



City of West Orange

City Hall
2700 Western Avenue
West Orange, TX 77630

City Council Regular Session Meeting Minutes

Monday, September 9, 2024

5:00 p.m.

Council Chambers

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mayor Randy Branch
Lanie Brown

Jay Odom
Brent Dearing

Meritta Kennedy

OFFICIALS ABSENT:

Michael Shugart, Sr.

APPOINTED OFFICIALS PRESENT:

Theresa Van Meter
David Roberts

Jon Sherwin
Simmie Gibson

Mike Stelly

OTHERS PRESENT:

Vera Bacon
Tremaine Wilson, Sr.
Michael Corbett

Jaycee Bacon
Tremaine Wilson, Jr.
Bob Dickinson

Claude Webb
Jane Branch
Sandra Howard

Call to Order

Mayor Branch called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m., who then gave the invocation and also led in the Pledges of Allegiance to both the United States and Texas flags.

Consent Agenda

Discussion and Possible Action on approval of the minutes of the August 12, 2024 City Council Meeting and the August 12, 2024 Budget Workshop- Both sets of minutes were unanimously approved by vote after a motion was made by Council Member Odom with a second by Council Member Brown.

Public Comments

Mr. Webb (Webb Family Trust) stated that he was speaking to Council regarding 407 Dayton, 1117 Dayton and 825 Jasper. Those properties are in need of repair, but he just cannot get to them at this time. He will need to get as much time as he can on those properties. The structure at 923 Irving has been torn down, but has not been picked up yet.

Mr. Webb stated that he will submit a request to be on the October agenda to discuss his properties.

Chief Stelly reported that TS Francine has shifted toward the Vermillion and Cameron areas of Louisiana. It is a fast-moving storm and is expected to be a Category 2 hurricane by the time it makes landfall later in the week.

Staff Reports

Public Works – Jon Sherwin

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

- **Construction Projects**
 - Waste Water Treatment Plant construction has begun and is on schedule
 - City Hall Generator Project – online; still has work to be performed and punch list
 - Drainage improvement project – culvert replacement complete; working on large collection ditch cleaning
 - Water District to begin water line and hydrant replacements this week

- **Building Official**
 - 22 permits issued (1 new construction)
 - 33 permits completed
 - Currently at \$26,669 in revenue, which is nearly 22% more than this same period last year.
- **Sanitation**
 - 29 loads of green waste collected (\$4,350)
 - 3 loads (13 tons) of C & D to landfill
- **Animal Control**
 - 65 calls
 - 8 intakes
 - 3 claimed/5 adopted/0 rescued
 - 5 court filings
- **Street**
 - Began clearing brush on collection ditch east of Lansing
 - Patching utility cuts and potholes throughout city
- **Parks**
 - Litter pickup continues
 - Mowing city property and alleyways
- **Shop**
 - Normal repairs of city assets (5 full-services performed)
 - Monthly 30-for-30 – All police and fire vehicles in good working condition
 - Mowing large collection ditches

Police Department – Mike Stelly

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

- Traffic contacts: 444
- Crashes reported: 5
- Arrests: 37
- Reports: 42
- Calls for service: 590
- Miles driven: 12,606

Code Enforcement

Violations Investigated: 121

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 August, 2024:

- Structure Fire: 1
- Vegetation Fires: 2
- Electrical Issues: 1
- Medical Assist Calls: 5
- False Alarms: 3
- Dispatched/Cancelled Enroute: 2
- Other: 1

Regular Session

Presentation to Council by Ms. Vera Bacon regarding dog incidents in her neighborhood – Mayor Branch stated that he and Council were aware of the incident involving Ms. Bacon's dog being attacked by a neighbor's dog after Ms. Bacon's dog got into the neighbor's yard. He added that he did not feel that Council could do much to help her – that she needed to work with Animal Control to possibly petition the Court for some type of judgment – or not, depending upon the decision of the judge, but if she had anything she wished to say to Council, she was welcome to do so. Ms. Bacon stated that she has already spoken with Animal Control, and the dog owner has "not even gotten a ticket." According to Ms. Bacon, the neighbor's dog has had no shots. Her dog was severely injured and required surgery after being attacked by that dog. She is afraid that someone will be badly injured by the dog. She stated that this is a "seriously dangerous dog and someone has got to do something."

She was asked if she filed a complaint when her dog was injured and she responded that it would "do no good." Council Member Dearing asked if she called the police. She responded that "in West Orange, the police have nothing to do with anything that is animal related...everything goes through animal control."

Mayor Branch pointed out that Ms. Bacon's dog got loose and went into another person's yard, where it was attacked. She is ultimately responsible for the actions of her animal. He added that Ms. Bacon has to take some ownership for what happened. He also stated that all of the other incidents involving the neighbor's dog should have been reported at the time they occurred.

The mayor then told Ms. Bacon once again that there was nothing that the Council could do for her, but he would have the Animal Control Officer get with the Municipal Court the following morning so that the matter could be dealt with legally.

Discussion and Possible Action on a request from Mr. Kenny Pigg for a permit to burn within the City limits of West Orange in accordance with City of West Orange Ordinance No. 205-A – A motion was made by Council Member Odom to approve Mr. Pigg's request, followed by a second from Council Member Brown. Mayor Branch stated that he would like Mr. Pigg to alert the fire department before he begins to burn so that they are aware, as he is certain they will receive calls from the public. Asst. Chief Gibson stated that he would appreciate it if Mr. Pigg would wait until the weather cools off a bit, as the ground is still very dry. Mayor Branch asked that this request be passed on to Mr. Pigg. A vote on the motion was then called, passing unanimously.

Discussion and Possible Action on adopting a Resolution supporting the South East Texas Regional Planning Commission-Metropolitan Planning Organization's effort to redesignate and expand its planning area boundaries to accept Jasper County – Council Member Brown made a motion that Council adopt this Resolution supporting the South East Texas Regional Planning Commission-Metropolitan Planning Organization's effort to redesignate and expand its planning area boundaries to accept Jasper County. This motion received a second from Council Member Odom.

Mr. Dickinson then addressed Council, expressing his appreciation for this item being added to the agenda for consideration. He explained the background surrounding the need for this resolution. He stated that what this will do is add more population to the formulas and potentially some additional funding that TxDOT gets allocated in this district. He added that "anything we can do to improve the movement of people and goods from Point A to Point B in the safest and most timely manner is the goal and this will greatly assist in those efforts."

Mayor Branch then called for a vote on the motion, which passed unanimously.

Discussion and Possible Action on casting the City's ballot for persons to fill the open positions on the TML-IRP Board of Directors – Council Member Brown then made a motion that the City's votes go to the following nominees for the open positions on the TML-IRP Board of Directors:

- Place 11: Randy Criswell
- Place 12: Allison Heyward
- Place 13: Harlan Jefferson
- Place 14: Mike Land

Council Member Odom seconded her motion. A vote was cast; motion carried.

Discussion and Possible Action on submission of the City's ballot for Region 16 Representatives for the TML Board of Directors – Council Member Brown moved that the City's vote for the Region 16 Representative for the TML Board of Directors be cast for Cindy Burchfield. This motion received a second from Council Member Odom. A vote was cast; motion carried.

Announcements

Mayor Branch then made note of the following:

1. Public Hearing on Proposed Budget for FY 2025 – Tuesday, September 24, 2024; 5:00 p.m.
2. Public Hearing on Proposed Tax Rate – Tuesday, September 24, 2024; 5:15 p.m.
3. Special-Called Council Meeting – Thursday, September 26, 2024; 5:00 p.m.
4. Next Regular Council Meeting: Monday, October 14, 2024; 5:00 p.m.
5. Registrations now being accepted for "Holiday in the Park" – (Saturday, Nov. 2, 2024)
6. West Orange Fall Clean-Up Event – Saturday, November 16, 2024 – 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Adjournment

With there being no further business before Council, Mayor Branch adjourned the meeting at 5:45 p.m.

R R Branch
Randy Branch, Mayor

ATTEST:

Theresa Van Meter
Theresa Van Meter, City Secretary

