



City of West Orange

City Hall
2700 Western Avenue
West Orange, TX 77630

City Council Special Session Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, May 7, 2024

5:00 p.m.

Council Chamber

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mayor Randy Branch
Meritta Kennedy

Jay Odom
Lanie Brown

Michael Shugart, Sr.
Brent Dearing

APPOINTED OFFICIALS PRESENT:

Theresa Van Meter
David Roberts

Jon Sherwin
Simmie Gibson

Mike Stelly
Carl Thibodeaux

OTHERS PRESENT:

Sherry Shugart
Gail Langton
Tremaine Wilson

Mary Odom
James Fisette
Richard Jones

Michaela Thibodeaux
Rich Mosel
Crystal McIlvaine

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 both the United States and Texas flags.

The mayor then announced that this was Economic Development Week, and as the City of West Orange now has an Economic Development Corporation, this week was being observed in the City.

Consent Agenda

Discussion and Possible Action on approval of the minutes of the April 8, 2024 Council Meeting – These minutes were unanimously approved by vote after a motion was made by Council Member Brown, with a second by Mayor Pro-Tem Kennedy.

Mayor Branch then presented Certificates of Appreciation to those with expiring terms: Council Members Brown, Odom and Shugart. The mayor thanked them for their dedication and service to the city.

Public Comments

Mr. Rich Mosel (2805 Smith Street) expressed his concern over his street becoming a “drag strip.” He added that not only are students speeding down the street, but also many school buses. It has become an “everyday thing.” He has complained to the school district’s police department, but felt that he got nowhere with them. He is afraid someone is going to get hurt.

Staff Reports

Public Works – Jon Sherwin

Mr. Sherwin reported the following activities for the month of April, 2024:

- **Construction Projects**
 - Waste Water Treatment Plant contract has been awarded; Notice to Proceed (NTP) June 17, 2024
 - City Hall Generator Project – Still waiting on CenterPoint Energy
 - Drainage improvement project – on-schedule
 - Acquisition grant – near completion with only demolition of structure remaining, scheduled for May 11th.
 - Pipe-bursting project going on throughout city with many manholes being replaced or added
- **Building Official**
 - 22 permits issued (0 new construction)

- 30 permits completed
- 5 properties set for demolition (Bid opening May 15th)
 - 1319 E. Milam
 - 2836 Bonham
 - 914 Lansing
 - 2120 Crockett
 - 218 Katherine
- **Sanitation**
 - 24 loads of green waste collected
 - 1 (2.5 tons) loads of C & D to landfill
- **Animal Control**
 - 65 calls
 - 15 intakes
 - 1 claimed/4 adopted/1 rescued
 - 0 court filings
- **Street**
 - 2 tons of cold mix place on streets
 - Cleaned ditches on Jasper and Crockett Streets
- **Parks**
 - Litter pickup continues
 - Mowing continues
- **Shop**
 - 2 full-services performed
 - Normal repairs of city assets
 - Monthly 30-for-30 – All police and fire vehicles in good working condition
 - Mowing ditches

Police Department – Mike Stelly

Chief Stelly gave the following statistics for the month of April, 2024:

- Traffic contacts: 171
- Crashes reported: 6
- Arrests: 33
- Reports: 36
- Calls for service: 567
- Miles driven: 10,814

Code Enforcement

Violations Investigated: 124

Violations filed w/Court: 14

Volunteer Fire Department – Simmie Gibson

Asst. Fire Chief Gibson reported the following activity for the department during the month of April, 2024:

- Structure Fires: 2
- Vehicle Fires: 1
- Grass Fires: 3
- Medical Assist Calls: 3
- EMS Incidents: 1
- Combustible Spill/Leaks: 1
- Smoke Odor Calls: 1
- False Alarms: 1
- Dispatched/Cancelled Enroute: 2

Regular Session

Mayor Branch announced that, as there was no opposition to the incumbents for the May 4th election, Council Members Shugart, Odom and Brown were duly elected to serve another two-year term.

Issuance of Statements of Elected Officers - Council Members Shugart, Odom and Brown each signed a Statement of Elected Officer prior to taking the Oath of Office.

Issuance of Oaths of Office of Elected Officials – Orange County Judge John Gothia administered the Oath of Office to Council Member Brown, while City Secretary Theresa Van Meter administered the Oaths to Council Members Shugart and Odom.

Presentation of Certificates of Election – Mayor Branch congratulated the “new” council members and presented each with a Certificate of Election.

Discussion and Possible Action on election of Mayor Pro-Tempore – Mayor Branch nominated Council Member Kennedy to serve another term as Mayor Pro-Tem. Council Member Odom seconded his motion. With there being no other nominations nor discussion, the mayor called for a vote. The motion passed unanimously.

Discussion and Possible Action on approval of the following mayoral appointments - Mayor Branch then announced his appointments for the 2024-25 year:

- a. City Attorney – Christopher Leavins
- b. Municipal Court Judge – Carl Thibodeaux
- c. Municipal Court Judge – Alternate – Jay Odom
- d. WOVFD Chief – David Roberts
- e. WOVFD Assistant Chief – Simmie Gibson, III

Council Member Brown made a motion to approve the mayor's appointments as presented. Her motion was seconded by Council Member Shugart. A vote was cast; motion carried unanimously.

Administration of Statements of Appointed Officials and Oaths of Office for Appointed Officials – Each appointee then signed his Statement of Appointed Official form; after which they individually took the Oath of Office, administered by Mrs. Van Meter.

Discussion and Possible Action on an Application for Membership into the WOVFD submitted by Guy Geuder – A motion was made by Council Member Shugart to approve Mr. Geuder's application for membership in the WOVFD. Council Member Brown seconded this motion. With there being no discussion, Mayor Branch called for a vote; with the motion passing unanimously.

Discussion and Possible Action on accepting into record the Quarterly Investment Report for January – March, 2024 – A motion was made by Mayor Pro-Tem Kennedy to accept into record the Quarterly Investment Report for January – March, 2024 as presented. Council Member Brown seconded this motion. There was no discussion on the report, therefore the mayor called for a vote on the motion, which passed unanimously.

Discussion and Possible Action on the following residential tax exemptions for tax year 2024:

- a. Homestead
- b. 65 or older
- c. Disabled

Council Member Brown made a motion that these exemptions be adopted for tax year 2024 as presented. Mayor Pro-Tem Kennedy seconded her motion. Council Member Brown then amended her motion to include amounts for each exemption as follows:

- a. Homestead: 20%
- b. 65 or older: \$17,000
- c. Disabled: \$17,000

Mayor Pro-Tem Kennedy amended her second to the motion accordingly. There was no further discussion the item, therefore Mayor Branch called for a vote. The motion carried unanimously. The exemptions for 2024 were adopted as presented by Council Member Brown.

Discussion and Possible Action on reviewing and approving the City of West Orange's Investment Policy – Council Member Brown made a motion that the City of West Orange's Investment Policy be approved to include the amendments presented. Her motion received a second from Mayor Pro-Tem Kennedy. Mayor Branch reported that this policy had been submitted to TexPool for review and they confirmed that it does meet their criteria for investment purposes. There being no further discussion, he then called for a vote on the motion, which passed unanimously.

Discussion and Possible Action on authorizing the City Secretary to publish notice requesting proposals for depository services for the City – Council Member Odom made a motion that the City Secretary be authorized to publish notice requesting proposals for depository services for the City. Council Member Brown seconded this motion. A vote was cast; motion carried.

Discussion and Possible Action on sending a notice of cancellation to Orange County regarding a 1987 contract by which the WOVFD provided fire protection to a certain unincorporated area in the County – Council Member Odom made a motion that a notice of

cancellation be sent to Orange County regarding a 1987 contract by which the WOVFD provided fire protection to a certain unincorporated area in the County. Mayor Pro-Tem Kennedy seconded his motion. Mayor Branch explained that the majority of the land covered by this contract is now where Golden Triangle Polymers is being built. They will have their own fire department. There was no further discussion, therefore the mayor called for a vote on the motion, which passed unanimously.

Announcements

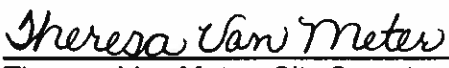
Mayor Branch then announced that the next Council meeting was scheduled for Monday, June 10, 2024, beginning at 5:00 p.m.

Adjournment

With there being no further business before Council, Mayor Branch adjourned the meeting at 5:35 p.m.



Randy Branch, Mayor

ATTEST:


Theresa Van Meter, City Secretary

