



CITY OF GRAND PRAIRIE

City Hall
300 W. Main Street
Grand Prairie, Texas

Meeting Minutes

Special City Council Meeting - Charter Review / Council Community Engagement Policy

Wednesday, December 11, 2024

5:00 PM

City Hall - Briefing Room

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Jensen called the meeting to order at 5:10 p.m.

PRESENT

Mayor Ron Jensen

Mayor Pro Tem Jorja Clemson

Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Junior Ezeonu

Council Member District 2 Jacquin Headen

Council Member District 3 Mike Del Bosque (arrived at 5:12 p.m.)

City Council Member District 4 John Lopez

Council Member District 5 Tony Shotwell

Council Member District 6 Kurt Johnson

ABSENT

Council Member At Large Place 7 Bessye Adams

EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was no closed session.

ITEMS FOR INDIVIDUAL CONSIDERATION

1. Charter Review and Requested Amendments

City Attorney Maleshia McGinnis provided an overview of the review process for amending the city charter including information on how often it can be amended and how the charter amendment election would be ordered. She advised February 4th would be last day Council can order the election as that is the last regular scheduled Council meeting before the deadline. Ms. McGinnis reviewed newspaper publication ballot drafting rules. She provided a list of the charter provisions that would be discussed at this meeting and a copy of the current city charter. Ms. McGinnis discussed Council's current term limits and provided Council with comparison data of terms and limits in other cities. She reviewed multiple examples of term limits. Council Member Del Bosque supports term limits and Council Member Shotwell said he wanted to discuss term limits further. Mayor Jensen opened the topic up for discussion. There was discussion on preparing for those who come behind current Council and whether or not city boards and commissions have term limits. Mayor Jensen confirmed there are no term

limits for city boards/commissions members. Council Member Johnson said he supports term limits, noted there is discussion in his district regarding term limits, believes it will incite more interest if citizens to know that someone is termed out and said he supports voters deciding. Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Ezeonu said he supports voters deciding and is against term limits for any form of government noting it term limits are anti-democratic. Mayor Jensen said Council has operated efficiently as they are, current Council is representative of their community, noted very successful candidates have beat incumbents and he feels it works and is comfortable leaving it as is. Mayor Jensen moved, seconded by Council Member Jacquin Headen, to have no term limits placed on Council. In favor: Mayor Jensen, Mayor Pro Tem Clemson, Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Ezeonu, Council Members Headen and Shotwell. Opposed: Council Members Johnson, Lopez, Del Bosque. Motion carried, 5-3.

Ms. McGinnis provided information on making changes to council districts. Mayor Jensen said the three At Large districts cover minority districts and there are currently two minorities in At Large positions. Council Member Johnson asked to clarify how At Large members operate noting he receives District 6 calls advising At Large members ask them to call their district representative or sometimes they do not call citizens back. Mayor Jensen advised he is not going to tell any citizen not to reach out to their district member and he cannot enforce other At Large members to do the same as he does, communicate with district members about inquiries. Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Ezeonu said he feels whoever the constituent is comfortable reaching out should be their option, discussed how a federal system of government works and said he is not required to go to single member district members to inform them of constituent calls. Council Member Del Bosque commented that is very disrespectful, noting if there's an inquiry on something in his district he wants to know. There was discussion on council having events in each other's district and whether or not to let the district member know and discussion on constituents reaching outside their districts to other council members. Mayor Jensen discussed the staggered elections allowing everyone to vote for someone in every election. Council Member Del Bosques discussed growth down south and redistricting. Council Member Lopez advised if there is more than a ten percent increase in population, council can review for redistricting sooner than ten years, mentioned that At Large districts work against people of color, discussed a relative lawsuit against Grand Prairie ISD some years back and noted he thinks there will have to be two additional seats due to population. Mayor Jensen discussed Goodland area down south, noting it will not have representation for thirty years or until it is fully developed. There was discussion on other cities adding seats and dividing districts due to population. Council Member Shotwell noted last time it was done, there was not a lot of community support and there was a charter committee who discussed it with various groups. Council Member Del Bosque proposed a charter committee. Mayor Jensen moved, seconded by Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Ezeonu, to leave Council with six district seats and three at large seats. In favor: Mayor Jensen, Mayor Pro Tem Clemson, Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Ezeonu, Council Members Headen, Lopez and Shotwell. Opposed: Council Members Johnson and Del Bosque. Motion carried, 6-2.

Ms. McGinnis reviewed law relative to resign to run. She discussed charter and state provisions as well as provisions to run for mayor. There was discussion regarding a council member desiring to run for Mayor noting they have to resign their council seat automatically and discussion on how other cities handle. There was discussion on school board seats. Council Member Shotwell moved to change the charter to put any other political office not just mayor in the provision. Mayor Jensen said the motion failed for lack of a second.

Ms. McGinnis discussed compensation of Mayor and Council Members. She reviewed compensation other cities' mayors and members receive and asked if council wishes to propose changes. Council Member Lopez noted other cities clarify expenses and supports this method, noting North Richland Hills and Mansfield council approves all expenses and Grand Prairie ISD has an annual report of members expenses. Mayor Jensen asked to clarify if this different from already the approved expenses council has already voted on. Ms. McGinnis reviewed Council's stipend, internet allowance and cell phone information. Deputy City Manager Cheryl De Leon reviewed what each member receives included in their stipend. Council Member Johnson proposed to change compensation for Mayor to \$1860, Mayor Pro Tem to \$1760 Deputy Mayor Pro Tem to 1660 and Council Members to \$1560. There was discussion on stipend versus pay as noted in the Charter. Mayor said this item and discussion is to focus on amending the charter for pay only, not expenses. There was discussion on taxation on pay and expenses and the lack of recent charter amendment elections passing relative to pay. Council Member Johnson moved, seconded by Council Member Del Bosque, to change compensation as he previously suggested above. Council Member Headen said there is a misconception that Council is lining their pockets and a jump from five dollars up to a large amount would be a lot. There was discussion on increasing expense stipend, not pay, on eliminating pay and just keeping expense stipend, this being too big of a jump in pay and pay increases not a popular item with voters.

Voting in favor: Council Members Johnson and Del Bosque. In opposition: Mayor Jensen, Mayor Pro Tem Clemson, Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Ezeonu, Council Members Headen, Lopez and Shotwell. Motion denied, 6-2.

Council Member Shotwell moved to use Council Member Johnson's proposed pay numbers and eliminate any stipend with no reimbursement for expenses and to keep pay until it goes to voters. There was discussion on whether it can be tied to expenses.

Council Member Shotwell amended his motion for council to receive compensation without any additional expenses. Council Member Johnson seconded the motion. Mayor Pro Tem Clemson noted it would appear as a pay increase on the ballot.

Voting in favor: Council Members Shotwell, Johnson, Del Bosque, Lopez and Mayor Jensen. Voting in Opposition: Mayor Pro Tem Clemson, Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Ezeonu and Council Member Headen. The motion carried 5-3.

Ms. McGinnis reviewed other charter provisions for clean-up. Mayor Jensen, moved, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Clemson, for Ms. McGinnis to review and revise the language for Council's consideration. The motion carried unanimously. Council Member Lopez asked for an item to be added to agenda for an annual report clarity of expenses and with a breakdown of what each council member spends. There was discussion on amending the charter to outline the office of Deputy Mayor Pro Tem and discussion on Via versus mass transit.

2. Council Community Engagement Policy

Mayor Jensen moved, seconded by Council Member Headen, to accept the rules previously considered and set by the committee regarding criteria for community events and event naming/advertising. There was discussion on the naming of events, using personal social media and the city's social media for marketing, and use of city funding.

Voting in favor: Mayor Jensen, Mayor Pro Tem Clemson, Council Members Headen, Lopez, Del Bosque, Johnson and Shotwell. Voting in Opposition: Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Ezeonu. Motion passed, 7-1.

Mayor Jensen moved, seconded by Council Member Lopez, to approve event cost and frequency. There was discussion on number of activities to choose from already, who would monitor rules are followed and planning/executing, the current Town Hall policy. Mayor Jensen withdrew his motion and Council Member Lopez supported the withdrawal. Mayor Jensen moved, seconded by Council Member Johnson, to keep the townhall policy as is, the Mayor's events are not part of this motion, but any future events held by council paid by the city is vetted by staff and brought to council for approval. There was discussion on clarification of the motion and whether hosting is a city event if no city resources used, and no staff are involved. Council Member Headen felt this would be micro-managing. There was discussion on getting approval from council to continue current events and using facilities. Council Member Lopez supports two events per year and offered an amendment to the motion for two events with no city council approval. Mayor Jensen seconded the friendly amendment which turns into substitute motion. Mayor Jensen moved to accept Council Member Lopez's motion not to include the mayor's events.

Voting in favor: Mayor Jensen, Mayor Pro Tem Clemson, Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Ezeonu, Council Members Headen, Lopez, Del Bosque and Shotwell. Voting in Opposition: Council Member Johnson. Motion passed, 7-1

Mayor Jensen took a vote on Council Member Lopez's amended motion. There was discussion on what counts against the two events.

Voting in favor: Mayor Jensen, Mayor Pro Tem Clemson, Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Ezeonu, Council Members Headen, Lopez, Del Bosque and Shotwell. Voting in Opposition: Council Member Johnson. Motion passed, 7-1

Mayor Jensen moved, seconded by Council Member Lopez, that events, not town halls have the five-thousand dollar per event maximum limit to include the rent of a facility but not cost of staff time, with allowance of the charity rate for use of city facilities. There was discussion on the cost set per venue, on what expenses apply to total and reimbursements. Deputy City Manager Megan Mahan advised a budget will be created. Council Member Johnson said he wants to see a breakdown of event expenses. The motion carried unanimously. There was discussion on limiting to two events and an agreement that any additional events would be brought to council for approval. Mayor Jensen noted this does not apply to campaign events nor events paid for from personal accounts as those are unlimited, not paid by the city.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Jensen adjourned the meeting at 7:10 p.m.

The foregoing minutes were approved at the January 7, 2025, City Council meeting.

Mona Lisa Galicia, City Secretary