



# Regular Council Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, June 20, 2023 at 6:30 PM  
8301 Westview Drive, Houston, Texas 77055

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**1. CALL TO ORDER** Mayor Buesinger called to order the Regular Council Meeting at 6:30 P.M.

1.A. Council Member Gordy gave the **invocation**.

1.B. **Pledge of Allegiance**

1.C. **PRESENT**

Mayor Bob Buesinger  
Council Member Mike Gordy  
Council Member Justin Crawford  
Mayor Pro Tem Andy Carey  
Council Member Mark Huber  
Council Member Kristi Cooper

Also Present Were: Attorney Bounds, Olson & Olson, Engineer Him, Engineer Vasquez\*, HDR Engineering, Spring Valley Police Captain Lane, Sergeant Menchaca, Secretary Stephens, and Clerk Ray.

*\*Present remotely*

**2. CITIZEN'S COMMENTS**

**Paul Maddock, Hilshire Oaks Court**, said he had three (3) statements about the traffic on Wirt Road. First, he stated that there are a significant number of drivers who turn off Wirt Road onto Ridgeley Drive to U-turn at the entrance to Hilshire Oaks Court. Second, he said drivers using Ridgeley Drive to cut through the City are speeding. Third, Mr. Maddock said that the stop sign at the intersection of Glourie Drive and Ridgeley Drive has a less than 50% stop rate.

**Bill Bristow, Pine Chase Drive**, said that the drainage easement at 1209 Pine Chase Drive is not being regularly maintained by the property owner and he wants someone else to take over the maintenance. He also said that the vacant lot at 1226 Glourie Drive is only mowed once a month and the grass is too tall. Mr. Bristow asked how the City will handle the traffic caused by the Wirt Road Sidewalk Project. He said that hurricane season is upon us and wants to see what the City's emergency procedures are. Mr. Bristow asked if the council members are part-time or serve 24 hours a day 7 days a week.

**Joan Weltzien, Glourie Drive**, said that her desk faces a window overlooking the stop sign at Glourie Drive and Ridgeley Drive and she sees a lot of vehicles driving through the

intersection without stopping. She stated that the cut-through traffic travels above the speed limit, and therefore suggested speed bumps for the safety of pedestrians.

### **3. REPORTS TO COUNCIL**

- 3.A. **Police Report:** Sergeant Menchaca said that in the month of May, there were 183 calls for service, 761 business checks, 3 parking violations, 64 public relations, and 10 traffic stops that resulted in 16 violations.

He said there was a call about a **suspicious person** in the 1000 block of Ridgeley. Officers responded and found the person at the 1000 block of Wirt Road. Further investigation found that the suspect was pulling on car door handles in the parking lot of the Shell gas station. The male suspect was detained.

Sergeant Menchaca gave an update on the construction material theft that occurred on May 9<sup>th</sup> at **1126 Guinea Drive**. The vehicle information was entered into the flock system and was later found loaded with stolen materials. The suspects involved were charged with felony theft in conjunction with the stolen construction materials at 1126 Guinea.

Paul Maddock, Hilshire Oaks, asked about the **recent break-in of a vehicle** parked off Ridgeley Drive. Sergeant Menchaca confirmed that there was a break-in during the month of June. He said that the suspect arrested was found with a gun that had been reported stolen from Hilshire Oaks. Sergeant Menchaca said the suspect is a homeless person that has been arrested in 2022 for the same offense. Captain Lane said that a majority of the time criminals will be checking for unlocked doors, and they typically will not break windows or make lots of noise. He said the best defense is to lock your doors and remind your neighbors to do the same.

Captain Lane thanked the Mayor and city staff that participated in the **Residents for Responders Event**, he said it meant a lot to the officers and department staff to see Hilshire Village support.

- 3.B. **Building Official Report:** Secretary Stephens said that the building report had an average amount of inspections and permits. Overall, building and development are doing well and haven't slowed down since COVID-19.
- 3.C. **Engineer Report:** Engineer Vasquez said that there are a number of permits that have drainage plan reviews and inspections in progress.

Engineer Him said that he received a response from the City of Houston with an amended draft of the Interlocal Agreement, and sent it to Attorney Bounds for review. Engineer Him said he had some initial concerns but after review and discussion with Attorney Bounds, they recommend City Council approve the amendments so that Engineer Him can move forward with the coordination and requirements, especially the easement agreement with the School of the Woods. Engineer Him said that they are reaching out to Mr. Jose Laguna who will be the primary contact through the design effort associated with the **Wirt Road Safety Project**. He stated that an additional survey is planned to capture the design and current conditions of the base of the brick walls on Wirt Road, making sure to

include the drainage holes.

Council Member Gordy asked if there would be any involvement from the City of Houston, as the **design phase** is complete. Engineer Him said that the City might send inspectors spontaneously. Council Member Gordy reminded everyone that Harris County will be funding the materials and labor and maintaining traffic control. Council Member Huber asked for the timeline for the project. Engineer Him said the project should take two months if all goes according to plan. Council Member Gordy said that the sidewalk will be installed in phases that won't require a full lane shut-down and therefore should minimize traffic issues. Engineer Vasquez said there could be a request to skip peak hours of traffic to help mitigate traffic control. Engineer Him said the next step would be to execute the **easement at the School of the Woods**. He stated that the sidewalk design is 60% complete and will include the additional details from the supplemental survey. The Interlocal Agreement has an expiration of December 2024 by which all projects will need to be completed. Council Member Cooper asked about the original funding sources for the Wirt Road Safety Project. Engineer Him explained that Wirt Road is a City of Houston right of way and Commissioner Ramsey assisted in getting a commitment from the City of Houston, but the City of Hilshire Village is responsible for engineering costs.

Engineer Vasquez stated that a survey has been ordered for the **Pine Chase Meter Vault area** and the Council will be updated once that information is received.

3.D. **Fire Commissioner's Report:** Mayor Buesinger said that the two new ambulances have been delivered and both have power lifts.

He stated that fire hydrant testing continues and the commission is still exploring cooperation with the Memorial Village Police Department for dispatch backup. There were many requests from the Fire Department during budget talks, one being the exercise equipment which is over 20 years old. The Mayor of Hedwig Village called a private business owner who donated funds for the exercise equipment at the fire department, and that budget item was able to be removed. Mayor Buesinger said that heavy rain storms caused a power outage but the generator at the station kept the department running. He stated that in May, low-hanging branches damaged a ladder truck and that the Fire Department is doing inspections for other dangerous areas. Separately, Mayor Buesinger said that Village Fire responded to a head-on vehicle collision which resulted in three (3) fatalities.

Mayor Buesinger stated that at the most recent fire commission meeting they reviewed a presentation of the **2022 Budget**. They then authorized the auditor to examine seven (7) non-budgeted expenditures which exceeded \$10,000 without commission nor member city approval per the terms of the Interlocal Agreement. Council Member Carey asked if the \$150,000 that has been in question is a part of the additional audit. He stated that when the Bunker Gear invoice came in the funds were not available and that is being studied.

3.E. **Mayor Buesinger's Report:** Mayor Buesinger stated that **Villages Independence Day Parade** will happen on Tuesday July 4<sup>th</sup>. City Secretary Stephens said that there is information posted on the bulletin board and a city-wide email will be sent.

Mayor Buesinger said that a shelter in place order for a chemical fire, which nearly included Piney Point, caused concerns about the **emergency management**

**procedures.** He stated that the shelter order did not include the Memorial Villages, although it was very close to Piney Point Village. Chief Miller sent an email to the Village City Mayors about the order, but some of those messages weren't seen until the next day. The commission will explore communication solutions.

Council Member Cooper asked if the fire commission had a plan to find a new fire chief. Mayor Buesinger said a search committee was appointed where Hedwig Village, Piney Point Village, and Spring Valley Village have members. In addition, Interim Chief Miller and the City of Humble Fire Chief are on the committee. He said the hope is to have a new fire chief by the end of the year.

- 3.F. **City Secretary's Report:** Secretary Stephens said that the Tree City USA application is not due until September, so she and Clerk Ray are using the time to consult with professionals including at the Texas A&M Forest Service. She said that the areas available to plant trees are limited and the City does not want to take over maintenance of more than it needs to.

Secretary Stephens stated that the Spring Branch ISD Tax Office will have the amended contract for a five-year term in their August meeting agenda for approval by the Board.

- 3.G. **City Treasurer's Report:** Secretary Stephens said that she has prepared the budget workshop calendar with tentative dates and asked that council members advise of their planned vacations.

Secretary Stephens said that David Schwarz would like to remove himself from the treasurer of the HVCEFFC and HVHEFC and asked for anyone interested to contact her.

#### **4. CONSENT AGENDA**

**Motion made by Mayor Pro Tem Carey, Seconded by Council Member Crawford.**

- 4.A. Approve Proclamation for former Mayor Pro Tem Paul Maddock
- 4.B. Approve Proclamation for former Council Member David Schwarz
- 4.C. Approve Disbursements
- 4.D. Approve Minutes from the Regular Council Meeting 5/16/2023
- 4.E. Approve Check Registers

**Voting Yea: Council Member Gordy, Council Member Crawford, Mayor Pro Tem Carey, Council Member Huber, Council Member Cooper**

**The motion carried 5-0.**

#### **5. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION**

5.A. **Discussion and Possible Authorization for Engineering Services for the Hilshire Green Paving, Drainage & Utility Improvements Project**

**Motion made by Council Member Gordy, Seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Carey.**

Engineer Him said that in 2003-2004 a comprehensive underground utility assessment, as well as an overall pavement improvement plan, was reported for the City of Hilshire Village. Those reports had suggestions for improvements to existing infrastructure. The list was used to make a priority Capital Improvements Projects list. Since 2008, 80% of the priority list has been completed. The next project in line is the Hilshire Green Paving Project, and the street is all curb and gutter, with no ditches. Engineer Him stated that when a roadway needs to be repaved, they recommend replacing water and sewer lines, and in Hilshire Green, storm sewers. The scope of work will include upsizing existing water lines and rehabilitating the sewer lines using the pipe-bursting method. Underground storm sewers will be added to address some of the drainage issues on Hilshire Green. Engineer Him said that historically, construction management and full-time inspection are provided in the proposal, but due to the smaller size of the project Council may want to consider part-time inspection. Council Member Huber asked what would the risk be of cutting back an inspector onsite, and Engineer Him said that contractors have to be approved prior but could potentially cut corners when not monitored. Council Member Crawford said that because the project is smaller maybe an inspector every other day would be feasible. Engineer Him said that inspection times can be specified and is an opportunity to cut costs. Engineer Him discussed the design elements of the project including fire hydrant lines.

Council Member Carey asked if there is a preliminary plan for construction. Engineer Him said that there are conceptual plans based on other projects. He stated that water lines will be built parallel to the existing, tested and sanitized before service is transferred. He also said that additional storm sewer drains will be installed.

Council Member Huber asked about how the project is financed. Council Member Carey asked how to roll over the costs into a new finance facility. He stated that debts are maturing and we will need to renegotiate or extend the debt facilities to finance the projects. Council Member Gordy said that we currently pay notes on the debt, and that's a part of the structure of these loans, and that financing will happen as one debt closes another line of financing will be created. Council Member Crawford stated that the idea is to stagger the loans to keep a flat debt service amount to fund the bigger projects. Council Member Gordy said that we have gone through the capital improvement projects in order of priority. Engineer Him said that City Council planned to use ARPA funds to finance the engineering portion.

Council Member Carey said that we might need a workshop before the next council meeting to discuss capital improvement projects specifically. The council agreed to postpone the conversation to a future date to allow time for a re-evaluation of the capital improvement project priorities and a detailed timeline of the funding, both from American Rescue Plan Act and debt financing, to be presented.

**5.B. Discussion and Possible Action to Approve an Interlocal Agreement between the City of Houston and the City of Hilshire Village for the Wirt Road Safety Project**

**Motion made by Council Member Huber, Seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Carey.**

Attorney Bounds said that there appears to be a formatting issue with the document after the changes were accepted, and requested that the line spacing be adjusted before sending it to the City of Houston.

Engineer Him said that he will make the adjustment and send it back to the City for execution.

**Voting Yea: Council Member Gordy, Council Member Crawford, Mayor Pro Tem Carey, Council Member Huber, Council Member Cooper.**

**The motion carried 5-0.**

**5.C. Discussion and Possible Action to Approve the Village Fire Department 2022 Budget Amendment 2022-003 for Budget Surplus**

**Motion made by Council Member Gordy, Seconded by Council Member Crawford.**

Mayor Buesinger said that this is a normal every-year process, it takes all budget categories and balances them. There was an overall surplus of \$91,040 to move to the 2023 budget. Council Member Cooper asked if there was a surplus, if was there no carryover, or amendment was not approved, she was asking to better understand the budget process. Mayor Buesinger said that any change to the VFD budget goes back to the interlocal agreement between the six cities and VFD where it's agreed upon that any change of any budget item over \$10,000 dollars requires review by the fire commission and approved by each city. Council Member Gordy said that the money wasn't spent and so that money moves to the 2023 budget.

Council Member Carey asked if there is a \$91,000 dollar surplus then is capital operations still missing \$150,000? Council Member Huber said that multiple budget increases have happened. Council Member Gordy said that to his understanding is that \$150,000 was not allocated to gear and we are unsure where the money was spent. Mayor Buesinger said that the completed audit is concerned as special audit to look into those items closer.

**Voting Yea: Council Member Gordy, Council Member Crawford, Mayor Pro Tem Carey, Council Member Huber, Council Member Cooper.**

**The motion carried 5-0.**

**5.D. Discussion and Possible Action to Approve the Village Fire Department 2023 Budget Amendment 2023-04, the City of Hilshire Village's portion being \$13,538.31.**

**Motion made by Mayor Pro Tem Carey, Seconded by Council Member Gordy.**

Mayor Buesinger said that were a couple of amendments for the bunker gear and radio equipment, and then there was an amendment for the roof of the annex building. The roof is over 20 years old, a coating was discussed, but the consultant suggested a new roof over the existing roof. The fire commission has reached and consulted with other experts and the new roof should be starting soon.

Mayor Buesinger said that when the salaries were initially reviewed the total was 4.8 million but the actuals are closer to 5.1 million. The biggest discrepancy is salaries and all the items that go with salary, like FICA, and workman's comp. The fire department is not fully staffed.

Mayor Buesinger said that this budget has a 3% increase from the amended budget including three new hires. Professional services went up \$47,000 and a large portion being the ISO rating audit, hiring of a consultant, salary survey, and special audit. The fire department is looking into accounting software and cyber security.

Council Member Cooper wanted to know if there was an incident where one of the other cities denied or didn't approve over time. Mayor Buesinger said that there was concern last year that if there was a major event there wouldn't be enough funding.

Council Member Cooper wanted to know if there was a budget forecasting issue as there is a big discrepancy in salaries, and how was that being addressed moving forward. Mayor Buesinger said that the fire commission had multiple budget workshops and they feel that the 2023 budget can be used as a model moving forward. Council Member Crawford wanted to know if a contingency was set for a large or major emergency event. Mayor Buesinger said that a contingency fund was put in the 2024 Budget.

Council Member Crawford said that he would like to see the overtime reduced to a statistically insignificant amount in a status quo budget and address emergencies as needed.

**Voting Yea: Council Member Gordy, Council Member Crawford, Mayor Pro Tem Carey, Council Member Huber, Council Member Cooper.**

**The motion carried 5-0.**

- 5.E. **Discussion and Possible Action to Approve the Village Fire Department Proposed 2024 Budget of \$9,913,487.85, the City of Hilshire Village's portion being \$297,404.64.**

**Motion made by Mayor Pro Tem Carey, Seconded by Council Member Gordy.**

Mayor Buesinger said that the fire commission did a great job this year, spending a lot of time breaking line items into more granular views so that they could see more detail in various categories. The commission wanted to hire three (3) new full-time employees to operate, provide better tools for accuracy, efficiency, and security

through the department, have competitive pay for all employees, invest in training and certifications, and maintain equipment.

Mayor Buesinger said that the fire commission will have a special workshop to look into capital outlay for the next 10 years, developing a plan and savings.

Council Member Cooper said that she was surprised that the fire department employees do not have to contribute to their insurance premiums and wanted to know if that was considered in the salary survey.

Council Member Crawford asked what the starting salary for a firefighter. Chief Miller said the typical salary is \$65,000. Council Member Crawford said that because there is a step salary system a 3% increase could be much more for someone on a higher pay scale.

Council Member Carey asked if Spring Branch ISD sent the appraisal roll to run numbers. City Secretary Stephens said that Spring Branch ISD actuals won't be sent for a few months.

Mayor Buesinger said that everything is going up in cost and that we will have to do analysis in the budget workshops to keep costs down. Council Member Gordy said that of all the Memorial Villages, Hilshire Village has the smallest discretionary spending because the city does not have a large retail center to collect sales tax from.

**Voting Yea: Council Member Gordy, Council Member Crawford, Mayor Pro Tem Carey, Council Member Huber, Council Member Cooper.**

**The motion carried 5-0.**

**5.F. Discussion and Possible Approval to Authorize the City Secretary to enter into a one-year contract with Houston Community Newspapers & Media Group for publication advertisements**

**Motion made by Council Member Huber, Seconded by Council Member Cooper.**

Secretary Stephens said that this is the same contract as last year. Council Member Huber asked if there was a possibility of making this contract a longer term than one year. Secretary Stephens said that Houston Community will not extend the contracts longer than one year.

**Voting Yea: Council Member Gordy, Council Member Crawford, Mayor Pro Tem Carey, Council Member Huber, Council Member Cooper.**

**The motion carried 5-0.**

**5.G. Discussion and Possible Action to Move Forward with a Utility Operator**



**Motion made by Mayor Pro Tem Carey, Seconded by Council Member Gordy.**

Council Member Huber asked if there was a way to plug in the other estimated costs based on this year's usage to compare line by line. City Secretary Stephens said that invoicing is cumulative and it would not be possible to create a direct comparison chart.

Council Member Gordy suggested a meeting with Inframark and asked if there is an opportunity to negotiate. Council Member Huber shared his frustrations with the billing side of Inframark. Both agreed to volunteer for a meeting with Inframark.

Council Member Cooper asked if council can respond during citizens' comments. City Secretary Stephens said that the meetings are led by the agenda, so if a comment is made about an issue or item, not on the agenda then council cannot comment. Council Member Cooper asked if the agenda packet could be sent out sooner, and City Secretary Stephens said that she is usually waiting for information to complete the packet.

Council Member Gordy thanked the Mayor for his participation in the fire commission and for helping organize the budget.

**Janis Hooker, Pine Creek Lane**, said that the stormwater fallout channel directly across from Monarch Oaks was a mess. Council Member Gordy said that the Boy Scouts have it on their schedule and are volunteering to clean that area.

**6. ADDITIONAL COUNCIL COMMENTS**

**7. FUTURE AGENDA TOPICS**

**8. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**9. ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion made by Council Member Gordy, Seconded by Council Member Crawford.**

**Voting Yea: Council Member Gordy, Council Member Crawford, Mayor Pro Tem Carey, Council Member Huber, Council Member Cooper.**

**The motion carried 5-0.**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:17 P.M.

ATTEST:

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Robert F. Buesinger, Mayor

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Cassie Stephens, City Secretary