 p.m.*

Chief Randall Aragon announced that the department will have 2 years to complete accreditation after the agreement is signed.

***Mayor Pro Tem Compian returned to the meeting at 8:16 p.m.*

Councilmember Yancy questioned if the city had been accredited before?

It was determined that the city had never been accredited before.

Councilmember Yancy made a motion to approve the La Marque Police Department's participation in the Texas Police Chiefs Association Best Practices Accreditation Program. Councilmember Ross seconded. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

9.VIII. Special Events Committee

Mayor Bell shared that he requested this item because of the quantity and complexity of events. He felt that the best approach would be a joint effort between volunteers and staff members. He proposed a group of internal stakeholders such as finance, public works, police, fire, and communications. Along with community stakeholders such as representation from the Parks Board,

Keep La Marque Beautiful Commission, and Economic Development Corporation. He also recommended 2 community volunteer appointees made by the Mayor but ratified by the council. The proposal having the Mayor and Mayor Pro Tem as ex-officio members.

Councilmember Ross shared that he thought it was a great idea.

Councilmember Ross made a motion to establish a Special Events Committee.

Councilmember Yancy seconded. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

9.IX. Grant Administrator Purchase Orders

Interim City Manager Pritchett shared that this is a housekeeping item, as the total is above the limit placed on the City Manager's Office.

Clarifications regarding an invoice for funding for Fleming Bridge ensued, followed by other invoice location and funding source clarifications.

Mayor Pro Tem Compian made a motion to authorize the payment of the outstanding grant administrator purchase orders. Councilmember Ross seconded. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

10. CITY MANAGER REPORT

***Item 10.II was pulled for discussion*

10.I. February 2025 GLO Public Infrastructure Project Update
Stood as submitted.

10.II. La Marque Public Library January Statistics
The council gave kudos to Ms. Miller and her team. Councilmember Yancy recommended a "Joyce Bell Literary Festival" in 2026.

10.III. January 2025 City Council Monthly Finance Report
Stood as submitted.

10.IV. Items for the Good of the Order

Interim City Manager Pritchett announced the State of the Cities on Wednesday, March 12 with Texas City-La Marque Chamber of Commerce and the City of Texas City.

He followed by announcing March 20 as the State of La Marque. The city is accepting questions and there will be a presentation by the city.

He stated that Galveston County Day at the Capitol was an early morning and late night but a wonderful day. La Marque was singled out for their representation at the event.

The Library has plenty of activities for spring break for the community to attend.

He also announced the Bon Temps Roulette Cajun Throwdown event to be held on March 21-22 and Trash Bash on March 29th.

The Easter Egg Hunt for the Blind and Visually Impaired Children will be held on April 12.

11. EXECUTIVE SESSION

***Mayor Bell recessed the Regular Meeting and entered in to Executive Session at 8:45 p.m.*

11.I. Section 551.074 (Personnel Matter)

11.II. Section 551.074 (Personnel Matter)

12. ACTIONS TAKEN FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION

***Mayor Bell closed the Executive Session and reconvened the Regular Meeting at 9:34 p.m.*

12.I. Section 551.074 (Personnel Matter)

Councilmember Ross made a motion to continue services with Mills Shirley LLP. Councilmember Yancy seconded.

Mayor Pro Tem Compian shared that we are very fortunate as a community to have two impeccable legal entities that responded to the request. La Marque should be very proud. He personally felt that a change was needed.

Councilmember Yancy shared that this was not a easy decision, and expectations would be bigger. "We need to be tougher, and more assertive.... or we will end up back here in one year".

Mayor Bell gave his thoughts, stating it has been an eventful year, and there is no manual for how to handle chaos. He applauds Mr. Knebel, for even attempting to swim. Mr. Knebel is not corrupt. He is not part of a criminal enterprise. He is a partner at the oldest law firm in the state of Texas and is just trying to do the right thing. The City is just looking for a more assertive attorney and that is something that has to be learned.

MOTION CARRIED WITH 3 AYES AND 1 NAY (COMPIAN).

12.II. Section 551.074 (Personnel Matter)

Councilmember Yancy made a motion to censure Councilmember District C for the charge of violating council ethics section 5.b paragraphs 2 and 3 for comments made towards the Councilmembers from District A and D, and also for comments and threats made against Harvey Freebird.

City Attorney Knebel read the sections referenced in to the record.

Councilmember Ross seconded.

Councilmember Yancy shared that Councilmember District C had routinely attacked the husband of Councilmember District A, her children, and the residents of District A, calling them a criminal district. "What we do for one we do for all" and "with accountability comes responsibility". She asked if individuals cannot represent their constituents and follow the rules that they step down. She asked that everyone represent their residents.

Councilmember Ross expressed that he was called a derogatory name by the Councilmember in question via text, right as he began his statement. He shared harmful comments that were made regarding himself, his partner and his child. "We as a city need to move forward and move on".

Mayor Pro Tem Compian shared that the councilmember's conduct is not ethical and hurts people. He does not agree with what the Councilmember does with other people. It's not easy to remain impartial. He does not agree with any comments he has heard, but he does not read them. He likes to get along with everyone, he knows all the councilmembers, and there is "absolutely nothing

there". He will abstain from the vote, but not vote against it. He believes that there is a dynamic group of individuals on the council.

Mayor Bell shared that an abstention is essentially a "no" vote in this level of government. "This is a government, we do not have time to be in preschool anymore". Mayor Bell states that he has a meeting to run, and that will be disturbed no longer. The mayor is appalled at the accusations being made, and he is sick of it. "Enough is enough".

MOTION CARRIED WITH 3 AYES AND 1 ABSTENTION (COMPIAN).

13. REQUESTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Interim City Manager Pritchett announced that there are currently 180 different municipal police departments that have obtained accreditation through the Texas Police Chief Association. He also shared that item 9.IV will be brought before the council at the next meeting as he would like for Assistant Director Hobby to be present to present.

Councilmember Ross encouraged everyone to "come out" to clean up Mac McGaffey Highland Bayou Park on March 29, 2025 and shared his excitement for the Easter egg hunt.

Councilmember Yancy acknowledged Women's international Month. She also reiterated her desire for the Joyce Bell literary Event in 2026 and also proposed naming the music arena after Kay Bailey Hutchinson, a daughter of the city, and the public library after Geraldine Sam. Galveston County Day was an amazing day. She welcomed a new pastor at Progressive Church and recognized the passing of Minister J. Bass. She requested an update on the historical district and La Marque High School.

***Councilmember Ross exited the meeting at 10:09 p.m. and returned at 10:10 p.m.*

Mayor Pro Tem Compián thanked all the councilmembers and staff who attended Galveston County Day. He appreciated City Attorney Knebel for attending at his own expense, as he did for the All America City event. There is a Senior Breakfast on Wednesday at Greater Barbours Chappel and the State of the Cities the same day at 11:30 a.m.. He thanked the Fire department for their CPR class and requested research on load limits for city streets.

Mayor Bell was saddened by the passing of two integral parts of the community, Alan Waters of the Planning & Zoning Committee, and Ms. Rose McGaffey. He sent his prayers to both families, as both individuals are irreplaceable and will be sorely missed. He also reiterated his support for the Easter Egg Hunt for the Visually Impaired as supported by the La Marque Fire Union.

14. ADJOURNMENT

Councilmember Yancy made a motion to adjourn. Councilmember Ross seconded.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

***Meeting was adjourned at 10:16 p.m.*