

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

On the 13th day of February 2024, the City Council of Taft, Texas, convened for a regular meeting at 230 Green Avenue, Taft, Texas, Taft City Hall at 6:30 P.M.

**1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER**

There being a quorum, Mayor Vasquez called the meeting to order at 6:32 P.M.

**2. CALL ROLL AND ESTABLISH A QUORUM IS PRESENT**

Councilman Molina	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> present	<input type="checkbox"/> absent
Councilman Garza	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> present	<input type="checkbox"/> absent
Mayor Pro-tem Keeney	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> present	<input type="checkbox"/> absent
Mayor Vasquez	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> present	<input type="checkbox"/> absent

Others Present: Andrea Gomez, Kandi Hubert, John Landreth

**3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Councilman Garza led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**4. PRAYER**

Rev. Steve Boettcher led the prayer.

**5. CITIZEN COMMENTS**

- 1) Melanie Hickey spoke on behalf of the Friends of the Taft Public Library. Ms. Hickey informed the council that the organization has helped with provided computers, book and other items for the Library. Ms. Hickey invited the council to the ground breaking of the New Taft Public Library which will take place on Monday March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2024. The Friends of the Library will also be hosting a luncheon on April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2024, the council is also invited to this event and tables are decorated as a theme of a book.
- 2) Maria Garcia stated she wanted to thank the Mayor and City Manager for their efforts in getting her sewer line replaced. The Public Works crew has completed the major job of replacing her sewage line and finishing her driveway. Ms. Garcia understands it was a very hard job to do, but she wanted to thank everyone for getting it done.

**6. CONSENT AGENDA**

**A. CITY SECRETARY REPORT**

Approval of Minutes for 01/23/2024 regular council meeting.

Councilman Keeney motioned to approve minutes for 01/31/2024, seconded by Councilman Garza.

The following Votes were polled:

Councilman Molina	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> for	<input type="checkbox"/> against	<input type="checkbox"/> abstain	<input type="checkbox"/> absent
Councilman Garza	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> for	<input type="checkbox"/> against	<input type="checkbox"/> abstain	<input type="checkbox"/> absent

Mayor Pro-tem Keeney             for    against    abstain    absent

Mayor Vasquez                     for    against    abstain    absent

**The motion carried.**

**B. PUBLIC WORKS REPORT**

Timothy Williams reported that an employee has passed for his test for a “D water license”. Most of the violations the City had at the wastewater department have been satisfied. Councilman Molina inquired of Mr. Williams was familiar with the fire hydrant incident and if he was able to have any kind of communication with the crew. Mr. Williams responded he was aware and was in communication with the public works crew. Councilman Keeney stated that from the previous Public Works Directors there has been an issue of knowing where the operational valves are. Is there a way to retain a comprehensive map showing the valves and shut off areas? Mr. Williams stated, yes updated maps would assist in that matter, once the Public Works department is caught up that is something that can be worked on.

C. Police Report

D. Code Enforcement Report

E. Permits Report

F. Animal Control Report

Chief John Landreth reported on items C through F. The Taft Police Department has had three felony arrests this week. Animal Control is doing well and picks up about 30 animals a month. Code Enforcement is still working on operation curb appeal with the help of the public works crew who’s doing a good job.

G. Library Report

Georgina Silvas reported for the month of January that 305 as a grand total of circulations, this includes video and audio books. Ms. Silvas is hoping that when the new library is built more people will go in and spend some time at the library. Other services offered at the library are notarizations, copies of documents and lending a listening ear to the residents that need someone to talk to.

H. Financial Report

LeeAnn Goben reported the expenses and revenues for the month of January. Ms. Goben also informed the Council Donald Allman will be coming around the second week of March to work with her in completing the audit. Mayor Vasquez expressed that he does understand that the new employees are now having to play catch up from the problems that were incurred in the past. The departments are working hard to get on track. Ms. Goben informed the council once the audit is complete there will be a better financial idea. The deadline for the completion of the audit is set for March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024.

**7. DISCUSS, CONSIDER AND APPROVE CITY OF TAFT AUTHORIZAITION TO ISSUE REQUESTS FOR PROPOSALS FOR ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES (RFP) AND REQUESTS FOR QUALIFICATIONS (RFQ) FOR THE 2024 TEXAS COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM, DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION PROGRAM ADMINISTERED BY THE TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICUTLTURE**

Kandi Hubert stated, after speaking to the EDC she would like to go out for a revitalization grant.

Councilman Molina motioned for the City Manager to go out for proposals for the administrative services and requests for qualifications for the community development block grant program, downtown revitalization program administered by the Texas department of agriculture, seconded by Councilman Keeney.

The following Votes were polled:

Councilman Molina            for    against    abstain    absent  
Councilman Garza            for    against    abstain    absent  
Mayor Pro-tem Keeney        for    against    abstain    absent  
Mayor Vasquez            for    against    abstain    absent

**The motion carried.**

**8. DISCUSS, CONSIDER AND NECESSARY ACTION REGARDING TQIC AND 4B PROJECTS**

Manuel Espinoza President of TQIC requested the Council allow TQIC to take on type B projects that normally would be for the EDC. The projects Mr. Espinoza would like to take on are Public Parks, Recycling facilities, streets/roads related improvements, demolition of existing structures, municipality owned improvements, and cleanup of condemned properties / health hazard zones. Mayor Vasquez asked for clarification of what Mr. Espinoza was requesting. Robbin McCarty stated, TQIC is requesting an Ordinance from the Council allowing the TQIC a type A organization to take on some type B projects. Councilman Keeney read aloud the response from the City Attorney stating that a type A corporation cannot take on any type B projects without having a special election. Kandi Hubert stated that a Public Hearing would need to take place to let the residence decide, followed by an election.

Councilman Keeney motioned to table item #8 to a later date, seconded by Councilman Molina.

The following Votes were polled:

Councilman Molina            for    against    abstain    absent  
Councilman Garza            for    against    abstain    absent  
Mayor Pro-tem Keeney        for    against    abstain    absent  
Mayor Vasquez            for    against    abstain    absent

**The motion carried. The item was tabled.**

**9. DISCUSS, CONSIDER AND NECESSARY ACTION REGARDING THE PROPOSED ORDINANCE AND A STIPEND FOR THE FIRE FIGHTERS**

Michael Vasquez, the assistant fire chief for the volunteer fire department stated that the fire department is looking for an incentive to encourage volunteers. Mr. Vasquez is requesting a financial incentive not to exceed \$50/ month for active fire fighters. Kandi Hubert stated, it would be a stipend of \$5 per call for fires and \$7 for emergency calls, not to exceed \$50 a month per firefighter. Michael Vasquez stated he believes other cities also offer this incentive. Ms. Hubert informed the council that if approved, this will not go into effect until October 1<sup>st</sup> to avoid any disruption in the budget.

Councilman Molina motioned to table item #9, seconded by Councilman Garza.

The following Votes were polled:

Councilman Molina            for    against    abstain    absent  
Councilman Garza            for    against    abstain    absent  
Mayor Pro-tem Keeney        for    against    abstain    absent  
Mayor Vasquez            for    against    abstain    absent

**The motion carried. The item was tabled.**

**10. DISCUSS, CONSIDER AND NECESSARY ACTION TO ADVERTISE FOR A FULL TIME CITY MANAGER**

Councilman Molina stated that it does take some time for the hiring process and feels that it is time to place an ad so that the city is able to start receiving applicants for the position. Mayor Vasquez stated it was previously agreed that the ad and position would be placed on hold until after the completion of the audit. The work the current city manager is doing seems to be working and he's concerned that issues that have happened in the past, such as completing projects and securing grants would be missed or lost due to change in city managers. Councilman Molina stated that he believes the city needs a full time City Manager. Councilman Keeney stated if we do not advertise we will not have options. Mayor Vasquez informed the Council that he would like to see her finish what she has started. LeeAnn Goblen stated that as someone who was here while the previous City Manager Mr. Linn was employed, nothing was done. Mr. Linn was hired as a full time to be working at the City Monday – Friday and he did not show up for work, we were lucky if he was here two days a week. Kandi Hubert has put together an excellent team even with the hours she works. Mayor Vasquez stated he would like to continue to wait until March 31<sup>st</sup> after the audit is complete, Councilman Garza agreed.

Councilman Garza motioned to table item #10 to a later date, seconded by Mayor Vasquez.

The following Votes were polled:

- Councilman Molina             for    against    abstain    absent
- Councilman Garza             for    against    abstain    absent
- Mayor Pro-tem Keeney        for    against    abstain    absent
- Mayor Vasquez                for    against    abstain    absent

**The motion carried. The item was tabled.**

**11. DISCUSS, CONSIDER AND NECESSARY ACTION TO CALL FOR A SPECIAL ELECTION**

Kandi Hubert informed the Council they have the opportunity to enter into a joint election with the Taft ISD. Mayor Vasquez stated the public should be able to decide on who fills the vacant seat. Councilman Keeney stated it was best to wait considering it would be just for a 6 month term. Mayor Vasquez stated everyone is working together and would like to wait for the Attorney General's opinion.

Councilman Keeney motioned that no action be taken on item #11, seconded by Councilman Molina.

The following Votes were polled:

- Councilman Molina             for    against    abstain    absent
- Councilman Garza             for    against    abstain    absent
- Mayor Pro-tem Keeney        for    against    abstain    absent
- Mayor Vasquez                for    against    abstain    absent

**The motion carried.**

**12. DISCUSS, CONSIDER AND NECESSARY ACTION TO HAVE A GENERAL COLLECTION AREA FOR RECYCLABLES**

Zach Simmons presented on behalf of Frontier Waste and the Recycling Department. Mr. Simmons has put together a "pilot program" as a test program for the remainder of the year. The program will be a collection center to be managed by the city. The collection center should be in a gated area, the days and times will be decided by the City Administration. Each container is divided with different types of recyclable departments. Paper, plastic, cardboard and aluminum cans would be the main focus of the program. Frontier will design a QR code for the residents with more information and knowledge to help make the process easier. There will be no cost for this addition from Frontier other than utilizing man

power. Councilman Keeney stated, most of the items received are cardboard and asked if we would be able to use the bin for specific recyclable items such as cardboard? Mr. Simmons stated yes, the dividers are removable.

Councilman Keeney motioned to move forward to have a General Collection Area of Recyclables with Frontier Waste, seconded by Councilman Molina.

The following Votes were polled:

Councilman Molina            for    against    abstain    absent  
Councilman Garza            for    against    abstain    absent  
Mayor Pro-tem Keeney        for    against    abstain    absent  
Mayor Vasquez            for    against    abstain    absent

**The motion carried.**

**13. DISCUSS, CONSIDER AND NECESSARY ACTION TO APPOINT/REAPPOINT PLANNING AND ZONING MEMBERS**

Kandi Hubert stated that the Planning and Zoning committee currently has four members and need a fifth. A meeting will be called so that nominations or recommendations can be made and brought back to council.

Councilman Keeney motioned to table item #13, seconded by Councilman Garza.

The following Votes were polled:

Councilman Molina            for    against    abstain    absent  
Councilman Garza            for    against    abstain    absent  
Mayor Pro-tem Keeney        for    against    abstain    absent  
Mayor Vasquez            for    against    abstain    absent

**The motion carried. The item was tabled.**

**14. EXECUTIVE SESSION:** City Council will meet in closed session pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 551 of the Texas Government Code, in accordance with the authority contained in:

- *Section 551.074 (Personnel Matters) and Section 551.071 (Advice of Counsel) and Section 1.05 (Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct):*
  - Personnel Matters
  - Legal Matters

Councilman Keeney moved to go into Executive session to discuss this item further, seconded by Councilman Garza.

The following Votes were polled:

Councilman Molina            for    against    abstain    absent  
Councilman Garza            for    against    abstain    absent  
Mayor Pro-tem Keeney        for    against    abstain    absent  
Mayor Vasquez            for    against    abstain    absent

**The motion carried.**

**The Council moved into Executive Session at 7:59 pm.**

**15. OPEN SESSION:** City Council will reconvene in open session at which time action on the matter(s) discussed in Closed Session may be considered.

➤ *Section 551.074 (Personnel Matters) and Section 551.071 (Advice of Counsel) and Section 1.05 (Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct):*

- Personnel Matters
- Legal Matters

At this time 8:46 p.m., Councilman Molina motioned to reconvene, seconded by Councilman Garza at which time action on the matter(s) discussed in Closed Session be considered.

The following Votes were polled:

Councilman Molina	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> for	<input type="checkbox"/> against	<input type="checkbox"/> abstain	<input type="checkbox"/> absent
Councilman Garza	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> for	<input type="checkbox"/> against	<input type="checkbox"/> abstain	<input type="checkbox"/> absent
Mayor Pro-tem Keeney	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> for	<input type="checkbox"/> against	<input type="checkbox"/> abstain	<input type="checkbox"/> absent
Mayor Vasquez	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> for	<input type="checkbox"/> against	<input type="checkbox"/> abstain	<input type="checkbox"/> absent

**The motion carried.**

**No Action was taken on the matters discussed in Closed Session.**

**16. COUNCIL AND STAFF COMMENTS: COMMENTS MAYBE MADE BY STAFF OR COUNCIL BUT NO ACTION WILL BE TAKEN**

Councilman Keeney stated he was concerned with the dead trees at the City Park. He would like to see them removed. Councilman Keeney also stated that the City Dump should be open every 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday of every month, and asked if we could please make certain it's covered. Councilman Keeney expressed that the curbs look exceptional. One last comment from Councilman Keeney was regarding the Deannexation Fund, he asked if that would be something that would be looked into.

Councilman Molina stated he wanted to thank Sergeant Easley for going out to the Fire Hydrant Accident.

**17. ITEMS TO CONSIDER FOR PLACEMENT ON FUTURE AGENDAS**

Councilman Molina - When the new library goes into effect, if we can look into adjusting the hours.

Councilman Keeney – Would like more teeth in the code compliance due to vehicles still being parked on the front lawns.

Kandi Hubert – We may have to go up on the trash fee, we will look into that and place it at some point on a future agenda. Next meeting will have personnel policy changes.

**18. ANNOUNCEMENTS OF COMMUNITY INTEREST AND/OR UPCOMING EVENTS**

Councilman Garza – Wanted to share that there are good things happening for Taft ISD

Mayor Vasquez – Wanted to remind everyone of the Grand Opening of the Library on March 18<sup>th</sup> & Luncheon for the booked themed tables with the Friends of the Public Library on April 20<sup>th</sup> at the Northshore Country Club.

**19. ADJOURN – TIME 9:01 P.M.**

Councilman Keeney motioned to Adjourn, Seconded by Councilman Molina.

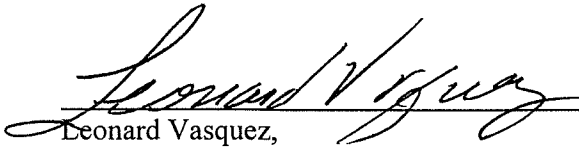
The following Votes were polled:

Councilman Molina	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> for	<input type="checkbox"/> against	<input type="checkbox"/> abstain	<input type="checkbox"/> absent
Councilman Garza	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> for	<input type="checkbox"/> against	<input type="checkbox"/> abstain	<input type="checkbox"/> absent
Mayor Pro-tem Keeney	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> for	<input type="checkbox"/> against	<input type="checkbox"/> abstain	<input type="checkbox"/> absent
Mayor Vasquez	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> for	<input type="checkbox"/> against	<input type="checkbox"/> abstain	<input type="checkbox"/> absent

**The motion carried.**

Passed and Approved this 13<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2024.

CITY OF TAFT

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Leonard Vasquez, Mayor

ATTEST:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Andrea Gomez, City Secretary