

**CITY OF CASTROVILLE CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR CALLED COUNCIL MEETING**

1209 Fiorella

City Council Chambers

May 13, 2025

Tuesday

5:30 P.M.

MINUTES

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Darrin Schroeder called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Present:

Mayor Darrin Schroeder

Scott Dixon, City Administrator

Mayor Elect Bruce Alexander

Debra Howe, City Secretary

Mayor Pro Tem Sheena Martinez

John Gomez, Public Works Director

Councilmember Houston Marchman

Jim Kohler, Police Chief

Councilmember Phil King

Councilmember David Merz

Councilmember Robert Lee

Others in Attendance:

Daniel Santee, Attorney, DNRBS&Z

III. PLEDGE OF ALLEIGENCE

IV. INVOCATION

Pastor Mitch Cobb of Calvary Church gave the invocation.

Mayor Schroeder announced he would be moving Agenda items 8 a. through f. up in to allow for the recognition of outgoing Councilmember Paul Carey, public comments by the outgoing mayor, canvassing of the vote, swearing in of Councilmembers 1, 2 and 5, swear-in of incoming Mayor Bruce Alexander and passing of the gavel. Mayor Schroeder said there would be a short break for refreshments.

VIII. DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS

a. Recognition of outgoing Councilmember, Paul Carey, District 2

Mayor Schroeder presented outgoing District 2 Councilmember Paul Carey with an inscription expressing appreciation for his time serving the citizens for the past 8 years.

b. Public comments by out-going Mayor, Darrin Schroeder

Mayor Schroeder spoke on the challenges and achievements during his tender as Mayor. Mayor Schroeder thanked everyone for working together to make the city better and hoped the city continued to move forward.

- c. Canvassing the May 03, 2025 General Election Results for Mayor
The City Council canvassed the final results of the 2025 General Election for the position of mayor declaring the results as correct.
A motion was made by councilmember Martinez and duly seconded by Councilmember Merz to accept the results of the May 3, 2025 General Election results declaring Bruce Alexander as the winner for the position of Mayor. A vote was taken (5:0 all ayes) the motion carried by all present.
- d. Swearing-In of Sheena Martinez, District 1 Councilmember, Houston Marchman, District 2 Councilmember, and Robert 'Bob' Lee, District 5 Councilmember
Medina County Judge Keith Lutz was present and administered the oaths to each of the incoming Councilmembers.
- e. Administration of the Oath of Office and Swearing-In of Bruce Alexander, Mayor
Medina County Judge Keith Lutz administered the oath of office to incoming Mayor Bruce Alexander.
- f. Passing of Gavel by Mayor Darrin Schroeder to Mayor Bruce Alexander followed by brief recess and refreshments
Outgoing Mayor Darrin Schroeder handed off the official gavel to newly sworn in Mayor Bruce Alexander.

Mayor Alexander recessed the meeting at 5:48 p.m. for refreshments.

Before reconvening in open session Mayor Alexander made a statement thanking his family and supporters for their support and hard work on the campaign. Mayor Alexander said his number one goal was open government, and following rules and regulations.

Mayor Alexander reconvened in open session at 6:05 p.m.

V. CITIZENS COMMENTS

The City Council will hear comments from any citizen or visitor. Speakers must address their comments to the presiding officer rather than individual council members or staff; stand at the podium, speak clearly into the microphone, and state your name and residential address before speaking. Speakers will be allowed a maximum of 3 minutes for testimony. Speakers making personal, impertinent, profane, or slanderous remarks will be given one warning before losing the privilege to speak or may be removed from the room. In accordance with the State Open Meetings Act, the City Council is restricted from discussing or taking action on items not listed on the agenda. Action can only be taken at a future meeting.

Karen Brunair, 112 River Forrest, was happy for Mayor Alexander and said she was opposed to density in the city or ETJ. She was against retail coming to the city and she did not want the city to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars outside of the city. Ms. Brunair wanted money spent on beautifying Hwy 90 with planters and greenery. She was against lots less than 1/3 acre in city limits and in the ETJ and if the developers did not wish to comply they could withdraw from the ETJ. She was against any construction in Stage 4 water restrictions and hoped the city would not allow.

Karen Fifield, 805 Washington, agreed with all Ms. Brunair said and spoke on the difficulty she had in finding the ordinances referred to on the agenda. Ms. Fifield said she finally was able to find the backup after contacting the city secretary. Ms. Fifield suggested more detailed language for a better understanding of the subjects on the agenda when discussing ordinances.

Chris Cox, 219 Alexander Hamilton Dr. San Antonio, spoke as the representative for Frontier Waste on the agenda item regarding proposals for the city solid waste contract. Mr. Cox spoke on having previously been the city contact for the current company – Waste Management and knowing the city’s needs. Mr. Cox questioned the scoring matrix on the proposals and his company proposed five-year and ten-year rates. Mr. Cox spoke on the cities Frontier Waste served and hoped Castroville would consider their proposal above the others.

Charity Rivera, 1105 Alamo Street, spoke on the recent election and thanked outgoing Mayor Schroeder for his work and attention to serving the community. Ms. Charity said she wanted to be a part of the community and as a volunteer had cleaned the fountain in Houston Square and helped with the cleanup of the streets. Ms. Rivera thanked former Mayor Schroeder for always taking the time to speak to the citizens, answering questions, and being a good person. Ms. Rivera hoped the community could come together and continue to work at keeping the city a place to come to and be proud of.

VI. CONSENT AGENDA

a. Minutes for April 22, 2025 Regular Called Meeting

A motion was made by Councilmember King and duly seconded by Councilmember Merz to approve the consent agenda.

Councilmember Lee said he had wording corrections and could send to city secretary. Mr. Lee also questioned a few statements under the UDO discussion. Councilmember King withdrew his motion as did Councilmember Merz his second, to allow for corrective action to be made and bring back at the next meeting.

VII. PRESENATIONS

a. The Castroville Area Economic Development Council will present the winning poster for their annual Poppy Poster contest

CAEDC member Arnie Dollase introduced the artist of the winning poster as Shelby Dixon, daughter of City Administrator Scott Dixon. Mr. Dollase said the original was hand painted, not computer generated and copies would be available for sale. Ms. Dixon was present and was acknowledged for her work. City Administrator Scott Dixon accepted the framed print on behalf of the city.

Mayor Alexander provided the city council with a revised agenda order from what was shown. Mayor Alexander said after seeing representatives present for the solid waste item he was move that up in the agenda order. City Council agreed to the changes.

VIII. DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS

j. Discussion and appropriate action to award a contract for solid waste (inclusive of recycling, bulk, and hazardous waste) services

Mayor Alexander said he wanted the item to be tabled to allow for additional review of the proposals. Councilmember King wanted to make sure the companies would provide the 96-gallon containers.

Mr. Dixon said that was in the proposals. Councilmember Martinez said she was in favor of tabling the item until the next meeting. Councilmembers had not received a copy of the proposals until that evening and were reminded the documents held confidential information.

A motion was made by Councilmember Lee and duly seconded by Councilmember Marchman to table item. A vote was taken (5:0 all ayes) the motion carried by all present.

- n. Discussion and take appropriate action regarding the provision of cell phones for the mayor, city council, and senior city staff

Mayor Alexander briefed the city council on his recommendations that city council and senior staff not use personal cell phones for city business. Mayor Alexander said using personal cell phones for city business could cause issues if there were open records request. Mayor Alexander said the texts were to be kept indefinitely as per state requirements. Councilmember Merz said devices could be lost or broken losing information. Mr. Merz asked what the best way was to retain information. City Administrator Dixon recommended taking a screen shot of text and email to city issued email for retention. Mayor Alexander requested a city cell phone for himself with options left open for council members and senior staff current and in the future. None of the other members of council wished to have a second phone. City Administrator Dixon said staff would look at a city issued cell phone policy and look at procedures to capture and retain city communications on private city council cell phones and emails. No formal action was taken.

- l. Discussion and take appropriate action to establish dates, times, and locations for all open meetings conducted by the City of Castroville

Mayor Alexander briefed the city council on his suggestion of changing the city council meetings to 6 p. m. and holding executive sessions when necessary before the meeting starting at 3 p.m. Mayor Alexander wanted all boards and commissions to hold their meetings at city hall starting at 6 p.m. with livestreaming of all meetings for transparency. Councilmember Martinez said the board chairman should be asked about time and venue changes before the city council vote and asked if the council meetings starting later would they end sooner. Councilmember Marchman asked if all boards and commissions had to be livestreamed. City Attorney Santee said the state did not require this. Mr. Santee said that would be a city decision. Mr. Marchman was in favor of livestreaming all meetings. Councilmember King agreed on holding executive sessions early, before the regular meetings and said Roberts Rules stated at the beginning of a meeting the end time could be announced. Councilmember Merz was in agreement with meetings beginning at 6 p.m. but not live streaming all meetings until the livestream was fixed and look at possible added expense for additional streaming services. Mr. Merz was not in favor of meeting as early as 3 p.m. for executive sessions, as this would be a challenge for him and future candidates for council that worked. He said 5 p.m. was better for him to attend executive sessions due to his work schedule. Councilmember Lee said for all boards to meet at city hall it could be an issue with the Airport Board having to bring materials (maps) to the city hall for meetings. These were available at the Airport and would have to be transported each meeting. Mr. Lee also said the Library had materials they showed at meetings that were at the Library. Mr. Lee agreed the boards should be asked and he was in favor of holding the executive sessions at the beginning of the meetings. This item would be brought back for action.

m. Discussion and possible updates or changes to the “Council Policy and Rules of Procedure” found Chapter 2, Article 1, Section 2-4 of the City’s Code of Ordinances

Mayor Alexander briefed the city council on the possibility of changing the council policies to reflect more of what the County Commissioners Court had in place for citizens to speak on listed agenda items. Mayor Alexander provided a copy of their policy and a signup sheet for any citizen to speak in addition to citizens comments on an agenda item they were interested in during the council discussion on that item. Councilmember Merz felt there should be additional information added to current council policies to not allow sharing of notes or minutes as this had caused confusion at times for the speakers. Mr. Merz also wanted to remove the hats not allowed clause. Councilmember King was good with current policy and felt citizens could speak during citizens comments. Councilmember Lee did not feel place of employment or employment phone should be on the form and he did not want the hat ban during meetings to be removed. Mayor Alexander was also in agreement on leaving the hat ban in. Mayor Alexander recognized Karen Brunair for a question on speaking during the agenda items. Ms. Brunair asked if this would allow citizens to have a back and forth with the city council during the item. Mayor Alexander said it would not allow a dialog as per the city ordinance, only at the city council’s discretion. Mayor Alexander said for citizens to speak on the item the form had to be turned in before the item was called. Staff was directed to prepare the form.

o. Discussion on the review of city ordinances as required under Article 1, Chapter2, Section 2-11 of the City's Code of Ordinances

City Secretary Debra Howe briefed the city council on review of the current ordinances and explaining the council policies and procedures regarding this requirement had been included to review ordinances with state required timelines. Ms. Howe said the most current ordinance had been the curfew ordinance and the state in 2023 had removed cities enforcement. Mayor Alexander felt all of the city ordinances should be reviewed as every two years state legislators changed laws that effected the cities and updates be brought to the city council for review. Councilmember Merz felt staff did keep up with the changes and worked with TML on changes. Mr. Merz said it would be very time-consuming and costly to send out to the attorney for reviews and he felt the city had more pressing things to work on such as the Airport Zoning and the HLC Board’s authority was just a few. Councilmember King felt the city did keep up with changes by following TML and should review council policies yearly. Councilmember Martinez agreed the city had more pressing items. Councilmember Lee spoke on turning in materials ahead of time for council agendas items to shorten time it took for compiling the agendas and packets. A suggestion was for the City Administrator to farm out ordinances to departments the ordinances pertained to for review and or hire contract employee to help with review process.

g. Consider and take appropriate action on applications submitted for open positions on City Boards and Commissions

Mayor Alexander briefed the city council on the opening on the P & Z Commission his election to Mayor had created and his authority to appointment alternate member Edwardo Esquivel Jr. to fill position #5. Mayor Alexander had contacted Mr. Esquivel and he had agreed to serve in the full board position.

City Secretary Debra Howe briefed the city council on two applications submitted for open positions on the Zoning Board of Adjustments. Ms. Howe said the city had received applications from Wayne D. Whitaker and Joe Holzhaus for consideration. Mr. Holzhaus was in attendance and introduced himself. Mr. Holzhaus said he was a former city councilmember and at the last council meeting he attended it was noted the ZBOA was in need of members to be able to hold meetings. Mr. Holzhaus said he wanted to help where he could. Mr. Whitaker was not in attendance but had been encouraged by Councilmember Lee to apply. A question of whether the city council would keep the two-step process in acted by the last Mayor or go back to review and appointment in one meeting. Councilmember Merz felt they should stay with the current two-step process and had not met Mr. Whitaker.

A motion was made by Councilmember Martinez and duly seconded by Councilmember Marchman to appoint Joe Holzhaus to position #1 (term ending 2026) and Wayne Whitaker to position #2 (term ending 2026) on the Zoning Board of Adjustments. A vote was taken (5:0 all ayes the motion carried by all present.

Mayor Alexander called a short recess at 7:45 p.m.

Mayor Alexander reconvened in open session at 7:54 p.m.

- h. Discussion and take appropriate action on acceptance of Texas Department of Emergency Management(TDEM) grant HMGP4798 for the purchase and installation of a 60 KW Diesel Generator at the Castroville Police Building and authorizing the expenditure of a 25% City Match of \$15,051.21 from the City's General Fund**

Mayor Alexander commended Police Chief Kohler for having gotten the grant and asked why he felt diesel fuel was better than natural gas. Mayor Alexander said back when he was still working for the city they had generators at the wells and they were powered by natural gas. Chief Kohler said he also had questions from Councilmember Lee on the choice of diesel over natural gas since the city owned the gas. Chief Kohler said the generator they selected had a feature that would automatically clean the fuel and fuel was not a problem. Chief Kohler was asked the size of the fuel tank. Chief Kohler said it was 100 gallons. Councilmember King said that would supply 20 hours of power. Chief Kohler said they hoped to get the current generator running again and use somewhere else in the city. Councilmember Martinez was in favor and said they needed a reliable generator as they were the command control center. Councilmember Lee was in favor of accepting the grant.

A motion was made by Councilmember Lee and duly seconded by Councilmember Martinez to accept the Texas Department of Emergency Management(TDEM) grant HMGP4798 for the purchase and installation of a 60 KW Diesel Generator at the Castroville Police Building and authorizing the expenditure of a 25% City Match of \$15,051.21 from the City's General Fund. A vote was taken (5:0 all ayes) the motion carried by all present.

- i. Discussion and possible action regarding the contract for planning services with Simple City Design**

Mayor Alexander said he wanted to terminate the contract immediately. Councilmember King said he wanted staff feed back on stopping the work and the cost to finish the document. Mr. King said the city still had conflicting ordinances if the process was canceled as the contract had expired.

Councilmember Martinez said the city council had been brief at the first meeting in April with overages. Ms. Martinez said the council agreed to pay the difference and now there were additional charges of \$30,000. City Administrator Dixon said the additional charges were from an invoice the city received for work completed after the initial invoice was submitted. Councilmember King said the overages equaled the 10% contingency in the contract and the city should pay the invoice and use on an hourly basis to complete the document. Councilmember Merz stated as before the overages were due to the city council wanting changes as recent as March and the additional meetings. Mr. Merz agreed the company should be paid for their work. Councilmember Lee said he felt the P & Z and citizens were not at fault for the delays. Mr. Lee felt the city staff had worked on a large amount of the project since the former Mayor and Community Development Director Soto had put together a comparison of all current ordinances vs. the UDO to help others have a better understanding of the changes, not Simplecity as requested. Mr. Lee agreed on paying the balance due and move on. Councilmember Marchman felt Simplecity owed the city money and said the city had suffered through the process. Mayor Alexander said as he read the contract the city would not own the finished product. He asked if the city would own the documents. The answer was yes and Councilmember King said the city council had approved the contract with Simplecity.

A motion was made by Councilmember King and duly seconded by Councilmember Lee to pay the contractual invoiced amount. A vote was taken (5:0 all ayes) the motion carried by all present.

j. Discussion and appropriate action to award a contract for service for the design and construction of the city hall remodel and potential future library expansion

Mayor Alexander recommended tabling to have staff bring back a funding source with no new debt being created. Councilmember Lee said he was seeing from \$1.5 to \$3 million for the remodel and asked why the big difference and the proposed way to fund, using earned interest off of general fund gave him concern. City Administrator Dixon said the city would need to borrow money to fund the project and because he did not have an engineer there were no good numbers on what it would cost. This contract for design and construction was the first in the remodeling process. Councilmember Merz asked what the issues were with the building. City Administrator Dixon said building needed maintenance and had out of date wiring, leaking roof, and upstairs walls were crumbling. Mr. Dixon said they could start by negotiating break points to see if they wanted to move forward with whomever they chose. Councilmember King said even if the city hall was moved to a different location, the building would still have to be maintained. Mr. King was in favor of starting the process and get an assessment to make an informative decision. Councilmember Marchman said he was in favor and had been through restoration when his hometown remodeled their courthouse. Councilmember Martinez felt the building needed to be updated and felt they should look at during the CIP meetings and suggested Darin Hamm look for possible grants. Councilmember Lee said the city had neglected to keep up with the maintenance and felt the earmark money for the city hall should be looked at for other projects. He felt they should look at something of this nature during budget work sessions. Councilmember King suggested that they should negotiate a contract with an hourly rate. Mayor Alexander wanted to review the RFQ's. Councilmember King was good with reviewing further and bring back to next meeting. Mayor Alexander appointed Councilmember King and Marchman as a committee to review qualifications and bring back to the next meeting. No action was taken.

IX. City Council Liaison Report

Airport Advisory Board - May 5, 2025

Councilmember Martinez reported the Airport Board met and Arnie Dollase had updated the board on working to get the STEM Program started and he was pursuing a large corporation to help build the program. Ms. Martinez said the runway had been fenced off to keep non-aviation vehicles off the runway; Border Patrol was watching airports for unusual activity at night; the fuel contract was expiring and they were discussing going with BASCO; farmland lease was coming up in December and Carpi Deim Farms was looking to renew; the board was looking at identifying the top three project to use the left over \$200,000 on. Ms. Martinez said the board seats were coming up and three of the members did plan to reapply and there were recent safety issues with patrons of the baseball fields parking along the roadside. Ms. Martinez said the police department was aware of the issues and was working to resolve.

Library Advisory Board - May 1, 2025

Councilmember Lee said he was unable to attend the meeting but had requested a report from the Library Director Beth Farley. Ms. Farley had provided her report she presented to the Library Board for the city council. Mr. Lee said the Library Board had a full board and was working on a budget presentation and City Administrator Dixon would be at their next meeting. Councilmembers were asked if they wished to review the report at that meeting as it would be part of the staff reports at the next. They chose not to.

Councilmember Marchman reported the P & Z Commission did meet and approve the amendment to the Development Agreement with Alsatian Oaks approving the school property removal and sidewalks kept at 4ft. with the exception of keeping the current number of homes to 100 and a letter from the school stating they were declining the land.

Historic Landmark Commission - April 15, 2025

Councilmember King reported the HLC had met and discussed the ins and outs of the guidelines the city council had adopted.

Parks and Recreation Advisory Board - April 16, 2025

Councilmember Merz reported the park board met and alternate Ben Jean sat in as a voting member at the meeting. Mr. Merz said they discussed Lions Park Master Plan update and planned to approve at the next meeting. Mr. Merz said the board discussed grants, the community center impact on the pool schedule, the irrigation system connection to the WW Treatment Plant being easier than expected due to an unknown valve, and finalizing the Park Master Plan to be presented to the city council in the next few months.

X. Discussion on Future Agenda Items

Councilmember Lee asked for a discussion on comparison between developers on cost, design, flexibility, annexation or not with the UDO or the existing ordinances. Mr. Lee also wanted an item to discuss putting a dirt berm/sod at a home near Athens street to alleviate flooding. City Administrator Dixon said he had to bring back solid waste contract, water conservation plan, SCADA, proposed signup form, review the ordinances compliant with state law, cell phones for Mayor and city council, and budget work session was scheduled for May 21, 2025 beginning at 9 a.m.

XI. Adjourn

Mayor Alexander adjourned the meeting at 9:20 p.m.

Mayor

ATTEST:

City Secretary