

MINUTES OF REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

On the 9th day of March, 2021, the City Council of Taft, Texas, convened in a regular session at 402 Park St., at the Kiva Hut, at 6:30 p.m. with the following members present:

Pedro "Pete" Lopez Mayor
Lolo Hernandez Mayor Pro-tem
Rolando Rodriguez
JoAdrian Vara
Leonard Vasquez

Others present: Mary Alice Sandoval, Finance Director and Jennifer Pineda, City Secretary.

#1. There being a quorum, the meeting was called to order at 6:36 p.m.

#2. Invocation & Pledge of Allegiance.

Councilman Hernandez led the Pledge of Allegiance and gave the invocation.

#3. Visitors.

Scott Patton – President of the Fire Association – wanted to know why they are not part of the conversation that the council is having on the fire truck.

Felipe Rodriguez – 519 Victoria – stated that he found it disrespectful for the city attorney to sit behind a video that is turned off; wanted a status update on street lights that are burned out and laying on the ground; also wanted to know about the signs that are to be placed at the parks.

Sid Arismendez stated on record that he was the attorney for Amanda Powell and Leonard Vasquez.

Chris Keeney – 542 Field – stated that it was shameful to investigate Amanda Powell.

#4. Consider and discuss update regarding the city's financial condition as it relates to bonded debt, past dues, recurring payments, revenues and expenditures.

Mary Alice updated the council on the city financials. She stated that the TQIC account balance was \$98,156.67 and the Street account balance was \$95,694.16. The collections for city taxes was 80.74% and the deannexed area was 63.83%.

#5. Consider, discuss and take action on Ardurra's Professional Services Agreement to include Design, Topographic Survey, and Environmental Assessment Services for the Texas Department of Transportation Connectivity/Accessibility Sidewalk Project CSJ#0916-28-081 in the amount of \$75,000.00.

Councilman Rodriguez made a motion to take action on Ardurra's Professional Services Agreement to include Design, Topographic Survey, and Environmental Assessment Services for the Texas Department of Transportation Connectivity/Accessibility Sidewalk Project CSJ#0916-28-081 in the amount of \$75,000.00. The motion was seconded by Councilman Vara.

The following votes were polled:

Ayes: Vara, Rodriguez, Mayor, Vasquez, Hernandez

Nays: None

The motion carried.

#6. Update on the sidewalk project and the First, Second and Third Street grant project. (Councilmember Vara)

Hailey with SMMP gave the update on the sidewalk project.

#7. Discussion from the Friends of the Library on the opening up of the Taft Public Library.

There was not a representative from the Friends of the Library who was able to attend the meeting.

#8. Consider, discuss and take action to approve a contract with OnSolve, LLC for the CodeRED program for a term of 3 years in the amount of \$7,094.79.

Councilman Vara made a motion to approve a contract with OnSolve, LLC for the CodeRED program for a term of 3 years in the amount of \$7,094.79. The motion was seconded by Councilman Hernandez.

The following votes were polled:

Ayes: Vara, Rodriguez, Mayor, Vasquez, Hernandez

Nays: None

The motion carried.

#9. Consider, discuss and take action to approve an engagement letter from S. Noel Snedeker, II, CPA. for professional accounting services.

Councilman Rodriguez made a motion to approve an engagement letter from S. Noel Snedeker, II, CPA. for professional accounting services. The motion was seconded by Councilman Hernandez.

The following votes were polled:

Ayes: Vara, Rodriguez, Mayor, Vasquez, Hernandez

Nays: None

The motion carried.

#10. Consider, discuss, and take action to adopt Ordinance No. 1070, an ordinance amending Ordinance No. 968 and rescinding Ordinance No. 984, to designate that the Chief of Police be a municipal officer appointed, hired, and removed by the City's governing body.

Councilman Vasquez made a motion to table this item. The motion was seconded by Councilman Rodriguez.

The following votes were polled:

Ayes: Vara, Rodriguez, Mayor, Vasquez, Hernandez

Nays: None

The motion carried.

#11. Presentation, discussion and action, if any, on implementing a Taft Demolition Program.

Roxann explained that there could be a Taft Demolition Program implemented if the council wished to do so. She did explain how the program would work. Council took no action on this item.

#12. Discussion and action, if any, on the status of LexiPol.

Chief Trevino stated that he made contact with the LexiPol representative and explained what was needing to be done. There was no action on this item.

#13. Discussion on the possibility of training for the zoning committee. (Councilmember Vara)

Councilman Vara addressed the council on this item and stated that he thought it would be a good idea to send the Planning & Zoning to classes for training.

#14. Discuss, consider, and take action on a water utility relief program. (Councilmember Vara)

Councilman Vara wanted to see if there could be any program to establish to help alleviate some of the burden.

#15. Consider, discuss and act to conduct an investigation into Amanda Powell withdrawing \$4,088.63 from a City of Taft's Prosperity Bank Account without prior or proper authorization from the City. (Mayor Pedro Lopez)

Councilman Vara made a motion to not conduct an investigation into Amanda Powell withdrawing \$4,088.63 from a City of Taft's Prosperity Bank Account without prior or proper authorization from the City. The motion was seconded by Councilman Hernandez.

The following votes were polled:

Ayes: Vara, Rodriguez, Vasquez, Hernandez

Nays: Mayor

The motion carried.

#16. Consider, discuss and take action to close the City of Taft's bank account for the Pride of Taft. (Mayor Pedro Lopez)

Councilman Vasquez made a motion for the city finance director and the Pride of Taft to go close the account.. The motion was seconded by Councilman Vara.

The following votes were polled:

Ayes: Vara, Vasquez, Hernandez

Nays: Mayor

Abstain: Rodriguez

The motion carried.

#17. Discussion on using funds from the Restricted Funds to purchase possible storage tank and generators. (Mayor Pedro Lopez)

Mayor addressed the council about using the restricted funds to help fund the purchase of a ground storage tank and generators. Council also discussed looking into a loan for a storage tank and anything else that is needed.

#18. Discussion on purchasing a storage tank. (Mayor Pedro Lopez)

This item was discussed along with item #17.

#19. Discussion on purchasing generators. (Mayor Pedro Lopez)

This item was discussed along with item #17.

#20. Discussion on purchasing fire hydrants. (Mayor Pedro Lopez)

Council discussed this item Joe Sandoval answered questions that the council had in regards to the cost to replace a fire hydrants.

#21. Discuss, consider and act to approve \$10,000 support for the Fireworks Extravaganza sponsorship for the Fourth of July event. (Councilmember Vasquez)

Councilman Vara made a motion to table this item. The motion was seconded by Councilman Vasquez.

The following votes were polled:

Ayes: Vara, Rodriguez, Mayor, Vasquez, Hernandez

Nays: None

The motion carried.

#22. Discuss, consider and act for Pride of Taft to reserve the city park, the lot behind City Hall, and block off the streets for Springfest and BBQ Cook-off for the date of April 16th, 17th, and 18th. (Councilmember Vasquez)

Councilman Rodriguez made a motion to act for Pride of Taft to reserve the city park, the lot behind City Hall, and block off the streets for Springfest and BBQ Cook-off for the date of April 16th, 17th, and 18th and to ensure they have liability insurance. The motion was seconded by Councilman Hernandez.

The following votes were polled:

Ayes: Vara, Rodriguez, Mayor, Vasquez, Hernandez

Nays: None

The motion carried.

#23. Discuss monthly reports for police department, animal control, code enforcement, and public works.

Chief Trevino presented the monthly reports for police department, animal control and code enforcement. He also gave an update on LexiPol and stated that the Racial Profiling report has been completed and filed. Joe Sandoval presented the monthly report for public works.

#24. Consider, discuss and act on operational and logistical measures related to the City's preparedness and response to the State and City's local state of emergency declaration due to public health and safety emergency known as severe winter weather.

Councilman Rodriguez discussed item #26 during this item since they go hand in hand. Council discussed changing the ordinance to waive the tampering fee during a natural disaster.

#25. Consider, discuss and take action to approve Ordinance No. 1071, an emergency ordinance of the City of Taft, Texas extending a local state of disaster declaration due to a public health emergency known as severe winter weather for ninety (90) calendar days from date of ordinance.

This item was tabled.

#26. Discussion and review of ordinance in regards to turning off water in dire conditions. (Councilmember Rodriguez)

This item was discussed during item #24.

#27. Consider, discuss, and take action to approve overtime pay for exempt employees for hours worked during the declared severe winter weather.

Councilman Vara made a motion to take action to approve overtime pay for exempt employees for hours worked during the declared severe winter weather. The motion was seconded by Councilman Vasquez.

The following votes were polled:

Ayes: Vara, Rodriguez, Mayor, Vasquez, Hernandez

Nays: None
The motion carried.

#28. Discuss, consider and act on the operational and logistical measures related to the City's preparedness and response to the federal, state, and city's local state of emergency declarations due to a public health emergency known as Covid-19 pandemic.

Roxann gave an update on the Governor's statement on wearing masks. There was discussion among the council on this.

#29. Consider, discuss and take action to approve Ordinance No. 1072, an emergency ordinance of the City of Taft, Texas extending a local state of disaster declaration due to a public health emergency known as Covid-19 for ninety (90) calendar days from date of ordinance.

This item was tabled.

#30. City Council Requests and Announcements

Councilman Rodriguez would like to have an ordinance in regards to audio and videos to be kept one year from the time they are approved.

Councilman Vara would like to have all the preventative maintenance logs for all city equipment, a contract with the volunteer fire department, and would like to discuss the truck for Chief Gibson.

#31. Executive Session:

1. **Convene into executive session pursuant to Section 551.074 Personnel matters involving the appointment and employment of the City Manager.**
2. **Convene into executive session pursuant to Section 551.071 of the Texas Open Meetings Act to meet with its Attorney to seek legal advice on a matter in which the duty of the attorney to the City Council under the Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct of the State Bar of Texas clearly conflicts with the Texas Open Meetings Act regarding Taft Volunteer Fire Truck.**

Councilman Rodriguez made a motion to enter into executive session. The motion was seconded by Councilman Hernandez.

The following votes were polled:
Ayes: Vara, Rodriguez, Mayor, Vasquez, Hernandez
Nays: None
The motion carried.

#32. Reconvene into Regular Session and consider, discuss, or take action, if necessary, on any item(s) discussed in Executive Session.

Councilman Rodriguez made a motion to take no action.. The motion was seconded by Councilman Hernandez.

The following votes were polled:
Ayes: Vara, Rodriguez, Mayor, Vasquez, Hernandez
Nays: None
The motion carried.

#33. Adjournment.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Councilman Rodriguez to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilman Vara.

The following votes were polled:
Ayes: Vara, Rodriguez, Mayor, Vasquez, Hernandez

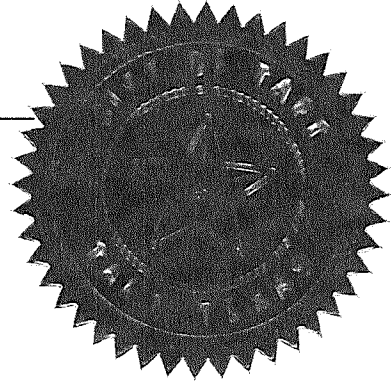
Nays: None
The motion carried.

CITY OF TAFT

Randy Powell

Randy Powell

Mayor



ATTEST:

Jennifer Pineda

Jennifer Pineda

City Secretary