



**CITY OF LA MARQUE
CITY COUNCIL
RETREAT MINUTES
of
July 22, 2025**

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Mayor Bell called the meeting to order at 10:12 a.m.

2. ROLL CALL

PRESENT:

Keith Bell	Mayor
Joe Compian	Mayor Pro Tem/District B
Kimberley Yancy	District A
Joseph Lowry	District C (arrives at 10:16 a.m.)
Tonia Griffin	District D

3. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Pro Tem Compian gave the invocation and Finance Director Christine Turner led the pledge.

4. CITIZENS PARTICIPATION

Hayley Winkelmann (1413 Bowie) spoke about illiteracy, stating that the adult illiteracy rate in the area is approximately 30%. She stated that there is a functional illiterate individual involved today. She stated that she is a trained trainer and recommended one-on-one focus and hoped that the day would be a productive retreat.

Wyatt Huff (4725 Lawndale) was scheduled to be on the Planning & Zoning agenda. However, the meeting was canceled. He was not informed and was only notified after he called for confirmation. The rezoning is the final piece of the process and if it is not completed by the end of the month, the tenant will move.

Gregg Cornett (1310 Cedar Dr) as the chair of the Planning and Zoning Commission. He just found out about Mr. Huff's issue last Friday, and he agrees that this should be addressed quickly.

5. NEW BUSINESS

5.1. Council Rules of Engagement

City Clerk Nance presented the council with documents including a memo giving a summary of Roberts Rules of Order, the method that the council has utilized to conduct meetings. She also provided the council with a copy of the Resolutions and Ordinances that council imposed on itself, including Resolutions R-2025-0002, R-2024-0006, and R-2024-0007, as well as Ordinance No. O-2024-0008. Mayor Bell gave a brief summary of the use of Roberts Rules of Order as it pertains to the council and his role as the presiding officer. He also acknowledged Mayor Pro Tem

Compian for excelling in this area.

Councilmember Lowry stated that there is a double standard, he was not afforded the full first amendment before he was on council, and he is not allowed to give points of information. Mayor Bell stated that he hears Councilmember Lowry's concerns, and if he feels that way, he must do a better job of addressing his concerns.

Councilmember Griffin stated that she is happy to be a part of the council, and personally does not want to be placed in the position where she has to intervene between any of the adults in the room where the adults know right from wrong. She stated that since she has been on council, she has heard that the council will be unified, but she has not seen that. The council cannot leave the retreat and continue to behave as it has.

Mayor Pro Tem Compian spoke to the issue of points of information, as he believes that the council does "cross the line sometimes". It is not intended to correct misinformation; it is intended to seek additional context or procedural questions. He sees that the first amendment discussion has evolved over the last few years. He also reminded the council that they can appeal the decision of the chair by simply stating "I wish to appeal the decision of the chair".

Mayor spoke to the evolution of the first amendment allocations, stating that this evolution was a result of the advice of the city's attorney as individuals had begun to "threaten lawsuits" against the city for alleged first amendment rights violations. He also identified that there is a councilmember that has filed a lawsuit against the city for the same reason. He believed that with this happening, it was the decision to relax the requirements.

Councilmember Lowry again spoke to the double standard, "he is for the first amendment" however, it's not fair.

Councilmember Griffin stated that she heard Councilmember Lowry, and Mayor Pro Tem Compian heard him as well, but she also heard the Mayor give potential solutions. She asked him how to move forward.

Councilmember Lowry believes that outside agitators are invited to the community and "we" have to deal with it. He is at a loss of what to do because it is tough. He doesn't want to violate anyone's rights.

Mayor Pro Tem Compian stated that all of council is challenged being in this position. He will be carefully reading the information presented by the city clerk. He spoke to other cities that only allow nonresidents to speak regarding non-profit or organized work. He asked for change to prioritize the concerns of the residents of La Marque.

Councilmember Yancy stated that she believes public comments have to be included at the beginning of the meeting. She agreed that "what we do for one we do for all" but she asked all of council to follow the rules the council has set forth. She believes that the outside attention is due to the behavior of the council.

Discussions regarding limiting citizens' participation and the timing of the agenda ensued.

Mayor Pro Tem Compian stated that this is a great time to engage the community, build trust, and hear what the residents want.

Councilmember Lowry stated his concerns regarding Facebook posts made, such as the Mayor Bell's Council Recap segment. He feels it is inappropriate. Mayor Bell

asserted that it was his decision to utilize his discretionary funds to communicate what the government is doing to the constituency.

Mayor Pro Tem Compian asked the City Clerk to consider providing annual refresher courses for the council. He spoke to the ability to provide communications with their discretionary funds, as he is also working on building a system to do something similar.

Councilmember Griffin stated that as a resident she fully expects to hear updates from the mayor regarding what is going on. She states that as a councilmember, she waits for those posts and pulls out what is related to District D and publishes it for her residents.

Councilmember Yancy encouraged Councilmember Lowry to do something similar. City Clerk Nance clarified that this is an opportunity that is afforded to the full council, as the initial intent was to create a "Council Corner" to which each week a different council district was spotlighted. However, with changes in administration, this idea has not been brought forward as a priority.

Councilmember Lowry stated that this was a double standard, as this was never afforded to him. He stated that he had sent a cease-and-desist letter regarding this communication that was ignored.

Mayor Bell reasserted that the council has the ability to communicate with their constituents. However, it must be based on facts.

***Mayor Bell recessed the meeting at 11:24 a.m. and reconvened at 11:44 p.m.*

Councilmember Yancy spoke to allegations being made about her travel. She, like the rest of the council, was invited to attend a trip to Washington D.C. with the Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership and she attended. She went as a member of the delegation to help save jobs, and as a result of their efforts, NASA was given an additional 4 billion dollars. She stated that as a councilperson she was invited to the White House, and she was honored. She raised her own money to go on the trip, and it was not fully funded by the city. She has asked for the misinformation to stop.

This led to a conversation by Finance Director Turner explaining the travel policy. Councilmember Lowry asked clarifying questions regarding council expenses.

5.II. Council Appointed Positions

Mayor Pro Tem Compian clarified that the council has no authority regarding the City Judges decisions. He also asked that the council formalize the position of the Deputy City Manager, and possibly include the position in the city council's scope. He spoke to the decision to work in tandem with the City Clerk and City Attorney and Councilmember Lowry to resolve communication issues. Discussions regarding council communications with staff ensued.

Councilmember Yancy asked that the new city manager communicate with all of council and asked the city clerk to be more vocal about the needs of the department. She is very happy to see the improvements in the courts. She is still unsure about the attorney. She likes him as a person but wonders if he is good for the city.

Councilmember Griffin reminded the council that they all share staff, and they should be considerate of the facts and make requests as a body if possible.

Mayor Bell suggested a council action to set an expectation of what reports are requested by the council and the timeline.

Discussions regarding department updates ensued.

Councilmember Lowry requested quarterly staff meetings with the council.

Councilmember Griffin requested more communication between the council and the boards and commission.

Mayor Bell agreed that the council cannot tell the judge how to rule. However, he would like to consider the judge's disposition and demeanor when interacting with the defendants, how they interact with the staff, and consider their working conditions. He spoke to the two approvals the city manager received from the council. The first was through an approved budget, and the second was by 3 votes in an open council meeting. He believes that this is one of the most confusing parts of being a city manager.

Councilmember Lowry expressed concerns regarding liabilities in Open Records.

A lengthy discussion regarding the role of the City Clerk's Office in records retention ensued. The City Clerk identified that for years the office has requested additional considerations and funding to combat these concerns. However, they have not been addressed. The department is doing what they can with the resources available to them and complying with the law.

The Council and City Clerk Nance engaged in lengthy discussions regarding how to move forward, including but not limited to, revising the response language to provide more detail and clarity as is allowed by law.

***Mayor Bell recessed the meeting at 1:19 p.m. and returned at 2:01 p.m.*

5.III. Council Priorities

***This item was taken after 5.V*

Mayor Pro Tem Compian's priorities include identifying the issues in the wastewater sewer system and roads, including Texas Department of Transportation roads.

Councilmember Yancy's priorities included roads, streets, ditches, pavement, and drainage. She requested a sewer study in the area near Highland Village. She requested that the library be named after Geraldine Sam, a road be named for Kay Bailey Hutchinson, Frank Bell's business incubator, and continued work on the Emancipation Trail. She is looking forward to hosting a summit with non-profit organizations in the area, Stop the Violence will continue, and would like to start a church softball league. She would like to be more active in Houston Galveston Area Council and their grants, and expressed her desire to rename historical District A. She is proud of the work being done in District A. She wants the city to remember the work that has been done and preserve that work. She feels that we don't brag enough about the progress that we have made.

Councilmember Griffin's priorities include streets, code enforcement, educating the community about debris processes, drainage, tree maintenance, apartments, and grants. She also stated that she will be updating the Bike Audit that she previously presented to the council, and she will be requesting a bike route sign and making a request to apply for the AARP Walk Grant.

Councilmember Lowry's priorities include correcting the road depth at Lake and Main. He spoke of barriers at the corner of Lake and Main, Waste Management concerns, easements, and ditches.

Mayor Bell's priorities are brush, illegal dumping, and easements, which he will push for staffing and equipment to correct these issues. He continued with street

maintenance, economic development, municipal academy, Heroes Village, and a partnership with a nonprofit organization that would be able to provide classes to teach building trades, for free, to the community that the city would only need to provide the space.

Mayor Pro Tem Compian asked Ms. Miller for her priority considerations. She believes the council has provided some good ones. She spoke to the need of the development services department to be "on their toes" for this next phase of building the community.

5.IV. Preliminary Budget Considerations

Finance Director Turner gave a brief overview of the city's finances as of today. She had some initial concerns regarding revenues that she was waiting for the staff to respond to. Discussions regarding the police overtime budget ensued. This was followed by a discussion regarding grants in the police department.

Mayor Pro Tem Compian requested that the city truly get a handle on the disaster fund. He is unsure of what is currently in it. He wants to ensure that the reimbursement funds that the city is receiving do not get entered into the general fund but are returned to the disaster fund. Finance Director Turner identified the fund balance as \$2,012,025.00 in the disaster fund. Mayor Pro Tem Compian identified that there are still funds that have not been received. He believes that the city has not done a good job in this area as there are expenses that the city has not considered.

Discussions regarding the changing guidelines for how to conduct the organization during times of disaster and the need for meticulous documentation ensued.

Mayor Pro Tem Compian also reminded the council that the city is below the 90-day reserve requirement and this needs to be addressed.

Finance Director Turner shared that the utility fund is strong and is in the positive \$866,000.

Discussions regarding the All-America City line items ensued. The city collected \$77,000 in donations for the All-America City event last year and expended a total of \$82,290.73.

Discussions regarding operational transfers from the utility fund to the general fund ensued, clarifying the need and opportunities associated with the transferring of funds.

Finance Director Turner shared that the sanitation fund has a positive balance of \$630,986.63. Discussions continued regarding the need to increase the franchise fee line item in the next budget.

Discussions ensued regarding considerations for camera systems and signage to deter illegal dumping.

5.V. Budget Calendar

***item 5.V was taken after lunch*

City Clerk Nance shared that the budget workshops are scheduled for August 4th, 5th, 7th, 11th, and 12th beginning at 10:00 a.m. She then requested that the council consider who they would like to present at the budget workshops.

6. EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was no executive session.

7. ACTIONS TAKEN FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION
No action was taken.

8. ADJOURNMENT
***Meeting was adjourned at 3:54 p.m.*