



**CITY OF LA MARQUE  
CITY COUNCIL  
REGULAR MINUTES  
of  
January 9, 2023**

Minutes of a **Regular Meeting** held in the **Council Chambers** at **1109-B Bayou Road La Marque, Texas** as well as via **videoconference hosted through Zoom** on **January 9, 2023**, beginning at **6:00 PM** :

1/9/2023 - Minutes

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Mayor Bell called the meeting to order at 6:07 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

All members of Council were present.

3. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

La Marque Police Department Chaplain, Pastor Jervie gave the invocation, and Councilman Carlson led the pledge.

4. PRESENTATIONS

4.I. Proclamations

Mayor Bell recited proclamations for Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Human Trafficking Prevention Month, and Law Enforcement Appreciation Day. Ms. Duana Boswell-Lochel received the proclamation for Human Trafficking Prevention Month, and Duana Boswell-Lochel and Chief of Police Randall Aragon received the proclamation for Law Enforcement Appreciation Day.

4.II. New Officer Introduction

Chief Aragon introduced two new officers, Mandella "Della" Mosely and Joshua Peterson, both of whom shared that they were happy to serve the community.

4.III. Police Excellence Award

Officer Dana Thomasson was presented with a Police Excellence Award for her diligence and service in locating a missing child.

5. CITIZENS PARTICIPATION

- Charlotte Westerledge (825 Shady Lane), would like district representatives on the council to be residents of the district. She stated that she misses getting the news from La Marque, and wonders if infrastructure grants could help with water issues. She shared complaints regarding fireworks and

gunshots on New Year's Eve and her appreciation for the La marque Police Department.

- Bill Pritchard (2416 Newman) spoke regarding sewer issues and potholes near his neighbor's home.
- Richard Chitten (2404 Newman) spoke regarding the sewer issues he has had over the past 8 years. He praised Public Works Director for always answering or returning his call, regardless of the time of day or night.
- Re'Chard Loftis (309 Johnson) spoke in support of the Rental Registration Program.

## 6. MINUTES

Councilmember Carlson made a motion to approve all minutes as submitted. Councilmember McAuliffe seconded the motion. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

## 7. RESOLUTIONS

### 7.I. Resolution No. R-2023-0001

Councilmember Carlson made a motion to adopt Resolution No. R-2023-0001. Councilmember McAuliffe seconded the motion. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

### 7.II. Resolution No. R-2023-0002

Councilmember Carlson made a motion to adopt Resolution No. R-2023-0002. Councilmember McAuliffe seconded the motion. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

### 7.III. Resolution No. R-2023-0003

City Manager Cesar Garcia gave a brief history of how the City became aware of this program.

Councilmember McAuliffe asked how citizens are connected with these services. Utility Billing Supervisor Venisha Henderson shared that services such as this, are shared with residents who are having difficulties with bill payment. Councilmember Yancy added that citizens could speak with Texas Workforce Commission located in Texas City as they are housed in that building, and applications can be retrieved there.

Councilmember McAuliffe made a motion to adopt Resolution No. R-2023-0003. Councilmember Carlson seconded the motion. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

### 7.IV. Resolution No. R-2023-0004

Mayor Pro Tem Compian clarified the location of this land.

Councilmember McAuliffe made a motion to adopt Resolution No. R-2023-0004. Mayor Pro Tem Compian seconded the motion. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

### 7.V. Resolution No. R-2023-0005

Development Services Director Kathleen Van Stavern gave a brief history of the property. Mayor Pro Tem Compian asked if there were residential structures currently on these properties and Director Van Stavern clarified that there were not.

Mayor Pro Tem Compian made a motion to adopt Resolution No. R-2023-0005. Councilmember Carlson seconded the motion. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

7.VI. Resolution No. R-2023-0006

City Manager Garcia gave a brief overview of the grants potential. Councilmember Carlson inquired about the Parks Boards opinion of this particular grant opportunity. City Manager assured the council that the Parks Board is in full support of moving forward.

Councilmember Carlson made a motion to adopt Resolution No. R-2023-0006. Mayor Pro Tem Compian seconded the motion. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

8. NEW BUSINESS

8.I. Boards And Commissions Handbook

Discussions ensued regarding removing felony background checks and their costs, clarifying language throughout the handbook, and aesthetics. Council also discussed additional Robert's Rules of Order training for chairpersons as well as including the mission, history, and current dealings of each board. Staff was asked to clarify "Highest Moral Capacity", and while the current draft speaks to social media there needs to be the inclusion of face-to-face decorum as well.

Mayor Pro Tem Compian made a motion to table this item. Councilmember Carlson seconded this motion. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

8.II. Rental Registration

Councilmember Carlson requested this item. He cited citizen concerns regarding the \$100 administrative fee that is attached to the registration. Discussion regarding the logistics of changing the administrative fee ensued, with clarification from Attorney Gus Knebel that any changes to the fees, administrative or registration, would require an ordinance amendment. Mayor Bell and Development Services Director Van Stavern gave a brief history regarding the creation of the Rental Registration Program.

A lengthy discussion regarding the program's intent and the number of rental properties within the city ensued.

Councilman Carlson made a motion to direct staff to eliminate the administrative (processing) fee of \$100 and retain the rate of \$100 per registered single family residential home.

*\*\*Motion died due to lack of second.*

Councilmember Yancy made a motion to table this item. Mayor Pro Tem Compian seconded the motion. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

8.III. Monthly Meetings

Mayor Bell requested this item previously but is open to all suggestions, including revisiting this item in 6 months. He reiterated that the current policy states that while there is currently only one regular council meeting each month any tabling of an item "triggers" a second meeting on the fourth Monday of that month.

Councilmember McAuliffe asked the City Clerk about the average number of meetings the council has had over the last six months. It was clarified that there had been multiple months with 2-3 meetings per month. Councilmember McAuliffe was open to two regular meetings with the caveat that the two regular meetings would be the only meetings allowed. Councilmember Yancy asked staff for input as when this was addressed previously staff requested one meeting.

Mayor Bell suggested that the Council meet twice a month but proposed that the departments be scheduled to appear before the council once a month.

City Clerk Nance spoke and stated that the current process could be cumbersome for her, and trying to ensure that all of the staff's items are heard at one time puts a lot of pressure on her department and actually takes her out of operations for anywhere from one to two weeks per month simply due to the amount of information she has to compile, drafting resolutions and ordinances with legal, and other preparations. However, she understood that asking department heads to attend two council meetings per month could cause undue hardship on them. She closed her thoughts with she serves at the pleasure of the council and will continue to work in whatever manner they choose to move forward.

Public Relations Officer, Joshua Pritchett spoke on the item, stating that for the purposes of communication and spreading information, breaking this information into two meetings would be easier. The idea of scheduling departments on one Monday or another would help alleviate some of the work on the City Clerk, whom he reminded everyone is a staff of one, without an assistant to help spread the work. He spoke to two meetings potentially making the meetings shorter which would also benefit the department heads who are required to attend.

City Clerk also informed the council that making the change could also affect the passing of ordinances, as it currently takes between 30 and 90 days to pass an ordinance, whereas with the proposed meeting schedule, they would theoretically be able to pass within 30 days.

Public Works Director Rick Sailer spoke to the benefits of the additional meeting from a public works and projects standpoint, he often works with outside vendors, and if there is any delay that causes them to miss a deadline, it could mean an additional 30-day delay before the item is brought to council before implementation.

Councilmember McAuliffe reiterated her support of two meetings as long as it removed the ability to have special meetings.

Mayor Bell suggested an additional resolution that restricted when and how the council would be allowed to convene in a special meeting, citing that only items that had legal or statutory requirements could require a special meeting.

Councilmember McAuliffe made a motion to direct staff to return with an ordinance authorizing (2) regular meetings per month, providing the elimination of Special meetings barring legal requirements. Mayor Pro Tem Compian seconded the motion. **MOTION PASSED WITH 4 AYES AND 1 NAY (Yancy).**

#### 8.IV. Upcoming Events

No action taken on this item.

#### 8.V. Items For The Good Of The Order

Councilmember Carlson welcomed the new police officers, and "good job," Officer Thomasson. He asked the city manager to update the screens at the police department with new and current information. He wished everyone a Happy New Year.

Councilmember McAuliffe wished everyone a Happy New Year and echoed the welcome to the new officers and an appreciation for Officer Thomasson.

Councilmember Yancy recognized long-time District A resident Ollie Jewel Williams, who passed away. She loved La Marque and had served as the pianist for Rising Star Missionary Baptist Church for 70 years. She asked to revisit the naming policy to honor the legacy of "famous" residents such as Ron

Crowder, Geraldine Sam, Bobby Hocking, and Kay Bailey Hutchinson. She announced the MLK Parade next weekend and that some of the Council will be participating. She is looking forward to all that is being manifested in 2023 and hopes that the issues on Newman are addressed soon.

Mayor Pro Tem Compian shared best wishes to everyone in the new year. He reminded the community that the issues with the sewer system are ongoing and affect everyone. He also had a leak but thanked Rick Sailer and the Public Works staff for their work. He asked everyone to be patient with the department as we are not a very wealthy city with limited staff, and infrastructure problems abound. He asked that the after-hours process for reporting issues be revisited as calls are currently routed to dispatch, and he was placed on hold multiple times while they dealt with emergencies. He will attend the H-GAC retreat this upcoming weekend to continue building relationships and advocate for small home-rule cities. He closed by inviting everyone to attend the Martin Luther King parade, which he also will be participating in.

Mayor Bell spoke to the city mourning the loss of former mayor and Economic Development Corporation Chairman Ron Crowder. He thanked the "Chairman" for his distinguished decades of service to the community. He was a friend, historian, and counselor to many councils. Losing a person of such impact is a difficult loss for the entire city. He also remembered Ms. Ollie Jewel Williams as a model citizen, the epitome of elegance, an educator, and a great musician. He shared his concerns regarding the city's struggles with addressing social media discourse regarding city issues. He cited issues dealing with infrastructure and how they should be addressed in dynamic and comprehensive ways, explaining the issue, how the issue arose, the price tags on these repairs, and how the city is addressing these issues. He feels that these could be addressed appropriately through the public relations officer. He asked that the council, sooner rather than later, deliberate on what role the council would like for this position to play. His personal goal is to focus on the work in 2023, "what are we doing to improve the lives of our citizens". His main focus is infrastructure. He also would like to work with the administration on reorganizing departments to be more efficient, continue to work strongly on the Safe City Program and work diligently with the Economic Development Corporation to continue to increase development. He also shared that he asked City Manager to provide the Council with a list of all Home Owners Association meetings in the city.

City Manager Garcia shared his condolences to the Crowder family and looks forward to the new year.

## 9. EXECUTIVE SESSION

*\*\*Mayor Bell recessed the Regular Meeting and entered into Executive Session at 8:39 p.m.*

9.I. Section 551.074 (Personnel Matters)

9.II. 551.076 (Deliberations About Security Devices)

## 10. ACTIONS TAKEN FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION

*\*\*Mayor Bell adjourned the Executive Session and reconvened the Regular Meeting at 11:47 p.m.*

10.I. Section 551.074 (Personnel Matters)

Mayor Pro Tem Compian made a motion to table this item until January 23, 2023. Councilmember Carlson seconded this motion. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

10.II. 551.076 (Deliberations About Security Devices)

Mayor Pro Tem Compian made a motion to proceed with staff recommendations regarding enhancing security devices at city properties. Councilmember McAuliffe seconded. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

11. ADJOURNMENT

Councilmember Carlson made a motion to adjourn. Mayor Pro Tem Compian seconded the motion.  
**MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

*\*\*Meeting was adjourned at 11:49 p.m.*

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Keith Bell  
Mayor

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Kierra K. Nance, TRMC  
City Clerk

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