



**CITY OF LA MARQUE
CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MINUTES
of
April 28, 2025**

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Mayor Bell called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

PRESENT:

Keith Bell

Mayor

Joe Compian

Mayor Pro Tem/ District B

Kimberley Yancy

District A

Joseph Lowry

District C

James Ross

District D

3. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Rev. Dr. Timmy Sykes gave the invocation and Mayor Pro Tem Compian led the pledge.

4. PRESENTATIONS

4.I. Proclamation: Autism Acceptance Month

Lieutenant Forrest Gandy accepted a proclamation honoring Autism Acceptance Month.

4.II. Proclamation: Drinking Water Week

Members of the Public Works team, including Water Operator II Martin Saucedo, accepted a proclamation honoring Drinking Water Week.

4.III. Proclamation: Lemonade Day

Economic Development Director Alex Getty accepted a proclamation honoring Lemonade Day on May 3, 2025. Director Getty encouraged the community to support the young entrepreneurs who will be participating in this annual event.

4.IV. Proclamation: World Migratory Bird Day

La Marque Parks Board Vice-Chair Tonia Griffin accepted a proclamation honoring World Migratory Bird Day.

4.V. Presentation: Economic Development Corporation Update

Economic Development Director Alex Getty gave a brief presentation regarding the activities of the Economic Development Corporation including a brief history, a snapshot of the residential growth in the community, highlights of some new businesses, marketing tools provided for local businesses, and awards and opportunities the corporation and city have received.

Councilmember Ross shared that he has not ever received a copy of Inside La Marque delivered to his home. Director Getty stated that he would look into that further.

Councilmember Ross also publicly apologized to Director Getty and the Board of Directors for his delivery when presenting information at the board meeting the previous week.

Mayor Bell asked for an update on the sales tax audit.

5. CITIZENS PARTICIPATION

- Jack Mazzola (21 S. Flamingo) congratulated Chief Aragon, his staff, and the officers for reducing crime. He urged the community to step up and if they see something, say something. He hears voices in the background speaking about overpolicing, and he does not feel that way at all. He encouraged the police chief to park a car on his street any time, "We enjoy the police".
- Carl Beard (Pennsylvania Ave) says that police officers have been "stonewalling" reports against a certain Councilmember for the past 3 years. However, the same councilmember has been able to lodge complaints against community members for actions, that he claims, the Councilmember has done to other councilmembers. He spoke to a video that shows the Councilmember in question following a news reporter in an act that he called "harassing" and listing actions that he believes are crimes in the state of Texas. He stated that it is time that the community gets an answer from the District Attorney regarding the charges.

***Councilmember Lowry exited at 6:46 p.m.*

- Harvey Freebird ("Joseph Lowry's Head") states that a Councilmember stalked and harassed him last weekend citing various messages he received through the weekend. He stated that he published the information on his Youtube channel to show that "this isn't just a harmless prank, this is obsessive threatening behavior from an elected official". He spoke of others that he claims have received the same type of treatment. He asked for mental health intervention for the person who he deems has shown "frightening instability. It's time to take proactive steps to protect everyone before the situation gets worse. This is not about politics, it's about public safety".
- Joe A. Hix Sr (321 Volney St) commended the Mayor and Council on the progress made to improve the city. He asked for assistance in maintaining ditches. He is worried about the drainage system in his area with the pending hurricane season.

***Councilmember Lowry returned at 6:54 p.m.*

- Kathy Herrin-Keith (56 Borondo Pines) opened her statements by complimenting the mayor, stating that he looks "snazzy" in his suit jacket. She spoke regarding crime in the city, citing that while the police department's community policing efforts have lowered crime in the city however the city is still not crime-free. She spoke to concerns regarding game rooms, possible trafficking, and an attempted abduction. She shared that there are individuals in the community

that fear calling the police due to retaliation from those engaging in the activities. She shared her support for more police patrols and shared her claims of harassment in the polling location by "those who think they are above the law".

- Tammy Gary (P.O. Box 1211) has heard what others have said, and, as a former law enforcement officer, she feels that there is a "right" way to police, and you cannot pick and choose which areas to police in the city. She gave an anecdote of a situation that happened to her and her son to amplify her point.
- June Lundy (4324 N Galveston, TX) gave an anecdote of an interaction between her and a member of the police department where she feared for her life.
- Judy Sturgeon (3101 Melody Dr) does not have any complaints about the police department. She shared that the chief of police stated that there would be more proactive policing, and she appreciates the extra patrols. She agrees that racial profiling, or any other kind of profiling, is not OK. However, the residents were warned ahead of time. She thanked the police department and all of those who shared their problems.
- Sharon Sellers (103 Long Ridge) has a very large dog due to the criminal activity in her area. She agrees that racial profiling is wrong and shouldn't happen, but there is no overpolicing. "We need more policing". She thanked the city for cleaning the culverts, but some of the deeper areas have standing water, and would cause a "bad mosquito season".
- Robert Michetich (24 N Curlew) says that about four (4) months ago the Public Safety Building Committee was told that an elevation survey was needed, and at the last meeting four (4) locations were added. He asked for some additional documents. He asked for a quick response to an open records request regarding an incident in a polling location.
- Vanessa McAfee (Texas City, TX) would like to address how someone "stole" \$50,000 from the Economic Development Corporation. She also spoke to the lack of response she received from the Chief of Police. She shared her disdain for the actions of the Chief of Police and District Attorney regarding concerns surrounding a particular individual. She requested that the Interim City Manager see to it that the issue of the \$50,000 is dealt with. She encouraged a certain Councilmember to support the censure of the Councilmember in question.
- Richard Holcomb (2708 Magnolia Dr.) had a list of things to talk about. He is a republican, but that doesn't mean he hates democrats. He said that there are people not following the rules. This is meant to be about the City of La Marque for La Marque residents. He believes that the mayor is allowing individuals to disparage one Councilmember and he does not agree with it, "fighting a he said she said don't make nothing to me when my tax dollars are wasted". He spoke to his feelings regarding the staff members driving on the street and weekend park workers. He believes that this has been turned into a kangaroo court and a means to put down the man that he voted for, and would vote for again because he is doing what nobody else apparently wants to do.
- Rev. Dr. Timmy Sykes (Texas City, TX) shared his history as a peace officer, his heart is heavy, he reiterated the situation previously stated by June Lundy. He supports policing 100% but does not support "renegade- Rambo style" racial

profiling policing. He is planning to file a formal complaint against the officer. He knows

- David Pennington (924 Cypress) spoke regarding the volunteer background checks. He shared his concerns regarding the citizens being held to a higher standard than the council due to the fact that, in order to fulfill this requirement for the council, the charter would need to be changed. He also asked if this would be mandatory or voluntary.
- Brandon Kantowski (Oaklawn) ***did not speak*
- Re'Chard Loftis (309 Johnson) thanked the Public Works Department for their assistance at the Keep La Marque Beautiful Commission clean up event the previous weekend. He also thanked the Mainland Lions Club for providing food at the event. He requested a grappling truck, and ditches to be cleared in District A. He asked the council to stop bickering and "do the people's business".

6. MINUTES

6.1. Special City Council Minutes 04.16.2025

Mayor Pro Tem Compian made a motion to approve the Special City Council Minutes of August 16, 2025. Councilmember Lowry seconded. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

7. OLD BUSINESS

7.1. Volunteer Background Checks

Mayor Pro Tem Compian shared that his reason for bringing this to the council is simply because it is good practice. He provided example documents of other local cities to the council he requested that they be added as supporting documents when this item comes before the council again. He emphasized the importance of having background checks for volunteers that interact with children.

This item was tabled.

8. NEW BUSINESS

8.1. Ordinance No. O-2025-0011

Mayor Pro Tem Compian shared that he likes this "cleaned-up" document, and it is a better presentation than what was received in the financial retreat. He likes that the position titles were not changed, as that would have been confusing. He asked to verify if the budgetary needs cannot be allocated elsewhere, perhaps outside the general fund, if possible.

Mayor Bell questioned the Stormwater Equipment Operator position, asking if that is a comparable salary to nearby areas. Interim City Manager Pritchett confirmed that it is.

Mayor Bell asked for information regarding the grapple truck requested earlier in the meeting.

Interim City Manager Pritchett quipped regarding the budgetary concerns. These drainage problems are the pains of a growing city. This is a new position, creating a new position, so the city has 2 stormwater crews.

Mayor Bell asked for further clarification regarding reclassifying positions, and the

increase in the City Clerk's legal advertising.

Councilmember Ross believes that the \$500,000 allocated to Waste Management for bulk pickup could be done internally.

Councilmember Lowry supported transitioning to internal bulk pickup.

Mayor Pro Tem Compian questioned the city's current capability regarding the use of a grapple device.

Councilmember Ross made a motion to approve Ordinance No. O-2025-0011.

Councilmember Lowry seconded. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

8.II. Resolution No. R-2025-0020

***Mayor Pro Tem Compian exited the meeting at 7:52 p.m.*

Councilmember Ross made a motion to approve Resolution No. R-2025-0020.

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

8.III. Resolution No. R-2025-2021

Councilmember Yancy made a motion to amend the resolution number to R-2025-0021, and adopt the resolution. Councilmember Ross seconded. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

8.IV. Resolution No. R-2025-0022

***Mayor Pro Tem Compian returned at 7:54 p.m.*

Councilmember Ross made a motion to adopt Resolution No. R-2025-0022.

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

8.V. Resolution No. R-2025-0023

***Councilmember Ross exited the meeting at 7:56 p.m.*

Mayor Pro Tem Compian shared that at this current time, it is more effective to not have to wait for the council to apply.

Mayor Bell requested that once a grant is applied for, the process includes having the application sent to the council, and added to the next agenda's City Manager's report. He stressed his position that the city did not accept any grant funding until presented to the council.

Mayor Pro Tem Compian requested that both the City Manager and Finance Director be included due to turnover. However, he agreed that the council should be notified.

Mayor Pro Tem Compian made a motion to adopt the resolution to include language that the application be submitted upon authorization from the City Manager and Finance Director. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

8.VI. Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF)

Mayor Pro Tem Compian made a motion to authorizing the postponement of the ordinance authorizing the sale of certificates of obligation to evidence a loan from the Texas Water Development Board and the related public hearing.

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

8.VII. Purchasing

Councilmember Ross questioned the funding source.

Lieutenant Gandy identified that the purchase is fully covered by the SB224

Catalytic Converter Grant. The primary function of the drone is 3D mapping of crime scenes and assisting in locating individuals. He shared that this is the first step in creating an Automated First Responder program.

Councilmember Lowry asked clarifying questions about the personnel needed for the deployment of the drone.

Mayor Pro Tem Compian questioned the warranty on the drone. It was determined that there would be a 5-year warranty. He followed by inquiring about the monthly cost of the drone. Lieutenant Gandy shared that there has not been a firm number determined and when one has been reached it will be brought to the council.

Mayor Pro Tem Compian asked who would be licensed to pilot the drone.

Lieutenant Gandy shared that the department will add as many pilots as possible, and currently has 2 licensed pilots.

Councilmember Yancy questioned the "autonomous nature". Gandy shared that there are some "seriously advanced" anti-collision sensors on the equipment and that there is always an operator that can control it.

Councilmember Ross made a motion to approve the purchase of a drone utilizing the SB224 Catalytic Converter Grant funding. Councilmember Lowry seconded.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

8.VIII. Meeting Cancellation

Mayor Bell stated that this is an annual event due to the city being closed for Memorial Day.

Councilmember Ross made a motion to cancel the Regular City Council Meeting on May 26, 2025. Councilmember Yancy seconded. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

8.IX. District A Request

Mayor Bell began this item by giving ground rules, reminding the council to allow the discussion to progress and to allow the chair to recognize them before they speak. He allowed Councilmember Yancy to speak first but assured the council that everyone would be allowed to speak.

Councilmember Yancy said that this is not an easy discussion, but it needs to be had. She spoke to the charter's requirements regarding felonies. She stated that after 9 or 10 months she had hoped the information would have been given voluntarily, but since it has not, she is requesting that the council direct the city manager and city attorney to "get that on file so we can lay this to rest". She spoke about an excessive use of staff resources, creation of a hostile work environment for staff members and council due to threats, bullying and name calling from the Councilmember of District C.

City Attorney Knebel interjected with concerns that the council is moving away from the noticed agenda item.

Councilmember Yancy stated that she is laying the foundation of "why we need to do this". She gave a lengthy list of further examples of the behaviors that have led her to request this item. She stated that she is asking for this to be done because "maybe we are dealing with a criminal mind and we don't know it".

Councilmember Lowry stated that he is 100% eligible to serve on council. He sees this as a smear campaign and he believes that what he does outside this council is

"none of your business". He is going to continue to exercise his first amendment rights, and if she doesn't like it, she doesn't have to like it. He is asking for things outside of the council to stay outside of the council. Business needs to be conducted here. He has already had his attorney send a letter to City Attorney Knebel and he is fully prepared to "100% enforce or attempt to enforce everything in the charter not pick and choose". He requested that Mayor Bell run more professional meetings.

Councilmember Ross stated that he is going to break a lot of hearts tonight but the law is the law. Once an elected official is an elected official "too bad so sad", there was time to make these complaints prior to him being seated. He stated that as of 2021 all felony drug related cases in the State of Washington were vacated by a Supreme Court ruling and in 2023 any person who had paid for those convictions to be vacated were reimbursed. He particularly referenced this because Councilmember Lowry had told him in the past that he "was" and he applauded the councilman for "changing" his life. He stated that there is nothing else the council can do.

Councilmember Yancy stated that she disagrees. She asked if that information was first or third party information, to which Councilmember Ross confirmed that it was his own research through legal cases in Washington.

Councilmember Yancy then questioned if he was an attorney, to which he confirmed he is not. She then stated that she is asking for primary research, by a licensed individual, not third party. She stated that this is harassment, and the first amendment does not give an individual the right to harass others and while it is not about harassment, the council has to properly vet its members. She referenced the statement by Mr. Pennington that questioned having a higher standard for city volunteers than the council, and she agreed. She also stated that she thinks it's important to find out for sure because of the "criminal behavior that we're seeing, just because you didn't get caught by the cops doesn't mean you're not guilty".

Mayor Bell stated that he would allow two more minutes of discussion on this item and allowed Councilmember Ross to finish his statement.

Councilmember Yancy stated that she is the only woman sitting on the council and is in fear because of what she has seen in the councilmember's past. She is afraid and needs clarity on the matter because she is being asked to meet alone with him at times and that is scary for her. She needs this done not only for herself as the only woman on the council but for the constituents that are always bringing this to the council and she doesn't understand why he won't provide it himself.

Mayor Bell stopped the Councilmember and asked Councilmember Ross to continue.

Councilmember Ross stated that there is nothing to be provided due to the Supreme Court ruling.

Councilmember Yancy again requested that "somebody" put it in writing.

Mayor Bell stated that the council is beyond "beating a dead horse, the horse isn't even a horse anymore".

Councilmember Lowry stated that "at the end of the day I'm not a felon". He is more than willing to go to the District Attorney's office, or have the police department run his name but he is lawfully seated as a councilmember.

Discussions regarding the need for professionalism at council meetings ensued and the need for respect amongst the council.

Mayor Pro Tem Compian asked for confirmation that the eligibility requirements are state requirements. This was confirmed by City Attorney Knebel. He followed by clarifying that this information could be obtained by a public information request, which is a process available to anyone on the dias. City Attorney Knebel believed that to be true, but stated that he does not have any intimate knowledge of Washington Public Information Law.

City Attorney Knebel advised that collateral attacks against elections are generally disfavored as the election has already been canvassed, the parties have all taken an Oath of Office, and seated.

Mayor Pro Tem Compian questioned if there would be any objection, by Councilmembers Lowry or Yancy, if he, as a private citizen, made the request. Councilmember Lowry did not have any objections. However, Councilmember Yancy did. She did not understand why Mayor Pro Tem Compian would volunteer instead of authorizing the paid attorney to do so.

This statement sparked a debate between Councilmember Yancy and Mayor Pro Tem Compian regarding the nuance between an individual making a public information request and a practicing attorney. There are no requirements to be an attorney for this process leading to Councilmember Yancy explaining her interpretation of the charter requirements regarding felony convictions. She stated that she does not believe the vacation of a felony satisfies this requirement and clarified that her position is in no way to discredit Mayor Pro Tem Compian. Mayor Bell questioned if the City Clerk had any official record of Councilmember Lowry's conviction of any felonies. City Clerk Nance stated that she did not have any official record. Mayor Bell stated that the cart may be getting put before the horse, as there is no official record stating that the councilman has been convicted of a felony. He took issue with the council requesting a record of vacation when the council does not have in its possession a record of conviction, regardless of what has been stated.

Councilmember Ross stated that, if it is ok with Councilmember Lowry, he is ok with allowing Mayor Pro Tem Compian to make the request as he suggested earlier in the discussion.

Councilmember Yancy made a motion to have the City Clerk, to obtain a full cohesive, not just Washington state, comprehensive review of the criminal history of Councilmember Joseph Lowry due to the allegations of him being a convicted felon, which would violate the city charter.

Mayor Pro Tem Compian raised concerns regarding the motion not aligning with the noticed agenda item, stating that a background check was not disclosed as part of the item.

City Attorney Knebel agreed that the Mayor Pro Tem raised a valid point.

Councilmember Yancy amended her motion and made a motion to request a Public Information Request for the State of Washington and the State of Oregon, and a copy of the standing judicial ruling of vacation.

***Motion dies due to lack of second*

Councilmember Ross made a motion to authorize resident Joe Compian to obtain a public information request from Washington and Oregon regarding the standing

judicial ruling vacating a felony conviction. Councilmember Yancy seconded. Councilmember Lowry expressed that this is strictly political theater and a waste of everyone's time and tax dollars.

MOTION FAILED WITH 2 AYES (YANCY/COMPIAN) AND 3 NAYS (BELL/LOWRY/ROSS)

Mayor Bell stated that he understands where Councilmember Yancy is coming from but "we need this missing link".

9. CITY MANAGER REPORT

All items pulled for discussion.

9.I. March 2025 Municipal Court Stats

Mayor Pro Tem Compian asked clarifying questions regarding the Capias Warrants item. It was determined that there was an increase in February due to the city not engaging any capias pro fines in January due to the freeze event.

Court Administrator Froeschner confirmed.

He questioned the category of inactive cases, to which it was explained that they are simply cases that have not seen activity for a certain time frame.

Discussions regarding "round ups", amnesty programs, and safe harbor courts ensued.

Mayor Pro Tem Compian questioned if this messaging was translated into spanish, as that could assist with compliance. It was confirmed that at present the court does not, but this will be reviewed.

9.II. Sales Tax Revenue Report as of April 2025

Councilmember Ross asked if there was a reason for the drop in revenue.

Interim City Manager Pritchett stated that this happens annually. This is reflective of February, right after the holiday season.

9.III. Grant Award: NRA Foundation Gun Safety Education

Councilmember Ross requested that this item be brought back at a later date at the suggestion of Interim City Manager Pritchett.

9.IV. Items for the Good of the Order

Interim City Manager Pritchett announced upcoming events in the city, including the Senior Safety Summit on April 29th, Lemonade Day on May 3rd, Hurricane Huddle and Community Fair on May 17th, and the Juneteenth Gala on June 18th.

10. EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was no executive session.

11. ACTIONS TAKEN FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION

No actions were taken.

12. REQUESTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councilmember Lowry gave kudos to Court Marshal Russell Washington for an interaction he witnessed where Marshal Washington met hostility with love and compassion. He asked for the data previously shared that showed a 100% unfounded rate regarding racial profiling complaints.

Councilmember Ross shared that his time is winding down on council and he has enjoyed it. He requested a joint meeting with the EDC and the Council to review the COVID grant applications, giving parameters of any business that meets 75% of the qualifications would be considered valid. However, any business that does not should be required to pay back the grant money.

Councilmember Yancy requested that the council "look into" the issue with ditches, a short town hall with the residents of Merry Lane, and thanked the council for healthy discussion. She again requested that Councilmember Lowry submit the requested documentation. She thanked the staff for having the Juneteenth Gala information eight (8) weeks ahead of the event, and wished everyone a Happy Mother's Day since there will not be a council meeting before the holiday.

Mayor Pro Tem Compian expressed sincere condolences to Alice Ashley for the loss of her husband. He recently learned about the Gulf Coast Economic Development District from the Houston-Galveston Area Council. He thanked both the council and the residents for their time.

Mayor Bell requested a meeting with the Drainage District #2 Executive Director to discuss their operations so that the city can coordinate "our" plans with theirs before hurricane season begins. He requested an update at the next meeting from the Public Safety Building Committee Chairperson, so that the council could express the urgency of their work.

13. ADJOURNMENT

Councilmember Ross made a motion to adjourn. Councilmember Lowry seconded the motion. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

***Meeting was adjourned at 9:40 p.m.*