

*LONE STAR CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
FIRE HALL – 201 WEST INDUSTRIAL
April 20, 2023, at 6:00 p.m.*

*We reserve the right to enter into Executive Session on any Agenda item pertaining to
TEX. GOV'T CODE ANN. Sections 551.071-551.078, 551.087-551.089*

In compliance with the Texas Open Meetings Act, Chapter 551, of the Texas Government Code, the City of Lone Star issues this public notice. If, during the course of the meeting, any discussion of any item on the agenda should be held in executive or closed session, the board will convene in such executive or closed session in accordance with Section 551 of the Texas Government Code, Et Seq. The City Council will consider and act on the following items:

The subjects to be discussed or considered or upon which any formal action may be taken are listed below. Items do not have to be taken in the same order as shown on the meeting notice.

MINUTES

Present were Mayor Randy Hodges, Mayor Pro-Tem Jerri Chism, Aldermen Mona Brown, Rudy Dudley, Tony Johnson, Cody Wommack and City Secretary Tina Love.

1. CALL TO ORDER – Mayor Randy Hodges at 6:00 p.m.

2. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Invocation – Mayor Randy Hodges

Pledge of Allegiance – All in unison

3. CITIZEN COMMENTS: *At this time, anyone will be allowed to speak on any matter for a length of time not to exceed **three minutes**. No Council/Board discussion or action may take place on a matter until such matter has been placed on an agenda and posted in accordance with law.*

Citizen Travis Pool discussed the 3% rate increase, the EDC, and the hiring of David Hood.

Citizen Tristan Ruiz of 317 Germany Street discussed the structure located at 323 Germany. She described the condition of the structure, referenced owners as being deceased, taxes haven't been paid in years, property is not being maintained, there are no utilities, water or sewer to the structure. She referenced people are living there and have been problematic and she doesn't feel safe. Mayor Hodges acknowledged the property condition, and the City is working on processing paperwork.

Marty Walker spoke and wanted to thank the Mayor and the Council and expressed his appreciation for all they do for the community.

4. CONSENT ITEMS:

Minutes of Rescheduled Regular Council Meeting on March 23, 2023

A motion to accept the Rescheduled Regular Council Meeting Minutes on March 23, 2023 was made by Rudy Dudley with a second from Mona Brown. Four voted Aye, one no vote.

5. REPORTS:

5-1: Judge/Court Report

5-2: Police Department Report

5-3: Fire Chief Report

- 5-4: Public Works Report
- 5-5: Water District Report
- 5-6: EDC Report
- 5-7: Financial Reports
 - a. Water and Sewer Fund
 - b. General Fund

Cody Wommack questioned some of the provided reports. These questions were answered with no changes or corrections.

A motion to accept reports 5-1 thru 5-7b was made by Mona Brown with a second from Jerri Chism. All voted Aye.

6. ACTION ITEMS

6-1 Review, Discussion, and Possible Action by the Council on City Bidding Policies and Procedures and applicable statutes (tabled from 3/23/23, item 7-1).

Cody Wommack was asked to write a bidding policy and procedure for the council to review. Discussed current statute requirements and the need to contact Historically Underutilized Business's (HUB). Referenced 3 HUB's in Morris county that aren't being contacted. One does construction work, one does catering, and one creates brochures. Discussed the City should create a vendor's list. Discussed the City of Lone Star should consider lowering the minimum bid threshold from \$3,000 to \$1,000. Rudy Dudley referenced there was no policy provided for review and felt it should be dropped off the list until one is made available.

A motion to drop this item off the list was made by Rudy Dudley with a second from Tony Johnson. Four voted for, one voted against.

6-2: Review, Discussion, and Possible Action regarding a 3.00% rate increase proposed by Sanitation Solutions.

Rudy Dudley discussed the current Sanitation Solution's contract includes cleaning the streets with a street sweeper. This has not been occurring because Sanitation Solutions no longer has street sweeping equipment. He doesn't think we should approve the rate increase.

Citizen Travis Pool asked if the rate increase would be added to his water bill. If so, it is already high, and he agrees with Mr. Dudley that the City shouldn't approve the rate increase.

Cody Wommack discussed the customer base and the rate increase statistics.

Citizen Keith Reiter referenced the streets not being cleaned as identified in the contract is a breach of contract. Keith also referenced occurrences of smelly liquids leaking from the back of the garbage trucks.

Citizen Theresa Peppers referenced debris and garbage on the streets and asked if Sanitation Solutions was supposed to be cleaning the streets.

Cody Wommack provided historical information about annual cost and profits for garbage collections and doesn't agree with the 3% rate increase.

A motion to not approve the 3% rate increase was made by Mona Brown with a second from Jerri Chism. All present voted Aye.

6-3: Review, Discussion, and Possible Action by the Council on city policy and procedures relating to the hiring decisions and authority.

Cody Wommack referenced the recent hiring of Officer Cole. He referred to the City Council having hiring authority and that Officer Cole was introduced to the City Council but was not voted on by the City Council. Mayor Hodges referenced the letter of the law was ultimately responsible for hiring authority. He had spoken with our legal counsel about the hiring authority. We had a opening for an officer voted on and approved by the City Council. The Mayor took the initiative to hire Officer Cole because of multiple reports of speeding up and down the highway and near misses. He discussed the high officer turnover rate and getting a good officer was difficult to find. Cody discussed the administrative duty and responsibilities of the City Council. According to legal counsel, the Mayor is the Chief Administrator of the City. The City Council had voted on and approved the hiring of an additional police officer. Chief of Police, Steven Blythe, discussed the hiring policy established for Lone Star PD. A police officer has to pass a physical agility test, then interviewed by an oral board. Then the oral board approves or disapproves the interviewee. If approved, the Chief of Police does a final interview with the applicant. This narrows the process down to who is qualified for the position. Chief Blythe discussed the time spent interviewing a candidate and the presentation to the council.

Keith Reiter doesn't want his voted in representatives not be part of the hiring process. Mayor Hodges discussed the officer having all the necessary qualifications and certifications to perform the job. He presented the Council the opportunity to override his decision if they wanted to. There were discussions amongst attendees of needing an additional officer. Mona Brown referenced the Council had approved the hiring of an officer and to move on. The Mayor opened the floor for a vote.

There was no vote and no action taken.

6-4: Review, Discussion, and Possible Action on the term of office, authority, and compensation of the city fire marshal.

Cody Wommack referenced blueprints for a laundromat and hotel. Discussed the Fire Marshal requested certified architectural drawings for the hotel. Indicated the drawings would need to be provided to the Water and Sewer Supervisor, the Fire Chief, and the Mayor for review. Discussed certified architectural drawings were not required. Cody asked how much the Fire Marshal was paid. The City Secretary indicated \$100 per month. Discussed work on the hotel was stopped because a fire suppression system had not been installed in the structure in accordance to state law. Mayor Hodges had spoken with the Engineer over the project and discussed the issues. Previous state guidelines required a fire suppression system for 10,000 ft and above. The law had changed and required a fire suppression system installed for 5,000 ft. and above. The structure is less than 5,000 ft. Additional discussions occurred about fire walls being removed that didn't need to be removed. The Engineer was contacted and additional state requirements were discussed that had to be met. Additional discussions occurred about the authority and compensation of the city fire marshal.

A motion that no action be taken was made by Tony Johnson with a second from Jerri Chism. Four voted Aye, one no vote.

