

# CITY COUNCIL MEETING REGULAR SESSION

Tuesday, September 19, 2023 at 6:00 PM

City Hall, 102 W. Ashley Wilson Rd, Sweeny, Texas

## MINUTES

BE IT KNOWN that the City Council of the City of Sweeny met in **Regular Session** on **Tuesday, September 19, 2023 at 6:00 PM.** at City Hall, 102 W. Ashley Wilson Rd, Sweeny, Texas with the following agenda.

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### CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Mayor Hopkins called the meeting to order at 6 PM.

Reese Cook, Brian Brooks, and John Rambo were present. Mark Morgan Jr. and Tim Pettigrew were absent.

### PLEDGES & INVOCATION

The pledges were led by Brian Brooks.

The invocation was given by Attorney Stevenson.

Mayor Hopkins addressed Council and employees. He stated that we need to have unity. We have issues with employees video taping other employees, to council members following employees around. It doesn't build comradery. These types of things bring moral down. We need to move forward as a whole in order to fix things. He referenced the football team from prior to present and how they are now operating as a unit/team. The City must be unified and work together to bring action.

### CITIZENS WISHING TO ADDRESS CITY COUNCIL

John Hessong, 105 E 5<sup>th</sup> Street in Sweeny, approached Council and stated he is here in support of Lindsay (City Manager). He knew her car allowance was taken away and wants Council to know how she has made herself available for businesses and how they work together. He thinks she trying to do good for the city and doesn't think things should be taken away from her. He wants to keep her here. Toni Kotrla, 804 Brockman, approached Council and stated she and her husband (Bob) are in support of Lindsay. She and her husband are business owners within their home. They currently do a lot of business in Colorado but wishes to stay in Sweeny. She stated Lindsay has been helping them to find a spot to place the business.

### CONSENT AGENDA

1. Minutes: Special Session, September 5, 2023  
*Reese Cook moved to approve. John Rambo seconded.  
All in favor. Motion carried.*

### REGULAR AGENDA

2. Film Friendly Certification  
Representative Gabriel Ornelas, Production and Community Relations Specialist of the Texas Film Commission and Office of the Governor, congratulated the City on becoming film friendly and presented Mayor Hopkins a certificate. For a city to be designated as Film Friendly, it must meet requirements for future video production. Currently there are 175 communities within Texas that are film friendly. Ornelas stated that this process usually takes a year to complete, but Sweeny completed it in a few short months. Being certified as Film Friendly helps to keep money in Sweeny for economic development.  
Photos were taken with Mayor, Council, City Manager, and Ornelas with the certificate.
3. Discussion/ Possible action on allowance of the annual SISD bonfire; Daniel Fuller, SISD Superintendent

City Manager stated this request is for the SISD's annual bonfire. However, we are currently under a burn ban and she suggests Council conditionally approve, pending the lift of the ban.

*John Rambo made the motion to approve the variance to Ordinance 92.01, to allow SISD to hold the requested bonfire on October 25<sup>th</sup>, 2023, subject to an alternate date, pending the lifting of the burn ban currently in place, and following all Fire Department and Fire Marshal regulations.*

*Reese Cook seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.*

Roger Barton, Sweeny Fire Chief, stated that SISD needs to come to the Sweeny Fire Department ahead of time with plans and the Fire Department must also pre-approve their pile.

4. Discussion/ Possible action on Waste Connections contractual CPI increase  
William Holloway and a Waste Connections representative were in attendance to discuss the requested CPI and fuel increase requested, effective October 2023. Waste Connections stated that the fuel rate adjustment was not applied last year due to change in leadership. The increase last year was only for the CPI itself. This year, they are increasing for the CPI and fuel. The City is in a contract with Waste Connections until 2025 and the increase is consistent with the contract. Karla Wilson, Finance Director, asked if the fuel rate is applied per customer and to be on a separate line. Waste Connections stated they did not know how that would reflect on the City side. A cart alone would be a \$1.60 increase and billed to the City monthly. The fuel adjustment is separate and a single adjustment. Fuel rates should be reviewed every three (3) months and adjusted accordingly. The new customer rate on the city bill would be \$21.20 with the surcharge added. Councilman Rambo stated that last fall our option with Waste Connections was to raise the rate to keep services the same. Discussion was held on the fuel adjustment portion. Attorney Stevenson stated that per the contract, Waste Connections has the right to apply annual increases and/or decreases. Councilman Cook asked if we can delay this increase until January to give the City time to disperse information of the increase to our residents.  
*Reese Cook motioned to make the fuel rate adjustment as requested by Waste Connection with an effective January 2024 date, pending conversations of the Sweeny City Manager and Waste Connections' District Manager Zackary Ryan. John Rambo seconded.*  
*Discussion: Brian Brooks questioned as we are approving it now but pending the rate going into effect until January. Mayor stated the contract has language for it to go up.*  
*Reese Cook and John Rambo approved. Brian Brooks opposed. Motion carried.*
  
5. Discussion/ Possible action to possible replat for proposal of subdivision at 908 E 2nd Street; Doug Kirk  
Kaydi Smith stated that Doug Kirk approached the City with plans to develop a subdivision at the address of 908 E 2<sup>nd</sup>. He is asking for Council's consent prior to moving forward with needed engineering. If Council does not want a subdivision in the area, he does not want to waste his time or resources moving forward. Mr. Kirk was not in attendance. City Manager stated the concept presented does not work for drainage and suggests that the City enter into a developers agreement congruent with what engineering would cost for the City in order to subsidize any associated costs. Discussion ensued on Council's desire to entertain the idea of a subdivision and/or consideration to add rooftops. A motion made could be construed as an approval to move forward in which Council did not feel comfortable, noting the lack of information and attendance by the developer. Added rooftops to town is an added benefit per Cook and he is in support.  
*Reese Cook moved to approve. Item died for lack of second.*  
City Manager will reach out to Kirk and give the information expressed.
  
6. Discussion/ Possible action to approve the newly appointed officers of the Sweeny Beautification Committee

New Officers presented for the Beautification Committee are Ashley Rambo, President; Jenny Massey, Vice President; Joanna Rambo, Secretary; Michelle Medina, Treasurer; Wayman Hutchings, Parliamentarian.

*Reese Cook moved to approve as presented. Brian Brooks seconded.*

*Reese Cook and Brian Brooks approved. John Rambo abstained. Motion carried.*

7. Discussion/ Possible action to change signors on the Sweeny Beautification Committee bank account; Ashley Rambo  
Sweeny Beautification Committee is asking to remove prior members Laurie Martinez and Abby Klutz from the Beautification bank account and to add Michelle Medina and Joanna Rambo as signors. This is a City bank account under Beautification's control.  
*Reese Cook stated so moved. Brian Brooks seconded.*  
*Reese Cook and Brian Brooks approved. John Rambo abstained. Motion carried.*
  
8. Discussion/ Possible action on process and costs of returning water softeners to service; Councilman Rambo  
John Rambo stated this is about the ongoing water issues and wants to see what it will cost and the direction to pursue, with associated cost opinions for returning the water softeners to service. Reese Cook asked if agenda items #8 & #9 could be combined. All agreed.  
Michael Claybourn, Water of Texas/ Water Treatment Services of Texas, addressed Council with his findings of our current system and possible options. He stated the system we currently has is oversized. He produced possible options on moving forward. City Engineer, William Huebner was in attendance to address Council's questions and add suggestions. Council needs to determine how they want to approach the issues at hand. To address the manganese, address the hardness of the water, or both. Brooks asked for the City Manager to bring out a sample of pipe recently removed from a water leak repair. He is worried about the corrosion of the City's main water lines. Previously we were blaming homeowners piping, but now feels the city's piping needs to be replaced. Brooks asked if the water is clear going into the tanks, why spend money there versus replacing pipe? To replace all piping in the ground would be millions of dollars over at least 5-8 years. It would take \$250,000.00 to replace approximately 1000 feet of pipe. Discussion continued.  
*Reese Cook made the motion to approve Water of Texas to continue consultation and provide estimates and timelines on the costs, materials, and installation of a manganese filtration, softening, and a combination of the two at the water plant, and additionally approve \$50,000.00 to be used at discretion to replace steel water lines in the City of Sweeny. Brian Brooks seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.*
  
9. Discussion/ Possible action on proposal received by Water of Texas, Michael Claybourn Sr.  
  
*Combined with Agenda Item #8; see previous.*
  
10. Discussion / Possible action on presentation for CIP initiatives; City Engineer  
William Huebner, City Engineer, stated he has compiled a list of Capital Improvement Initiatives for Council consideration on the water, wastewater, gas, drainage, and streets to help create a master plan for the City's future. This would help to determine current infrastructure, capacity, and estimate for future growth. The City would be able to take this information and plan projects accordingly for the next five, ten, thirty years. Options include identifying needs, updating mapping, providing cost opinions of improvements needed, and addressing capacity needs. For additional costs, Strand could also provide GIS mapping of all utilities, create models of water, sewer, and the gas, conduct rate studies, and provide smoke testing. Timeframe on the base scope would be early next year for the report to be completed; approximately three to four

months. Any preliminary information they found would be available prior to receiving the full report.

*Discussion only; no motion made.*

11. Discussion/ Possible action on adding street lamps on Main/ FM 524; Councilman Rambo  
Councilman Rambo stated that after sundown, there is a dark area on Main Street between 6<sup>th</sup> Street (by the Donut Shop) down to Eleanor (near Bulldog). He feels we need additional lighting for safety purposes as it helps to deter crime and the illuminations helps for aesthetics. He asked about fixing the current poles where the lights are burnt out and the process of adding lamps/street lights. City Manager stated that if the City owns the lamp, we will do maintenance. If TNMP owns the pole, we notify them to replace. Additional lights would require us to notify TxDot and TNMP. TxDot does have footage requirements between poles/foot candles.  
*Brian Brooks motioned to look into adding two lights and fix currently out down Main Street. John Rambo seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.*
12. Discussion/ Possible action on adding signage to City owned parks; Councilman Rambo  
Councilman Rambo stated the Children at Play sign on MLK is believed to be facing the wrong direction. He would like to see more signage in the area as well as signage at the Backyard Park. There are two crossings where vehicle traffic crosses with the pedestrian walking trail and would like signage posted. City Manager will be looking to correct and place signage.  
*Discussion only; no motion made.*
13. Discussion/ Possible action on water wells on residential property; Councilman Rambo  
Councilman Rambo stated there has been a lot of discussion about the current state of the water condition. The question has been posed for a water well to be drilled on resident's private property. Per our ordinance, we allow, just haven't setup a committee or a permitting process. City Manager stated the Council acting as the committee would be the easiest option and the path of least resistance. We would need to establish a permitting process, inspection process, and research all County and State requirements. In 1990, the ordinance's purpose was to prevent private wells from contaminating the public water supply per Attorney Stevenson. The permit would require depth and other factors including a well head administrator to make a determination. City Engineer, William Huebner, stated that TCEQ does has requirements, but doesn't prohibit. He stated the City has a Certificate of Convenience and Necessity and provides for a certain area. Residential wells are much less regulated and a potential source of contamination. There are requirements as to how many feet the wells must be away from sewer facilities and livestock. All drilled wells would be in generally the same aquifer containing hard water and manganese. Mayor asked how we would meter sewer going out for billing purposes. Rambo suggested affixing a flat fixed rate for sewer and cap off city water or to average the residential sewage rate.  
*John Rambo made a motion to get with West Columbia and see how they handle the permitting system or what their requirements entail, and to come back with information at the next meeting. Reese Cook seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.*
14. Discussion/ Possible action on agenda request on "Top 10" project list for City Manager; Councilman Cook  
Councilman Cook stated that city work is never ending. This idea is for accountability for both Council and Lindsay. He wants to come up with an actionable list of items that she can work off of and get reports from. It also aids to bind the direction in which the city goes. Clear direction is requested and the list was suggested to be added to each agenda as item 1 for an update. Council discussed different items they would like to see completed. City Manager stated the City needs a new sewer jetter, which is approximately \$80,000.00, to blast culverts. Discussion

ensued over options of purchase versus renting. Council determined three items for the City Manager to start working on.

1. Water Quality- stemming from the approved previous agenda items #8 & #9
2. Work on the two (2) - six inch (6") Gorman Rups and associated piping for the wastewater plant/ RES pumps.
3. Sectioning off and delivering a map of the city for culverts and cutting weeds in/along Stevenson Slough.

*Reese Cook stated so moved. (to the three (3) items listed above after repeating) Brian Brooks seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.*

4. Discussion/ Possible action to cancel the October 3rd, 2023 Special City Council Meeting or reschedule to an alternate date; National Night Out

National Night Out is normally held the first Tuesday in October. Now that we are having twice monthly Council meetings, the two are in conflict. Administration is asking to either reschedule the October 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting or cancel.

*Reese Cook made the motion to rescind the previous motion and go back to regular session meetings in October and cancel the October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2023 special meeting. Seconded by John Rambo. All in favor. Motion carried.*

#### **ITEMS OF COMMUNITY INTEREST**

City Manager stated that Drainage District #11 is cleaning up behind Stewarts. She has interviews tomorrow morning for the Director of Public Works position and will be bringing prospective candidates before Council at the October 17, 2023 Regular meeting.

#### **ADJOURN REGULAR SESSION**

Mayor adjourned the meeting at 8:20 PM

City Officials/Employees Present:  
City Manager, Lindsay Koskiniemi  
Finance Director, Karla Wilson  
Police Chief, Brad Caudle  
City Secretary, Kaydi Smith  
City Attorney, RC Stevenson  
City Engineer, William Huebner  
Project Manager, Rusty Lofton  
Gas Operator, Shae Welman

These minutes were passed and approved this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2023.

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Kaydi Smith, City Secretary