

**CITY OF SANTA FE  
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING  
APRIL 11, 2024 7:00 P.M.  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
12002 HWY. 6, SANTA FE, TEXAS**

**MINUTES**

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. by Mayor Bill Pittman.

Roll Call: Present: Mayor Bill Pittman  
Mayor Pro Tem Brandon Noto  
Councilmember Jason O'Brien  
Councilmember Ronald "Bubba" Jannett  
Councilmember John Dickerson

Absent: Councilmember Dana Marks, excused

The Invocation was given by Pastor Brad Drake from Dayspring Church, 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:**

Mayor Bill Pittman presented the Mayor's Spirit Award and the Proclamations before the City Manager's update.

1. Presentation by Mayor Pittman of a Mayor's Spirit Award to Julio Pinto de Leon.
2. Proclamation proclaiming April 2024 as Sexual Assault Awareness Month
3. Proclamation proclaiming April 21, 2024 through April 27, 2024 as National Crime Victims Week

City Manager Alun Thomas gave a brief update on the Whataburger and Big Horn BBQ developments. Mr. Thomas informed everyone that the City's mass communications system is now live and that the Communication Specialist will address Council with more information. Mr. Thomas thanked the City staff and other entities for their efforts during the wind event earlier during the week. The Avenue P Project has been issued notice to proceed. The storm sewer has been approved for manufacturing, and construction is anticipated to start mid-May. There will be a pre-construction meeting in late April or early May for the project. The Santa Fe Chamber of Commerce, City of Santa Fe, Santa Fe Economic Development Corporation, and Small Business Development Centers (SBDC) held a marketing training event, which turned out in a huge success of attendees. Mr. Thomas thanked the new police cadet, Hunter Lobato, for assisting in various roles in the City as he awaits the start of his police academy. Lastly, the CDBG-MIT Regional Mitigation Program project for the improvement of drainage and streets in parts of the Alta Loma townsite has been approved and the City will meet with the General Land Office (GLO) next week.

4. Presentation and approval of minutes: 3/14/2024 special meeting, 3/14/24 regular meeting, 3/28/24 joint meeting, and 3/28/2024 special meeting. City Secretary Natalie Arnett informed Council that there was a typographical error on the item and the minutes for approval on 3/28/2024 were for a regular meeting and not for a special meeting as seen on the agenda. 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) Administration – rollout of the "Santa Fe Connect" mass notification, Communication Specialist Laurie Tollett informed Council that there are a total of 570 contacts that have opted in. Ms. Tollett explained to everyone how they could sign up to receive the notifications and also informed them that they do not have to download the application to be able to receive the notifications.
- 2) Community Services – building permits issued, fees collected, inspections performed, development update
- 3) Parks and Community Center – park maintenance activities, center rental statistics
- 4) Municipal Court – cases filed, revenue collected, warrants issued and cleared
- 5) Police – calls for service statistics, traffic crash analysis, use of force incidents
- 6) Fire Marshal – burn permit issuance, inspection activities



- 7) Library – patron and program attendance, circulation material statistics, fines and donations collected; library accreditation
- 8) Street – drainage projects, street maintenance and improvement activities, equipment maintenance
- 9) Resiliency Center – counseling statistics, including new and continuing clients, for individual and family sessions

**Citizens' Comments:**

Samuel Leach, 5611 Avenue M, and neighbor Bubba Zaro, 5602 Avenue M, expressed concerns about people living in a Recreational vehicle (RV) next door to their properties (5609 Avenue M). Mr. Leach and Mr. Zaro are concerned about the sanitation of the waste dump. They brought the issue to the attention of Code Enforcement Officer Ray Burgess back in February of 2024, and would like to make sure that Council is aware of the issue. Mr. Zaro thanked the Police Chief and his staff for their attention to the speeding down Avenue M, and thanked Streets Superintendent Billy Creppon and staff for their promptness in adding a sign that he had requested. Mark Pittman, brother of Mayor Bill Pittman, explained that Mayor Bill Pittman's term in office is coming to an end, and he wanted to let him know that he is proud of him for his hard work and dedication to the City over the years, and that he will be missed. Jessica Rhoads, from Galveston County Resources and Crisis Center, thanked the Council and City Staff for the presentation of the proclamations, for helping the Center's mission to ending sexual assault, human trafficking, domestic violence, and child abuse.

**Business:**

**A. Old Business:**

**1. Briefing and discussion: Results of the Santa Fe Justice Center's heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems' diagnostic tests as performed by Heat Transfer Solutions, Inc. (HTS)**

Community Services Director Georgia Carmack explained that on April 1, 2024, Heat Transfer Solutions, Inc. (HTS) performed a full diagnostic test on the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) system at the Santa Fe Justice Center. The results from the test results concluded that there is a leak in cooling unit 1, A and B, along with a need for the replacement of a compressor and an inverter board. The quote for the repairs total \$14,935.10, which also includes the assessment fee. Council asked if HTS would be doing preventive maintenance, Ms. Carmack said there is an option to do that however, it is not included in this quote. However, if Council wishes to do so, staff could get the quote and bring it back to Council for approval. Council asked what company originally put the system in, and City Manager Alun Thomas replied that City records show that it was Mesa Mechanical in 2014.

**2. Consideration and possible action: Approving an agreement for the repair or replacement of heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) equipment at the Santa Fe Justice Center, and authorizing the Mayor to execute an agreement with the selected vendor on the behalf of the City**

Motion by Councilmember O'Brien, seconded by Councilmember Noto, to approve the agreement with Heat Transfer Solutions, Inc. (HTS) for the repair or replacement of heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) equipment at the Santa Fe Justice Center, and authorizing the Mayor to execute an agreement on behalf of the City.

**3. Briefing and discussion: Staff update regarding the evaluation and addressing of drainage concerns in the area of McKay Road and Murphy Road**

City Manager Alun Thomas explained that in a prior meeting, a citizen who lives in this area expressed his concerns about the drainage and since staff has assessed the area. Building Official Ray Burgess said that he and Streets Superintendent Billy Creppon took some elevation readings of the area, and found them to comply with the City's Code of Ordinances. Mr. Burgess reached out to the City Engineer who produced a lidar map that shows the natural flow of the drainage, which is in the direction of McKay Road. Mr. Creppon explained that all the drainage from Murphy Road and the pastures that back up to the dump drain to McKay Road. Mr. Creppon reiterated that the area



is in compliance with the City's Code of Ordinances. Mr. Creppon said that the City and other entities will be doing some maintenance in the area to further improve the drainage.

**B. New Business:**

**1. Consideration and possible action: Appointment of one member to the Zoning Board of Adjustment and Building Standards Commission to serve the remainder of an unexpired two-year term to expire in July 2024**

City Secretary Natalie Arnett informed Council that Jack Helton has resigned from his position on the Zoning Board of Adjustment and Building Standards Commission, which now leaves a vacancy for an unexpired term expiring July 2024. There were two applications received for the position, and there is also the option to move one of the Alternate Members to serve the unexpired term. If Council chooses to appoint one of the Alternate Members to serve the remainder of the term, Council would then need to appoint a new member to serve that unexpired term in a future meeting.

Motion by Councilmember Dickerson, to appoint Tim Clark to serve the remainder of an unexpired two-year term to expire in July 2024. The motion failed due to the lack of a second.

Motion by Councilmember Jannett, seconded by Councilmember O'Brien, to appoint Christopher Roth to the Zoning Board of Adjustment and Building Standards Commission to serve the remainder of an unexpired two-year term to expire in July 2024. The motion passed the roll call vote unanimously.

**2. Consideration and possible action: Adoption of a resolution of the City Council of the City of Santa Fe, Texas approving and authorizing the First Amendment to the Development Agreement between the City of Santa Fe and Tres Rios Laguna Azure, LLC, and providing an effective date**

Mayor Bill Pittman asked that the Council postpone this item until April 18, 2024, by which time the final version of the amended Development Agreement should have been received.

Motion by Councilmember Jannett, seconded by Councilmember O'Brien, to postpone the approval of the First Amendment to the Development Agreement until April 18, 2024. The motion passed the roll call vote unanimously.

**3. Consideration and possible action: First reading of an Ordinance of the City of Santa Fe, Texas, amending Section 14, Golf Carts, of Chapter 9, Traffic Code, of the City of Santa Fe Code of Ordinances, through the inclusion of utility vehicles and recreational off-highway vehicles in the applicability of the Section; renaming Section 14 as "Golf Carts, Utility Vehicles, and Recreational Off-Highway Vehicles"; and providing a repealer clause, a severability clause, and an effective date**

Police Chief Walter Braun explained that the Texas Transportation Code labels any vehicle that can carry cargo on the back a utility vehicle and recreational off-highway vehicles, such as side-by-sides, which have become more popular over the years. Staff would like Council to amend the "Golf Carts" section of the Code of Ordinances to include Utility Vehicles, and Recreational Off-Highway Vehicles to require permits on certain City streets if driven by a licensed driver. Chief Braun said that side-by-sides are being driven on the streets already and that most Cities have added these vehicles to their Golf Cart Ordinances.

Motion by Councilmember Noto, seconded by Councilmember Dickerson, to approve the first reading of an ordinance, amending Section 14, Golf Carts, of Chapter 9, Traffic Code, of the City of Santa Fe Code of Ordinances, through the inclusion of utility vehicles and recreational off-highway vehicles in the applicability of the Section; renaming Section 14 as "Golf Carts, Utility Vehicles, and Recreational Off-Highway Vehicles" as presented. The motion passed the roll call vote unanimously.



City Manager Alun Thomas said to everyone that this is only the first reading and that it is not yet legal until the second reading has been approved and the vehicle has had the proper inspections and permits.

**4. Consideration and possible action: Authorizing the sale of City-owned property**

City Manager Alun Thomas explained that periodically the City finds that items it owns are no longer needed, including vehicles. The proper way to dispose of items that still have value is through a public auction. Council received a list of items that staff believes are no longer needed, and this item allows for Council to approve or disapprove of the items staff has recommended for auction.

Motion by Councilmember O'Brien, seconded by Councilmember Jannett, to authorize the sale by public auction of all the City-owned property shown on the exhibit entitled 'List of Surplus Items for Auction: April 2024.'" The motion passed the roll call vote unanimously.

**5. Consideration and possible action: Approving an agreement between the City of Santa Fe, Texas and Lemons Auctioneers, LLC & Online Pros for online auction services, and authorizing the Mayor to execute the agreement on behalf of the City**

City Manager Alun Thomas said that the City of Santa Fe has partnered with Lemons Auctioneers, LLC for several years and has been pleased with their services. Lemons Auctioneers, LLC charges 5% of the gross proceeds of the sale in exchange for promoting the sales of the merchandise and also charges the buyers a 14% buyer's premium along with an administrative fee for any credit card payments. Lemons Auctioneers, LLC also handles all title transfers for the vehicles and equipment. Staff recommends the approval of the proposed agreement.

Motion by Councilmember Noto, seconded by Councilmember O'Brien, to approve an agreement between the City of Santa Fe, Texas and Lemons Auctioneers, LLC & Online Pros for online auction services, and authorizing the Mayor to execute the agreement on behalf of the City. The motion passed the roll call vote unanimously.

**6. Consideration and possible action: Approval of the build-out of additional office space, including space for the Santa Fe Economic Development Corporation, at Santa Fe City Hall**

City Manager Alun Thomas said that the Santa Fe Economic Development Corporation (EDC) recently hired a full-time EDC Coordinator who is currently working in the central area of City Hall. The EDC has proposed possibly funding the building-out of office space for the EDC Coordinator and other City staff members. Mr. Thomas drafted a proposal for the location of the offices which was included in the packet sent to Council. The proposed location would be in the Council Chambers where the Department Heads dais is currently located, and the dais would move to the opposite side of the Council Chambers if Council chose to approve the layout.

Motion by Councilmember Jannett, seconded by Councilmember O'Brien, to approve the build-out of additional office space, including space for the Santa Fe Economic Development Corporation, at Santa Fe City Hall as presented. The motion passed the roll call vote unanimously.

**7. Discussion and direction: Possible development and adoption of a policy for child warning area signs**

City Manager Alun Thomas explained that all over the city one sees signs that read "children at play", "deaf child" or "autistic child area", etcetera to warn drivers to be cautious in these particular areas. Staff have received multiple requests for the placement of these signs. Mr. Thomas explained that there is one specific area where the signs have been placed multiple times and then have been promptly stolen. The replacement of the signs becomes costly to the City. Staff would like guidance from Council before adopting a policy for children warning signs. Mr. Thomas gave ideas from surrounding cities sign policies such as, requestors paying a fee for the signage, requestors providing proof of the disability, evaluation of the signs periodically to confirm the child or individual still lives in the area or that the child is still under the age of 18, etcetera.



Streets Superintendent Billy Creppon said that the signs are costly to the City. Residents in areas with the signs appreciate the signs and will call to have them replaced if they have been removed. Community Services Director Georgia Carmack explained that there has been an issue where a certain sign had been added by request and a neighbor complained because they felt the sign was directed to their child, and expressed they strongly disliked the sign.

Crystal Whaley, 10906 Longmire St., explained that if the City is going to put signs out that "children at play" seems to be the best option as it will not be directed solely on children with disabilities.

After much discussion about placement of the signs, costs, and which signage to post, Council stated it does not want the requestors to pay for the warning signs and if staff chooses to go forward with a particular sign, then all existing signs should stay as is and not be replaced. Council asked staff to work on a proposed policy for it to review at a future meeting.

**8. Briefing and discussion: Update on changes to notification requirements under state law for zoning changes, including uses-by-right, conditional uses, text amendments, and setbacks**

City Manager Alun Thomas said that in the last legislative session, effective September 1, 2023, the State of Texas changed the law on what process needs to be followed if changes to uses are made in certain zoning districts. Whereas notification requirements for such changes were previously relatively inexpensive for the City, they have now become more expensive, even for minor text changes. Community Services Director Georgia Carmack explained that staff learned about the update while discussing possible changes to the requirements on setbacks in different districts and changing certain uses to, conditional uses to regulate the number of convenience stores on streets. Ms. Carmack said staff would like guidance from Council on whether all changes will be assessed at one time by each of the various City boards so that one notice could be sent with all the listed changes to every parcel listed in the City in an effort to conserve funds. The approximate cost to the City would be \$4,764.16, which does not include publications in the Galveston County Daily News, supplies, or the staff time; this cost is only for franking. Mr. Thomas explained the process in depth and the cost to send notifications for individual changes, noting that sending all changes in one notification would be more cost effective to the City.

Mayor Bill Pittman discussed the option of creating a Public Improvement District (PID), which would let the City decide on what could be built in a certain location. The cost of creating a PID would need to be researched to know if it would be more cost effective for the City.

Eli Polinard, 2317 Jack Beaver, asked who would get to decide on what could be done in a PID, City Manager Alun Thomas said that a PID is established by the City Council. Mr. Polinard asked if someone bought property inside the PID then they would not be able to build whatever they choose, Mayor Bill Pittman stated that in a PID, the only allowable land uses are what Council chose to allow during the creation of the PID. There would be a public hearing before the PID would be created so that citizens could express their concerns, and future property owners would be made aware that their property was in a PID. Council discussed possibly having a workshop in the future to discuss zoning text amendments.

**9. Consideration and possible action: Rescheduling of the planned April 25, 2024 budget workshop**

City Manager Alun Thomas said there is both a budget workshop and a regular City Council meeting scheduled for April 25, 2024, it is expected that there will not be a regular meeting, so staff assumes there will also not be a budget workshop meeting. The Council was sent the budget workshop calendar in the agenda packet and Mr. Thomas recommended possibly moving the scheduled meetings by two or three weeks to stay on schedule with the regular Council meetings. Finance Director Rudy Zepeda said the workshop in question will be more interactive than prior

Workshops, and will consume a full hour for discussion. Mayor Bill Pittman noted that there could possibly be a special meeting on May 9, 2024, before the regular meeting, and if so, the budget workshop scheduled for May 9, 2024, may also need to be rescheduled. The Council agreed to reschedule to April 25, 2024, budget workshop to April 18, 2024, at 6:00 p.m.

Announcements:

Library Director Becky McClain thanked the citizens and City staff for their hospitality during "Library Week." The Friends of the Library are having a quilt raffle proceeding until May 16, you can purchase 6 tickets for \$5. Community Services Director Georgia Carmack let everyone know the City will be having a Hurricane Preparedness Expo on May 11, 2024 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at City Hall, and that there will be guest speakers, refreshments and, if people are unable to attend it in person, it will be broadcast live. Finance Director Rudy Zepeda let everyone know the City of Santa Fe's television channel (cable channel 16) is up and running. Mayor Pro Tem Noto informed everyone that during the General Election there will also be a City Charter Election. April 18, 2024, is a Candidate Forum for the candidates running for City Council, it will not be open to the public however, but it will be streamed live on I45 Now, 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. City Manager Alun Thomas let everyone know that the City's Spring Clean Up will be April 20, 2024, at R. J. Wollam Elementary School, 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and attendees must bring their AmeriWaste billing statement, to dispose of their large nonhazardous items.

Motion by Councilmember Noto to adjourn. The motion passed and the meeting adjourned at 8:27 p.m.

ATTEST:



Natalie N. Arnett, City Secretary

  
BILL PITTMAN, MAYOR