

**City of West Orange
Monday, June 12, 2023
Regular Session**

**City Council Chambers
2700 Western Avenue (rear entrance)
West Orange, Texas
5:00 P.M.**

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mayor Randy Branch
Michael Shugart, Sr.

Meritta Kennedy
Lanie Brown

Jay Odom

COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT:

Brent Dearing

APPOINTED OFFICIALS PRESENT:

Christopher Leavins
Simmie Gibson

Jon Sherwin
David Roberts

Theresa Van Meter

OTHERS PRESENT:

Kirk Roccaforte
Jane Branch
Matthew Frederick

Kimberly Cline
Michael Corbett

Mary Odom
Tremaine Wilson

Call to Order

Mayor Branch called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. Council Member Shugart gave the invocation. The mayor then led in the Pledges of Allegiance to the American and Texas flags.

Consent Agenda

Discussion and Possible Action on approval of the minutes of the May 9, 2023 City Council Meeting - These minutes were approved and accepted into record by vote after a motion was made by Council Member Brown, followed by a second from Mayor Pro-Tem Kennedy.

Staff Reports

Public Works – Jon Sherwin

Mr. Sherwin reported the following activities for the month of May, 2023:

- **Construction Projects**
 - WWTP – No new information available
 - City Hall Generator Project –
- **Building Official**
 - 43 permits issued; 25 permits completed
- **Sanitation**
 - 13 loads (34 tons) of green waste collected
- **Animal Control**
 - 89 calls
 - 15 intakes (2 surrendered)
 - 2 claimed/1 adopted/14 rescued (kittens)/1 euthanized
 - 1 court filing
- **Street**
 - Patching streets with cold mix and rock in drives
 - Cleaning 1,100 linear feet of ditches
- **Parks**
 - Mowing continues
 - Repairs to gazebo
- **Shop**
 - 2 full-services
 - Normal repairs of city assets
 - Monthly 30-for-30 (All police and fire vehicles in good working order.)
 - Large outfall ditch mowing continues

Police Department– Matthew Frederick

Investigator Frederick gave the following statistics for the month of May, 2023:

- Traffic contacts: 49
- Crashes reported: 7
- Arrests: 83
- Reports: 56
- Calls for service: 441
- Miles driven: 11,516

General Administration – Theresa Van Meter

Mrs. Van Meter announced that the City's new website was finally on-line. She encouraged everyone to sign up for notifications for Alerts, General Updates and Agendas & Minutes postings.

Volunteer Fire Department – Simmie Gibson

Assistant Chief Gibson reported the following activity for the department during the month of May, 2023:

- Trash, vehicle, other fires: 3
- Gas Leak: 1
- Power Line down/issues: 4
- Motor Vehicle Collisions: 1
- Medical assist calls: 2
- Mutual Aid given: 1
- Cancelled enroute: 1

Regular Session

Discussion and Possible Action on a Resolution joining the Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas in support of the Tribes of Texas Equal and Fair Opportunity Act – Council Member Brown made a motion that this resolution be passed as written. Council Member Odom seconded her motion. Council Member Brown expressed her appreciation to the tribe for the many contributions, not only to deep east Texas, but to all of southeast Texas, as well. The mayor then called for a vote on the motion, which passed unanimously. Mayor Branch then read the resolution aloud for the benefit of those present. He then presented the resolution to Ms. Kimberly Cline, who was present representing the Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas. She expressed her appreciation to the Council for the resolution and their support.

Discussion and Possible Action on a request submitted by Shari Medina representing Medina Property Group, LLC for a variance to Ordinance No. 302-F to place a HUD-code manufactured home at 2015 Crabtree – Mayor Branch explained that Ms. Medina had requested to postpone her request until the July meeting, so he would be tabling this item for the time being.

Discussion and Possible Action on approving the recommendation of the Selection Review Committee to award, by Resolution, a contract for engineering services pertaining to the implementation, if awarded, of the City's Hurricane Harvey DR-4332 from the Texas Division of Emergency Management for city-wide drainage improvements – A motion was made by Council Member Brown to approve the recommendation of the Selection Review Committee to award, by Resolution, a contract for engineering services pertaining to the implementation, if awarded, of the City's Hurricane Harvey DR-4332 from the Texas Division of Emergency Management for city-wide drainage improvements to Leavins Engineering and Design LLC. This motion received a second from Council Member Shugart. A vote was cast; motion carried unanimously.

Discussion and Possible Action on approving the recommendation of the Selection Review Committee to award a contract for demolition services for up to four properties within the city – Council Member Odom made a motion that Council approve the recommendation of the Selection Review Committee to award a contract for demolition services for up to four properties within the city to Ceaser Landscaping & Construction LLC at a cost of \$17,100. Mayor Pro-Tem Kennedy seconded this motion. With there being no discussion on the item, Mayor Branch called for a vote, with the motion passing unanimously.

Discussion and Possible Action on renewing employees' health, vision and dental insurance through TX Health Benefits Pool for the 2023-2024 fiscal year – Mayor Pro-Tem Kennedy made a motion approving the renewal of City employees' health, vision and dental insurance through TX Health Benefits Pool for the 2023-2024 fiscal year. This motion received a second from Council Member Brown. The new rates for the 2023-2024 fiscal year included an increase of 12% for medical coverage, 8% for dental coverage and no increase on vision coverage. The mayor then called for a vote on the motion, which was unanimously approved.

Discussion and Possible Action on authorizing the Mayor to execute an Assignment Agreement with the OCWCID #2 regarding a South Avenue sewer project – Council Member Brown made a motion that the Mayor be authorized to execute an Assignment Agreement with the OCWCID #2 regarding a South Avenue sewer project. Council Member Shugart seconded her motion. Mayor Branch then explained that the Water District has agreed to take that project on themselves and therefore the City does not need to be involved. The motion and second were then rescinded by Council Members Brown and Shugart respectively.

Discussion of possible economic development options for the City of West Orange – Mayor Branch opened the discussion by stating that West Orange has property that could be developed. He explained that the option to increase the current sales tax by ¼% is available to be used for economic development. He added that West Orange is fighting the City of Orange for developments, as they have more resources available to them.

He further explained that a \$100 purchase would only cost an additional \$0.25 should this increase come to pass. Council Member Brown asked if the city would maintain these funds, or if the County EDC would handle them. The mayor responded that the city would have a dedicated account and would administer them.

Commissioner Roccaforte stated that he understands that this would have to be brought to the voters of West Orange. Mayor Branch confirmed this, adding that he would like to see it on the November ballot.

Assistant Fire Chief Gipson stated that the Water District needs to update the water mains and hydrants throughout the city, but especially off of MacArthur Drive. The mayor responded that there may be grants available to help with that. Council Member Shugart suggested holding a workshop with members of the Water District to discuss these issues.

Announcements

Mayor Branch then announced that:

- All non-emergency departments of the City closed in observance of Independence Day on Tuesday, July 4, 2023
- Next Regular Council meeting: Monday, July 10, 2023; 5:00 p.m

Adjournment

With there being no further business before Council, Mayor Branch adjourned the meeting at 5:29 p.m.



Randy Branch, Mayor

ATTEST:



Theresa Van Meter, City Secretary

