

## MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING

On the 22nd day of November, 2022, the City Council of Taft, Texas, convened in a regular meeting at 402 Park Street, Kiva Hut, at 6:30 p.m. with the following members present:

Randy Powell                    Mayor  
Rolando Rodriguez        Mayor Pro-Tem  
Lolo Hernandez  
Leonard Vasquez

Others Present: Sid Arismendez, Interim City Manager; Molly Topper, Finance Director/City Secretary; Bernie Saenz, Director of Public Works

### VISITORS:

Al & Judy Molina	Melanie Hickey	Steve Saucedo	Linda Watson
Rudy Mirabal	Amanda Powell	Rose Searcy	Georgina Silvas
Leslie Pullin	Ryan Smith	Chris Keeney	Karen Diaz

### 1. CALL TO ORDER AND QUORUM CHECK

There being a quorum, the meeting was called to order by Mayor Powell at 6:30 p.m.

### 2. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Councilman Hernandez led the invocation and Pledge of Allegiance.

### 3. CONSIDER AND TAKE ACTION TO APPROVE ORDINANCE #1101, AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF TAFT, TEXAS, TO CANVASS THE RETURNS AND DECLARE THE RESULTS OF THE GENERAL ELECTION HELD ON TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2022, FOR THE PURPOSE OF ELECTING ONE ALDERMAN FOR WARD ONE AND ONE ALDERMAN FOR WARD TWO FOR A TERM OF TWO YEARS.

Councilman Rodriguez motioned, seconded by Councilman Hernandez, to approve Ordinance No. 1101. The election results were:

Alderman - Ward One: David Trevino	82
Kathy Davis, (AKA) K. D.	53
Leonard Vasquez	84
Alderman – Ward Two: Raquel Torres-Ruvo	186
Alonso Molina	232

The following votes were polled:

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

### 4. SWEARING IN AND OATH OF NEWLY ELECTED OFFICIALS

Sid Arismendez swore in the newly elected Aldermen Alonso Molina and Leonard Vasquez after they executed a Statement of Officer.

At this time, Mayor Powell presented an award of service to exiting Councilman Lolo Hernandez for his many years of service to the City of Taft.

### 5. DISCUSS AND CONSIDER REPLACEMENT OF COUNCILMEMBER TO FILL THE VACANCY LEFT FOR THE POSITION OF THE OFFICE VACATED BY ALDERMAN JO ADRIAN VARA. ALLOW FOR INTERESTED INDIVIDUALS TO SPEAK TO COUNCIL.

Summer Garcia and Chris Keeney addressed the Council with their qualifications and aspirations of filling the vacated seat.

**AT THIS TIME, 6:43 P.M. MAYOR POWELL MOTIONED TO CLOSE THE REGULAR MEETING TO CONVENE INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION, SECONDED BY COUNCILMAN MOLINA.**

The following votes were polled:

Ayes: Molina, Powell

Noes: Vasquez, Rodriguez

Absent: None

The motion died.

**6. (9.) DISUSS, CONSIDER AND TAKE ACTION UPON APPOINTING A MEMBER OF THE CITY COUNCIL TO SERVE AS THE CITY'S MAYOR PRO-TEM FOR A TERM OF ONE YEAR PURSUANT TO TEXAS LOCAL GOVERNMENT CODE SECTION 22.037.**

Mayor Powell nominated Councilman Rodriguez, he accepted the nomination. Mayor Powell motioned to appoint Councilman Ronnie Rodriguez as the Mayor Pro-tem for a term of one year pursuant to Local Government Code Section 22.037, seconded by Councilman Molina.

The following votes were polled:

Ayes: Vasquez, Rodriguez, Molina, Powell

Noes: None

Absent: None

The motion carried.

**7. (11.) DISCUSS, CONSIDER AND ACT ON OFFER TO PURCHASE TAX SALE PROPERTY (RESOLUTION NO. 664)**

Steven Saucedo, attorney, and Amy Rodriguez, litigation manager, from the firm Linebarger, Goggin, Blair & Sampson, were in attendance to report on the property tax sale process, with all future sales being conducted on-line, and the bid submitted regarding Suit No. S-08-1155TX; Taft ISD and San Patricio County vs. Mark Almanza, et al. The property described as Acct. No. 39914; Lot 10, Block 1, Fourth Addition, an addition to the town of Taft, San Patricio County, Texas, according to the map or plat thereof, recorded in Volume 3, Page 58, Map records of San Patricio County, Texas.

Mr. Saucedo reported that the School District and County had already approved the sale for the amount of \$3,000.00. The amount due to the City in delinquent taxes is \$3,994.54, receiving \$399.85 from the sale.

Councilman Rodriguez motioned, seconded by Councilman Vasquez, to accept the agreement by Linebarger to sell acct #3991, Lot 10, Blk 1, Fourth Addition to the Town of Taft, San Patricio County, Texas, according to the map or plat thereof, recorded in volume 3 Page 58, map records of San Patricio County, Texas, for \$3,000.00

The following votes were polled:

Ayes: Vasquez, Rodriguez, Molina, Powell

Noes: None

Absent: None

The motion carried.

**8. (12). DISCUSS, CONSIDER AND ACT ON AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO EXECUTE THE NECESSARY CONTRACT FOR THE PURCHASE OF THE NEW FIRE STATION WITH MUELLER, INC.**

Mr. Arismendez reported the initial plans for the new fire station called for a height of 18' feet with the exterior wall and door opening to accommodate the new fire truck. The modification was made to increase that to 20' with an 18' door. The increased price is minimal since the price of steel went down, material takes 8 weeks for delivery. New price is \$103,990.65 with anchors, but without doors and labor. The install contractor will be required to account for that. Plans are to build the new station in the same spot. Bids will be taken for demolition.

Councilman Rodriguez asked if consideration has been made to house EMS in the same building. Mr. Arismendez responded with “that is a possibility”.

Councilman Rodriguez motioned, seconded by Mayor Powell, to authorize the City Manager to execute the necessary contract for the purchase of the new fire station with Mueller, Inc.

The following votes were polled:

Ayes: Vasquez, Rodriguez, Molina, Powell

Noes: None

Absent: None

The motion carried.

**9. (13.) ADOPT ORDINANCE NO. 1102, ALLOWING FOR THE CREATION OF THE POSITION OF FIRE CHIEF AS A CITY EMPLOYEE FOR THE CITY OF TAFT, WITH ALL RIGHTS, BENEFITS AND DUTIES OF A CITY OF TAFT EMPLOYEE. AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO IMMEDIATELY POST THE JOB ANNOUNCEMENT, CONDUCT INTERVIEWS AND SELECT SAME AFTER CONSIDERATION OF APPLICANTS. ALLOWING FOR THE CITY MANAGER TO IMMEDIATELY APPOINT AN INTERIM FIRE CHIEF WHILE THE APPLICANTS ARE BEING CONSIDERED AND POSITION FILLED PERMANENTLY. ALLOWING FOR THE CREATION OF THE CITY OF TAFT FIRE DEPARTMENT BYLAWS AND POLICIES AND PROCEDURES. ALLOWING FOR THE INTERIM FIRE CHIEF TO ASSUME ALL DUTIES OF OVERSIGHT OF CURRENT VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS.**

Mayor Powell announced that he did not like the wording of this item, also doesn't like the misinformation posted on social media. With that being said, he and the chief met and concluded that there is a better way to resolve this issue which would be beneficial to both the City and Fire Department. A meeting is scheduled for next week and asked for a motion to table Item #13.

Councilman Vasquez motion, seconded by Councilman Rodriguez motioned to table Item #13.

The following votes were polled:

Ayes: Vasquez, Rodriguez, Molina, Powell

Noes: None

Absent: None

The motion carried.

## **10. VISITORS**

Mayor Powell did not address this item.

## **11. (14.) DISCUSS, CONSIDER AND ACT ON CONTRACT WITH ALLEGIANCE AMBULANCE SERVICES**

Chief Landreth met with two representatives from Allegiance regarding response time. They advise that contract allows for a response time of 15 minutes. Discussion centered to changing that to 8 minute response time within the City, and 15 minutes outside the City. The reported that all police units have been instructed to respond to all calls.

AT THIS TIME, 7:03 P.M, Councilman Rodriguez, asked that the executive section #6. item on the agenda, be addressed again. He thought that this item would be addressed in open session. Mr. Arismendez advised that this item could still be voted on in open session.

## **12. (6.) EXECUTIVE SESSION: CONVENE INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION PURSUANT TO SECTION 551.L074 PERSONNEL MATTERS INVOLVING THE APPOINTMENT, EMPLOYMENT, EVALUTION, REASSIGNMENT, DUTIES, DISCIPLINE, OR DISMISSAL OF A PUBLIC OFFICER OR EMPLOYEE, TO-WIT: ALDERMAN**

Council did not go into executive session.

## **13. (7.) DISCUSS, CONSIDER AND ACT ON FILLING THE VACANCY OF THE UNEXPIRED TERM OF OFFICE VACATED BY ALDERMAN JO ADRIAN VARA.**

Councilman Vasquez motioned to nominate Summer Garcia to fill the vacancy of the unexpired term of office vacated by Jo Adrian Vara. Due to lack of a second, the motion died.

Councilman Rodriguez motioned, seconded by Councilman Molina, to nominate Chris Keeney to fill the vacated seat.

The following votes were polled:

Ayes: Rodriguez, Molina, Powell

Noes: Vasquez

Absent: None

The motion carried.

**14. (8.) SWEAR IN AND OATH OF OFFICE OF THE NEWLY APPOINTED COUNCILMEMBER**

Mr. Arismendez swore in Chris Keeney after he read the Statement of Officer.

**AT THIS TIME, 7:07 P.M. COUNCIL RETIRED INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

**15. EXECUTIVE SESSION: CONVENE INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION PURSUANT TO SECTION 551.074 PERSONNEL MATTERS INVOLVING THE APPOINTMENT, EMPLOYMENT, EVALUATION, REASSIGNMENT, DUTIES, DISCIPLINE OR DISMISSAL OF A PUBLIC OFFICER OR EMPLOYEE, TO-WIT: MUNICIPAL JUDGE KAREN DIAZ.**

Councilman Rodriguez motioned, seconded by Councilman Keeney, to enter into executive session.

The following votes were polled:

Ayes: Vasquez, Rodriguez, Keeney, Molina, Powell

Noes:

The motion carried.

**COUNCIL RETURNED TO OPEN SESSION AT 7:26 P.M.**

**16. RECONVENE INTO REGULAR SESSION AND CONSIDER ACTION UP TO AND INCLUDING APPOINTING AN INTERIM JUDGE, IF NECESSARY, ON ANY ITEMS(S) DISCUSSED IN EXECUTIVE SESSION.**

Councilman Vasquez motioned, seconded Keeney, to reconvene into regular session.

The following votes were polled:

Ayes: Vasquez, Rodriguez, Keeney, Molina, Powell

Noes:

The motion carried.

No action was taken at this time.

**17. CITY COUNCIL REQUESTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Councilman Rodriguez: would like to review ordinance for adoption regarding political signs placed near City property

Councilman Molina: code enforcement update

Councilman Vasquez: financials

Keeney: none

Mayor Powell: none

**18. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business Councilman Vasquez motioned, seconded by Councilman Rodriguez, to adjourn the meeting at 7:28 p.m.

CITY OF TAFT

\_\_\_\_\_  
Randy Powell Mayor

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Molly Topper City Secretary