



City of West Orange

City Hall
2700 Western Avenue
West Orange, TX 77630

City Council Regular Session Meeting Minutes

Monday, October 13, 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
David Roberts

Mike Stelly

OTHERS PRESENT:

Jane Branch
Sara Burton

Dr. Ranjit Pillai
Neil Burton

Tremaine Wilson
Sandy Howard

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 September 4, 2025 Budget Hearing, the September 4, 2025 Tax Rate Hearing and the September 8, 2025 Council Meeting – A motion to accept the September 4, 2025 Budget Hearing, the September 4, 2025 Tax Rate Hearing and the September 8, 2025 Council Meeting minutes into record was made by Council Member Odom, followed by a second from Council Member Langton. A vote was cast; motion passed unanimously.

Staff Reports

Public Works – Jon Sherwin

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

- **Construction Projects**
 - Waste Water Treatment Plant construction is on schedule.
 - Dayton Street reconstruction project awarded to Texas Materials. Pre-construction meeting held earlier today.
- **Building Official**
 - 22 permits issued (1 new construction)
 - 25 permits completed
- **Sanitation**
 - 29 loads of green waste collected @ \$150 = \$4,350
- **Animal Control**
 - 63 calls
 - 3 intakes
 - 1 claimed / 2 adopted / 4 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 September, 2025:

- Traffic contacts: 405
- Crashes reported: 5
- Arrests: 26
- Reports: 45
- Calls for service: 472
- Miles driven: 13,206

Code Enforcement

Violations Investigated: 84
Violations filed w/Court: 15

General Administration

Mrs. Van Meter reported that booth space registrations for the 2025 Holiday in the Park have been coming in slowly, mainly due to the new cottage food laws passed by the last Legislature. She expressed her concern regarding the small number of food booths who have registered. With approximately two weeks to go before the festival, hopefully more vendors will sign up.

Fire Department

Assistant Chief Gibson gave the following report for the WOVPD for the month of September, 2025:

- Structure fires: 1
- Outside trash or rubbish fires: 1
- Grass fires: 1
- Medical Assists: 1
- EMS calls: 2
- Motor vehicle accidents: 1
- Extrication of victim from structure: 1
- Service calls: 1
- Dispatched and Cancelled enroute: 2
- Smoke scare: 1
- False alarms: 1
- Smoke detector malfunctions: 1
- Mutual aid-given incidents during the month of September: 3

Recently, the blue fire truck was being backed into the bay when the driver got too close to the building and ran into it. Damage was done both to the building and the truck. Assistant Chief Gibson reported that new safety measures will be implemented to keep this from happening in the future. Should the truck be backed into the bay, a spotter should be present to assist. If no spotter is available truck should be driven in from the back of the bay without having to be put into reverse.

Asst. Chief Gibson also reported that the fire department plans on hosting an event for children on Halloween evening. Mrs. Van Meter will design a flyer and publicize the event.

Regular Session

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 – Dr. Pillai addressed Council, explaining that he plans to renovate the buildings in Lots 3, 4 and 5 (shown on his plat) into climate-controlled storage units. A community church is already holding services in the building on Lot 2 and he is planning on using Lot 1 for the development of single-family housing units. Council Member Brown asked if these housing units would be rentals or owner-occupied. Dr. Pillai initially responded “rentals,” but then stated that he was still in works with his architect on just what would work on that property. He would prefer to sell these homes rather than renting them, but he does not yet know how many homes he will be able to build on those three acres. Mr. Sherwin pointed out that, before construction on those housing units could begin, the property would have to be re-platted and approved by Council once again.

Council Member Odom then made a motion to allow for the re-platting of the property as presented on the plat presented. Mayor Pro-Tem Kennedy seconded his motion.

Council Member Brown reported that she has personally spoken with many of the Fair Park/Newton Street neighbors to this property. They are not in favor of commercial (rental) property. They would much prefer owner-occupied homes.

Council Member Odom then amended his motion to add that Lot 1 would have to be re-platted and approved by Council before anything could be built on it. Mayor Pro-Tem Kennedy seconded the amended motion. Mayor Branch then called for a vote. Voting "for" the motion were Mayor Branch, Mayor Pro-Tem Kennedy, Council Member Odom and Council Member Langton. Voting "against" the motion were Council Member Brown and Council Member Shugart. The motion passed by majority vote.

Discussion and Possible Action on recommendation from LEAD, LLC for contractor for PD and FD generators project – Council Member Brown moved that the recommendation from LEAD, LLC to contract with A&A Electric for the police and fire department generator projects be approved. Council Member Shugart seconded her motion. A vote was cast; motion carried unanimously.

Discussion and Possible Action on condition of parks in West Orange – Mayor Branch stated that he understood that there were interested citizens in the audience. He asked if anyone would like to speak to this item. Mr. Burton stated that his children enjoy going to the Anna Jean Caffey Park to play, but there are some dangerous items on the pieces of equipment there. There is rust and broken metal pieces that stick out and they can "catch little hands and little feet." He added that he and his family live directly across the street from the park and he was hoping something could be done with it.

Mr. Sherwin explained that he had recommended almost a year ago that the equipment be removed, as it did not meet the standards for playground equipment. It is dangerous, but he does not see that repairing it is going to solve all of the problems. He feels that the equipment should be removed.

Mayor Branch added that the City is looking at what it would cost to revamp both parks. Hopefully, they will turn out to be better places for the children to go. He stated that, in the meantime, the dangerous equipment will be torn down.

Mrs. Burton asked if the equipment would be replaced. She stated that her boys love the equipment, but they would be just as happy with a pile of rocks to play on. She asked if that might be possible. She was told that it just might be a possibility.

Mayor Branch asked if there were any comments and/or questions from the Council. Council Member Odom suggested putting together a committee and possibly inviting some of the local industry leaders to a meeting to see if they would be able to help in repairing the parks. Mayor Branch asked if anyone on Council would be willing to serve on this committee. Council Members Odom and Brown both agreed to serve. Mr. and Mrs. Burton were also asked to participate on the committee. Council Member Brown added that she has several other individuals in mind who might be interested.

Mayor Branch thanked the Burtons for their interest and for attending the meeting.

Announcements

Mayor Branch then announced:

- Holiday in the Park - Saturday, November 1, 2025
- the next meeting of the City Council would be Monday, November 10, 2025 at 5:00 p.m.

Adjournment

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



R R Branch
Randy Branch, Mayor

ATTEST:

Theresa Van Meter
Theresa Van Meter, City Secretary