

**CITY OF SANTA FE
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
SEPTEMBER 14, 2023 7:00 P.M.
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
12002 HWY. 6, SANTA FE, TEXAS**

MINUTES

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Mayor Bill Pittman.

Roll Call: Present: Mayor Bill Pittman
Mayor Pro Tem Brandon Noto
Councilmember Dana Marks
Councilmember John Dickerson

Absent: Councilmember Jason O'Brien, excused

The Invocation was given by Pastor Tim Gregory from Family Worship Center, and the pledge to the U.S. Flag and to the Texas Flag was led by Mayor Bill Pittman.

Mayor's and City Manager's Report:

City Manager Alun Thomas gave a brief update on ongoing developments. Mr. Thomas thanked the citizens and volunteers who attended "The Final Run at Behringer-Tully Field" event on Saturday, September 2, 2023. The City's Capital Improvement Plan has recently been adopted and an increase of parks was requested by the citizens. The purchase of this property increased the acreage of parkland by 63% in the city. Mr. Thomas said the Santa Fe Police Department is one hire away from being fully staffed and commended the Chief and police department staff for demonstrating that the department is a wonderful place to work.

1. Presentation of proclamation for Constitution Week, presented by Mayor Bill Pittman to Joanne Wilson from the Daughters of the American Revolution.
2. Presentation of proclamation for "Best Day at Barnett", presentation was given to the first graders at Barnett Elementary School by Mayor Bill Pittman at the school earlier that day.
3. Presentation by Mayor Bill Pittman of two Mayor's spirit awards, to Terri Westmoreland and Billy Creppon for their years of commitment to the city.
4. Presentation and approval of minutes: 8/10/2023 special meeting, 8/10/2023 regular meeting, 8/24/2023 regular meeting, and 9/5/2023 special meeting. The minutes were approved as presented.
5. Presentation of departmental reports by staff, specifically a recap of the activities performed during the previous month and a report of upcoming activities, events, and projects on the horizon
 - 1) Community Services – building permits issued, fees collected, inspections performed, development update, given by Community Services Director Georgia Carmack. Ms. Carmack said there were 22 volunteers, 150 shirt vouchers, 22 concession items, and 107 food truck items were claimed from The Final Run at Behringer-Tully Field. There were also 55 surveys received by the citizens of what they would like the field to become. Ms. Carmack thanked all the vendors for their participation.
 - 2) Parks and Community Center – park maintenance activities, center rental statistics
 - 3) Municipal Court – cases filed, revenue collected, warrants issued and cleared
 - 4) Police – calls for service statistics, traffic crash analysis, use of force incidents
 - 5) Fire Marshal – burn permit issuance, inspection activities
 - 6) Library – patron and program attendance, circulation material statistics, fines and donations collected; library accreditation given by Library Director Beck McClain. Ms. McClain said the Mae S Bruce library received their accreditation, Friday September 1, 2023. The library has been accredited since 1990, this is the 33 years to be accredited. Ms. McClain let Council know that the number of citizens who visited the library in June and July was 4,592 and there are 4,020 people in programs.
 - 7) Street – drainage projects, street maintenance and improvement activities, equipment maintenance
 - 8) Resiliency Center – counseling statistics, including new and continuing clients, for individual and family sessions

Citizens' Comments:
None.

Business:

A. Old Business:

1. Consideration and possible action: Adoption of a resolution of the City Council of the City of Santa Fe, Texas, revising the fee schedule for use of park facilities as specified by Chapter 6, Health and Sanitation, Section 10, Park Regulations, Subsection C, Use of Park Facilities, of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Santa Fe, Texas

Community Services Director Georgia Carmack said she adjusted the fee schedule according to the feedback from the Council at the August 10, 2023, meeting. Mayor Bill Pittman reviewed the fee schedule and wanted to make sure the fees would not affect the senior citizens; Ms. Carmack said the contract with the senior citizens remains the same and they will not be affected by the fees and will still be able to use the Thelma Webber Center free of charge. City Manager Alun Thomas explained that the City has an agreement with the senior citizens for the use of the Thelma Webber Center, and passing this resolution is only for the citizens that are not covered by that agreement.

Motion by Councilmember Marks, seconded by Councilmember Noto, to approve the resolution as presented with the understanding that the senior citizens covered by the existing Thelma Webber Center usage agreement are exempt. The motion passed the roll call vote unanimously.

2. Consideration and possible action: Purchase of mass communications system for use by the City of Santa Fe, and authorizing the Mayor to execute an agreement, on behalf of the City, for such purchase

Communications Specialist Laurie Tollett said that since the Council gave permission to proceed with the solicitation of quotes for the purchase of a mass communications system, she sought out and received five quotes. Out of the five quotes, staff's recommendation is to purchase the system from Everbridge, as it meets most of the required needs and for a fair price. Citizens who choose to enroll in the service will be able to choose which alerts they would like to receive by downloading an application, text messages, phone calls, email, etcetera. The purchase of the mass communication system will come from next Fiscal Year's budget. Councilmember Marks suggested that once the system has been purchased, the City could contact Clear Channel to see how much it would cost to have messages simultaneously broadcasted on their billboard sign to help get the citizens informed about the new system. Once the system is purchased, staff will research how to make the citizens aware of this new communication system.

Motion by Councilmember Dickerson, seconded by Councilmember Marks, to approve the purchase of a mass communications system with Everbridge as presented. The motion passed the roll call vote unanimously.

B. New Business:

1. Public Hearing: Proposed 2023-2024 general fund operating budget

Finance Director Rudy Zepeda explained that the Council needs to approve an annual budget for the City of Santa Fe. Mr. Zepeda explained the proposed budget is a balanced budget, without the use of reserved funds, this is the first time in many years that the City has been able to do so. This was partly achieved by department heads cutting expenses and partly through increasing property taxes as part of the revenue. The proposed revenue over expenses is expected to be \$156,000 for the budget as presented, with its assumed property tax rate.

Mayor Bill Pittman opened the Public Hearing at 7:24 p.m.

There were no comments from the public.

Mayor Bill Pittman closed the Public Hearing at 7:24 p.m.

2. Consideration and possible action: First and final reading of an ordinance of the City of Santa Fe, Texas, adopting the City of Santa Fe's budget for the fiscal year beginning October 1, 2023

Mayor Bill Pittman asked that this item be postponed until the regular meeting on September 28, 2023, due to there being only three Councilmembers present and he would like all four to be in attendance, and Council agreed.

3. Public Hearing: Proposed ad valorem tax rate for tax year 2023

Finance Director Rudy Zepeda explained that this item relates to the approval of the proposed budget and should also be postponed until the regular meeting September 28, 2023.

Mayor Bill Pittman opened the Public Hearing at 7:26 p.m.

There were no comments from the public.

Mayor Bill Pittman closed the Public Hearing at 7:26 p.m.

4. Consideration and possible action: First and final reading of an ordinance of the City of Santa Fe, Texas, establishing an ad valorem tax rate; date when ad valorem taxes become delinquent; rate as of assessment; providing for certain exemption; penalty and interest for delinquent taxes and savings clause

Mayor Bill Pittman explained since the proposed budget has not been approved therefore, the ad valorem tax rate cannot be established, and this item will need to be postponed until the regular meeting on September 28, 2023.

5. Consideration and possible action: Ratification of the property tax revenue increase

Finance Director Rudy Zepeda explained that had the Council made a motion for a tax increase then this ratification would have been needed however, this item will also need to be postponed until the regular meeting on September 28, 2023.

6. Consideration and possible action: Appointment or reappointment of four members (Positions 1, 3, 5, and 7) to the Santa Fe Economic Development Corporation to serve a two-year term to expire in August 2025

Finance Director/Economic Development Corporation Director Rudy Zepeda let the Council know there are four terms that expired this month on the Santa Fe Economic Development Corporation (EDC). Those positions are currently filled by Fidencio Leija, Johnny Helpenstill, Bob Wylie, and Ashley Carner. All members except for Ashley Carner would like to be reconsidered for reappointment. There were five applications received from citizens who would like to be considered for appointment to the EDC.

Motion by Councilmember Noto, seconded by Councilmember Dickerson, to reappoint Bob Wylie and Johnny Helpenstill, and to appoint Ryan McCamy and Terri O'Connell as members to the Economic Development Corporation. The motion passed the roll call vote unanimously.

Finance Director/Economic Development Corporation Director Rudy Zepeda asked that the Council assign positions to the members, noting that such assignments will not affect the expiration of any term.

Amended motion by Councilmember Noto, to reappoint Bob Wylie (Position 7), Johnny Helpenstill (Position 5), and appoint Terri O'Connell (Position 1), and Ryan McCamy (Position 3) to the Economic Development Corporation. The Councilmembers were all in agreeance. The motion passed unanimously.

7. Public Hearing: Proposed approval of funding for the “Excavator Contribution Project” in the amount of \$157,692 from the Santa Fe Economic Development Corporation to the City of Santa Fe

Finance Director/Economic Development Corporation Director Rudy Zepeda said in September 2020, the Economic Development Corporation (EDC) started the “Excavator Contribution Project” to fund the lease of an Excavator for a drainage project. The EDC agreed to fund year four and five payments to the City of Santa Fe for the current year’s budget. The City Council must have two Public Hearings prior to the approval to release the EDC funds. Mayor Bill Pittman asked the Council if they do make the motion to approve the funding that the motion would also include paying the excavator off, to save the city all the interest. City Manager Alun Thomas reminded the Council that is only a Public Hearing, and the motion would be made during the next item.

Mayor Bill Pittman opened the Public Hearing at 7:32 p.m.

There were no comments from the public.

Mayor Bill Pittman closed the Public Hearing at 7:32 p.m.

8. Consideration and possible action: First reading of a resolution approving funding for the “Excavator Contribution Project” in the amount of \$157,692 from the Santa Fe Economic Development Corporation to the City of Santa Fe

Motion by Councilmember Marks, seconded by Councilmember Dickerson, to approve the first reading of the resolution approving funding for the “Excavator Contribution Project” in the amount of \$157,692 from the Santa Fe Economic Development Corporation to the City of Santa Fe and for the excavator to be paid off in full. The motion passed the roll call vote unanimously.

9. Consideration and possible action: Award of contracts to begin October 1, 2023 and ending September 30, 2024, with the option to renew for two one-year terms, related to City of Santa Fe Invitation to Bid number COSFTX SCB2023-01; approving award of a contract to Martin Asphalt Company for the purchase of SS-1 Emulsion; approving award of a contract to Martin Marietta Materials for the purchase of limestone and the purchase of crushed concrete; and approving award of a contract to Vulcan Materials Company for the purchase of Type D Hot Mix Cold Lay and the purchase of Hot Mix Asphalt; and authorizing the Mayor to execute such agreements on behalf of the City

City Manager Alun Thomas explained the materials are used often by the Streets Department. There were three different companies that made bids, with no overlaps. The staff reviewed the various bids and they do seem to be competitive in today’s market. There were six items asked for and out of the six items, the City received bids on five of the items from these three companies. The City will have to go out and rebid for fuel and fluids.

Motion by Councilmember Noto, seconded by Councilmember Marks, approving award of a contract to Martin Asphalt Company for the purchase of SS-1 Emulsion; approving award of a contract to Martin Marietta Materials for the purchase of limestone and the purchase of crushed concrete; and approving award of a contract to Vulcan Materials Company for the purchase of Type D Hot Mix Cold Lay and the purchase of Hot Mix Asphalt; and authorizing the Mayor to execute such agreements on behalf of the City. The motion passed the roll call vote unanimously.

10. Consideration and possible action: Purchase of Forensic Imager, to be reimbursed by the United States Secret Service

Police Chief Walter Braun asked Detective Jesse Cannon to explain to the Council what the item is and announced that Detective Cannon recently had his swearing-in ceremony and received his credentials as a Special Agent of the United States Secret Service. Detective Cannon explained that this device will allow for cloning of hard drives from certain cases and allows for evidence to be preserved which gives officers a way to work with the evidence without manipulating the originals. It will also allow for images to be deleted so the images will not be confiscated. The United States Secret Services gives \$12,000 for the officers to spend on what they need however, once the item or items are purchased the United States Secret Service will reimburse the funds. The cost for the Forensic Imager is approximately \$4,000. This specific device is the preferred device by the United States Secret Service.

Motion by Councilmember Noto, seconded by Councilmember Marks, to approve the purchase of the Forensic Imager from Forensic Computers Inc. in the amount of \$3,963.99, to be reimbursed by the United States Secret Service upon providing a paid invoice. The motion passed the roll call vote unanimously.

Mayor Pro Tem Noto said that he and the Mayor attended the Santa Fe Chamber of Commerce First Responders Appreciation luncheon where Detective Jesse Cannon was awarded "Police Officer of the Year" by the Santa Fe Police Department. The Council commended Detective Cannon for his accomplishments.

11. Consideration and possible action: Approval and adoption of a logo for the City of Santa Fe's Park and Recreation Board

Community Services Director Georgia Carmack explained to the Council that on July 31, 2023, the Park and Recreation Board was presented with five separate logos and it voted in favor of the logo presented in the agenda packet. The idea for creating the logo is so that the Board can create its own Facebook page and start promoting its forthcoming events, to become more active in the community. This logo would be used for t-shirts, Facebook pages, flyers, etcetera. This logo has been approved by the Park and Recreation Board; however, the Board wanted the Council to also approve the logo since it will be associated with the City of Santa Fe.

Motion by Councilmember Marks, seconded by Councilmember Noto, to authorize the City of Santa Fe's Park and Recreation Board to use the logo as presented for Park and Recreation Board events. The motion passed the roll call vote unanimously.

12. Consideration and possible action: Approval of the purchase of one (1) used Ford F-150 from McRee Ford, and equipment upfitting, for a total combined cost not to exceed \$35,000.00

Police Chief Walter Braun said that earlier in the month an officer was involved in an accident in one of the patrol vehicles. The Insurance Adjustor inspected the vehicle and determined the vehicle is totaled and can not be salvaged. Three of the patrol Ford Explorers are going to be decommissioned and the Dodge Charger will be turned over to City Hall. Chief Braun thought the department could keep the Ford Explorers until 2025, however, the maintenance cost associated with the Explorers has almost depleted the fleet funds. Chief Braun said he does not believe it is necessary to spend money on new Chevrolet Tahoes to replace the Ford Explorers, instead would like to purchase a used Ford F-150 from McRee Ford, and equipment upfitting, for a total combined cost not to exceed \$35,000.00. The budget for the replacement vehicles is \$80,000. Chief Braun said that once the vehicles are auctioned off the department will request that those funds and the settlement funds from the wrecked vehicle be used to replenish the replacement funds. City Manager Alun Thomas said this purchase will be from the 2023 budget funds since the funds are available.

Motion by Councilmember Marks, seconded by Councilmember Noto, to approve the purchase of one (1) used Ford F-150 from McRee Ford, and equipment upfitting, for a total combined cost not to exceed \$35,000.00 from Fiscal Year 2023 budget. The motion passed the roll call vote unanimously.

13. Consideration and possible action: First reading of an ordinance of the City Council of the City of Santa Fe, Texas, amending the City of Santa Fe Code of Ordinances Chapter 3 Construction Regulations, establishing Section 12 Substandard Building Regulations; authorizing the appointment of a Building Standards Commission to serve as the authority to hear substandard building cases; establishing a penalty of not more than \$2,000.00 for violations; repealing conflicting ordinances, provisions of ordinances and provisions of the code of ordinances; providing for severability; providing an effective date and other related matters

Community Services Director Georgia Carmack let the Council know this ordinance was put together by the City Attorney. It clearly defines what the substandard structures are and the processes, to get substandard structures demolished in the city. City Manager Alun Thomas said that the City's processes needed to be updated to make sure that the City's Code of Ordinances complies with State Law. Mr. Thomas also explained that, at the moment, this Commission will be the Board of Adjustment, however, that could be changed if the Council wishes to do so in the future.

Motion by Councilmember Dickerson, seconded by Councilmember Noto, approve the first reading of the ordinance as presented. The motion passed the roll call vote unanimously.

14. Consideration and possible action: Authorizing the City Manager and the Chief of Police to execute a Tobacco Grant contract with Texas State University for 2023-2024

Police Captain Robert Shores explained this is the same as the contract approved around the same time last year, it is a yearly contract with Texas State University.

Motion by Councilmember Dickerson, seconded by Councilmember Marks, to approve the authorization of the City Manager and the Chief of Police to execute a Tobacco Grant contract with Texas State University for 2023-2024. The motion passed the roll call vote unanimously.

15. Approval of the execution of a "STEP Comprehensive" grant agreement (2024-SantaFe-S-1YG-00003) with Texas Department of Transportation for Fiscal Year 2023-2024, to promote safe vehicle operation within the city limits of Santa Fe

Police Captain Robert Shores informed Council that this is a continued partnership with the Texas Department of Transportation, it is an overtime grant that allows officers to come in on their spare time to make traffic stops and enforce traffic laws to make the city safer. Police Chief Walter Braun explained the state looks at the statistics on accidents in the community and then set certain areas with most frequent accidents and those are the areas to be focused on during these hours of overtime. Mayor Bill Pittman agrees this grant is needed; however, he expressed his concerns about the low number of citations being given to drivers when there are so many complaints from citizens about speeding on City roads. Council agreed that it would like to see that this grant is being used effectively.

Motion by Councilmember Marks, seconded by Councilmember Dickerson, to approve the City Manager to authorize the execution of a "STEP Comprehensive" grant agreement (2024-SantaFe-S-1YG-00003) with Texas Department of Transportation for Fiscal Year 2023-2024. As presented. The motion passed the roll call vote unanimously.

16. Consideration and possible action: Award of contract for Avenue P Storm Design (the Avenue P Drainage Project) to Gulf Coast Limestone, Inc., contingent upon approved construction plans and verification of their bonds and insurance coverage

City Manager Alun Thomas explained that the Avenue P Drainage Project has been going on for quite a while using funds from American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) There was a meeting for reconfiguration of where its drainage channel pipes will go. There was a bid opening last week and the bids came in at a much lower price point than what had been predicted. Staff recommended awarding the project to Gulf Coast Limestone, Inc., the lowest bidder. The City's contracted engineer is confident that Gulf Coast Limestone, Inc. will do the work properly.

Mayor Bill Pittman had some concerns about whether or not the City can handle the loads of dirt and be able to give it away with the help of Galveston County Drainage District No. 1 (DD1). Streets Superintendent Billy Creppon said there should not be a problem getting rid of the dirt. There are several citizens wanting dirt, he explained, and the dirt will be given to the residents of the City of Santa Fe. Mr. Creppon said that DD1 would help haul the dirt off from Avenue P as they are digging to keep it from piling up on Avenue P. Mr. Thomas and Mr. Creppon both agreed that Gulf Coast Limestone Inc. would be the best selection for the project.

Motion by Councilmember Marks, seconded by Councilmember Noto, to award the contract for Avenue P Storm Design (the Avenue P Drainage Project) to Gulf Coast Limestone, Inc. as presented. The motion passed the roll call vote unanimously.

17. Executive Session, closed to the public, pursuant to Chapter 551.087, Texas Government Code, to deliberate the offer of a financial or other incentive with Megatel Homes

Mayor Bill Pittman told the Council that there is no new information, therefore, there is no need for an Executive Session.

18. Discussion and direction: Matters discussed in Executive Session regarding the offer of a financial or other incentive with Megatel Homes

There was no Executive Session, so no discussion was had about this item.

Announcements:


Mayor Pro Tem Noto let everyone know that it was Community Services Director Georgia Carmack's birthday and also commended her for her excellent execution of "The Final Run at Behringer-Tully Field" event that was held on September 2, 2023. Mayor Pro Tem Noto also announced that it was his and his wife's 10-year wedding anniversary. City Secretary Natalie Arnett let everyone know that the Runoff Election to fill the vacancy in Position 3 will be held on September 30, 2023, and that early voting begins on Monday September 18, 2023, to Friday September 22, 2023, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., also Monday September 25, 2023 and Tuesday September 26, 2023, 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Election Day, September 30, 2023, voting will be 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Ms. Arnett encouraged everyone to come out and vote.

Motion by Councilmember Noto to adjourn. The motion passed and the meeting adjourned at 8:08 p.m.

ATTEST



Natalie N. Arnett, City Secretary


BILL PITTMAN, MAYOR