

MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL

On the 28th day of May 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 6:30 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: Ryan Smith, others present listed on sign in sheet

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Councilman Garza led the Pledge of Allegiance.

4. PRAYER

Rev. Steve Boettcher led the prayer.

5. CITIZEN COMMENTS

- 1) Maxine Bowen appeared before council to ask what kind of Emergency Management System was in place for the City of Taft due to Hurricane season. Ms. Bowen has gone through three major hurricanes already and believes that there should be a plan in place.
- 2) Melony Hickey appeared before council to address the closure of the splash pad. Ms. Hickey was inquiring on when the splash pad would be opening this summer.

6. PUBLIC HEARING REGARDING THE ANNEXATION REQUEST BY ADOLFO APARICIO IN REFERENCE TO HIS 2.21 ACRE TRACT OF LAND LOCATED OFF ABAZOLA.

7. PUBLIC HEARING REGARDING THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION'S REQUEST TO PURCHASE APARICIO'S 2.21 TRACT OF LAND OFF ABAZOLA FOR \$79,560 PLUS CLOSING COSTS.

Public Hearing Opened at 6:39 p.m.

David Smith board president for the Taft Economic Development Corporation presented items numbered 6 and 7 combined during the Public Hearing. Mr. Smith stated this Public Hearing was the second one for the sequence of events that needed to take place. Mr. Smith also informed the public that Mr. Adolfo Aparicio has volunteered to annex his 2.21 acres of property with the City of Taft. Mr. Smith answered any questions that were brought to his attention.

Public Hearing Closed at 6:49 p.m.

8. DISCUSS, CONSIDER AND NECESSARY ACTION REGARDING ADOLFO APARICIO'S REQUEST FOR ANNEXATION OF HIS 2.21 ACRE TRACT OFF OF ABAZOLA.

Councilman Keeney moved to approved Adolfo Aparicio's request for annexation, the motion was seconded.

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.

9. DISCUSS, CONSIDER AND NECESSARY ACTION REGARDING THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION EXPENDING \$79,560 PLUS CLOSING COST ON THE PURCHASE OF ADOLFO APARICIO'S 2.21 ACRE LOT OFF OF ABAZOLA.

Councilman Garza motioned to allow the Economic Development Corporation to purchase Adolfo Aparicio's 2.21 acre lot off of Abazola for \$79,560 plus closing costs, the motion was seconded.

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.

10. DISCUSS, CONSIDER AND NECESSARY ACTION IN REFERENCE TO THE CITY HOSTING UP TO 5 MOVIE IN THE PARK EVENTS THROUGHT THE MONTHS OF JUNE, JULY, AND AUGUST DURING THE SUMMER MONTHS. EVENTS TO BE HELD ON SATURDAYS AND ESTIMATED COST TO CITY TO BE MAINTAINED UNDER \$5,500.

Ryan Smith informed the Council that quotes were obtained for movies alone allowing residents to bring their own drinks and snacks. The amount would be closer to \$3000.00 if approved. Mr. Smith stated this schedule coordinates with the school calendar, there would be two movies in June, two in July and one in August.

Councilman Garza motioned to allow the City to host 5 movie in the parks for months of June, July and August during the summer months and the cost to be maintained under \$5,500, the motion was seconded.

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.

11. DISCUSS, CONSIDER AND NECESSARY ACTION ON ALLOWING THE MEMORIAL PARK TO BE UTILIZED FOR MARKET DAYS ONE WEEKEND PER MONTH AND THE CITY TO WAIVE ALL FEES AND PEDDLER LICENSE IN RELATION TO MARKET DAY'S EVENTS.

Ryan Smith stated residents on Facebook have been expressing how they would like to be able to utilize having market days like surrounding cities.

Councilman Garza motioned to allow the memorial park to be utilized for market days one weekend per month until the end of the year, the motion was seconded.

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 ON ALLOWING THE CITY MANAGER TO GO OUT FOR PROPOSALS ON REPLACING PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT, BENCHES, AND SHELTERS AT CITY PARKS.

Councilman Molina stated he would like to see if there are funds available in the budget to upgrade some of the equipment at the parks. Ryan Smith stated he would be able to obtain proposals for the price of items and possibly reach out to individuals to collaborate with the cost. Mr. Smith suggested revisiting this during a budget workshop as well.

Councilman Molina motioned to allow the City Manager to go out for proposals on replacing the playground equipment benches and shelters at city parks, the motion was seconded.

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.

13. DISCUSS, CONSIDER AND NECESSARY ACTION ON ASSIGNING A LOCATION FOR THE RECYCLING BINS.

Councilman Keeney stated the best location for the recycling bins would be in the field area to the left of the animal shelter, with operational hours daily and free to the public.

Councilman Keeney moved to assign the location for the recycling bins, the motion was seconded.

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.

14. DISCUSS, CONSIDER AND NECESSARY ACTION IN RELATION TO THE CONTRACT BETWEEN THE CITY OF TAFT AND THE TAFT LITTLE LEAGUE.

Councilman Garza motioned for the City of Taft to enter into an agreement with the Taft Little League, the motion was seconded.

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.

15. DISCUSS, CONSIDER AND NECESSARY ACTION ON A RESOLUTION FINDING THAT AEP'S REQUESTED RATE INCREASE SHOULD BE DENIED.

Ryan Smith stated this has previously been done. AEP has requested the council deny the rate increase.

Councilman Keeney moved to enact a resolution finding that AEP's requested rate increase should be denied, the motion was seconded.

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.

16. DISCUSS, CONSIDER AND NECESSARY ACTION ON ADDING A HARDSHIP PTO SALE POLICY FOR CITY OF TAFT EMPLOYEES.

Ryan Smith stated there is already a policy in place that allows employees to sell PTO. There is a requirement that states 40 hours of PTO must remain in their bank prior to selling, and only 40 hours of PTO are allowed to be sold at the end of the year (December). The recommended policy allows the employee to sell up to 24 hours due to hardship at any time, and still keep up to 40 hours in their personnel bank.

Councilman Keeney moved to table item number 16 pending the city attorney's review of the hardship PTO policy, the motion was seconded.

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. The item was tabled.

17. DISCUSS, CONSIDER AND NECESSARY ACTION TO ALLOW CITY HALL TO CLOSE FOR TRAINING ON JUNE 4TH FROM 9:30 AM – 12:00 P.M.

Ryan Smith stated this is a free training for all employees of public works and city hall staff regarding the water meters. It would be best to close City Hall to avoid interruptions and be able to allow as many employees attend as possible.

Councilman Keeney moved to allow city hall to close for training on June 4th from 9:30 am – 12:00 pm, the motion was seconded.

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.

18. DISCUSS, CONSIDER AND NECESSARY ACTION TO ALLOW THE CITY ATTORNEY TO SEEK CLARIFICATION OF THE FEDERAL COURT ORDER FROM 1989.

Attorney Andrew Quittner stated this would be to allow the 1989 order to be amended and clarified. The next step would be to gain clarification from the federal court that issued the order.

Councilman Garza motioned to allow the city attorney to seek clarification of the Federal Court Order from 1989 with the caveat that the plaintiff agrees, the motion was seconded.

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.

19. DISCUSS, CONSIDER AND NECESSARY ACTION ON ALLOWING THE CITY MANAGER TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH TALON INVESTIGATIONS TO CONDUCT A 3RD PARTY INVESTIGATION IN RELATION TO CURRENT PERSONNEL MATTERS AND TO DETERMINE A NOT TO EXCEED PRICE FOR THE SERVICES.

Ryan Smith stated the specific 3rd party investigators are from San Antonio. The company consists of former FBI employees.

Councilman Keeney moved to allow the city manager to enter into a contract with Talon Investigations to conduct a 3rd party investigation in relation to current personnel matters and the price not to exceed \$10,000 for the services, the motion was seconded.

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

The motion carried.

The mayor then reopened the discussion regarding item number 19 for further clarification.

They Mayor re-voted on agenda item 19, the following vote was polled by Mayor Vasquez.

Mayor Vasquez	<input type="checkbox"/> for	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> against	<input type="checkbox"/> abstain	<input type="checkbox"/> absent
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The motion still carried.

20. DISCUSS, CONSIDER AND NECESSARY ACTION ON THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE LEAVE OR EMPLOYMENT, FOR THE CHIEF OF POLICE JOHN LANDRETH.

Mayor Vasquez requested that Chief John Landreth be placed on paid administrative leave. Chief John Landreth gave a speech informing the council and public of his 30-year career.

Mayor Vasquez motioned to continue the administrative leave of Chief John Landreth with pay, the motion was seconded.

The following Votes were polled:

Councilman Molina	<input type="checkbox"/> for	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> for	<input checked="" 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 failed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

21. CLOSED 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 551.071 (Consultations with Attorney) in reference to possible litigation against the city
- Section 551.074 (Personnel Matters): to deliberate the appointment, employment, evaluation, reassignment, duties, discipline or dismissal of a public officer or employee:

- City Manager
- City Attorney
- Public Works Director

The Council moved into Executive Session at 7:32 pm.

22. Open Session: The City Council will reconvene in Open Session at which time action on the matter(s) discussed in Closed Session may be considered.

- Section 551.071 (Consultations with Attorney) in reference to possible litigation against the city
- Section 551.074 (Personnel Matters): to deliberate the appointment, employment, evaluation, reassignment, duties, discipline or dismissal of a public officer or employee:
 - CITY MANAGER
 - CITY ATTORNEY
 - PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR

The Council Reconvened Session at 8:27 pm.

**Matters of Executive Session:
The Council announced:**

- CITY MANAGER: Council decided to interview 3 applicants for this position and reinstate the position for an additional 30 days.
- CITY ATTORNEY: Council decided to interview the applicant from the Gwosdz Law firm.
- PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR: Council stated the hiring of the Public Works Director was up to the discretion of the City Manager.

Councilman Garza motioned to approve the Executive Session items listed above, the motion was seconded.

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 failed.

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

Councilman Keeney & Ryan discussed the Splash Pad.

24. ITEMS TO CONSIDER FOR PLACEMENT ON FUTURE AGENDAS

Councilman Garza – Would like to look into a flag pole being placed at City Hall.

25. ANNOUNCEMENTS OF COMMUNITY INTEREST AND/OR UPCOMING EVENTS

Councilman Garza – Announced the book sale being held by the Library.
Pastor Steve Boettcher

26. ADJOURN – TIME 8:35 P.M.

Councilman Keeney motioned to Adjourn, the motion was seconded.

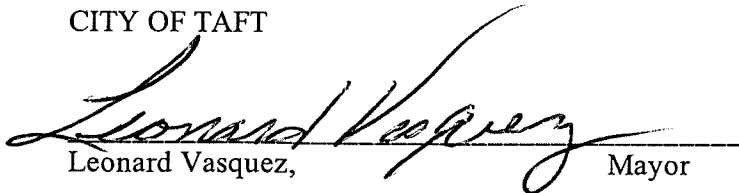
The following Votes were polled:

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

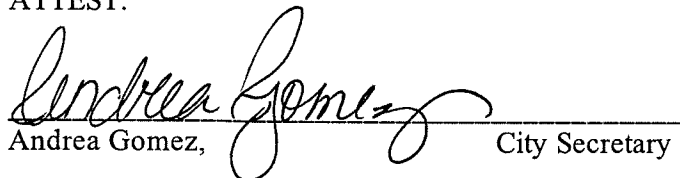
The motion carried.

Passed and Approved this 11th day of June, 2024.

CITY OF TAFT


Leonard Vasquez, Mayor

ATTEST:


Andrea Gomez, City Secretary