



**CITY OF LA MARQUE
CITY COUNCIL
SPECIAL MINUTES
of
August 12, 2025**

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Mayor Bell called the meeting to order at 10:35 a.m.

2. ROLL CALL

PRESENT:

Keith Bell	Mayor
Joe Compian	Mayor Pro Tem/District B
Kimberley Yancy	District A (arrived after lunch at 2:44 p.m.)
Joseph Lowry	District C
Tonia Griffin	District D

3. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

4. CITIZENS PARTICIPATION

Mike Bock (*no address given*) spoke concerning the Parks Board budget. He stated that the council gave the board \$21,000 in the current year, and they were not allowed to spend it. However, the next budget has no funding and he is asking that the current year's balance be rolled over.

5. NEW BUSINESS

5.1. Review And Discuss Proposed Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Departmental Budgets And All Funds

Chief Randall Aragon opened by sharing the department's organizational chart and statistics that show a steady decline in the city's crime rate as well as an increased call volume.

After determining that Chief Aragon and his staff have modified their budget since the printing of the proposal it was determined that the council would recess to get a copy of the modified budget.

***Mayor Bell recessed the meeting at 10:54 a.m. and returned at 11:05 a.m.*

Mayor Bell began by reviewing the department's overtime budget, stating that it is very large at \$500,000. Chief Aragon stated that the top three causes are holidays, reporting, and training.

Chief Waggoner stated that there are personnel that are assigned to special assignments that are reimbursed to the city. However, that is not reflected in the department budget.

Discussions regarding alternative staffing, such as "call takers" ensued.

Discussions regarding the police department's rentals line item ensued, which includes a myriad of programs and software the department utilizes.

Discussions regarding utilizing seized vehicles for undercover officers ensued, to which the department clarified that this process is no longer utilized due to liability.

This was followed by a brief discussion regarding the council's desire to have department heads and senior level staff members undergo training in financial management and creating succession planning.

Lieutenant Anders shared concerns regarding the fleet, stating that the vehicles have not been rotated or maintained properly. The department has now begun to have their vehicles serviced at a local vendor. Discussions ensued regarding the change, and why the city's mechanics are not utilized for these services. It was determined that there was a larger discussion regarding vehicle maintenance in the city to be had, and also the city did not at that time have certified mechanics.

Mayor Pro Tem Compian identified areas that he believed were big ticket items, such as the retirement contribution. He also shared his discontent with professional divisions being required to coordinate their own vehicle maintenance.

Councilmember Lowry stated his belief that the city should recommit to utilizing fuel tanks in order to realize a savings on fuel costs.

Mayor Bell gave a brief history of the Enterprise fleet contract, identifying that the purpose was to be able to meet the cities fleet needs at a fixed rate. He agreed with Mayor Pro Tem Compian that at some point the city will need a professional fleet manager or management company. Discussions regarding vehicle sales and repair ensued.

The council requested that a fleet management position be strongly considered as this is an area that will affect a large portion of the city.

Mayor Bell questioned what is considered professional fees in the police department budget, identifying a requested \$100,000 increase. Chief Aragon stated that \$15,000 is a consulting fee with the Resource Crisis Center that is reimbursable by grant funding, DNA testing for cold cases, updating the GIS system, grant writers, updating digital infrastructure, medical exams, third party investigations, and extra help in the evidence room.

It was clarified that the third-party investigations referenced are regarding internal investigations, not reported crimes.

When asked, Deputy Chief Waggoner shared frustration with the budgeting process because the department does not know where it will be in the upcoming year. He does not feel it is appropriate to put money into a building that they may not be in for much longer. He stated that the current conditions are "embarrassing" and they are trying to run a professional department, but their facilities do not align.

Lieutenant Gandy stated that "from the floor to the ceiling there is not one area of that building that does not need repairs".

Councilmember Lowry stated that a bond would not pass. He alleges that there is \$3 million that can be used to partially build out "Building A" and do

what can be done, no matter if that is 10% or 40%.

Interim City Manager Holly stated that the current building is being scheduled for inspection.

Mayor Pro Tem Compian gave alternatives for safe environments for the department to work in such as portable buildings. He believes that the community is ready for a bond, as long as everyone is on one accord, and no tax increases.

Mayor Bell shared his perspective while individuals are in the community, saying that the bond will fail when no one knows. There are factions of the community that have been against a police station for years, and they keep saying that it would not work. The discussion began in 2021, and was again brought to the council in the form of a Public Private Partnership by a former city manager, and now the general bond discussion. He asked that everyone get together and roll up their sleeves to alleviate those obstacles. He also spoke of the liability of continuing to operate in these deplorable conditions. "If we love them as much as we say we do...we need to get to a place where we all agree they need a police station".

Mayor Pro Tem agreed that it is unwise to put money into an building that potentially will not be there.

***Mayor Bell recessed the meeting at 1:00 p.m. and returned at 2:44 p.m.*

Chief Aragon and James Osteen, who represents the city on the Galveston County Animal Services Advisory Committee, started the session. Mr. Osteen stated that the actual FY24 number is incorrect. The total for that year was \$121,000. He stated that all of those figures in the proposal are incorrect. This year's is anticipated to be \$154,000. He stated that the cost of this program is based on the population, which is why the city's amount increased.

Discussions regarding animal services operations ensued.

Parks Board Chair Mike Bock reiterated his earlier presentation and requested that the funding for the current fiscal year be rolled over into next fiscal year.

Mayor Pro Tem Compian stated his belief that the parks donation fund should carry over each year; it was confirmed that it does.

Mayor Bell spoke to the council being assigned boards, commissions, and committees as ex-officio members and serving as the advocates for said boards during budget meetings.

Interim City Manager Holly shared a brief overview of the timeline of this budget process as she understands it and the reduction needed in the budget. She noted that the budget presented by the previous administration and finance director was set at a 46-cent tax rate, which she knows this council will not move forward with. She clarified that the council was unaware of the parameters in this budget as they have no administrative oversight. She hopes to have an updated budget presented to the council on the following Monday.

She stated that at this time, there would be no requested additions to staff due to uncertainty about the numbers.

Discussions regarding Cost of Living Adjustments (COLA), salary surveys, and livable wages ensued, with Interim City Manager Holly stating that this is a

process that is hopefully being built into the budget. However, she will look towards supporting front-line employees first and department leadership will be last if a decision has to be made.

Councilmember Yancy spoke to infrastructure projects that she felt passionate about, including replacing street signs, clearing alleyways, and ditch clearing. She also asked about the reserve fund.

Mayor Pro Tem Compian asked for the monthly fixed costs in order to adequately assess the reserve fund.

Mayor Bell requested that the Parks and Keep La Marque Beautiful Commission budgets be presented at the additional Monday meeting. He reiterated council's desire to formalize an operation plan for the public works department to clear debris and illegal dumping sites in each district.

6. EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was no executive session.

7. ACTIONS TAKEN FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION

NO ACTION TAKEN.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Pro Tem Compian made a motion to adjourn. Councilmember Yancy seconded. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

*****Meeting was adjourned at 3:39 p.m.***