

THE CITY OF EASTLAND
CITY COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING

June 19, 2023

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	James Doyle
Commissioner	Shirley Stuart
Commissioner	Richard Rossander

CITY COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:

Commissioner	Cecil Funderburgh
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PERSONNEL PRESENT:

City Manager	J.J. Oznick
Finance Director	Leslie Zander
City Secretary	Roma Holley
Police Chief	Tim Pitts
Fire Chief	Joe Williamson
Planning Director	Tony Stubblefield
Public Works Director	Bobby Jacoby

Guests: Julie Elrod, H. V. O'Brien, Vance O'Brien, Ron Hunt, Joe Wright, Don Griffin, Jeanie Griffin, Robert Culverhouse, Steve Gerdes, Lillian Brummitt, Ryder Warren

I. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

Chairman Larry Vernon called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

II. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairman Larry Vernon offered the invocation and Commissioner James Doyle 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)

There were no comments from the public at this time.

IV. APPROVE MINUTES OF THE MAY 15, 2023 MEETING

Commissioner Richard Rossander made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Shirley Stuart, to approve the minutes of the May 15, 2023 meeting.

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

V. Financial Report

Finance Director Leslie Zander stated the Sales Tax dipped just a little bit but we are still at a 9.75% increase over 2022

No action at this time.

VI. Presentation by Steve Gerdes regarding ECWSD award

Steve Gerdes, President of the Eastland County Water Supply District, addressed the Commissioners. He expressed his gratitude for the assistance that the City of Eastland gave when their intake failed in August 2022. The City of Eastland was very gracious in loaning equipment and other things as necessary.

Mr. Gerdes then stated that the ECWSD is a member of the Texas Water Utilities Association of the Central West Texas District. Chad Roberts, the water superintendent along with the water plant operators, attended a recent convention and training that was hosted in Abilene. The training was credited to their Continuing Education hours. While at this convention, they entered a sample of the water from the ECWSD into a “Water Tasting Contest”. This contest was based on the taste of the water and other factors. The Eastland County Water Supply District won 1st place out of the six counties that were entered. This is a great achievement and shows their dedication and their striving for excellence.

Chairman Larry Vernon congratulated Mr. Gerdes and the Eastland County Water Supply District. He stated this shows that as improvements are made and the costs are passed on to the citizens, the money is being well spent. This shows progress.

VII. Presentation by Eastland Memorial Hospital regarding Fee increase for Ambulance Service

Chairman Larry Vernon introduced Joe Wright, CEO of Eastland Memorial Hospital and Ron Hunt, CFO of Eastland Memorial hospital.

Mr. Wright addressed the Commissioners and said he will set the stage for this item and Ron Hunt will provide the details. Mr. Wright began by saying there has not been an increase in the subsidies for the Ambulance service for at least ten years, according to the Eastland County Auditor. These subsidies come from Eastland County, along with the cities of Eastland and Cisco.

There is a big difference in the worth of \$10 bill ten years ago, compared to the worth of a \$10 bill today. Our goal here today is to make you aware of our needs in order to ask for assistance. We are asking for a very serious increase and Mr. Hunt will now provide the data.

Mr. Hunt addressed the Commissioners and presented them with an exhibit of data in order to validate his request. He stated this is an effort to be totally transparent and honest.

Mr. Hunt stated this data represents 2018 – February 2023. He went through the data, page by page. He explained the disparity between the number of ambulance calls responded to and the number of actual calls that can be billed. He also explained the disparity between what the ambulance service bills insurance providers and what is received.

Mr. Hunt explained that when the pandemic occurred in 2020, the number of ambulance service calls decreased while the cost of everything increased. This, along with the fact that the insurance providers are even more stringent in what they pay now, has left the

Ambulance Service with a shortfall. If they do not receive an increase in subsidies, the ambulance service is going to be in serious trouble.

Mr. Hunt said he does not know why there have been no requests for increases in the past 10 years. If the subsidies had been increased a little at a time, we would not be in this situation. He stated he understands this is a serious increase but there is just no way around it. The ambulance service has been receiving a subsidy of \$65,000 from the City of Eastland. Mr. Hunt asked to increase the subsidy to \$102,000, an increase of \$37,000.

Mr. Hunt answered questions from the Commission and Chairman Vernon thanked him for his presentation.

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

- 1. Discussion and Consideration of Ordinance 23-894

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF EASTLAND, TEXAS AMENDING ARTICLE V, "DANGEROUS BUILDINGS", OF CHAPTER 5, "BUILDINGS AND BUILDING REGULATIONS", OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES, CITY OF EASTLAND, TEXAS BY AMENDING SECTION 5-76, "INSPECTION AND NOTICE OF ABATEMENT" TO PROVIDE FOR ALTERNATE METHODS OF PROVIDING NOTICE; PROVIDING REPEALER AND SEVERABILITY CLAUSES; AND ESTABLISHING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

City Manager JJ Oznick introduced this item by stating the goal of amending this chapter is to streamline the process of Inspection and Abatement of Dangerous Buildings in order to give property owners multiple opportunities to bring the property into compliance.

Planning Director Tony Stubblefield then explained the additional channels that will be pursued in contacting property owners.

Commissioner Shirley Stuart made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Richard Rossander, to approve the first reading of Ordinance 23-894.

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

- 2. Discussion and Consideration of Resolution 2023-06 Authorizing Application for Financial Assistance from The Texas Water Development Board for water system improvements; and making certain findings in connection therewith

City Manager JJ Oznick stated that we are still trying to find a way to fund the water improvement plan which was approved in 2018. Due to the pandemic and the increase in the cost of materials needed to complete the project, we have to seek additional funds. We would like authorization to apply for assistance from the Texas Water Development Board.

Commissioner Richard Rossander made a motion, seconded by Commissioner James Doyle, to authorize the application for Financial Assistance from the Texas Water Development Board.

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

3. Discussion and Consideration to Approve Resolution
2023-07 Designating Authorized Signatories

Finance Director Leslie Zander explained that when new Commissioners are elected, the bank requires a resolution in order to change the Signatories on the City accounts.

Commissioner Shirley Stuart made a motion, seconded by Commissioner James Doyle, to approve Resolution 2023-07

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

4. Discussion and Consideration Approval of Planning and
Zoning Board member changing designation from
alternate to a full board member.

Planning and Zoning Director Tony Stubblefield made the recommendation that Jill Warren be approved as a full-time member. Mrs. Warren will replace James Doyle, who was elected City Commissioner. He could not serve on both boards.

Commissioner James Doyle made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Shirley Stuart, to approve designating Jill Warren as a full Planning & Zoning Board Member.

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

5. Discussion and Consideration of Conveyance of Warner University
Subdivision to Eastland Community Foundation from EEDI

EEDI Executive Director Ryder Warren stated that in 2007, the bulk of the Warner University Subdivision was conveyed by the EEDI to the Eastland Community Foundation. Upon surveying the property recently, it was discovered that Lot 3 block 1 was not on the original conveyance. Due to a potential sale of this property, we need to make sure everything is correct.

Commissioner Richard Rossander made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Shirley Stuart, to approve the Conveyance of Lot 3 Block 1 of the Warner University Subdivision to Eastland Community Foundation

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

6. Discussion and Consideration Eastland County Museum request for
funds from Hotel/Motel Tax

Representatives from the Eastland County Museum, Don Griffin, Jeanie Griffin and Robert Culverhouse met with Chairman Vernon and City Manager Oznick recently. They shared their desire to participate in receiving Hotel/Motel Tax funds in order to continue operating the Eastland County Museum.

City Manager Oznick stated that we are planning to have a surplus in the Hotel/Motel Tax funds budget this year. We have approximately \$44,000 in surplus already. Mr. Oznick

recommended that we allot \$1500 per month beginning in July. He stated the museum is a vital part of this community and we all benefit from it.

Chairman Vernon spoke and stated that, beginning in the next budget year we are looking at increasing the amount of Hotel/Motel Tax funds allocated to all of the entities who currently receive these funds. He made the caveat that if the Hotel/Motel Tax Funds were to decrease, the amount allocated to each entity could also decrease.

Mr. Oznick mentioned that, with the allotment of these funds, they are responsible for turning in a quarterly report to the Commission, showing how the funds are being used.

Commissioner Richard Rossander made a motion, seconded by Commissioner James Doyle, to approve the allocation of \$1500 per month, \$18,000 per year, to the Eastland County Museum.

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

IX. City Manager Report

GLO-CDBG-MIT Project Planning

We have the first set of plans for those that have agreed for clearing. We will have to put a cutoff date soon.

TWDB Flood infrastructure Fund Grant

Waiting for the final report.

EASTLAND MUNICIPAL AIRPORT UPDATE

The project is looking GREAT!!

X. Code Compliance Report

Planning and Zoning Director Tony Stubblefield reported the Code Compliance Report for May 2023. There were 48 open cases at the beginning of the month, 34 new cases were opened and 28 cases were closed, which ended the month with 54 cases open. 4 Citations were issued, 2 cases were reported for Back Taxes and 4 Annual Notices were issued. Total fines assessed was \$1,336.

Mr. Stubblefield also advised the Commissioners that Troy Construction is clearing the lot behind Blake Fulenwider in the Eastland Business Park. They have placed two office buildings there already. They will be using the lot as a pipe yard for a job that consists of laying pipe between Abilene and Fort Worth.

Also, HTeaO has submitted their building plans for the remodel of the building between Sonic and Dairy Queen. Once the plans are approved, they will begin working on the building.

XI. Police Chief Report

Chief Tim Pitts stated there were 250 calls for service in May. 21 cases were filed with the District Attorney. There were 61 offense reports generated. He noted 15 arrests with 23 charges. A total of 413 traffic stops were initiated. This resulted in 302 warning citations and 111 citations issued. He also stated that 277 “business checks” were conducted. Our Animal Control Officer continues to be very active with 127 business calls. 6 citations were issued along with 18 warning citations. 21 animals were impounded and 7 were adopted.

Chief Pitts stated K-9 Officer Katie Thompson is currently attending another school to receive another certification.

We had the first deployment of the Tire Deflation Device, also known as a “spike strip”. DPS was in a pursuit on I-20 and we were able to assist them in stopping the vehicle, minimizing the danger of the pursuit.

Most of you know that our current Patrol Sergeant, Samuel Joiner, has been accepted to the Texas DPS and will begin his career with them in August. Ronnie Allman has been hired to be the new Patrol Sergeant. He is originally from Eastland and graduated from Eastland High School. He is a Master Peace Officer with 23 years of experience. He is a Law Enforcement instructor in several different areas. I believe he will be a great asset to our department.

XII. Fire Chief Report

Fire Chief Joe Williamson gave the following activity report for the month of May 2023 for the Volunteer and Paid Firefighters. Total call volume: 78 which was an average of 2.51 calls per day. 59 of these were in the City Limits and 17 of them were in the county and they responded to 2 calls for mutual aid to other county fire departments. There were 14 incidents between 10 p.m. and 7 a.m. There were no structure fires, 1 grass fire and 1 vehicle fire. They responded to 40 Medical calls, 13 Motor Vehicle accidents and 8 Public Service assists and 13 false alarms/investigations. Volunteer membership is at 26.

Chief Williamson informed the Commissioners that we are now at full staff. He introduced Lillian Brummitt and stated that she recently went through the Fire Academy and is looking forward to being a part of the Eastland Fire Department.

XIII. Adjournment

Commissioner Richard Rossander made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Shirley Stuart, to adjourn at 7:21 p.m. Motion passed unanimously.

APPROVED

Larry Vernon, Chairman
Board of City Commissioners

ATTEST

Roma Holley, City Secretary