



**CITY OF LA MARQUE
CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MINUTES
of
April 14, 2025**

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Mayor Bell called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Present:

Keith Bell

Joe Compian

Kimberley Yancy

Joseph Lowry

James Ross

Mayor

Mayor Pro Tem/ District B (arrived via Zoom at 7:07 p.m.
900 North Shoreline Drive, Corpus Christi, TX)

District A

District C

District D

3. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Bell gave the invocation and City Clerk Kierra Nance led the pledge.

4. PROCLAMATIONS:

4.I. Arbor Day

Mayor Bell acknowledged Arbor Day on April 25th, 2025.

4.II. Child Abuse Prevention Month

JoAnna Mendoza and Alli Hines, representing Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) of Galveston County, received a proclamation in honor of Child Abuse Prevention Month.

4.III. Earth Day

Keep La Marque Beautiful Commission Vice-Chair Re'Chard Loftis and Code Compliance Supervisor Jose Hernandez received a proclamation honoring Earth Day on April 22, 2025.

4.IV. Fair Housing Month

Mayor Bell acknowledged April 2025 as Fair Housing Month.

4.V. National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week 2025

Mayor Bell honored members of the City of La Marque Telecommunications Division with a proclamation honoring National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week April 13-19, 2025.

4.VI. National Wildlife Federation's Monarch Butterfly Awareness Month

Library Director Amy Miller received a proclamation honoring March as Monarch Butterfly Awareness Month.

Library Director Miller invited the public to a Monarch Butterfly release on April 22, 2025 at 10:00 a.m. held at Walter Feigle Park.

4.VII. Work Zone Awareness Week

Interim Public Works Director Shannon Breau received a proclamation honoring Work Zone Awareness Week in place of the Public Works Streets Division, as they were called for emergency repairs.

5. CITIZENS PARTICIPATION

- Re'Chard Loftis (309 Johnson) requested that the council review the security procedures in the council chambers. He is requesting that the council and staff also be required to utilize the security features for the safety of the community members.
- Brandon Kautowski (2030 Oaklawn) says that he has seen a lot of foolishness online. He does not feel that it is becoming of anyone to be name-called or "accusors". There is something bigger happening in the city than bickering among ourselves. There is evil, and darkness in this country. He also spoke to issues with his neighbor and he has lost faith in the system as the police keep playing "devil's advocate".
- Jacqueline Perrin (1304 Rhodora) states that her name is not "Jackie Smith" as an impersonation account has been made. She stated that she is sick, so she is wearing a mask. She noted that many elected officials have been attacked and no one has done anything, so how could she feel safe after filing a report. She stated that a councilmember is a felon, and should not be seated on the council. She also questioned why this had not been investigated. She does not feel safe in the city anymore.

6. MINUTES

Councilmember Ross made a motion to approve all minutes as submitted.

Councilmember Yancy seconded.

Councilmember Lowry requested that specific information regarding certificates of obligation be added to the Special Financial Retreat minutes.

*** Councilmember Ross rescinded his motion.*

Councilmember Lowry was asked to clarify his request. It was determined that he was referencing a conversation regarding the remaining balance of the Certificates of Obligation obtained to purchase the property known as the ABC Buildings (4916 Texas Ave., La Marque, TX 77568) which he estimated to equate to approximately \$2.5 million that could be utilized for a police station.

Finance Director Turner was asked to give the amount that remained in the account.

Councilmember Lowry made a motion to amend the Special Financial Retreat Minutes 04.08.2025 to include a conversation regarding the remaining balance of the Certificates of Obligation obtained to purchase the property known as the ABC Buildings (4916 Texas Ave., La Marque, TX 77568) in the amount of \$2,666,037.84 that

could be utilized for a police station.
Councilmember Ross seconded.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

6.I. Special Financial Retreat 04.08.2025

6.II. Special Joint Minutes 04.07.2025

6.III. Special City Council Minutes 03.10.2025

6.IV. Special City Council Minutes 02.24.2025

7. PUBLIC HEARING

***Mayor Bell recessed the Regular Meeting and entered into the Public Hearing at 6:50 p.m.*

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

There was no public comment.

8. OLD BUSINESS

***Mayor Bell closed the Public Hearing and reconvened the Regular Meeting at 6:51 p.m.*

8.I. Naming Policy

City Clerk Nance gave a brief overview of the history of this item, citing that it has been before council before and pointing out the differences since the last presentation, including the petition and notice process, the approval process, and regulations. She identified that this policy does not have fees included and direction is needed from the council.

Councilmember Yancy thanked Ms. Nance for adjusting the policy to reflect best practices, and stated that she does not have a recommendation for fees.

Discussions regarding setting a standard rate or assessing the true cost of the conversion ensued.

Councilmember Yancy made a motion to approve the Naming Policy with the addition of the payment of true costs and administrative fees. Councilmember Ross seconded. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

8.II. Ordinance No. O-2025-0005

Brent Berthier, ADICO Engineering, gave a brief history of the item. He shared that the current proposed recommendation is 50% of the true recommendation.

Interim City Manager Pritchett shared that in the updated document it shows the surrounding cities in the Greater Houston Area's updated impact fees.

Councilmember Lowry feels that this is a deterrent to attracting business. He feels that this is moving in the wrong direction.

Mayor Bell understands the effort, but he is in the mindset that this is "a tad bit too high for us". He noticed that larger cities are at a rate of \$9,000 or higher, and acknowledged that the current rate is the lowest. He requested a rate in the middle, somewhere between the rates of Iowa Colony and Galveston. He believes the \$8,400 is a problem.

Interim City Manager Pritchett acknowledged a "Grandfather Clause" that states any development that is currently underway would have one year after the passage of the ordinance to be charged at the current impact fees.

Mr. Berthier reiterated that this is simply a recommendation; the council has the authority to adjust.

***Mayor Pro Tem Compian entered the meeting at 7:07 p.m. via Zoom*

Mayor Pro Tem Compian requested that this item not move forward, due to the unrest around raising rates at both the state and national level.

Mayor Bell stated that he would not support the current recommendation at \$8,400, but would support a lower amount, around \$6,300 or \$6,500. Stating that the current proposal could be detrimental from a home buyer's perspective.

Councilmember Yancy confirmed that the current proposal is based on the infrastructure needs, stating that the "piss poor" infrastructure is the reason she moved away previously. She asked if this could be reviewed again in one year.

It was confirmed by City Attorney Knebel that this assessment has to be done "at least" every five years, but if the council wants to amend the ordinance, that is their prerogative.

Mr. Berthier identified that this recommendation is actually a 50% reduction from what their process actually discovered. However, in accordance with the law, they were allowed to provide that deduction. However, he warned that if the funds are not retrieved from the impact fees, they will need to come from elsewhere, which could be a burden to the taxpayer.

Mayor Pro Tem Compian made a motion to hold the rate, and continue to research an appropriate rate in the current state of the economy. **MOTION CARRIED WITH 3 AYES (BELL / COMPIAN / LOWRY) 1 NAY (ROSS) AND 1 ABSTENTION (YANCY)**

9. NEW BUSINESS

9.II. Ordinance No. O-2025-00xx (INC)

9.I. Ordinance No. O-2025-0006

***Councilmember Lowry exited the meeting at 7:22 p.m.*

Councilmember Ross made a motion to approve Ordinance No. O-2025-0006.

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

9.II. Ordinance No. O-2025-0007

Councilmember Ross made a motion to approve Ordinance No. O-2025-0007.

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

9.III. Ordinance No. O-2025-0008

Councilmember Ross made a motion to approve Ordinance No. O-2025-0008.

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

9.IV. Ordinance No. O-2025-0009

Councilmember Ross made a motion to approve Ordinance No. O-2025-0009.

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

9.V. ARPA Purchasing

***Councilmember Lowry returned at 7:25 p.m.*

***Councilmember Ross exited the meeting at 7:25 p.m. and returned at 7:27 p.m.*

Brief discussions were held regarding the amount of K9 officers this purchase would allocate. It was determined by Chief Aragon and Interim City Manager Pritchett that this would potentially allow for one (1) or two (2) additional dogs depending on the cost. It was clarified that the department already has two K9 units. This expenditure would be the third and possibly fourth.

Mayor Bell questioned what the process would be if there was a need for a K9 officer to be dispatched.

Councilmember Yancy shared her concerns regarding acquiring additional K9 officers when there have already been "incidences" in the past. She feels that if the council supports this expenditure, additional training should be held for the handlers.

Chief Aragon assured her that there is extensive training that the handlers receive, but there really should be one K9 unit on each shift.

Interim City Manager Pritchett relayed to Councilmember Yancy that the K9 officer that she is referencing had "gone to be with Jesus". The two K9 officers the city has currently are newer additions and, fortunately, have not had any such instances.

Mayor Pro Tem Compian asked for clarity regarding how many officers would come with this expenditure. It was clarified that there is not a set number of officers in this allocation, just a dollar amount. The department would like to receive two (2) but if the funding does not allow for it, there will at least be one (1) additional K9 officer.

Councilmember Ross made a motion to approve the ARPA expenditure in the amount of \$41,250 to obtain K9 officers. Councilmember Lowry seconded. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

9.VI. Saltgrass Park Name Change

Mayor Bell questioned the necessity of this item if the council had not voted to name this park land.

Mayor Pro Tem Compian identified that while there was no official name given to this land, the city made a commitment to include a park in this area.

After a brief discussion, Councilmember Yancy made a motion to name the area West Side City Park. Councilmember Ross seconded. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

9.VII. Volunteer Background Checks

Mayor Pro Tem Compian requested additional time to review this item. **THIS ITEM WAS TABLED.**

9.VIII. Waiver of Fees for Highland Bayou Pavilion Rental

Discussions regarding the current fees ensued.

Councilmember Ross made a motion to waive the Highland Bayou Pavillion rental fees for the Southeast Texas Sports Fishing Association event on May 3, 2025.

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

9.IX. Council Privileges

City Clerk Nance identified that this item is a request for clarity as the current

council is "very active" and she and her staff need direction on what is being expected from the department. Her team spends a significant amount of time on these requests, which she clarified that the item was not to complain, but just to ask what the expectations were.

Mayor Bell asked City Attorney Knebel to explain to the public what legislative privileges are.

City Attorney Knebel shared that it is the council's right to information as it pertains to creating policy. This would include additional information not necessarily available to the general public, because it is needed to create policies and procedures in their official capacity.

Mayor Bell asked City Clerk Nance what exactly she intended for the council to do with this item. She responded that the intent was for the council to discuss and consider a policy to set "guardrails", including how they would like this information to be tracked and if there were any requests for how to process.

Councilmember Lowry claimed that this item was only being brought up because of him, which City Clerk Nance denied.

Councilmember Lowry stated that being an elected official gives privileges to view documents that are not readily available to the public. He believes that if information is being withheld from him, then he cannot do his job properly. He ventured to say that people put in open records requests that are at times sent to "a very dishonest law firm", Olson & Olson, who he asserts is untruthful and "won't tell the whole story". He believes the law firm is used to hide information from the public and that information shouldn't be hidden from the public or an elected official. He asserts that as an elected official he has the right to view information such as credit card information and body cams.

A brief discussion regarding the differences between legislative privilege and executive privilege ensued.

Councilmember Lowry said that "the bottom line is as an elected official we have the right to view information" and "anything being withheld I think is a disservice to the taxpayers that elected us". He followed by stating that this is one of the biggest reasons that he ran for political office, because of the dishonesty with open records, and he claims that it is still happening today.

Mayor Bell asked for clarity from Councilmember Lowry regarding what "his job" is.

Councilmember Lowry stated that if he wanted to audit credit cards, then that's his job. His job is the will of the people.

Mayor Bell and Councilmember Lowry veered into a discussion regarding a statement Councilmember made regarding having watched bodycam footage, where Councilman Lowry asserted that an Executive Session had been broken apart. Mayor Bell questioned what the elements were that would dispel an Executive Session, to which Councilmember Lowry did not respond. Mayor Bell explained that during the incident in question, he, Councilmember Ross, and Councilmember Yancy remained in the meeting room. The city attorney stepped out of the room, which was inconsequential because he was there at the pleasure of the council. He asserts that since the quorum was not broken and the presiding officer of the meeting did not recess the closed session, it's confidentiality is still intact.

***The council was requested to remain on the agenda topic by City Attorney Knebel and City Clerk Nance.*

Councilmember Lowry continued his outburst at one point, stating "We're going to get it, we're going to get it because it's the law."

Mayor Bell stated his opinion that an open records request be filed for all information submitted to council.

***Councilmember Lowry continued to speak over the other councilmembers and Mayor Bell requested that he allow the other Councilmembers to speak.*

Councilmember Ross asked clarifying questions regarding the supporting document which included an email from Councilmember Lowry.

City Clerk Nance apologized for the confusion. Her intent was to show that the topic of Council Privileges was not only a concern to her and her team, but that Councilmembers had concerns as well. She did not intend for this item to cause so much heartburn, she merely wanted a policy or procedure for how to move forward.

Mayor Pro Tem Compian questioned the existence of legislative privileges at the municipal level. He believes if an item is on an agenda to be discussed in an open session, then the Councilmember can request additional clarity.

Councilmember Yancy supported Mayor Pro Tem Compian's position. She requested that the City Clerk bring to the council a form and the beginnings of a policy for the council to review. She stated that she had not seen a lack of transparency nor has she felt as if she had not receive information that had been requested.

Councilmember Ross made a motion for the council to utilize the Public Information Request process to make council requests while the City Clerk's Office drafts a standard operating procedure for processing council requests.

Councilmember Yancy seconded. **MOTION CARRIED 3 AYES (BELL / YANCY / ROSS) 1 NAY (LOWRY) 1 ABSENT (COMPIAN).**

10. CITY MANAGER REPORT

***Items 10.I, 10.V, and 10.VI were pulled for discussion.*

10.I. March 2025 Sales Tax Revenue (January receipts)

Interim City Manager Pritchett shared that there is an increase in the amount this month. This is being handled with caution until the amount can be legitimized.

10.II. February 2025 Finance Report

This item stood as submitted.

10.III. February 2025 Crime Statistics

This item stood as submitted.

10.IV. February 2025 La Marque Public Library Report

This item stood as submitted.

10.V. Update on Wastewater Treatment Plant Expansion and Upcoming Bid Phase

***Mayor Pro Tem Compian exited the meeting at 8:04 p.m.*

Interim Public Works Director Breaux gave a brief timeline of the project, concluding with an estimated completion date of October 30th.

10.VI. Manhole Project Update

Interim Public Works Director Breau clarified the legend provided in the supporting documents, bringing attention to the green dots which represent all the completed manhole covers. The crew is currently working in Zone 4.

10.VII. Wal-Mart Foundation Grant Application

This item stood as submitted.

10.VIII. Items for the Good of the Order

Interim City Manager Pritchett announced a series of events hosted by the City of La Marque, including a Monarch Butterfly Release program to be held April 22 at 10:00 a.m. at the La Marque Public Library, Annual Spring Cleanup on April 26, Senior Safety Summit on April 29, Hurricane Huddle and Community Fair on May 17, Juneteenth Gala on June 18, and Life and Liberty on July 5th. He emphasized that there would be a new addition to the police and fire charity softball game as other unions have asked to participate.

He reported that the Public Works department is undergoing some significant changes in order to better serve the community primarily in the areas of stormwater and the creation of a mosquito control spraying plan. The current plan will entail mosquito sprays three nights a week for approximately three to six hours per night between the hours of 8:00 p.m. and 4:30 a.m., peak mosquito activity hours. This is also an effort to protect the pollinators in the community.

11. EXECUTIVE SESSION

***Mayor Bell and Councilmember Ross both waived their rights to a closed session, opting to speak in open session.*

Mayor Bell gave the ground rules for discussion. The complaint will be read uninterrupted, a rebuttal from the subject of the complaint will follow. After the subject concludes, questions are allowed from the Council and, if necessary, action will follow. The council will not interrupt each other. If the council does not adhere to the rules, the discussion would stop to be heard at a later date.

11.I. For the purpose of hearing a complaint or charge against an officer or employee:
Councilmember District D - *District C / District D*

11.II. For the purpose of hearing a complaint or charge against an officer or employee:
Mayor - *District C / District D*

12. ACTIONS TAKEN FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION

Councilmember Lowry questioned if the events leading to the complaint happened in executive session, would they be allowed to be discussed in public.

City Attorney Knebel clarified that the complaint that Councilmember Lowry made referenced statements made in open session, if the events he would like to discuss are from another executive session, then generally those would not be able to be discussed in public. However, the council has the right to waive that privilege.

City Clerk Nance read the complaint that was submitted and seconded into the record. The complaint was received Wednesday, March 26th via email stating, "here's an actual valid ethics complaint, I would like to file an ethics complaint against Keith Bell and

James Ross for lying on the dias about what I said. I can bring both videos to watch as a powerpoint presentation their lies vs my truth. Joseph Lowry, Slx Brothers Concrete and Pumping."

Councilmember Lowry claims that he asked for additional discussion for actions taken in executive session, to which City Clerk Nance states that while he did send emails to her related to the event, those emails did not reference a request for agenda consideration.

Councilmember Lowry stated that he would resubmit those complaints for consideration at a future meeting.

Councilmember Yancy gave her opinion that she had no problem with discussing the executive session at this time.

Discussion with the City Attorney regarding this revelation ensued taking careful consideration that the additional discussion was not noticed, nor seconded for discussion on this agenda.

Councilmember Ross agreed to second the discussion at resubmission.

Mayor Bell asked to move forward.

Councilmember Lowry stated that he would resubmit the complaint at a future meeting with the additional context.

Both Mayor Bell and Councilmember Ross stated that they would like to address the concerns already proposed to the council, to which Councilmember Lowry refused.

12.I. For the purpose of hearing a complaint or charge against an officer or employee:
Councilmember District D - *District C/ District D*

12.II. For the purpose of hearing a complaint or charge against an officer or employee:
Mayor - *District C/ District D*

13. REQUESTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councilmember Lowry requested that ditches be cleaned out in "District.... all of them". He gave a shoutout to the Drainage District for work done on the canals. He also asked for cleanup of the overgrowth on the roadways around Mac McGaffey Highland Bayou Park as it has been an area of concern for residents.

Councilmember Ross announced the Spring Cleanup event on April 23, 2025, and directed the public to his social media pages for additional information regarding the events he is participating in.

Councilmember Yancy stated that she took a tour with representatives of Drainage District #2 and agrees with Councilmember Lowry. She requested that the area the city owns on Lake Road be paved for a more "professional" look. She again requested a judicial ruling and Open Records Request on Councilmember Lowry's alleged criminal background "so we can put this to rest". She announced Stop the Violence which would be April 23 through April 26, 2025. She apologized to the Mayor for the lack of respect.

Mayor Bell requested a report from all contractors regarding major water main breaks, the start date for the civic academy, an update from Habitat for Humanities on Heroes Village, and a workshop with the Texas Department of Transportation in reference to debris left alongside the road.

14. ADJOURNMENT

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

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

***Meeting was adjourned at 8:38 p.m.*