



MINUTES

City of Taft City Council Special Meeting

Thursday, October 24, 2024 at 6:30 pm

Taft City Hall- Council Chambers

230 Green Ave, Taft, TX 78390

The City of Taft City council held a Special Meeting on Thursday, October 24, 2024, at the Taft City Hall Council Chambers. A notice of this meeting was posted at least 72 hours in advance per Section 551, Texas Government Code.

1. CALL REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING TO ORDER

Mayor Pro Tem Chris Keeney called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL AND ESTABLISH QUORUM IS PRESENT

A roll call was called by City Secretary Jessica Gonzalez and a quorum was established. Council Members present were Mayor Pro Tem Keeney, and Aldermen Alonzo Molina, and Rolando Rodriguez. Mayor Leonard Vasquez and Alderman Isaiah Garza was absent.

City Staff present were City Manager Ryan Smith, City Attorney Thomas Gwosdz and Chief of Police John Landreth.

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND TEXAS PLEDGE

The City Council led in the Pledge of Allegiance and Texas Pledge.

4. PRAYER

The prayer was led by Reverend Steve Boettcher.

5. CITIZEN COMMENTS

Glen Searcy addressed the Council, raising concerns about city finances, transparency, and lawsuits involving the City. He referenced missing funds, including \$3.1 million and an additional \$450,000 related to an easement, and questioned the accuracy of the city's budget numbers. Searcy stated that taxpayers were "getting robbed" and asked for clarity regarding pending lawsuits against the City, including those involving the City Manager and Chief of Police.

City Attorney Thomas Gwosdz advised that the Council could not respond to questions on items not listed on the agenda but that staff would take note of his concerns. Searcy argued that lawsuits were listed as part of the agenda under the item concerning John Landreth v. City of Taft.

6. EXECUTIVE SESSION

- a. Section 551.071, Consultation with attorney on matter involving pending or contemplated litigation or other matter in which the duty of the attorney to the governmental body under the Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct clearly conflicts with the Open Meetings Act, including but not limited to John Landreth v. City of Taft, Cause No. S-24-5444CV-C, in the 343rd Judicial District, San Patricio County

- b. Section 551.074, (Personnel Matters) to deliberate the appointment, employment, evaluation, reassignment, duties, discipline, or dismissal of a Public Officer or employee or to hear a complaint against an officer or employee, including the Chief of Police

City Manager Smith stated that Police Chief Landreth has requested that his item be discussed in open session.

Council Member Rodriguez motioned to go into Executive Session, seconded by Council Member Molina, and the motion passed with the following vote: Molina, Keeney, and Rodriguez voted Aye. Garza and Vasquez were absent.

The City Council recessed into Executive Session at 6:35 p.m.

7. ACTION ON EXECUTIVE SESSION ITEMS

The Council convened in open session at 7:55 p.m.

Council Member Molina questioned Chief Landreth about his communication with the media, specifically asking whether Landreth acted independently or on advice from others, including Sheriff Rivera. Chief Landreth stated that Sheriff Rivera provided him with a news contact and encouraged him to reach out. Council Member Molina referenced statements from Mayor Vasquez that allegedly advised against contacting the media, but Chief Landreth denied being told not to.

Council Member Molina also questioned Chief Landreth on the Talon investigation and why certain information had not been addressed publicly, to which Chief Landreth responded that he had not been interviewed by Talon but was contacted only once by phone.

Mayor Pro Tem Keeney asked Chief Landreth if, on October 18, 2024, he removed city records and transported them to his ranch for destruction. Chief Landreth confirmed that he removed records but stated that proper procedures were followed, and that all necessary paperwork and photographic documentation exist. He further alleged that contraband and controlled substances from the old EMS building had been left improperly stored at City Hall.

Mayor Pro Tem Keeney questioned Chief Landreth regarding the purchase of police vehicles and whether he ignored instructions from the city manager to return vehicles ordered on October 7, 2024. Chief Landreth asserted that he followed all procurement policies, the vehicles had already been accepted, and he sought private funding when city funds were not available.

Mayor Pro Tem Keeney raised concerns about alleged confrontational emails and remarks made by Chief Landreth to the interim finance director, including a comment referring to "misappropriation of public funds" as "sweet retribution." Chief Landreth acknowledged that he may have made such a remark but attributed his frustration to months of mistreatment and disciplinary actions.

Mayor Pro Tem Keeney asked Chief Landreth if he could continue to work professionally with city staff and take direction from the city manager. Chief Landreth responded that he would follow any lawful directives from supervisors.

Council Member Molina questioned why overtime-related investigations, which had begun months prior, had resulted in only one arrest. Chief Landreth explained that his suspension delayed ongoing investigations and that warrants had recently been signed to continue the process.

Chief Landreth addressed his role in recommending Kandi Hubert as interim city manager, stating he initially believed she would be a good fit but later realized the relationship was not as cooperative as anticipated.

There was also a discussion about Chief Landreth obtaining his personnel file from City Hall. Mayor Pro Tem Keeney questioned how Chief Landreth acquired it; Chief Landreth stated it was part of his ongoing investigation and done under direction.

A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Keeney to terminate Chief Landreth's employment with the City of Taft and the motion failed due to lack of second.

8. COUNCIL AND STAFF COMMENTS

There were no comments.

9. ITEMS TO CONSIDER FOR PLACEMENT ON FUTURE AGENDAS

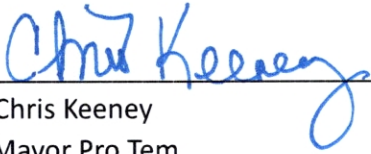
There were no items.


10. ANNOUNCEMENTS OF COMMUNITY INTEREST AND/OR UPCOMING EVENTS

City Manager Smith stated that Halloween on the Green event is coming up.

11. ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Council, Mayor Pro Tem Keeney adjourned the meeting at 8:27 pm.


Chris Keeney
Mayor Pro Tem


~~Jessica Gonzalez~~ Ryan Smith
City Secretary
Manager

Approved on: 11/12/2025