

**CITY OF SANTA FE
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
OCTOBER 26, 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
 Councilmember Brandon Noto
 Councilmember Jason O'Brien
 Councilmember John Dickerson
 Councilmember Ronald "Bubba" Jannett
 Councilmember Dana Marks

Absent: None.

The invocation was given by Pastor Lucas Campbell from New Life Church, and Mayor Bill Pittman then led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance to the U. S. Flag and to the Texas Flag.

Mayor's and City Manager's Report:

1. Proclamation – Fentanyl Awareness Month presented by Mayor Bill Pittman to Travis's Voice Group. Mayor Bill Pittman recognized the families that were present who have lost loved ones from fentanyl poisoning.
2. Swearing-in Ceremony for the promotion of Cody Myers to Police Corporal and Edward Pean to Police Sergeant, sworn-in by Police Chief Walter Braun. The Council congratulated Cody Myers and Edward Pean on their promotion.
3. 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) Finance – city finance activities (including cash flow, financial reports, investment reports, utility audit services, PEG channel development), and Santa Fe Economic Development Corporation project updates, presentation given by Finance Director Rudy Zepeda.

Citizens' Comments:

None.

Business:

Old Business:

1. Discussion and direction: Possible changes to the City Charter through a May 2024 election and the process for preparing for such an election

City Manager Alun Thomas explained that during the previous meeting on October 12, 2023, Council had questions about the approximate cost difference between appointing a Charter Review Commission and just having the City Attorney review it, he said it is difficult, because it depends on how long the Charter Review Commission discusses the changes. A good faith estimate from staff, given the attorney gets paid \$210 an hour and the average of six two-hour meetings, it would cost the City \$2,500 less to have the City Attorney review it rather than the Charter Review Commission. The Staff would like direction from the Council on how they would like to proceed seeing as the May election would be called in a few months and therefore, the Charter Review Commission would need to start the process rather quickly. Mr. Thomas explained that the City's Charter is much like the City's Constitution; it is what

the citizens of Santa Fe have entrusted their city government to do, the rules of how the Council operates and in turn certain key members of staff; it establishes and maintains the parameters of how the citizens would like to be governed. A Charter election would consist of the Council would come up with a set of propositions which are individual changes to sections of the Charter, the people will then get to vote line by line on which propositions they agree with and which ones they do not agree with. Councilmember Dickerson asked if it was free for the City Attorney to review the Charter, and Mr. Thomas explained the City Attorney would have to review it regardless so the couple of hours that it would take for his review would cost the City the same. Essentially, there would simply be an additional cost if the Council chooses to also have a Charter Review Commission. If there is a Charter Review Commission appointed, then there would need to be an attorney present to ensure the Commission stays within the parameters of the law, which would then cost the City more in attorney fees. The cost is not in the budget, but it is a relatively small amount that could be absorbed in legal fees overall. Council asked how much was in the budget for attorney fees, and Finance Rudy Zepeda said it is about \$20,000 to \$30,000. Councilmember Jannett asked if there was a timeframe before the election during which citizens will get to review the proposed changes on whichever way the choice is made and Mr. Thomas said yes, the election is called several months in advance and the changes would be advertised. However, it takes a bit more time as the changes would first need to be translated into Spanish and then go through a legal review. There would be plenty of time in advance for the citizens to review the proposed changes and if they have questions they could ask staff, which Mr. Thomas vocally encouraged.

The Council would like to make sure the citizens are involved with the proposed changes. Mr. Thomas explained that Finance Director Rudy Zepeda and Communications Specialist Laurie Tollett have already drafted a simple questionnaire that is ready to go live on the City's website that allows the citizens to submit their comments directly to the staff. The questionnaire would be open the whole month of November for the citizens' input. The Council ultimately agreed that the staff should receive input from the citizens, and have the City Attorney review the proposed changes, and that there is no need to cost the City more money by having a Charter Review Committee.

New Business:

1. Consideration and possible action: Approval of an agreement with PC & Cable for information technology services for Fiscal Year 2023-2024

City Manager Alun Thomas explained to the Council that PC & Cable has been serving the City for many years and the agreement under consideration is a one-year contract for Fiscal Year 2023-2024 that is already budgeted. The fees will remain the same as they have for many years; there will not be any cost increase. Council asked how many hours are used each year, Mr. Thomas did not have the exact number but explained that it varies. However, PC & Cable comes twice a month and spends most of a day servicing City Hall and the Police Department.

Motion by Councilmember O'Brien, seconded by Councilmember Marks, to approve the agreement with PC & Cable for information technology services for Fiscal Year 2022-2023. The motion passed the roll call vote unanimously.

Councilmember Noto asked if the agreement should have been for Fiscal Year 2023-2024 because the motion was made for Fiscal Year 2022-2023, Mr. Thomas said that in fact it should be for Fiscal Year 2023-2024 and the motion would need to be amended.

Motion by Councilmember O'Brien, seconded by Councilmember Marks, to approve the agreement with PC & Cable for information technology services for Fiscal Year 2023-2024. The motion passed the roll call vote unanimously.

2. Consideration and possible action: Approval of the purchase of Occupancy and Fire Inspection Software from ESO Solutions, Inc. for use by the Fire Marshal's Office, and authorizing the City Manager to execute the agreement on behalf of the City

Fire Marshal Ramon Coven explained to Council that under the Fire Code and the City's Code of Ordinances, he oversees keeping up with the records that pertain to the Fire Marshal and at this time, the City does not have any software that helps him keep track of when or if businesses need inspections. This software will help to track the process from start to finish to ensure businesses are in compliance. The software is a cloud-based solution. The cost of the software is \$2,180.00, of which, \$1,090.00 is a one-time fee for the setup and online classes, and the rest is an annual fee of \$1,090.00 for maintenance software which will be updated through the cloud. The Council asked how Chief Coven is doing the process currently, Chief Coven said it is all through paper. Chief Coven added that he cannot find any previous records of inspections. He said that he drove down FM 1764, FM 646, and Highway 6, and handwrote every business and their addresses, which he then made into a spreadsheet. He explained that the current software used for permits, iWorq, works for keeping up with permits and certificate of occupancy permits but not for keeping up with tracking inspections. Mr. Zepeda explained that the cost could be absorbed from the additional calculations from sales tax revenue since the revenue was more than what was predicted from last year. The Council had some concerns about the revenue showing to be in the negative, Mr. Zepeda explained that the negative is based off current numbers but once the last month of the year's sales tax has been added along with all the additional expenses, then total will be approximately \$74,000.00 in the positive for the year.

Council wanted to know if the cost for this software was already in the budget, Finance Director Rudy Zepeda let the Council know that this purchase was not a part of the budget and if the Council chooses to approve the purchase, it would be a budget amendment. Mr. Zepeda explained that Chief Coven was not hired until the end of the budget process and did not know he would need this system before the budget had been approved. The Council expressed that they do not like having budget amendments right after the budget has been approved. Councilmember Noto asked if the previous part-time Fire Marshal had ever expressed the need for such software, City Manager Alun Thomas said it had not been brought to his attention. Mr. Thomas noted that the previous Fire Marshal expressed concerns to the Council that part-time hours were not enough to keep up with both plan reviews and commercial inspections. Mr. Thomas said that now that there is a full-time Fire Marshal, and that the extra time allows for him to be more aware of what is needed to keep up with the process of the inspections.

Motion by Councilmember O'Brien, seconded by Councilmember Marks, to approve a budget amendment for the purchase of Occupancy and Fire Inspection Software from ESO Solutions, Inc. for use by the Fire Marshal's Office, and authorizing the City Manager to execute the agreement on behalf of the City. The motion passed the roll call vote unanimously.

3. Consideration and possible action: Approval of the purchase of one (1) used 2019 Ford F-150 from McRee Ford, and equipment upfitting, for a total combined cost not to exceed \$32,000.00

Police Captain Robert Shores explained this is a used vehicle that, if approved by Council, would be purchased for his use. The Police Department has recently decommissioned 6 vehicles, 3 marked patrol units that will go to auction, 1 patrol unit that was involved in an accident and totaled out (waiting for compensation from the insurance company), a Chevrolet Silverado that was seized (also, will go to auction), and a Dodge Charger that was given to City Hall to replace the Building Officials vehicle. Captain Shores explained that his current vehicle is a marked patrol unit that would be assigned to the new officer who is in Field Training and should be out of training by the end of next week. Therefore, the truck will be assigned to Captain Shores to replace the unit he is passing on to the new officer. Captain Shores said there is a line item in the budget for police vehicle replacement, which is where the funds for this purchase would come from. Councilmember Noto asked if Finance Director Rudy Zepeda could clarify whether the purchase is in the budget or not. Mr. Zepeda said the purchase is not in the budget, but that accidents

happen and when accidents happen that is why we have a contingency, in this case the City has an equipment replacement fund that was created to address these types of events. There is about \$200,000 already included in the budget for equipment replacement from the Capital Improvement Fund. City Manager Alun Thomas explained that although there is money in there, the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) the Council approved does not list the purchase of this vehicle. Mr. Zepeda said the purchase of this vehicle was in the CIP for next year so instead of purchasing in 2025, it would be adjusted for 2024. Captain Shores confirmed that that is correct. The Council wanted to know when the auction would take place and Mr. Thomas explained it would be soon as possible after the vehicles have been stripped and prepared for auction, and then the staff would bring the item to the Council for the approval of the auction. Most of the funds for the purchase of this truck will come from the funds received from the vehicles that will be auctioned and not all from the CIP.

Councilmember Noto asked what the upfitting for the vehicle would cost, Captain Shores said he has been speaking with City Mechanic Justin Parker, and between the two of them it can be done from the equipment out of the other vehicles therefore, there would be no cost to the City. The Council also asked how the vehicle would be marked. Captain Shores explained the light placement and said the graphics will be a light gray and will not be the "ghost" graphics. The Council expressed that they do not like the "ghost" graphics that are on some of the new Chevrolet Tahoes, as it prefers that the City's police vehicles be readily identifiable. Captain Shores explained that was an oversight from the previous administration and the graphics had already been printed by the time that he and Police Chief Walter Braun had realized it was the incorrect color. However, the company refused to reprint the graphics for free, so the department stayed with "ghost" graphics.

Motion by Councilmember O'Brien, seconded by Councilmember Noto, to approve the purchase of one (1) used 2019 Ford F-150 from McRee Ford, and equipment upfitting, for a total combined cost not to exceed \$32,000 with the stipulation that the funds received from the sale of the vehicles be set aside for future vehicle replacement cost. The motion passed the roll call vote unanimously.

4. Consideration and possible action: First and final reading of an ordinance of the City of Santa Fe, Texas, regarding the City of Santa Fe's Texas Municipal Retirement System benefits providing employees with five-year vesting

City Manager Alun Thomas explained that one of the benefits offered to City employees is the retirement plan through Texas Municipal Retirement System (TMRS). The standard across the state is that employees vest their money with the City after 5 years. Currently, the City of Santa Fe is one of the very few cities in the state of Texas that has a 10-year vesting. Mr. Thomas explained that in Galveston County there are 2 cities that are not members of TMRS, and that of the remaining cities, Santa Fe is the only city that still has 10-year vesting. Mr. Thomas explained that when people are applying for city employment, it is one of the considerations made when considering moving from one city to another. Mr. Thomas also explained that a few years ago the Council made the switch from a 1.5:1 to a 2:1 matching fund contribution rate, which helps employment at the City look more appealing to applicants.

Mr. Thomas said that the cost to make the change is already in the budget and the total cost to the city is \$790 for this Fiscal Year. However, the total will change each year based on employees given salaries. The total budgeted amount for this Fiscal Year is \$860. Councilmember Noto asked if the change would be for all current employees, Mr. Thomas said yes, if an employee has been with the City for 6 years the employee would now be completely vested. Councilmember Noto asked for clarification on how the total for the change would be less the amount that had been budgeted if there will be more employees will be vested, Mr. Thomas explained that at the time the numbers were run, it was based on how well TMRS's investments were doing, and the employee's current salaries. As employees come and go it makes a difference since it is based on the percentages of employees' salaries. Mr.

Thomas answered many questions from the Council concerning the cost increases going forward, and the process of making the change considering there were multiple meetings and discussion when the matching fund contribution rate change had been made. Mr. Thomas said that the decision does not have to be made at this time and if Council would like for a representative to come explain the processes or if the Council would like to have a workshop, then those can certainly be arranged. Finance Director Rudy Zepeda confirmed the decision did not have to be made at this time however, with the cost to the City being relatively low, it was an option that staff wanted to present to the Council. Mr. Zepeda said that if the Council would like to see a projection of cost over time that he could make a spreadsheet to help the Council have a better understanding.

Motion by Councilmember Noto, seconded by Councilmember Marks, to postpone the item until the next City Council meeting. The motion passed the roll call vote unanimously.

5. Presentation and direction: Proposed creation and operation of a City of Santa Fe staff-level public involvement initiative to be named the "City Action Network" for the proactive identification, reporting, and addressing of hyperlocal issues

Communications Specialist Laurie Tollett explained this is a proposal of a staff level program that will proactively identify and address concerns within the city. Ms. Tollett said there will be certain zones within the city and each zone will have its own representative. The representatives will be residents of the city who live within each zone and will communicate issues or concerns that they see or hear about in their area to the Communications Specialist either by telephone or email. Ms. Tollett said that depending on the issue/concern received, she would bring the attention to the Supervisor of the department the issue/concern pertains to.

The Council believes this is a great idea and wanted to ensure the staff is staying communitive with each requestor because without communication this program will not work. City Manager Alun Thomas said this is a great way for staff to try and help residents with concerns that they have that the staff may not be aware of. Mr. Thomas said it is not a promise to fix everything, but to hopefully fix inexpensive concerns before turning into a bigger issue in the future. The idea for the program is to receive input from the resident about things the staff might be unaware of. Ms. Tollett let the Council know there is already an email set up for this program and although not all the issues may be resolved, the staff will be able to communicate to the residents either way. Mr. Thomas added that he spoke with a woman from Plains, Texas, at the Texas Municipal League Conference, who gave him this idea. Mr. Thomas stated that it should not be an overwhelming number of emails or calls as there would only be one volunteer representative from each zone that would be communicating the issues in their zone to Ms. Tollett. Mr. Thomas said he wants the program to show the residents that the City really does work for them and to make it where the staff is more responsive to their needs.

Council expressed its concerns about making sure staff stays in communication with requestors and to have a process that will ensure all issues/concerns are being addressed in a timely manner. Ms. Tollett said parameters establishing acceptable response times will be set up to ensure that the City stay in communication with the representative through the whole process from start to end. The Council ultimately agreed that this would be a great program and would like for staff to proceed with the organization of the process and bring the item back to their attention.

Announcements:

Terri O'Connell, 12821 19th St., announced that for anyone who lives in Galveston County, the Salvation Army is doing registertoring.org, anyone can register to ring and if the Salvation Army does not get ringers, they will charge \$15 an hour, she encouraged everyone to register to volunteer to ring the bell so as to save the Salvation Army money. The Lion's Club is sponsoring "Pie in the Face" at Heritage Festival November 11, 2023, for \$5 you can put

a pie in the participants faces. The next Santa Fe Chamber luncheon is November 8, 2023. The next Chamber Mixer (promotion of small businesses) will be held at Hidden Palms.

Community Services Director Georgia Carmack invited everyone to The Candy Trail on Saturday, October 28, 2023, at Joe A. Tambrella Park from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Santa Fe Resiliency Center Victims Advocate Abby let invited everyone to their annual golf tournament on November 20, 2023, at the Bay Oaks Country Club, all proceeds will go to providing free counseling sessions to victims of crime.

Santa Fe Police Captain Robert Shores invited everyone to the first haunted house at the Police Department October 30, 2023, from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Entry is free, and the Department asks that each person donates one can good that will be donated to H.I.S. Ministries.

Police Chief Walter Braun let Council know that there is now an officer on full-time traffic duty, and he has been out running traffic for the last week.

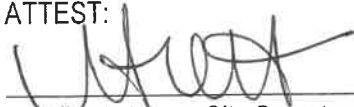
Ryan McCamy, 12151 21st St., announced that there will be a wrestling match at the Santa Fe Fire and Rescue on December 1, 2023, called "Santa Slam," to collect toys and money donations for H.I.S Ministries. There will be a contribute to Veterans at the Heritage Festival on November 11, 2023.

Councilmember Noto let everyone know that early voting has began for the Texas Constitutional Amendment Election and also a Santa Fe I.S.D School Bond proposition, and encouraged everyone to go vote.

Summary of action from this agenda, request for future agenda items, and scheduling future meetings: The next regular Council meeting is currently scheduled for November 9, 2023.

Motion by Councilmember Dickerson to adjourn. The motion passed and the meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

ATTEST:



Natalie N. Arnett, City Secretary



BILL PITTMAN, MAYOR