



**CITY OF LA MARQUE
CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MINUTES
of
June 23, 2025**

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Mayor Bell called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

PRESENT:

Keith Bell

Mayor

Joe Compian

Mayor Pro Tem/District B

Kimberley Yancy

District A

Joseph Lowry

District C

Tonia Griffin

District D

3. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Pro Tem Compian gave the invocation and Councilmember Griffin led the pledge.

4. AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

4.1. Introduction of Summer Interns

Human Resources Manager Mikala Halbrook introduced representatives of the La Marque Summer Internship Program: second year High School intern Vincent Mitchell, as well as first year High School interns Khushi Katri and Sebastian James. She announced that while there are currently 11 high school and college interns, the city is looking to add more.

Discussions regarding the internship budget ensued, with the council being supportive of additional funding if necessary.

5. CITIZENS PARTICIPATION

Mike Bock (Longridge Dr) spoke on item 8.VII, sharing his confusion regarding the Bayou Fest date. He stated that this event has been in place for 32 years on the third Saturday in October, and he was disgusted to see that the date was listed as "To Be Determined".

Paul & Kelley Neschich (Perthuis Drive) brought a sewer issue to the council's attention. Historically, this issue only happened occasionally – now it happens every time it rains. Their cleanouts have to be opened and raw sewage flows in their front and back yards. Ms. Kelley asked for assistance because the smell is abhorrent. She stated that it is not just an issue at their home, but for the whole street.

Re'Chard Loftis (La Marque) stated that it is very hot in the chambers.

Susan Polk (Studio Dr) lives in one of the oldest neighborhoods, and the family has

owned the property since 1952. There used to be a large ditch near the home, but that is no longer there and drainage issues are abundant. She has called the city, and has filed a request in Request Tracker. She was told that they would be "next on the list", but she had not seen anyone for a month. She spoke to instances where crews have come to the area, but nothing has been resolved.

James Ross (Ave D) has personally been aware of the Economic Development Corporation COVID grant to Councilmember Lowry for over a year. He spoke regarding newspaper articles that contradicted, in his opinion, the information provided in the grant application. He spoke regarding enacting a 75% rule in reviewing all grant recipients. If they meet 75% of the requirements, that would be sufficient. If not, the grant should be repaid.

Hayley Winkelmann (Bowie) is currently obtaining signatures for a recall petition against Councilmember District C. She listed her reasons for the recall petition. She shared concerns regarding city vehicles driving with items on the dashboard or on top of the back seat, items that could become debris if they were involved in an accident. She also shared concerns regarding the lack of street lighting on the feeder roads. There was a fatality this past weekend that possibly could have reduced the likelihood of the accident if a light was present. She stated that it was very nice to see more women on council.

6. MINUTES

Mayor Pro Tem Compian made a motion to approve all minutes as submitted. Councilmember Lowry seconded. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

6.I. Regular City Council Minutes 04.28.2025

6.II. Regular City Council Minutes 06.09.2025

6.III. Special City Council Minutes 06.16.2025

7. OLD BUSINESS

7.I. Boards and Commissions Appointments

Mayor Pro Tem Compian nominated Terry Taylor for the Ordinance Review Committee. Councilmember Lowry seconded. **MOTION CARRIED WITH 4 AYES AND 1 ABSENT (YANCY).**

***This item was reconsidered after the City Manager's Report*

Councilmember Yancy nominated Melanie Stowe for the Building Standards Commission. Mayor Pro Tem Compian seconded. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

8. NEW BUSINESS

8.I. Ordinance No. O-2025-0013

City Attorney Knebel identified that this item is a renewal of a franchise agreement established in 2015, as the previous one is to expire.

Mayor Pro Tem Compian requested some updates to the agreement for clarity specifically regarding the need to clear debris in the electrical right of way, and he

also questioned the fee associated. He asked for language to include notification from Texas New Mexico Power (TNMP) if rates are increased in other areas, that the city has 30-90 days to review and consider if the city wanted that increase as well.

Mayor Bell supported stronger language regarding the clearing of easements.

Mayor Pro Tem Compian made a motion to negotiate the electric franchise with Texas New Mexico Power Company. Councilmember Lowry seconded. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

8.II. Resolution No. R-2025-0032

Mayor Pro Tem Compian made a motion to adopt Resolution No. R-2025-0032 appointing Councilmember Griffin as the representative to the Gulf Coast Transit District Board and Councilmember Yancy as the alternate. Councilmember Yancy seconded. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

8.III. Wastewater Treatment Plant Bid Award

Assistant Public Works Director Amanda Hobby, Alex Sievers of GrantWorks, Brent Berthier of ADICO, and Rick Garcia of Ardurra presented on this item requesting that the council approve this item.

Mr. Garcia stated that there was a smaller footprint that came in under budget, and the remaining funding will be used for additional lift stations.

Mayor Pro Tem Compian stated that he has to "give credit, where credit is due" to former City Manager Charles "Tink" Jackson for initiating this project. He reminded the public that this is grant money whereas other cities have needed to issue revenue bonds to achieve projects of this level. He recognized the work being done by the city on the infrastructure, highlighting this project and the manhole cover initiatives, both of which were grant funded.

Councilmember Lowry asked about the completion date for this project. Mr. Sievers confirmed that this project is to be complete by October 2026.

City Manager Pritchett noted that an update meeting with the Texas General Land Office (GLO), it showed that everything is in order to complete the project within the timeframe.

Mr. Garcia stated that approximately 9 million dollars are available, 10% is required to be reserved for contingencies, which leaves 6.1 million dollars for additional stations. These projects are being prepared for bid to hopefully be released in the next 3 weeks.

Mayor Bell announced to the public that while this amazing work is being done, this is not going to stop the backups as that is caused by infiltration.

City Manager Pritchett explained that the city's existing pump systems only effectively pump at a depth of 25 feet, whereas many systems are installed at depths of 30 feet. He noted that this results in water remaining in the system, causing potential backup and inefficiencies. He expressed the need to have the systems re-engineered to be effective within the city. He explained the correlation between the city's current water loss at 22% and how it affected the infiltration issue.

Councilmember Yancy asked if the project is on schedule now, it was confirmed that the city is now on schedule.

Mayor Pro Tem Compian made a motion to approve this project to move forward.

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

8.IV. Construction Contract Award - Waterline Rehabilitation (LJA Project No. E019-1013)

City Manager Pritchett identified that Areas 6 and 7 are in District D and were identified as the highest areas of need as this is one of the oldest areas of infrastructure.

Mayor Pro Tem Compian identified that this project is related to Houston-Galveston Area Council funding.

Mayor Pro Tem Compian made a motion to award a construction contract to Scohil Construction Services, LLC for the Waterline Rehabilitation Project in the amount of \$2,930,985.00. Councilmember Yancy seconded. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

8.V. Wisteria Drainage Improvements Project (E019-1014) - Change Order No. 1

Mayor Pro Tem Compian made a motion to approve Wisteria Drainage Improvement Change Order No. 1. Councilmember Yancy seconded. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

8.VI. American Fidelity

Human Resources Manager Mikala Halbrook informed the council that the city currently offers AFLAC and, after complaints from employees, she is requesting a switch to American Fidelity. There is no cost to the city. However, it is pretax, payroll deducted.

Councilmember Yancy made a motion to approve the agreement between American Fidelity and the City of La Marque. Mayor Pro Tem Compian seconded. **MOTION CARRIED WITH 4 AYES AND 1 ABSENT (LOWRY).**

8.VII. Special Events

City Manager Pritchett gave an overview of all special events held in the City of La Marque and each event's proposed budgeting process.

Mayor Pro Tem Compian shared that he saw the list provided as proposed dates and noted several events missing, including Fall Sweep, Spring Clean Up, Bayou Fest, and Hurricane Huddle. These particular events rely on several boards in the city. He stated that this is not something the administration should dictate. He also argued that the Chamber of Commerce had not been around when the city needed them. He questioned Fair on the Square being named as an event. He requested that this item be placed on a future agenda to give more formal suggestions with input from boards and commissions.

City Manager Pritchett explained how several of the events mentioned by Mayor Pro Tem Compian, specifically those dealing with the boards, are standard annual weekend events.

Mayor Bell asked that the Small Business and Senior Safety Summits be added to the list of events.

Councilmember Yancy stated that she is a big fan of Bayou Fest and believes that it should stay. She has memories of Fair on the Square and believes that it has a place as well. She believes that it could be a possibility in either 2026 or 2027.

City Manager Pritchett replied that there is no desire to get rid of Bayou Fest, the

city just has to be better stewards of taxpayer's money.

Councilmember Griffin voiced her support for Bayou Fest in October. She questioned how this document would affect the Special Events Committee. It was determined that this would be a guiding document.

Mayor Bell believes that the document was drafted intentionally. He spoke about the past two years at Bayou Fest events, where he saw open field and grass during performances. He is not Bobby Hocking and Mac McGaffey is not here anymore, the events are not the same without those two. Bayou Fest is costing tens of thousands of dollars with poor turnout. He countered Mayor Pro Tem's statement on the Chamber's absence by stating that the Chamber of Commerce decided that they no longer want to be in the event planning or production business. He also noted that Bayou Fest originally replaced Fair on the Square, which was the original birthday celebration for the City of La Marque. He shared the idea of a new partnership with Bon Tem Rouler (BTR) and to return the city's "birthday party" to being Fair on the Square. He wants Bayou Fest to live on and appreciated that the date on the document provided was left blank to allow for the opportunity to have two (2) events instead of one (1).

Mayor Pro Tem Compian didn't think it was fair to be so critical of last year's events. He spoke to the Friday night Tejano event where the Bayou Fest was "hopping".

City Manager Pritchett addressed Mayor Pro Tem Compian's statement regarding last year's Bayou Fest. He explained the issues with the budget versus how much the city and the vendors lost in revenue throughout the event.. He also explained why the Special Events Committee was created, and how it will help with organizing events and maintaining the budget, so the city can remain fiscally responsible.

Councilmember Yancy shared that everyone has suffered from COVID and the last couple of years have been "piss poor planning." This is the first time since she has been on council that she has received a full calendar of events, and she thanked the administration for it.

Parks Board Chairperson Mike "Rock" Bock gave a brief overview of the progression of the Fair on the Square to the Bayou Fest event the City has today. Mayor Bell requested a cost analysis regarding Bayou Fest, including if the city were to partner with BTR.

City Manager Pritchett addressed the need for the city to remain within its budget and how the marketing for other events this year has proven effective with higher turnouts at events like Juneteenth Gala and Hurricane Huddle.

Discussion on the organization or partnerships of Bayou Fest ensued.

Mayor Bell shared the need to move forward in order to create more efficiency. He requested to have this item brought back in two (2) weeks.

NO ACTION TAKEN.

9. CITY MANAGER REPORT

9.1. April and May 2025 Water Loss Report Stood as submitted.

9.II. May 2025 Municipal Court Stats
Stood as submitted.

9.III. June 2025 Sales Tax Report
Stood as submitted.

9.IV. Items for the Good of the Order

City Manager Pritchett announced that the city's water loss is at 22%. He gave a brief recap of the Juneteenth Gala and announced the Bay Area Houston Economic Partnership 89th Legislative Briefing on Wednesday. He announced that on Friday, July 4th, the city offices would be closed, and on Saturday, July 5th, Life and Liberty will be held at Mac McGaffey Highland Bayou Park.

10. EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was no executive session.

11. ACTIONS TAKEN FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION

No actions were taken.

12. REQUESTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councilmember Griffin declined to speak.

Councilmember Lowry requested ditch work in District C stating "it's not a good look for the city ... it's not a reflection of me." He also requested open communication, citing lack of response to emails and text messages, calling it "very unprofessional" as he is one of City Manager Pritchett's bosses.

Councilmember Yancy had an amazing time celebrating "freedom season" in Galveston County. She has received a lot of good feedback from the Juneteenth Gala. She requested that the city reconsider the Historical District in Districts A and D. She is interested in helping the local churches create a kickball league. She asked for a monthly update on La Marque High School. She asked for an update on the new street signs, and thanked the staff for the work that is being done. She closed by stating that Jefferson Street looks amazing.

Mayor Pro Tem Compian requested a discussion regarding the city's drug testing policy, and additional information regarding the streets' workshop. He stated that there is not enough money to address all the infrastructure needs in this country, but would like to look at some innovative new ways to address some of these issues with the community.

Mayor Bell attended the Juneteenth Gala and noted that it was a wonderful evening with an interesting speaker. That night solidified for him what Juneteenth was about, not just freedom, but it was one of the most powerful times that this country lived up to its creed, choosing freedom over economic advancement or many other issues of the day. America is the land of the free. He is looking forward to Life & Liberty. He requested a stormwater plan as it is hurricane season, a safe city update, and attention to the 2050 plan. He enjoyed tonight and there was healthy debate, even though everyone did not always agree.

13. ADJOURNMENT

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

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

*****Meeting was adjourned at 8:21 p.m.***