



Regular Council Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, January 17, 2023 at 6:30 PM
8301 Westview Drive, Houston, Texas 77055

A reception was had at 6:00 P.M. to thank Susan Blevins for her service and dedication and to congratulate her on her retirement.

This meeting was held in person with remote attendees present.

1. CALL TO ORDER Mayor Buesinger called to order the Regular Council Meeting at 6:33 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
Council Member Andy Carey
Mayor Pro Tem Paul Maddock
Council Member David Schwarz

Also Present: City Attorney Thomas Ramsey, Olson & Olson, City Engineer Him, HDR Engineering, Spring Valley Police Chief Schulze and Captain Lane, City Administrator Blevins, City Secretary Stephens and City Clerk Ray.

2. CITIZEN'S COMMENTS

Sharon Fink, Glourie Drive, said that the City is losing more trees than are replanted and would like to establish "Operation Acorn" as a proactive volunteer measure.

Robert Belt, Glourie Drive, expressed his appreciation for Administrator Blevins' work over the years and said she deserves several honorary titles.

Nancy Friedman Taub, Pine Chase Grove, said that she urges the council members to get involved in the decisions made by the Village Fire Commission regarding Fire Chief Foster.

Regina Giovannini, Glourie Drive, said that there has been a lack of clarity, direction, and feedback leading to unprofessional communication with the Fire Department.

Due to technical difficulties, additional citizens comments were not recorded.

3. REPORTS TO COUNCIL

- 3.A. **Police Report:** Captain Lane said that there were 246 calls for service, of which there were 164 business checks, 44 public relations, and 8 traffic stops.

Chief Schulze presented the Annual Racial Profiling Report for 2022.

- 3.B. **Building Official Report:** There were no outstanding items for discussion.

- 3.C. **Engineer's Report:** Engineer Him said that an inspection was done at 1310 Ridgeley Drive for an erosion control project that drew concern and it was determined that the drainage channel integrity has been maintained.

- 3.D. **Fire Commissioner's Report:** Mayor Buesinger said that the Fire Department fared well over the freeze and was able to let some extra staff members go home because of the light call volume. He stated that there was a fire caused by an overheated swimming pool pump.

Mayor Buesinger said that budget discussions for the department will begin soon. Council Member Gordy said that if a contingency fund is established then it should be limited to certain expenditures, and would like to hear the other cities' opinions.

4. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION

- 4.A. **Discussion and Possible Approval of Resolution Number 2023-241 approving Central Bank's Electronic Lockbox Payment Services for City Utility Customers**

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

Mirna Bonilla-Adams, Inframark, said that this request is to streamline the payment receiving process to Central Bank. She stated that this will be a sweep account to the City's existing utility account.

Mayor Pro Tem Maddock stated that the mail system is unreliable for payments. Council Member Gordy said that is made worse by the fees charged for an electronic payment. Mrs. Adams said that those fees are charged to them by the bank so they are passed on to the consumer.

Voting Yea: Council Member Gordy, Council Member Crawford, Council Member Carey, Mayor Pro Tem Maddock, Council Member Schwarz

The motion carried 5-0.

- 4.B. **Discussion and Possible Approval of Inframark's Request for a Rate Increase**

Motion made by Mayor Pro Tem Maddock, Seconded by Council Member Schwarz.

Mirna Bonilla-Adams, Inframark, said that they have not raised rates on the City's account for ten years and have been operating at a loss. She said the rates presented would allow them to break even.

Administrator Blevins said that the contract with Inframark has a 30-day option to cease services.

Councilmember Carey said that a comparison of providers is needed to determine if rates with Inframark are industry standard.

Mayor Buesinger asked what the time frame is for this approval? Mrs. Adams said there is no set timeframe to approve the rate increase. Council Member Schwarz asked Mrs. Adams to revisit the fees to find a middle ground.

Mayor Pro Tem Maddock amended the motion to postpone the agenda item until further research can be done.

4.C. **Discussion and Possible Approval of the City of Hilshire Village Ordinance Number 828-2023 approving Amendment 1 of the FYE 2022 Budget**

Motion made by Council Member Schwarz, Seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Maddock.

Administrator Blevins said that the amendment includes intra-budgetary transfers and reclassifications to balance the line items. She stated that another amendment after the audit review is likely.

Voting Yea: Council Member Gordy, Council Member Crawford, Council Member Carey, Mayor Pro Tem Maddock, Council Member Schwarz

The motion carried 5-0.

4.D. **Discussion and Possible Approval of Amegy Credit Card for City Secretary Stephens with a Limit of \$2,000**

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

Mayor Pro Tem Maddock asked if the credit limit was high enough for the staff's needs. Secretary Stephens said that the \$2,000 limit is sufficient and did not request an increase.

Voting Yea: Council Member Gordy, Council Member Crawford, Council Member Carey, Mayor Pro Tem Maddock, Council Member Schwarz

The motion carried 5-0.

4.E. **Discussion and Possible Approval of Paying Out a Portion of City Administrator Blevins' Unused Vacation/Sick Time**

Motion made by Council Member Schwarz, Seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Maddock.

Administrator Blevins said that she included one (1) month of her salary in the budget for January but still has vacation remaining and requested to use it for the month of February.

Voting Yea: Council Member Gordy, Council Member Crawford, Council Member Carey, Mayor Pro Tem Maddock, Council Member Schwarz

The motion carried 5-0.

5. CLOSED EXECUTIVE SESSION: The Council did not convene into executive session.

6. DISCUSSION

6.A. Discussion of Playground Equipment in Front Yards

Robert Byrne, Bridle Spur Lane, said that there is a basketball goal standing at the edge of the pavement and extending over the street. He stated that the cul-de-sac is already a tight turnaround and this makes access difficult for first responder vehicles. Mr. Byrne said that the goal is movable, but is heavy and not maneuverable by children.

Council Member Carey said that basketball goals should be separated from other items in the front yard, but also should not be placed in the right-of-way.

Nancy Friedman, Pine Chase Grove, said that the Planning and Zoning Committee has discussed this subject including corner lots that have an unfenced side yard that some of these items might also pertain to.

Council Member Schwarz said that he wants to see the City remain family-friendly and allow the use of outdoor spaces. He said that the definition of play equipment should not include "intended for use by children".

Diane Rager, Mallie Court, stated that some items can easily be moved, such as soccer goals, and might be considered temporary. She said that side yards should be a different conversation.

The council discussed reviewing the notes from the Planning and Zoning Committee and returning for more discussion.

6.B. Discussion of the Tree Ordinance

Administrator Blevins said that the main issue is that the permit fee does not cover the arborist inspection cost.

Council Member Gordy stated that an arborist can determine if a tree is dead, dying, or diseased, but a hazard is more difficult to assess. He stated that he is concerned with the option to remove any tree without health or safety issue.

Robert Byrne, Bridle Spur Lane, said that enforcement of the current ordinance is more important than changing the language. He stated that there are new construction projects which don't have the required tree count.

Mayor Pro Tem Maddock said that a neighbor was planning on removing a mature healthy tree to limit potential hazards, and would have been able to do so because he had the minimum required tree count without it.

A citizen said that some lots are heavily wooded and should not be punished with permit fees to remove trees.

Council Member Crawford said that there is no penalty in the current ordinance for failing to replant trees.

6.C. **Discussion of Fencing for Lift Station Generator**

Council Member Gordy asked about the airflow buffer requirement for the generator if a fence or gate were installed. Engineer Him said that the exhaust exits from the sides and back, and has not been able to find manufacturer specifications for the open area required for airflow.

Robert Byrne, Bridle Spur Lane, said that a perforated metal gate might be a solution, and suggested redirecting the exhaust to escape vertically.

Council Member Schwarz stated that wrought iron is an option, but if the idea is to hide the equipment an image wrap would suffice. Engineer Him advised to check if this voids the manufacturer's warranty.

7. REPORTS TO COUNCIL

- 7.A. **Mayor Buesinger's Report:** Mayor Buesinger thanked Administrator Blevins for her service to the City.
- 7.B. **City Administrator's Report:** The report was included in the packet.
- 7.C. **City Treasurer Report:** The report was included in the packet. The Council discussed the City's debt and future infrastructure planning.

8. CONSENT AGENDA

Motion made by Council Member Gordy, Seconded by Council Member Schwarz.

- 8.A. 2022 Racial Profiling Report
- 8.B. Disbursements
- 8.C. Minutes from the 12/20/2022 Regular Council Meeting
- 8.D. Check Registers
- 8.E. 4th Quarter Investment Report

Voting Yea: Council Member Gordy, Council Member Crawford, Council Member Carey, Mayor Pro Tem Maddock, Council Member Schwarz

The motion carried 5-0.

9. ADDITIONAL COUNCIL COMMENTS

10. FUTURE AGENDA TOPICS

Items for further discussion are: Play Equipment, Inframark Rate Increase, Tree Ordinance, Capital Improvement Projects, Lift Station Generator Gate or Wrap

11. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Secretary Stephens said applications for a place on the general election ballot are available and the deadline to file is February 17th.

12. ADJOURNMENT

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

Voting Yea: Council Member Gordy, Council Member Crawford, Council Member Carey, Mayor Pro Tem Maddock, Council Member Schwarz

The motion carried 5-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:03 P.M.

ATTEST:

Robert F. Buesinger, Mayor

Cassie Stephens, City Secretary