

MINUTES OF A SPECIAL MEETING

On the 28th day of February 2023, the City Council of Taft, Texas, convened in a special meeting at 402 Park Street, Kiva Hut, at 6:31 p.m. with the following members present:

#1. CALL TO ORDER AND QUORUM CHECK

Randy Powell Mayor
Rolando Rodriguez Mayor Pro-Tem
Leonard Vasquez
Chris Keeney
Alonso Molina

There being a quorum, the meeting was called to order by Mayor Powell.

Others Present: Sid Arismendez, Interim City Manager; Molly Topper, Finance Director/City Secretary; Epi Ysassi, Interim City Attorney; Bernie Saenz, Director of Public Works; John Landreth, Chief of Police (see attached list for guests present)

#2. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE

Councilman Rodriguez led the Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance.

VISITORS

Glenn Searcy commented on employee pay and decaying buildings.

Scott Patton addressed the Council on behalf of the Taft Volunteer Fire Department with his concerns regarding equipment and building maintenance. He also commented on the qualifications of the Interim City Manager, Sid Arismendez.

#3. PRESENTATION BY CARYN BINGHAM, HOMELAND PREPAREDNESS PROJECT

Ms. Bingham, Homeland Preparedness Project, working with San Patricio County Emergency Management with a CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) program and is asking use of the Kiva Hut to provide citizens a training course that prepares them for an emergency disaster or response. Tentative dates are set for March 31, 2023 thru April 2, 2023.

#8. DISCUSS, CONSIDER AND ACT ON BUDGET AMENDMENT TO PROVIDE FOR CITY ASSISTANCE FOR ROOF REPAIRS TO BLACKLAND MUSEUM.

David Smith addressed Council on behalf of the Taft Blackland Musuem asking for funding consideration of \$15,000 for continued repairs to the roof on the building. Mayor Powell responded that the current budget would be reviewed, and would return this item on the March 14th agenda for consideration. No action taken on this item.

#7. DISCUSS, CONSIDER AND ACT ON RELINQUISHING OWNERSHIP OF 12” MAIN LINE WATER INLET TO SAN PATRICIO WATER DISTRICT.

Brian Williams, General Manager, and Jake Krumnow, Operations Manager, from the San Patricio Municipal Water District addressed the Council regarding a 12” main water line located on Hwy 181 from West Portland

Gin to the 500 block of Davis Road that is currently owned and maintained by the District. The City owns a water meter beginning at West Portland Gin with several customers serviced on the water line. The District is asking to move the meter closer to Taft to allow them to replace the line with an 18” line, and move ownership of the water meter and a portion of the water line at a point closer to Taft, approximately 3000 sq ft, to be serviced by Rincon Water Supply Corporation.

Councilman Keeney motioned, seconded by Mayor Powell, to table this item for a future meeting.

The following votes were polled:

Ayes: Vasquez, Keeney, Powell, Rodriguez, Molina

Noes: None

Absent: None

The motion carried.

#4. DISCUSS, CONSIDER AND ACT ON AUTHORIZING CITY STAFF TO SEEK RFP FOR ENGINEERING SERVICES FOR THE CITY OF TAFT IN DEVELOPING AN APPLICATION TO THE TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE FOR THE 2023-2024 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM FUND AND FOR THE DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION PROGRAM FUND FOR ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATED TO THE TEXAS COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM (TXCDBG) TO PERFORM REQUIRED SURVEYS, PREPARE ALL PRELIMINARY, FINAL DESIGN PLANS, AND SPECIFICATIONS, ASSIST IN BIDDING/NEGOTIATION, PERFORM CONSTRUCTION ADMINISTRATION, AND TO CONDUCT ALL NECESSARY INTERIM AND FINAL INSPECTIONS.

Mr. Arismendez reported on the upcoming grant cycles to TDA for the 2023 CDBG application for \$500,000 funding and \$250,000 for the Downtown Revitalization Program. Councilman Rodriguez motioned, seconded by Councilman Keeney, to authorize city staff to seek RFPs for engineering services for the City of Taft in developing an application to the Texas Department of Agriculture for the 2023-2024 Community Development Program Fund and for the Downtown Revitalization Program Fund for eligible activities associated to the Texas Community Development Block Grant Program.

The following votes were polled:

Ayes: Vasquez, Keeney, Powell, Rodriguez, Molina

Noes: None

Absent: None

The motion carried.

#5. DISCUSS, CONSIDER AND ACT ON CONTRACTING FOR ADMINISTRATIVE AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICES WITH LANGFORD COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT SERVICES TO PROVIDE THE FULL SCOPE OF APPLICATION AND ADMINISTRATION SERVICES FOR THE CITY OF TAFT IN DEVELOPING AN APPLICATION TO THE TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE FOR THE 2023-2024 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM FUND AND FOR THE DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION PROGRAM FUND FOR ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATED TO THE TEXAS COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM (TxCDBG).

Mr. Arismendez reported that administrative and engineering services would be for the above Item #4 grant applications. Councilman Vasquez motioned, seconded by Mayor Powell, to approve the item as read.

The following votes were polled:

Ayes: Vasquez, Keeney, Powell, Rodriguez, Molina

Noes: None

Absent: None

The motion carried.

#6. DISCUSS, CONSIDER AND ACT ON CONTRACTING FOR ADMINISTRATIVE AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICES WITH LANGFORD COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT SERVICES TO PROVIDE THE FULL SCOPE OF APPLICATION AND ADMINISTRATION SERVICES FOR THE CITY OF TAFT GLO CDBG-MIT METHOD OF DISTRIBUTION PROJECTS.

Mr. Arismendez reported that administrative services would be for the GLO \$3,000,000 program. Councilman Rodriguez motioned, seconded by Councilman Molina, on contracting for administrative and professional services with Langford Community Management Services to provide the full scope of application and administration services for the City of Taft GLO CDBG-MIT method of distribution projects.

The following votes were polled:

Ayes: Vasquez, Keeney, Powell, Rodriguez, Molina

Noes: None

Absent: None

The motion carried.

#9. DISCUSS, CONSIDER AND ACT ON NOMINATIONS TO TAFT QUALITY IMPROVEMENT CORPORATION (TQIC).

Mayor Powell reported that the recently appointed Board had resigned, with the exception of Robbin McCarty, Rolando Rodriguez and Manuel Banda. He reported that Summer Garcia and Brooke Banda had been contacted, leaving two vacant seats. Mayor Powell motioned, seconded by Councilman Keeney, that Summer Garcia and Brooke Banda be appointed to the Taft Quality Improvement Corporation.

The following votes were polled:

Ayes: Vasquez, Keeney, Powell, Rodriguez, Molina

Noes: None

Absent: None

The motion carried.

At this time, Mayor Powell announced that he had been advised by the City Attorney that items Nos. 10, 11, & 12 should be tabled until he receives clarification on them. Councilman Keeney motioned, seconded by Mayor Powell, to table these items.

The following votes were polled:

Ayes: Vasquez, Keeney, Powell, Rodriguez

Noes: Molina
Absent: None
The motion carried.

#10. DISCUSS, CONSIDER, AND ACT ON IMMEDIATE TERMINATION OF INTERIM CITY MANAGER, SID ARISMENDEZ.

#11. DISCUSS, CONSIDER AND ACT TO APPOINT ALONSO MOLINA AS INTERIM CITY MANAGER.

#12. DISCUSS, CONSIDER AND ACT ON HIRING A CITY MANAGER FROM ALL APPLICATIONS RECEIVED FROM TML

#13. EXECUTIVE SESSION: PURSUANT TO SECTION 551.074, INVOLVING THE APPOINTMENT, EMPLOYMENT, EVALUATION, REASSIGNMENT, DUTIES, DISCIPLINE, OR DISMISSAL OF A PUBLIC OFFICER OR EMPLOYEE: JUDGE KAREN DIAZ.

Interim City Attorney Epi Ysassi advised Council that Judge Karen Diaz had not been given notice of what the deficiencies in office are and that she should be given the opportunity to respond. He suggested that this item be tabled to allow Council to give her due notice. Councilman Vasquez motioned, seconded by Mayor Powell, to table this item.

The following votes were polled:

Ayes: Vasquez, Keeney, Powell, Rodriguez, Molina
Noes: None
Absent: None
The motion carried.

#14. RETURN TO REGULAR SESSION – NO ACTION

#15. PRESENTATION BY CITY ATTORNEY ON RESPONSIBILITIES AND ROLES OF MAYOR AND COUNCILMEMBERS IN A TYPE A GENERAL LAW CITY.

Mayor Powell announced the same action recommendation by the Interim City Attorney and motioned, seconded by Councilman Keeney, to table this item.

The following votes were polled:

Ayes: Vasquez, Keeney, Powell, Rodriguez, Molina
Noes: None
Absent: None
The motion carried.

#16. CITY MANAGER PROJECT UPDATES

Interim City Manager Sid Arismendez provided Council with a spreadsheet of the following projects with a breakdown of any expenses to date:

Fire Station: frame almost complete, need to order doors and hire contractor for inside walls
Wells Fargo Building: awaiting for the Dell server to arrive and internet access
Julia Montez Alvarado Senior Center: renovation continues
AEP Lighting for Miguel Garcia Park: AEP was contact and a site visit was made
Elevated Water Tower: inspection expected to be performed in March or April
City Swimming Pool: awaiting a bid for repairs
Revenue and Expenditures Report: A report was given to Council in the agenda packets for the meeting of February 13, 2023.

#17. CITY COUNCIL REQUESTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Vasquez: requests an update on the sidewalk project from TxDOT
Keeney: continue with annexation efforts
Powell: directed Mr. Arismendez to provide Court information to Judge Karen Diaz
Rodriguez: requests that the bids for garbage collection be kept sealed and opened by Council and Mayor; requests a workshop on March 8th to review city manager resumes
Molina: requests a hiring policy

#18. ADJOURNMENT

Councilman Vasquez motioned, seconded by Councilman Keeney, to adjourn the meeting at 7:37 pm.

The following votes were polled:

Ayes: Vasquez, Keeney, Powell, Rodriguez, Molina
Noes: None
Absent: None
The motion carried

CITY OF TAFT

Randy Powell, Mayor

ATTEST:

Molly Topper, City Secretary