

Elida Castillo, Mayor
Esmeralda "Mimi" Cruz-Molina, Mayor Pro Tem
Vacant, Alderman Ward 1
Alonzo Molina, Alderman Ward 2
Mariah Moreno, Alderwoman Ward 2



230 Green Avenue
Taft, TX 78390
Phone (361)528-3512

**REGULAR* MEETING OF THE CITY OF TAFT CITY
COUNCIL TAFT CITY HALL, 230 GREEN AVE., TAFT,
TEXAS JANUARY 14, 2026 – 6:30 P.M.**

- 1. CALL TO ORDER**
- 2. ROLL CALL AND CERTIFY A QUORUM**
- 3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND TEXAS PLEDGE**
- 4. INVOCATION**
- 5. CITIZEN COMMUNICATION**

The public is invited to address the City Council on any matter of City business. Please note that all comments should be made at this time. Unless an agenda item is listed as a "public hearing," comments will not be taken elsewhere. Also, Council members cannot respond to comments if the topic is not on this agenda. Each speaker will be allowed three minutes. If you wish to speak, please sign up with the City Secretary before the meeting begins. Citizens are to refrain from any personal attacks on the council or any member of the staff. Failure to abide by these policies could result in a charge of disorderly conduct.

6. CONSENT AGENDA

No discussion is anticipated on any of the items in this section because they are routine business, were included in the budget adoption process, or have been previously discussed as a staff report or discussion item. These items will be considered collectively by a single vote, unless a council member requests an item be removed from the consent agenda.

- 6.1.** Approval of November 5th Special Meeting Minutes, December 2nd, 2025 Regular Meeting Minutes, and November 14, 2025 Special Meeting Minutes.

7. ACTION ITEMS

City council will discuss, consider, and take any action deemed necessary on items listed in this section, including the adoption of a minute order, a resolution or an ordinance.

- 7.1.** Discuss, Consider and Act on appointment to fill the vacant Ward 1 Alderman position, including candidate presentation for the vacant Ward 1 Council seat.
- 7.2.** Discuss, Consider, and Act on obtaining at least 3 (bids) or proposals for position of City Attorney to ensure transparency, fiscal responsibility, and the opportunity to evaluate multiple candidates for legal representation.
- 7.3.** Discuss, Consider and Act on retaining the services of Epimenio Ysassi as City Attorney for legal and Prosecutorial Services for the City of Taft, Texas.
- 7.4.** Discuss, Consider and Act on rescinding all prior ordinances and or resolutions delegating any and all powers previously granted to the Taft City Manager and reverting back to the Statutory Provisions of the Texas Local Government Code related to the powers and duties of the Mayor and Council with the exception of prior Federal Court ruling in the Southern District of Texas that expands the role of the Mayor.
- 7.5.** Discuss, Consider, and Act on rescinding the current City of Taft Policy Manual in its entirety, and calling for workshops and Public Hearings on the development of a New Policy Employee Handbook to be prepared by City Attorney in conjunction with Taft City Council.
- 7.6.** Discuss, Consider, and Act on the interlocal agreement between San Patricio County, Texas and the City of Taft, Texas to provide retail food establishment regulation and On-Site Sewage Facilities (OSSF) enforcement services.
- 7.7.** Discuss, Consider, and Act on a Police Department's request to enter into a contract with Axon for vehicle and body worn cameras.
- 7.8.** Discuss, Consider, and Act on creating a new police officer position encompassing Animal Control and Code Enforcement.
- 7.9.** Discuss, Consider, and Act on Resolution No. 2025-1311 Reauthorizing the Levy and Collection of Interest and Sinking Fund (I&S) Taxes on the Deannexed Area of Taft to Satisfy the Outstanding 2010 Certificates of Obligation.

- 7.10. Discuss, Consider, and Act on accepting the resignation of Jason Keeney from the EDC Board and Maxine Bowen from TQIC, Emergency Management Liaison, and Cheniere Energy Advisory Panel effective 12/30/2025 and her resignation from BSC effective 02/28/2026.
- 7.11. Discuss, Consider, and Act on ordinances related to City Parks, including an Ordinance adding new Subsection 8-6 (o) to the City Code related to animal feces in Parks and other public places.
- 7.12. Discuss, Consider, and Act on rescinding the Ordinances for Agenda submission deadline.
- 7.13. Discuss, Consider, and Act on dissolving Building and Standards Commission.
- 7.14. Discuss, Consider, and Act on workshops to amend the budget.
- 7.15. Discuss, Consider, and Act on a Strategic Planning workshop with EDC, TQIC, and community.
- 7.16. Discuss, Consider, and Act on a resolution to ratify the Mayor's authorization for the Bojorquez Law Firm to represent the City as part of its ongoing special counsel relationship with the City on all matters related to the lawsuit filed against the City by the City Manager, *i.e. Ryan Smith v. Elida Castillo et. al.*, No. 13-25-00682-CV, currently on appeal in the 13th District Court of Appeals from the 343rd Judicial District, San Patricio County.
- 7.17. Discuss, Consider, and Act on calling the City Manager's surety bond to pay for the lawsuit filed against the City by the City Manager, *i.e. Ryan Smith v. Elida Castillo et. al.*, No. 13-25-00682-CV, currently on appeal in the 13th District Court of Appeals from the 343rd Judicial District, San Patricio County.
- 7.18. Discuss, Consider, and Act on a Resolution to dismiss the lawsuit filed by the City Manager on behalf of the City, *i.e. Ryan Smith v. Elida Castillo et. al.*, No. 13-25-00682-CV, currently on appeal in the 13th District Court of Appeals from the 343rd Judicial District, San Patricio County.
- 7.19. Discuss, consider, and Act on resuming holding regular City Council meetings twice a month.
- 7.20. Discuss, consider, and Act on lighting at city parks, and continuation of the agreement with the little league.
- 7.21. Discuss, consider and Act on a report related to water billing issues and water meter installation issues.
- 7.22. Discuss, consider, and Act on requesting applications for vacant positions on City Boards and Commissions, including Building and Standards Commission, EDC Board, and TQIC, among others.

8. EXECUTIVE SESSION

All items listed in this section will be deliberated in a closed session. Members of the public are not generally permitted to attend a closed session. Executive session items may be considered as an action item at the discretion of the Mayor: however, City Council will not take any action in closed session.

- 8.1. Section 551.071, consultation with the City's attorney regarding pending or contemplated litigation, a settlement offer, and/or a matter in which the duty of the attorney to the governmental body under the Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct clearly conflicts with the Texas Open Meetings Act. Reference Settlement Agreement in *John Landreth v. City of Taft*, Cause No. S-24-5444CV-C, in the 343rd Judicial District, San Patricio County, and *Ryan Smith v. Elida Castillo et. al.*, No. 13-25-00682-CV, currently on appeal in the 13th District Court of Appeals from the 343rd Judicial District, San Patricio County.
- 8.2. Section 551.074, to deliberate the appointment, employment, evaluation, reassignment, duties, discipline, or dismissal of a public officer or employee; or to hear a complaint or charge against an officer or employee, including the annual performance evaluation of City Manager Ryan Smith.

9. ACTION ON EXECUTIVE SESSION ITEMS

Council will reconvene in open session and may take action on any item listed in the Executive Session action of this agenda.

- 9.1. Section 551.071, consultation with the City's attorney regarding pending or contemplated litigation, a settlement offer, and/or a matter in which the duty of the attorney to the governmental body under the Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct clearly conflicts with the Texas Open Meetings Act. Reference Settlement Agreement in *John Landreth v. City of Taft*, Cause No. S-24-5444CV-C, in the 343rd Judicial District, San Patricio County, and *Ryan Smith v. Elida Castillo et. al.*, No. 13-25-00682-CV, currently on appeal in the 13th District Court of Appeals from the 343rd Judicial District, San Patricio County.
- 9.2. Section 551.074, to deliberate the appointment, employment, evaluation, reassignment, duties, discipline, or dismissal of a public officer or employee; or to hear a complaint or charge against an officer or employee, including the annual performance evaluation of City Manager Ryan Smith.

10. ADJOURNMENT

The City Council of the City of Taft reserves the right to convene in Executive Session in accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act, Texas Government Code: Section 551.071 (Consultations with Attorney), Section 551.072 (Deliberations about Real Property), Section 551.074 (Personnel Matters), Section 551.076 (Deliberations about Security Devices), or Section 551.087 (Deliberations Regarding Economic Development Negotiations) on any of the above items.

A quorum of the city council will be present at 230 Green Ave., Taft, Texas ("City Council Chambers"), and the city intends to have a quorum present at that location. The Presiding officer of the meeting will be present at City Council chambers, and that location will be open to the public. Other city council members may participate in this meeting by video conference, so long as their faces are visible, and their voice audible to members of the public in attendance at City Council Chambers while that member is speaking.

Special Accommodations

This facility is wheelchair accessible and accessible parking spaces are available. Requests for accommodations or interpretive services must be made 48 hours prior to this meeting. Please contact the City Secretary's office at (361) 528-3512 or FAX (361) 528-3515 or email secretary@tafttx.gov for further information. Braille is not available.

*This agenda was amended solely to change the meeting type from Special to Regular.