



City of West Orange

City Hall
2700 Western Avenue
West Orange, TX 77630

City Council Special Session Meeting Minutes

Thursday, May 8, 2025

5:00 p.m.

Council Chambers

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mayor Randy Branch
Meritta Kennedy

Jay Odom
Lanie Brown

Michael Shugart, Sr.
Brent Dearing

APPOINTED OFFICIALS PRESENT:

Jon Sherwin
Carl Thibodeaux

Mike Stelly
Theresa Van Meter

Christopher Leavins

OTHERS PRESENT:

Gail Langton
Mary Odom
Stuart Saragoza
Charles MacLaughlin

Jane Branch
Gerald Thomas
Tony Baumgartner

Susan Touchstone
Sharon Thomas
Ida Schossow

Call to Order

Mayor Branch called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. Council Member Shugart gave the invocation followed by the mayor leading 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 April 14, 2025 Council Meeting – A motion was made by Council Member Brown to accept the minutes as presented. Her motion was seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Kennedy. A vote was cast; motion carried.

Staff Reports

Public Works – Jon Sherwin

Mr. Sherwin reported the following activities for the month of April, 2025:

- **Construction Projects**
 - Waste Water Treatment Plant construction is on schedule.
 - Drainage improvement project – ditch from MacArthur to South is about 60% complete
- **Building Official**
 - 12 permits issued
 - 25 permits completed
- **Sanitation**
 - 25 loads of green waste collected
 - Spring cleanup event – 44 vehicles came through in two days. City had rented seven dumpsters. TCEQ now requiring cities to hold at least one cleanup event per year.
- **Animal Control**
 - 84 calls
 - 12 intakes
 - 8 adopted / 1 rescued
 - no court filings
 - On Earth Day, Shangri Law collected donations for the local animal shelters (split equally between Cities of West Orange, Pinehurst and Orange); donation to WO was \$854.28
- **Street**
 - Continuing daily duties
- **Parks**
 - Continuing daily duties
- **Shop**

- Continuing daily duties

Police Department – Mike Stelly

Chief Stelly gave the following statistics for the month of April, 2025:

- Traffic contacts: 270
- Crashes reported: 5
- Arrests: 32
- Reports: 18
- Calls for service: 421
- Miles driven: 12,576

Code Enforcement

Violations Investigated: 41

Violations filed w/Court: 1

WOVFD

In Asst. Chief Gibson's absence, Council Member Brown reported the following activities for the month of April, 2025:

Building Fires – 1
Alarm system calls - 1
Brush and/or Grass fires – 1
Rubbish fires - 1
Smoke - 1
Medical assists – 1
Carbon monoxide incidents - 1
Electrical wiring equipment problems – 1
Service calls – 1
Person in distress calls – 1
Public Service Assistance – 1
Smoke Detector – no fire - 2

Regular Session

Canvass of the May 3, 2025 General Election (*Order of Cancellation – Ordinance No. 492*)

- Mayor Branch read aloud Ordinance No. 492, which declared the following individuals as opposed and thereby duly elected to hold office:

Randy Branch – Mayor
Meritta Kennedy – Alderman
Gail Langton - Alderman

Mayor Branch then presented framed certificates of appreciation to Mayor Pro-Tem Kennedy and Council Member Dearing. He expressed his appreciation to both for their service on the Council. The mayor also received a certificate.

Issuance of Statements of Elected Official – The Statement of Elected Officials was then signed by those duly elected to hold office.

Issuance of Oaths of Office – Judge Ida Schossow then administered the Oath of Office to Mr. Branch and Mrs. Kennedy while City Secretary Theresa Van Meter administered the Oath to Ms. Langton.

Presentation of Certificates of Election – Mayor Branch and Aldermen Kennedy and Langton were then presented with Certificates of Election.

Discussion and Possible Action on election of Mayor Pro-Tempore – A motion was made by Council Member Odom to nominate Alderman Kennedy as Mayor Pro-Tem. This motion received a second from Council Member Brown. With there being no additional nominations brought forth, Mayor Branch called for a vote, with the motion passing unanimously.

Discussion and Possible Action on approval of the following mayoral appointments:

- 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 moved that these mayoral appointments be approved as presented. Mayor Pro-Tem Kennedy seconded her motion. With there being no discussion, the mayor called for a vote with all nominations being approved as presented.

Administration of Statements of Appointed Officials and Oaths of Office for Appointed Officials – Those appointees present (Mr. Leavins, Judge Thibodeaux and Judge Odom) then signed their Statement of Appointed Official and took the Oath of Office.

Discussion and Possible Action on a request submitted by Mr. Ranjit Pillai to replat property located at 900 Newton Street to allow for future commercial development – As Mr. Pillai was not in attendance to answer any questions, Council Member Brown made a motion to table Mr. Pillai’s request to the next meeting. Mayor Pro-Tem Kennedy seconded her motion. Mayor Branch then called for a vote on the motion, which passed unanimously.

Discussion and Possible Action on a tabled item previously submitted by Mr. Mark Cook for a variance to Ordinance No. 358-A as it pertains to the number of permitted RV parks allowed within the City – As Mr. Cook was not in attendance to present a rendition of plans for the park he wishes to open, Council Member Brown made a motion to table this item until the next meeting. Council Member Shugart seconded her motion.

Council Member Odom then stated that he wanted to discuss this item and make a decision on it. He explained that he had prepared an informal petition and visited with neighbors of the area surrounding the property proposed for the RV park. He stated that he very quickly obtained thirty (30) signatures, all against an RV park being placed on said property. He added that he opposed tabling the matter, as those signing the petition were residents and voters of the City.

Mayor Branch then called for a vote on Council Member Brown's original motion to table. Voting to table the matter were Council Members Brown and Shugart, and against were Mayor Pro-Tem Kennedy and Council Members Odom and Langton. The motion therefore failed for lack of majority vote.

Mayor Branch then made a motion that Council not bring this up again until Mr. Cook provides more information. Mayor Pro-Tem Kennedy seconded his motion. The mayor then called for a vote, with there being five (5) votes for the motion, and one opposition from Council Member Odom. The motion passed by majority vote.

Discussion and Possible Action on authorizing the City Secretary to advertise for proposals for banking depository services – Mayor Pro-Tem Kennedy made a motion that the City Secretary be authorized to advertise for proposals for banking depository services. Council Member Brown seconded her motion. The mayor called for a vote on the motion, which passed unanimously.

Announcements

Mayor Branch then made note of the following dates:

- All non-emergency offices/departments of the City closed on Monday, May 26, 2025 in observance of Memorial Day
- Next Council meeting – Monday, June 9, 2025 – 5:00 p.m.

Adjournment

With there being no further business before Council, Mayor Branch adjourned the meeting at 5:32 p.m.



Randy Branch, Mayor

ATTEST:



Theresa Van Meter, City Secretary

