



City of West Orange

City Hall
2700 Western Avenue
West Orange, TX 77630

City Council Regular Session Meeting Minutes

Monday, September 8, 2025

5:00 p.m.

Council Chambers

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Randy Branch
Michael Shugart, Sr.

Meritta Kennedy
Gail Langton

Jay Odom
Lanie Brown

APPOINTED OFFICIALS PRESENT:

Jon Sherwin
Simmie Gibson

Theresa Van Meter

Mike Stelly

OTHERS PRESENT:

Stephen West
Mary Odom
Tommy Lummus

Jeff Leavins
Sharon Thomas
Sandy Howard

Jane Branch
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 August 11, 2025 Council Meeting and August 11, 2025 Budget Workshop – Mrs. Van Meter made a correction to the list of those in attendance at the August 11, 2025 meeting. Mayor Pro-Tem Kennedy and Council Member Langton were shown as being present, when they were not. Council Member Brown moved that the minutes of both meetings be approved as amended. Her motion received a second from Council Member Shugart. 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 August, 2025:

- **Construction Projects**
 - Waste Water Treatment Plant construction is on schedule.
- **Building Official**
 - 16 permits issued
 - 22 permits completed
- **Sanitation**
 - 21 loads of green waste collected @ \$150 = \$3,150
 - 2 loads (8) tons of C&D to landfill
- **Animal Control**
 - 67 calls
 - 21 intakes
 - 5 claimed / 2 adopted / 5 rescued
 - 0 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 August, 2025:

- Traffic contacts: 401
- Crashes reported: 7
- Arrests: 62
- Reports: 37
- Calls for service: 473
- Miles driven: 13,432

Code Enforcement

Violations Investigated: 69

Violations filed w/Court: 13

Chief Stelly also reported that his department worked in conjunction with other law enforcement agencies in the area on homeland security matters, leading to 38 apprehensions and 7 deportations.

General Administration

Mrs. Van Meter announced that booth space registrations for the 2025 Holiday in the Park will be open to the public on Monday, September 15, 2025. She expressed her concern regarding the number of food booths that may not participate due to the new “Cottage Food Laws” which went into effect on September 1st. The Legislature has added many items to the “prohibited” list of foods that can be sold at festivals. James Scales, from the County Code Enforcement office, has asked that meetings be scheduled to allow him to meet with the food vendors and explain the rules and regulations put forth from the State. He stated that any food vendor who did not attend the meeting, or get with him prior to the festival, will not be allowed to sell food.

Although there will not be a car show this year, a food truck row has been planned for that block of Jasper Street. These booths will only be rented to those with trucks/trailers...and will be the only booths at the festival who may use a generator for power.

Fire Department

Assistant Chief Gibson gave the following report for the WOVFD for the month of August, 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-F to allow her to have chickens at her residence – Mayor Branch stated that Ms. Thompson sent in a request to be removed from this agenda, so he would move forward to the next item.

Discussion and Possible Action on amending the current Procurement Policy to reflect changes in State law – A motion was made by Mayor Pro-Tem Kennedy to amend the current Procurement Policy to reflect changes in State law as presented. This motion was seconded by Council Member Odom. A vote was cast; motion carried.

Discussion and Possible Action on reappointing the following individuals to the West Orange Economic Development Corporation Board of Directors:

- Randy Branch
- Michael Stelly
- Wayne Wiggins
- Mike Dixon

Council Member Brown made a motion to reappoint Randy Branch, Michael Stelly, Wayne Wiggins and Mike Dixon to the West Orange Economic Development Corporation Board of Directors for a two-year term (Oct. 2025 – Sept. 2027). Council Member Langton seconded this motion. With there being no further discussion, a vote was cast, with the motion passing unanimously.

Discussion and Possible Action on accepting recommendation from LEAD, LLC on awarding contract for Dayton Street (Grant No. DR 24-067-015-E202) – Council Member Odom moved that Council accept the recommendation from LEAD, LLC on awarding contract for Dayton Street (Grant No. DR 24-067-015-E202) to Texas Materials. Council Member Brown seconded his motion. Mayor Branch called for a vote on the motion, which passed unanimously. The project will repave Dayton Street, using concrete as it is now.

Discussion and Possible Action on adjusting pricing for adoption of animals – Council Member Brown made a motion to adjust pricing for the adoption of animals as follows:

- \$125 for canines; includes spay/neuter, DHPP, Bordetella, Rabies, Microchip and HW test if over 7 months of age;
- \$100 for felines; includes spay/neuter; FVRCP, Rabies, Microchip and IDEXX Triple Snap Test for FIV/FelV/HW if over 6 months of age

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

Discussion and Possible Action on authorizing Public Works Director to advertise for, and receive, bids for generators (Grant No. DR 4485-0043 and Grant No. DR 4485-0044) – Mayor Branch explained that these generators would be for the Police and Fire Departments. A motion was made by Council Member Brown to authorize the Public Works Director to advertise for, and receive, bids for generators (Grant No. DR 4485-0043 and Grant No. DR 4485-0044). A second to this motion was made by Council Member Odom. With there being no discussion, the mayor called for a vote, which passed unanimously.

Discussion and Possible Action on authorizing the mayor to negotiate and execute Industrial District Agreements – Mayor Pro Tem Kennedy made a motion to authorize the mayor to negotiate and execute Industrial District Agreements. Council Member Brown seconded her motion. She then asked if these agreements would be brought to council for consideration. Chief Stelly explained that the motion authorizes the mayor to execute the agreements, therefore they will not have to be brought back to Council. As there was no further discussion, Mayor Branch called for a vote on the motion, which passed unanimously.

Discussion and Possible Action on changing the time for Council meetings to 6:30 p.m. (for a trial period of three months: October, November & December) – Council Member Shugart made a motion to not change the time for future Council meetings. Council Member Brown seconded his motion. The mayor stated that in the past, meetings were held later in the evening, and still no one came. He then called for a vote on the motion, which passed unanimously.

Discussion and Possible Action on Ordinance No. 494 (by record vote), levying taxes at the rate of \$0.3795 per \$100 assessed value for the maintenance and operation expenses of the City of West Orange, Texas for the fiscal year commencing October 1, 2025 and ending September 30, 2026 – Council Member Odom stated, “I move that the property tax rate be increased by the adoption of a tax rate of \$0.3795, which is effectively a 4.11% increase in the tax rate, as set forth in Ordinance No. 494.” Mayor Pro-Tem Kennedy seconded this motion.

Mayor Branch explained that this is a very small rate increase...\$0.0015 per hundred-dollar valuation. This would mean a \$1.50 increase per year for a home with a value of \$100,000. He added that the main increase in someone's taxes would be a result of their value increasing, per the county appraisal district.

The mayor then called for a record vote on this motion:

Mayor Pro-Tem Kennedy	Aye
Council Member Langton	Aye
Council Member Odom	Aye
Mayor Branch	Aye
Council Member Brown	Aye
Council Member Shugart	Aye

With the vote being unanimous, the motion carried approving the 2025 property tax rate of \$0.3795 per \$100 valuation.

Discussion and Possible Action on a Resolution ratifying a property tax rate that would increase the budget by \$31,788, which is a 4.12% increase over last year’s budget. The property tax revenue to be raised from new property added to the tax roll this year is \$4,471. – Mayor Pro-Tem Kennedy stated, “I move to approve this Resolution ratifying the budget adopted for 2025-2026 that proposes to raise more revenue from taxes than was raised in 2024-2025, requiring a tax rate of \$0.3795 per \$100 valuation.” Council Member Brown seconded her motion. With there being no discussion, Mayor Branch called for a vote. The motion passed unanimously.

Announcements

Mayor Branch then announced that the next meeting of the City Council would be Monday, October 13, 2025 at 5:00 p.m.

Adjournment

With there being no further business before Council, the mayor adjourned the meeting at 5:28 p.m.



R R Branch
Randy Branch, Mayor

ATTEST:

Theresa Van Meter
Theresa Van Meter, City Secretary