

THE CITY OF EASTLAND
CITY COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING

March 18, 2024

EASTLAND, TEXAS §

EASTLAND, COUNTY §

The City Commission of the City of Eastland, Texas, met in Open Session at Eastland City Hall as scheduled, and notice was posted 72 hours in advance and prior to the meeting.

CITY COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Chairman	Larry Vernon
Commissioner	Richard Rossander
Commissioner	Shirley Stuart

CITY COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:

Commissioner	James Doyle
--------------	-------------

PERSONNEL PRESENT:

City Manager	J.J. Oznick
Finance Director	Leslie Zander
City Secretary	Roma Holley
Police Chief	Tim Pitts
Planning Director	Tony Stubblefield

Guests: Julie Elrod, Thom Cameron, Juli Cameron, Carol Jones, Anna Ford, Gary Ford, H.V. O'Brien, Vance O'Brien, Sam Williams

I. Meeting Called to Order

Chairman Larry Vernon called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

II. Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance and the Texas Pledge

Chairman Larry Vernon offered the invocation and City Manager J.J Oznick led the Pledge of Allegiance and the Texas Pledge.

III. Public Comment on any Subject Not listed on this Agenda (Limited to Five Minutes Per Speaker)

No public comment

IV. Approve Minutes of the February 20, 2024 meeting

Commissioner Shirley Stuart mentioned that the word "funds" should be added to page 3 under item number two. City Secretary Roma Holley stated she would make this amendment.

Commissioner Shirley Stuart made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Richard Rossander to approve the minutes of the February 20 2024 Meeting with the amendment.

Ayes: Commissioners Rossander, Stuart, Vernon
Nays: None
Absent: Doyle

V. Financial Report

Finance Director Leslie Zander advised the board regarding the changing practices of Banking Institutions. This consists of a new way of securing funds at First Financial Bank. In the past, the bank would need to secure collateral accounts to order to insure funds. Now, the city's funds are in an insured cash sweep which puts the funds into money market accounts or demand accounts throughout state banks. This process is called IntraFi.

Ms. Zander also stated that sales tax revenue continues to be positive.

VI. The Board of City Commissioners May Discuss and Take Action on the Following Agenda Items:

1. Discussion and Consideration of the Lyric Theater Proposal

City Manager J. J. Oznick introduced this item and Anna Ford, President of the Lyric Art Center. She reviewed the business plan, which was included in their information packets. This business plan is a blueprint for the continuation and growth of this self-sustaining, non-profit arts center in Eastland County, Texas.

The center provides the county and adjacent region with access to visual, performance (theater, dance, music), creative writing, and culinary arts programming. The Lyric Art Center serves as a hub for education and enjoyment for its members, local residents, and the region.

Structured as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, the Lyric Art Center is a community venue where people of all ages can meet and engage directly with the arts through performances, exhibits, classes, and workshops. One key element of the Lyric's programming has been the establishment of the Bankhead Community Theater.

Miss Ford advised the Commissioners that the most urgent need at this time is a way to heat and cool the Center. She stated that it is the desire of the Lyric Art Center board to request a monthly donation from the City of Eastland.

Chairman Larry Vernon stated that we have been considering making this part of the funds made available through the Hotel/Motel Tax. These taxes are used to promote tourism and anything that brings people to Eastland on a temporary basis. He stated that a quarterly report will be expected if this is approved. He suggested that we make the Lyric Art Center a monthly donation of \$1,800 that are dispensed from the Hotel/Motel taxes, beginning in the month of March, 2024.

Commissioner Richard Rossander made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Shirley Stuart, to authorize the dispensing of \$1,800 per month to the Lyric Art Center from the Hotel/Motel Taxes.

Ayes: Commissioners Rossander, Stuart, Vernon
Nays: None
Absent: Doyle

2. Discussion and Consideration to approve Resolution 2024-05 to Cancel General Election

City Manager J.J. Oznick advised the board that there are two commissioners whose terms expire this May. The incumbents were the only two people to apply. This makes the

election uncontested and it is his recommendation to cancel the General Election. The Special Election to fill a vacancy will still take place on May 4, 2024. Commissioner Shirley Stuart made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Richard Rossander to cancel the May 4, 2024 General Election.

Ayes: Commissioners Rossander, Stuart, Vernon
Nays: None
Absent: Doyle

- 3. Discussion and Consideration to approve Resolution 2024-06 A
RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF EASTLAND, TEXAS TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH THE STATE OF TEXAS THROUGH THE TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FOR THE TEMPORARY CLOSURE OF STATE HIGHWAY 6 FROM SEAMAN STREET TO DIXIE STREET; AND STATE HIGHWAY 112 FROM SEAMAN STREET TO HALBRYAN STREET ONCE EACH YEAR ON A DESIGNATED DATE FOR ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATED WITH THE OLD RIP FEST PARADE.

City Manager J.J. Oznick told the board that this Resolution is necessary because the times of the parade are changing which necessitates the streets being closed for a different time than is stated in the original Resolution.

Commissioner Richard Rossander made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Shirley Stuart, to approve Resolution 2024-06 to change the time the streets are closed for the Old Rip Fest Parade.

Ayes: Commissioners Rossander, Stuart, Vernon
Nays: None
Absent: Doyle

- 4. Discussion and Consideration to approve Resolution 2024-07 A
RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF EASTLAND, TEXAS TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH THE STATE OF TEXAS THROUGH THE TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FOR THE TEMPORARY CLOSURE OF STATE HIGHWAY 6 FROM SEAMAN STREET TO DIXIE STREET; AND STATE HIGHWAY 112 FROM SEAMAN STREET TO HALBRYAN STREET ONCE EACH YEAR ON A DESIGNATED DATE FOR ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATED WITH THE LIGHTED CHRISTMAS PARADE.

City Manager J.J. Oznick told the board that this Resolution is necessary because the times of the parade are changing which necessitates the streets being closed for a different time than is stated in the original Resolution.

Commissioner Richard Rossander made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Shirley Stuart, to approve Resolution 2024-07 to change the time the streets are closed for the Lighted Christmas Parade.

Ayes: Commissioners Rossander, Stuart, Vernon
Nays: None
Absent: Doyle

- 5. Discussion and Consideration to approve construction of a new concrete runner at cemetery.

City Manager J.J. Oznick advised the Commissioners that we already have a concrete runner on half of this section in the cemetery. A photo of the runner is in front of you. All of these spaces have been purchased, except two. We want to get the other half of the section finished in order to facilitate selling them.

Cemetery Administrator Roma Holley stated that she had obtained a bid from Alan Barron for \$12,870 for setting a concrete runner for 390 feet. Holley advised she had met with a representative from another concrete company but she never heard anything else from them.

Commissioner Shirley Stuart made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Richard Rossander to approve construction of a new concrete runner at the cemetery for \$12,870 for 390 feet.

Ayes: Commissioners Rossander, Stuart, Vernon
Nays: None
Absent: Doyle

6. Discussion and Consideration of the second reading of Ordinance 24-899,

An Ordinance of the City of Eastland, Texas, temporarily reducing the speed limit for portions of Interstate 20 within the city limits of the City of Eastland which will be under construction.

City Manager J.J. Oznick stated this is something new that the Texas Department of Transportation is requiring throughout the state. This is the second reading of the ordinance.

Commissioner Richard Rossander made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Shirley Stuart, to approve Ordinance 24-899 on second reading.

Ayes: Commissioners Rossander, Stuart, Vernon
Nays: None
Absent: Doyle

7. Discussion and Consideration of Purchase of Police Vehicle using ARPA funds

Chief of Police Tim Pitts advised the Commissioners that with the addition of two new officers in 2023, they do not have enough vehicles in their fleet.

They received bids from three dealerships for a 2024 Dodge Durango with a police upfitting package. Chief Pitts recommended the Commissioners approve the bid from Grapevine Dodge for a sum of \$70,395.

City Manager J.J. Oznick stated these funds are available through American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and is an approved use of these funds.

Commissioner Shirley Stuart made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Richard Rossander, to approve the purchase of a 2024 Dodge Durango with Police Package from Grapevine Dodge with the funds coming from ARPA for \$70,395.

Ayes: Commissioners Rossander, Stuart, Vernon
Nays: None
Absent: Doyle

VII. City Manager Report

GLO-CDBG-MIT Project Planning

Work has begun, and the north section of the North Fork of the Leon looks great.

TXDOT Exit 343 Ramp and Signal Light Projects

Construction has begun. The turn lane is complete and the lights are beginning to go up. The project should be completed shortly.

GLO-CDBG-MIT Project Planning

Final report has been filed and final comments are being addressed.

VIII. Code Compliance Report

Planning and Zoning Director Tony Stubblefield reported the Code Compliance Report for February 2024. There were 5 open cases at the beginning of the month, 9 new cases were opened and 1 case were closed, which ended the month with 6 cases open. Two cases were reported for back taxes. He stated that we are still working on changing the database system and there are some issues currently being pursued. Hopefully this will all be sorted out soon.

NOTE: At this time, Commissioner Richard Rossander began having issues with both of his hearing aids and he was unable to hear. He left the meeting and Chairman Vernon stated we are now in open session as we no longer have a quorum.

IX. Police Chief Report

Chief Tim Pitts stated there were 274 calls for service in February. 15 cases were filed with the District Attorney. There were 42 offense reports generated. He noted 12 arrests. A total of 443 traffic stops were initiated. This resulted in 220 warning citations and 223 citations issued. He also stated that 650 “business checks” were conducted. Our Animal Control Officer continues to be active with 52 business calls. 16 animals were impounded and 4 were adopted and one was quarantined. 17 citations were issued by the Animal Control Officer.

Chief Pitts advised that Officer Auston Rose graduated from the Police Academy March 11, 2024 and is now on duty with the Field Training Officer.

X. Fire Chief Report

Assistant Fire Chief Sam Williams gave the following activity report for the month of February 2024 for the Volunteer and Paid Firefighters. Total call volume: 58 which was an average of 2 calls per day. 40 of these were in the City Limits and 14 of them were in the county and they responded to 4 calls for mutual aid to other county fire departments. There were 14 incidents between 10 p.m. and 7 a.m. There were 4 structure fires, 1 grass fire and 1 vehicle fire. They responded 25 Medical calls, 5 Motor Vehicle accidents and 8 Public Service assists and 13 false alarms/investigations.

XI. Adjournment

Chairman Larry Vernon closed the meeting at 6:43 p.m.

APPROVED

Larry Vernon, Chairman
Board of City Commissioners

ATTEST

Roma Holley, City Secretary