



**CITY OF LA MARQUE
CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MINUTES
of
March 13, 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 **March 13, 2023**, beginning at **6:00 PM** :

3/13/2023 - Minutes

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

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

2. ROLL CALL

All members of council were present.

3. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

4. PRESENTATION

Chief Randall Aragon and Lt. Gandy presented two officers, Senior Officer Nicole Galindo and Officer Aaron Skaggs, "Lifesaving Awards", for their efforts and Narcan use after being dispatched to instances of nonresponsive residents.

Chief Aragon briefly overviewed the Safe City Initiative and its first-year successes, including establishing (5) Community Watch areas with assigned Community Policing Officers, (8) CompStat Briefings, (2) fully trained Gang Unit Officers, (17) Special Response Team Operations, continued discussions, preparations for a social worker, youth programming, continued reduction of violent crime - 13% reduction from the year prior.

Councilmember Yancy suggested partnering with the Family Services Center and requested additional information regarding cold cases.

Mayor Bell reiterated that "crime is down," recognized that the City still has challenges, and commended the department for the progress that has been made. he conveyed the desires of the community that the Community Policing Program truly evolve into a partnership between the designated officers and the community that they serve. Mayor requested that the accomplishments reflected in this presentation be submitted in a bullet point or "report card" format to disseminate to residents. He shared citizens' concerns regarding gunshots, to which Chief Aragon has not heard or seen anything recently.

Economic Development Director Alex Getty gave a presentation regarding the Economic Development Corporation's (EDC) actions. He shared information regarding each board member and thanked the council for appointing such a diverse board. He gave a history of the EDC, historical projects that the corporation

has completed, and an overview of the EDC's finances and assets. EDC Public Relations Specialist Mandy Woodburn gave an overview of the marketing and advertising efforts of the EDC.

Mayor Pro Tem Compian questioned the fluctuations of the sales tax in the monthly reports, to which it was clarified that there is a 2-month "lag," so February numbers would reflect December sales, etc. He also spoke to the City's financial reports, questioning the position of the EDC in the report.

Councilmember Yancy shared concerns regarding the pace of activity within the Economic Development Corporation. She mentioned that she wants to see more "deliverables" and a timeline for proposed projects.

Councilmember McAuliffe stated that she understands that economic development is a long game but also, that the EDC is a source of "dreams" for many people in this community and would like to see more targeting, projecting, and vision from the EDC.

Mayor Bell shared his hope for Market on 3 to become a food truck park as there are not enough eateries in the city.

Mayor Pro Tem Compian shared a brief activity report for activities and events he has attended, including H-GAC events, Galveston County Day at the Capital, and TML MidYear Conference.

Mayor and Council thanked Mayor Pro Tem for his advocacy and dedication.

5. CITIZENS PARTICIPATION

- Joseph Lowry (2503 Cedar) spoke to congratulate the officers for their lifesaving awards. He mentioned organized crime and shots fired and questioned whether background checks were done on crime watch block captains. He congratulated EDC for their hard work.
- Clarence Caldwell (3603 Prairie) spoke, thanking Cesar Garcia and other city staff for their assistance in a personal matter. He also questioned if there is an ordinance regarding mowing and debris in the sewer system, referencing citizens who attended previous meetings reporting sewer backups. He also spoke regarding mosquitos and culvert clearing.
- Mary Limones (2709 John), Josey Ramos, and Marta Diaz (Mainland Lulac) spoke regarding a proposal to the City of La Marque requesting waiving fees, city vendor fees, providing traffic control, first responders, waste management, and advertising for a Cinco De Mayo Event.
- James Ross (414 Ave D) spoke, thanking whoever built the speed hump on Ave D and requested expediting the new system that allows citizens to view their water consumption sharing that he had a water break that he was unaware of and could have been alerted sooner had the technology been available.

6. PUBLIC HEARINGS

***Mayor Bell closed the Regular Meeting and entered into Public Hearings at 7:54 p.m.*

6.I. Ordinance No. O-2023-0001

There was no public input.

7. ORDINANCES

***Mayor Bell closed the Public Hearings and reconvened the Regular Meeting at 7:55 p.m.*

7.I. Ordinance No. O-2023-0001

Councilmember McAuliffe made a motion to adopt Ordinance No. O-2023-0001. Mayor Pro Tem Compian seconded the motion. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

7.II. Ordinance No. O-2023-0002

Mayor Pro Tem Compian questioned the rates reflected in the ordinance. After much discussion and perspective, Mayor proposed reducing the fees of the additional home to \$50 as opposed to the current \$100 proposal.

Councilmember McAuliffe spoke about the difference in relationships between career rental owners, those who own 2-3 family properties, and the fine line being walked. She reminded the council that the purpose of this program is to admonish and remove "slum lords" and provide a mechanism to identify these owners. Mayor Bell followed this with a brief history of the program.

Mayor Pro Tem Compian made a motion to adopt Ordinance No. O-2023-0002 amending the ordinance to reflect a \$50 fee for additional single-family dwellings after the first property, effective 2024.

City Attorney Knebel discussed whether the proposed changes would cover the program's cost. The City cannot utilize the program to "make money" but should not propose fees that will not cover the expenditures.

Mayor Pro Tem Compian withdrew his motion.

Councilmember McAuliffe made a motion to table. Councilmember Carlson seconded the motion.
MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

8. RESOLUTIONS

8.I. Resolution No. R-2023-0011

***Mayor Pro Tem Compian exited the room at 8:27 p.m. and returned at 8:31 p.m.*

Director Getty addressed some of the concerns raised at the initial submission of this item. City's representatives for Retail Strategies are based in Fort Worth, TX, although their headquarters are in Alabama. His opinion is that judging them solely on what businesses they could bring is unfair, considering that we were in a global pandemic in 2 of the 3 years contracted.

Councilmember Yancy shared her concerns and expressed that she has not seen deliverables from this organization. She agreed that it might be advantageous to extend their contract as suggested, but "they better shine."

Councilmember Carlson questioned why this contract is needed when we have an EDC. Director Getty shared that this contract expands the team by at least 2 members.

Councilmember McAuliffe stated that she understands the \$35,000 investment to expand the scope but questioned the vetting process and conveyed a need for the council to feel "looped in."

***Councilmember Carlson exited the room at 8:41 p.m. and returned at 8:43 p.m.*

Mayor Bell spoke about the change of leadership in the EDC after losing a long-term Chairman and the need to allow the new team an opportunity to proceed and grow.

Councilmember McAuliffe made a motion to adopt Resolution No. R-2023-0011. Councilmember Yancy seconded the motion. **MOTION PASSED WITH 4 AYES AND 1 NAY (CARLSON).**

8.II. Resolution No. R-2023-0015

Councilmember Carlson made a motion to adopt Resolution No. R-2023-0015. Councilmember McAuliffe seconded the motion. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

8.III. Resolution No. R-2023-0016

Councilmember McAuliffe made a motion to adopt Resolution No. R-2023-0016. Councilmember Carlson seconded the motion. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

8.IV. Resolution No. R-2023-0017

Councilmember McAuliffe made a motion to adopt Resolution No. R-2023-0017. Councilmember Yancy seconded the motion. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

8.V. Resolution No. R-2023-0018

Councilmember McAuliffe made a motion to adopt Resolution No. R-2023-0018. Councilmember Carlson seconded the motion. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

8.VI. Resolution No. R-2023-0019

Mayor Pro Tem Compian questioned why Grantworks is using 2010 census data vs 2020.

Councilmember McAuliffe made a motion to adopt Resolution No. R-2023-0019 with the contingency of updated 2020 Census data. Mayor Pro Tem Compian seconded the motion. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

8.VII. Resolution No. R-2023-0020

Mayor Pro Tem Compian questioned the intent of this item. Director Sailer clarified that this item is simply creating a purchase order for these services to increase efficiency and transparency.

Councilmember McAuliffe made a motion to adopt Resolution No. R-2023-0020. Mayor Pro Tem Compian seconded the motion. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

9. CITY MANAGER REPORT

Stood as submitted.

Mayor Pro Tem Compian acknowledged the great work everyone is doing, especially the library. Mayor Bell and Councilmember McAuliffe agreed. Mayor Bell also acknowledged the Public Works department's work to clear the yard, an area that has been a problem for years.

10. NEW BUSINESS

10.I. Investment Quarterly Reports

Finance Director Kou apologized for the late submission and gave a brief overview of the report.

Mayor Pro Tem Compian spoke about the timeliness of the reports and shared some information he learned in his Public Investments Act training, including the need to separate the reports of the City and EDC and maximize the potential of our investments.

Mayor Pro Tem Compian made a motion to approve the investment reports from the third and fourth quarters of 2022. Councilmember McAuliffe seconded the motion. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

10.II. Werner Construction

Councilmember McAuliffe made a motion to approve the construction proposal received from Werner Construction related to the remodeling of 1130 1st Street and 418 Laurel. Councilmember Yancy seconded the motion. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

10.III. Helm Design Group

Councilmember McAuliffe made a motion to approve the updated architectural and engineering fee from Helm Design Group related to the remodeling of 1130 1st Street and 418 Laurel. Councilmember Yancy seconded the motion. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

10.IV. CORE Office Interior

Councilmember McAuliffe made a motion to approve the quote received from CORE Office Interiors related to the interior remodel of 1130 1st Street. Councilmember Carlson seconded the motion. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

10.V. Request For Proposal

Councilmember Carlson questioned if the cost for Adico is included in the item from earlier in the agenda. It was clarified that this is separate work from general consulting and is not captured by the previous item. He questioned if this project would cross the TxDOT sidewalk project, and it was clarified that it would not.

Mayor Pro Tem Compian asked when citizens could expect interruptions on 1765. Public Works Director Sailler clarified that this project is done "behind the curb" and outside of some equipment potentially in the roadway; there will not be any disruptions.

Councilmember Yancy made a motion to approve the Advertisement and Request for Proposal for the construction of a 12-inch waterline on Texas Avenue (FM1764) from I45 to Newman Road, Phase 1 of the Stonewall Waterline Improvement Project. Mayor Pro Tem Compian seconded the motion. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

10.VI. "La Marque 2050"

Mayor introduced the project as long-term planning and memorializing a vision for the City in areas such as growth and financial planning, facilities usage, among many others.

Councilmember Carlson stated that he hopes current master plans will be included.

Councilmember McAuliffe made a motion to approve Mayor to work with City Manager to create an outline for the La Marque 2050 program. Councilmember Carlson seconded the motion. **MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

10.VII. FY24 Appropriations Funding Request

Public Works Director Sailler gave a brief overview of the request and the 2-inch waterline project being submitted for funding.

Councilmember McAuliffe clarified that this is not an application but a solicitation for fund allocations.

City Manager Garcia identified that a 20% matching fund could be assessed. There is also the ability

not to have any matching funds required. This discussion is just looking at the "worst case" scenario.

Monisha Khurana (The Goodman Group) clarified that the match must be in -cash, not in-kind contributions. While in-kind contributions cannot be utilized for this situation, additional CDBG funding could be used as matching funds.

Councilmember McAuliffe made a motion to approve submitting an appropriations funding request for a project totaling 5 million dollars, a 4 million dollar request with an estimated 1 million dollars of matching funds. Councilmember Carlson seconded the motion. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

10.VIII. Upcoming Events

No action was taken.

10.IX. Items For The Good Of The Order

Councilmember Carlson appreciates all the staff's hard work and commended a firefighter on a citizen comment he received. He values all of his council members and will hate seeing Councilmember McAuliffe leave. Thank you for everything.

Mayor Pro Tem Compian shared that it's great to be a part of a dynamic and innovative city. He is grateful for the ability to live here.

Councilmember McAuliffe stated thank you, as always, to the staff and also thanked the representatives of the EDC for their attendance.

Councilmember Yancy wished everyone a Happy Women's Month and St. Patrick's Day. The City of La Marque is hosting the Galveston County Mayor and Council's Association in the month of May and congratulated Hitchcock High School on their basketball state championship win. She also announced she is working with EDC to create Business Incubator named after Frank Bell and is looking forward to an update on Juneteenth. "Hats off" to Alex Getty. She wants to ensure that "we are our best in EVERYTHING that we do." She closed by announcing that Stop the Violence Week is scheduled for March 26-April 1, 2023.

Mayor Bell wished everyone a Happy Women's Month and acknowledged the efforts of the police officers who received the "Life Saving Award". He shared his thoughts about a request to adopt Cinco De Mayo as an annual city event. He is of the opinion that any celebration outside of Bayou Fest be solicited as a Request for Proposal with the idea that there are people in the community who are better at organizing and promoting events than the city, and it could be a way to maximize those dollars. He requested a policy draft for the council to deliberate on.

City Manager Garcia announced that he has been with the city for one year and thanked everyone stating that he is proud to lead this team.

11. EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was no executive session.

12. ACTIONS TAKEN FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION

No action was taken.

13. ADJOURNMENT

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

***Meeting was adjourned at 9:48 P.M.*

Keith Bell

Mayor

Kierra K. Nance, TRMC

City Clerk