



City of West Orange

City Hall
2700 Western Avenue
West Orange, TX 77630

City Council
Regular Session
Meeting Minutes

Monday, August 11, 2025 5:00 p.m. Council Chambers

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:		
Randy Branch	Meritta Kennedy	Jay Odom
Michael Shugart, Sr.	Gail Langton	Lanie Brown
COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT:		
Gail Langton	Meritta Kennedy	
APPOINTED OFFICIALS PRESENT:		
Jon Sherwin	Theresa Van Meter	Mike Stelly
Simmie Gibson	David Roberts	
OTHERS PRESENT:		
Anna Seale	Debbie Schlicher	Lynette Massey
Mardie Thompson	Jane Branch	Richard Jones
Gerald Thomas	Sharon Thomas	Mary Odom
Tommy Lummus	Tremaine Wilson	

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 July 8, 2025 Public Workshop and the July 14, 2025 Council Meeting - Council Member Brown moved that the minutes from each of these meetings be approved as presented. Her motion received a second from Council Member Odom. With there being no discussion, Mayor Branch called for a vote, with the motion passing unanimously.

Staff Reports

Public Works – Jon Sherwin

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

- Construction Projects
 - Waste Water Treatment Plant construction is on schedule.
 - Installation of fire hydrants throughout the City by ToMex continues – 99% complete
- Building Official
 - 31 permits issued (2 new residential)
 - 33 permits completed
- Sanitation
 - 34 loads of green waste collected @ %150 = \$5,100
 - 1 load (2) tons of C&D to landfill
- Animal Control
 - 69 calls
 - 21 intakes
 - 9 claimed / 6 adopted / 0 rescued
 - 4 court filings
- Street
 - Patching of streets and driveways
 - Cleaning ditches
- Parks
 - Mowing & litter removal
- Shop

- Ditch mowing continues
- Normal repairs and maintenance of City assets
- Monthly 30-for-30 – All Police and Fire vehicles in good-working order

Police Department – Mike Stelly

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

- Traffic contacts: 373
- Crashes reported: 6
- Arrests: 9
- Reports: 31
- Calls for service: 465
- Miles driven: 11,227

Code Enforcement

Violations Investigated: 68

Violations filed w/Court: 13

Fire Department –

Assistant Chief Gibson gave the following report for the WOVFD for the month of July, 2025:

- Structure fires: 2
- Outside trash or rubbish fires: 1
- Medical Assists: 4
- Motor vehicle accidents: 4
- Natural gas leaks: 1
- Chemical hazards: 1
- Downed power lines: 3
- Heat detector malfunction: 1
- Alarm system malfunction: 1
- Cancelled enroute: 1
- Smoke detector malfunctions: 1
- Mutual aid-given incidents during the month of July: 3

Regular Session

Discussion and Possible Action on a request from Mardie Thompson for a variance to Ordinance No. 355-D to allow her to have chickens at her residence – Council Member Odom made a motion that Ms. Thompsons' variance request be denied. The motion died for lack of a second. Council Member Brown made a motion to allow Ms. Thompson to keep her chickens. Council Member Shugart seconded her motion.

Ms. Thompson addressed Council regarding having chickens at her residence. She explained that when she moved into West Orange, she did not know that she could not have chickens. She presented photographs to Council showing the placement of her coup and the run for the chickens that is planned to be built. She explained that she will be moving the coup and the run to the very back of her property, near the railroad easement. Ms. Thompson also presented to Council a list of signatures from her neighbors supporting her in keeping the chickens.

Ms. Massey, one of Ms. Thompson's neighbors, spoke up in support of Ms. Thompson. She stated that her grandchildren go over the see the chickens every time they visit her house.

Council Member Brown asked if there had been any complaints about the chickens. Ms. Thompson replied that there none that she knew of.

Council Member Shugart asked Ms. Thompson if she had any roosters. She replied, "one."

Council Member Odom explained that other West Orange residents have asked for variances to have chickens and been told "no" because of their land size. The Ordinance requires a minimum of one acre. Ms. Thompson only has ¼ acre. He does not believe it would be fair to approve her request when others have been refused. Ms. Thompson replied that there are two-three dozen homes in West Orange at the present time with chickens on less than one-acre pieces of property. The mayor stated that these cases should be addressed, as well.

Council Member Odom reported that a man appeared in court the previous week, having been cited for having chickens. He got rid of them. The council member then stated that the

Ordinance may need to be reviewed and/or rewritten to adjust the number of chickens allowed per size of lot.

Council Members Brown and Shugart agreed that they had no problem with the chickens, as there had been no complaints and many of the neighbors have signed off in support of her having them.

Ms. Thompson stated that this would not have even come up if she had not reported a dog getting into her yard. The chickens were discovered by the City when investigating the issue with the dog.

Mr. Lummus stated that he understands both sides of the issue. He does agree that the land requirements of the ordinance need to be revisited. He feels that it should be addressed on a case-by-case basis...not based on land size.

Mayor Branch asked Ms. Thompson how many chickens she has. She responded, seven and three roosters, but two of those roosters are tiny "frizzles" and they make very little noise.

Mrs. Odom stated that she does not believe it to be environmentally safe for the City's residents if everyone had chickens. If everyone with ¼ acre of land had ten chickens, even if cleaned regularly, it would get into the city's water supply. She felt that it would not be healthy to allow everyone with ¼ acre of land to have chickens.

Mayor Branch stated that this is not a dog or chicken problem. It is a people problem. He then asked if there were any other comments. There were none.

The mayor then called for a vote on the motion to allow Ms. Thompson to keep her chickens. Voting in favor of the motion were Council Members Brown and Shugart. Voting against the motion were Council Member Odom and Mayor Branch. With a tie vote, the motion failed.

Council Member Shugart asked Ms. Thompson to come back to the next Council meeting. The mayor added that the ordinance can hopefully be reviewed by then.

Discussion and Possible Action on a previously-tabled request submitted by Mr. Ranjit Pillai to replat property located at 900 Newton Street to allow for future commercial development - With Mr. Pillai not being present to answer questions, the item was skipped and the meeting continued.

Discussion and Possible Action on a Resolution to nominate individuals to be placed on the ballot for the Orange County Appraisal District Board of Directors – A motion was made by Council Member Brown to nominate Karen Fisher and Philip Welch as candidates to be placed on the ballot for the 2025 Orange County Appraisal District Board of Directors. This motion received a second from Council Member Odom. With there being no discussion on the matter, a vote was cast with the motion passing unanimously.

Discussion and Possible Action on allowing the PWD to vacate the alleyways adjacent to Lot 1,2,3 & E 21.4' of 4 Blk 10 West Orange 171.4' X 159', Lot E 21.4' of 13 & Lot all of 14 thru 16 Blk 10 West Orange and Lot S 21.5' of 5, all of 6-11 and Lot W 21.5' of 12 Blk 7 West Orange – Mr. Sherwin explained that the Water District has a sewer line running east/west through this property. He added that he had received a recommendation from the Water District that this property vacation not be approved.

Council Member Odom then made a motion that the Public Works Director not be allowed to vacate the alleyways adjacent to Lot 1,2,3 & E 21.4' of 4 Blk 10 West Orange 171.4' X 159', Lot E 21.4' of 13 & Lot all of 14 thru 16 Blk 10 West Orange and Lot S 21.5' of 5, all of 6-11 and Lot W 21.5' of 12 Blk 7 West Orange. Mayor Branch seconded this motion.

Mr. Sherwin explained that this had been placed on a previous agenda, and that they had been aware that there was a sewer line on the property that ran east/west through the property, however there is also an 8" water main that comes directly from the water tower that runs north/south. Should these alleyways be vacated, the Water District would have no control over what would be placed over these lines. It would be detrimental to the citizens.

With there being no further discussion, Mayor Branch called for a vote on the motion to deny the alleyway vacation. This motion passed by unanimous vote.

Discussion and Possible Action on authorizing the PWD to request bids for CDBG-Dr #24-067-015-E233 providing for the reconstruction of Dayton Street – Council Member

Odom made a motion that the Public Works Director be authorized to request bids for CDBG-Dr #24-067-015-E233 providing for the reconstruction of Dayton Street. This motion was seconded by Council Member Brown. Council Member Odom questioned if anyone from the City would be monitoring this project to make sure the reconstruction is being done correctly. Mr. Sherwin responded that he typically follows the construction progress, but there will also be an engineering firm (LEAD Engineering) who will provide a project manager who is with them during the construction. Mr. Sherwin added that, should there be remaining funds at the end of the project, there are two alternate plans (Alternate 1 and Alternate 2) for the reconstruction of Bradford Street and/or Crabtree Street. So, there will actually be three streets going out for bid, with the main one being Dayton from Western Avenue to 50' south of the railroad tracks. Council Member Brown then asked what materials would be used for Dayton Street. Mr. Sherwin replied that, because of the grant, it has to be done using the same materials as presently on the roads – which for Dayton Street is concrete.

With there being no further discussion, the mayor called for a vote, with the motion passing unanimously.

Discussion and Possible Action on repealing Ordinance No. 355-E and replacing it with Ordinance No. 355-F, regarding animal control in the City – Mr. Sherwin explained the minor change in the ordinance. The current ordinance requires any animal adopted from the shelter to be vaccinated and spayed or neutered within ten days of the adoption. There is a possible program that could help fund these expenses, but not necessarily within a ten-day time constraint. It may take a few days longer. He is therefore asking that this time limit be removed from the ordinance. Council Member Odom made a motion that Ordinance No. 355-E be repealed and replaced with Ordinance No. 355-F, regarding animal control in the City. Council Member Brown seconded this motion. With there being no further discussion, the mayor called for a vote, with the motion passing unanimously.

Discussion and Possible Action on amending the pricing schedule for the adoption of animals from the animal shelter to provide for spaying and neutering of animals - Council Member Brown made a motion that the pricing schedule for the adoption of animals from the animal shelter to provide for spaying and neutering be amended as presented. Council Member Odom seconded her motion.

Mr. Sherwin explained that the adoption fee will go up to \$100. That will cover the cost of vaccinations, spaying or neutering and microchipping. The customer will pay the City, and in turn, the City will pay the Humane Society for the services when they are rendered.

Council Member Brown questioned the process if the new pet owner wished to use their own veterinarian for these services. Mr. Sherwin responded that the City would not participate in that instance.

Council Member Odom questioned the process should the animal have already been spayed or neutered. The mayor responded that there would still be an expense for the vaccinations and microchipping.

Council Member Brown asked if this \$100 fee was comparable to other area cities. Mr. Sherwin responded that this is a pilot program with other area municipalities. Ms. Schlicher added that this will look very attractive to potential adopters, as these fees at a veterinarian begin around \$160. With there being no further discussion, the mayor called for a vote on the motion, which passed unanimously.

Discussion and Possible Action on a Resolution for a speed limit reduction on Foreman Road (FM 105) - Council Member Brown made a motion that this Resolution requesting a speed limit reduction on Foreman Road (FM 105) be passed as presented. A second to this motion was made by Council Member Shugart. After reading the Resolution and with there being no discussion, Mayor Branch called for a vote on the motion, which passed unanimously.

Discussion and Possible Action on a Resolution authorizing signatures for contractual documents and documents requesting funds pertaining to the GLO CDBG grant contract number 23-160-086-F057 - Council Member Brown made a motion that this Resolution authorizing signatures for contractual documents and documents requesting funds pertaining to the GLO CDBG grant contract number 23-160-086-F057 be passed as presented. Council Member Odom seconded her motion. Mr. Sherwin explained that this grant will allow for a consultant to come in and look at a master plan for the City. This is a zero-dollar match grant.

With there being no further discussion, Mayor Branch called for a vote on the motion, which passed unanimously.

Discussion and Possible Action on accepting into record the Quarterly Investment Report for April – June, 2025 - Council Member Odom moved that the Quarterly Investment Report for April – June, 2025 be accepted into record as presented. This motion received a second from Council Member Brown. As there was no discussion on the item, the mayor called for a vote on the motion, which passed unanimously.

Discussion and Possible Action on acknowledging receipt of the Statement of 2025 No-New-Revenue and Voter-Approval Tax Rates with corresponding worksheets - Council Member Odom made a motion that council acknowledge receipt of the Statement of 2025 No-New-Revenue and Voter-Approval Tax Rates with corresponding worksheets. Council Member Brown seconded this motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Discussion and Possible Action on authorizing a proposal on an ad valorem tax rate by record vote and consider setting the date for a public hearing and the adoption of such proposal on a future meeting agenda - Council Member Brown made a motion, stating “I move that we, by record vote, place a proposed tax rate of no greater than \$0.3795 per \$100 valuation on the Monday, September 8, 2025 Regular Meeting agenda at 5:00 p.m. at City Hall and set a public hearing on Thursday, September 4, 2025 at 5:15 p.m. at City Hall to receive comments on such proposal.” Council Member Odom seconded this motion. With there being no discussion, the mayor called for a vote:

Council Member Odom	For
Council Member Brown	For
Council Member Shugart	For
Mayor Branch	For

The motion therefore carried.

Announcements

Mayor Branch then announced that the following meetings of the City Council:

- Public Hearing on Proposed Budget – Thursday, September 4, 2025; 5:00 p.m.
- Public Hearing on Proposed Tax Rate – Thursday, September 4, 2025; 5:15 p.m.
- Next Council Meeting – Monday, September 8, 2025; 5:00 p.m.

Adjournment

With there being no further business before Council, the mayor adjourned the meeting at 5:58 p.m.



Randy Branch, Mayor

ATTEST:



Theresa Van Meter, City Secretary

