



City of West Orange

City Hall
2700 Western Avenue
West Orange, TX 77630

City Council Regular Session Meeting Minutes

Monday, May 11, 2026

5:00 p.m.

Council Chambers

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Randy Branch
Michael Shugart, Sr.

Jay Odom
Lanie Brown

Meritta Kennedy
Gail Langton

APPOINTED OFFICIALS PRESENT:

Jon Sherwin
Christopher Leavins

Mike Stelly
Simmie Gibson

Theresa Van Meter

OTHERS PRESENT:

Sherry Shugart
Tremaine Wilson, Sr.

Cathey Fleming
Travis Rost

Cheryl Ray

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 March 9, 2026 Council Meeting – A motion was made by Mayor Pro-Tem Kennedy to approve these minutes as presented. Her motion received a second from Council Member Brown. A vote was cast; motion carried unanimously.

Presentation of Council certificates for those with expiring terms – Mayor Branch then presented Certificates of Appreciation to Council Members Shugart, Odom and Brown for their service as Aldermen for the 2024-2026 term.

Public Hearing

Mayor Branch adjourned the Regular Session of the meeting and convened the Public Hearing at 5:05 p.m. to solicit input from the public regarding the changes to the Scope of Work as it pertains to the General Land Office Grant No. 24-067-015-E202. Mrs. Ray gave a brief description of the work to be done with this grant. The original scope of work had been changed because there was a possibility of the presence of Alligator Snapping Turtles in the area planned for work. With there being no further discussion, the mayor closed the public hearing and reconvened the regular meeting at 5:08 p.m.

Staff Reports

Public Works – Jon Sherwin

Mr. Sherwin reported the following activities for the month of April, 2026

- **Construction Projects**
 - Waste Water Treatment Plant construction is on schedule
 - Generator project – generators in place, but not yet operational; waiting on CenterPoint Energy to connect natural gas
- **Building Official**
 - 18 permits issued in January
 - 26 permits completed
- **Sanitation**
 - 18 loads of green waste collected
 - 0 loads of C&D to landfill (Truck was down for a large portion of month.)
- **Animal Control**
 - 63 calls in April

- 8 intakes in April
- 0 claimed / 3 adopted / 2 rescued
- 0 court filings
- **Street**
 - Patching of Streets and driveways
 - Cleaning ditches
 - Gradall currently out of service.
- **Parks**
 - Litter and vegetative waste removal
 - Mowing
- **Shop**
 - Normal repairs and maintenance of City assets
 - Monthly 30-for-30 – all Police and Fire Vehicles in good working condition

Police Department – Michael Stelly

Mr. Stelly reported the following activities for the months of March and April, 2026

	<u>March</u>	<u>April</u>
• Traffic contacts:	222	200
• Crashes reported:	3	6
• Arrests:	29	38
• Reports:	24	36
• Calls for service:	361	367
• Miles driven:	11,910	12,501

Code Enforcement

Violations Investigated:	76	67
Violations filed w/Court:	2	3

Chief Stelly also reminded everyone present that Hurricane Season is scheduled to begin on June 1st. He also reported that the City will be transitioning over to a new telephone system later in the week.

Fire Department – Simmie Gibson

Asst. Fire Chief Gibson reported the following activities for the months of March and April, 2026

	<u>March</u>	<u>April</u>
• Building fire:		
• Trash fire:	0	1
• Brush fire:	1	0
• Outside fire:	1	0
• EMS call:	1	1
• Auto accident w/injuries	1	0
• Vehicle extrication	1	0
• Gas leaks:	0	2
• Service call:	3	1
• Cancelled in route:	2	0
• Alarm malfunction:	1	2

Regular Session

Canvass of the May 2, 2026 Special Election – Mayor Branch announced that Council Members Shugart, Brown and Odom have each been re-elected to their positions as they were certified having no opposition. Therefore, the 2026 General Election was cancelled, per Ordinance No. 498, which was passed by Council at its March 9, 2026 meeting.

The May 2, 2026 Special Election was then canvassed by Mayor Branch, Mayor Pro-Tem Kennedy and Council Member Langton. The following results were verified as presented:

Proposition A:	62 For	19 Against
Proposition B:	64 For	17 Against
Proposition C:	64 For	14 Against
Proposition D:	69 For	9 Against

(A detailed Special Election results report is attached to these minutes.)

Issuance of Statements of Elected Officers – Mrs. Van Meter then distributed the Statements of Elected Officials to Council Members Shugart, Brown and Odom for their signatures.

Issuance of Oaths of Office of Elected Officials – Mrs. Van Meter then gave the Oath of Office to Council Members Shugart, Brown and Odom.

Presentation of Certificates of Election – Mayor Branch then presented Certificates of Election to Council Members Shugart, Brown and Odom for the 2026-2028 term.

Discussion and Possible Action on election of Mayor Pro-Tempore – A motion to re-elect Meritta Kennedy as Mayor Pro-Tempore for the upcoming year was made by Mayor Branch, with a second by Council Member Shugart. With there being no additional nominations, a vote was cast, with the motion passing unanimously.

Discussion and Possible Action on a request from Travis Rost and/or Tracy Rost Byrdson for a variance to Ordinance No. 205-A, to allow for an outdoor public burn – Mr. Rost explained that he would like to burn the grass and weeds in the ditch in order to try to get a handle on it when it starts regrowing. The grass is not hard to manage, but the weeds have gotten bad and he has spent a great deal of money on poison.

Mayor Branch explained to Mr. Rost that he would have to get a permit from TCEQ before the City could issue a permit.

Council Member Odom questioned if the City could scrape the ditch. Mr. Sherwin responded that there is not much room there, but he will go out and look at it.

Discussion and Possible Action on an application to the WOVFD submitted by Andrew Michael Bledsoe – Council Member Odom made a motion that Council accept the application to the WOVFD submitted by Andrew Michael Bledsoe. Council Member Brown seconded this motion. With there being no discussion on the matter, a vote was called with the motion passing unanimously.

Discussion and Possible Action on decision-making authority of Keep West Orange Beautiful – Mayor Pro-Tem Kennedy moved that the Keep West Orange Beautiful committee be authorized to spend any funds not coming from the City (donations, grants, etc.), without Council permission. Council Member Brown seconded her motion. After some discussion, Mr. Leavins stated that he felt that the Committee should still come to Council, since it is a City affiliation. Mayor Pro-Tem Kennedy withdrew her motion and Council Member Brown withdrew her second to the motion. No action was taken on this issue.

Discussion and Possible Action on an Interlocal Agreement with Orange County for the joint procurement of goods and services – A motion was made by Council Member Brown to enter into this Interlocal Agreement with Orange County for the joint procurement of goods and services. Mayor Pro-Tem Kennedy seconded her motion. With there being no discussion, a vote was cast with the motion passing unanimously. Chief Stelly explained that another agreement will be presented at the next meeting for debris monitoring services.

Discussion and Possible Action on the following residential tax exemptions for tax year 2026:

Council Member Odom made a motion that Council adopt the following residential tax exemptions tax year 2026.

Homestead	20%
65 or Older	\$17,000
Disabled	\$17,000

This motion received a second from Council Member Brown. With there being no discussion on the item, Mayor Branch called for a vote, with the motion passing unanimously.

Discussion and Possible Action on a Resolution authorizing the Public Works Director to apply for a grant from Texas Parks and Wildlife and authorizing the mayor to submit a letter of commitment – Mayor Pro-Tem Kennedy made a motion to pass this Resolution authorizing the Public Works Director to apply for a grant from Texas Parks and Wildlife and

authorizing the mayor to submit a letter of commitment. The motion received a second from Council Member Brown. A vote was cast; motion passed unanimously.

Discussion and Possible Action on accepting into record the Quarterly Investment Report for January – March, 2026 - Mayor Pro-Tem Kennedy made a motion to accept into record the Quarterly Investment Report for January – March, 2026. A second to this motion was made by Council Member Brown. With there being no discussion, a vote was cast with the motion passing unanimously.

Announcements

Mayor Branch then announced the following:

- All non-emergency departments of the City will be closed Monday, May 25, 2026 in observance of Memorial Day.
- Next Council Meeting – Monday, June 8, 2026; 5:00 p.m.
- The Special Session previously scheduled for May 12, 2026 at 5:00 has been cancelled, as the Canvass was able to be completed at this meeting.

Adjournment

With there being no further business before Council, the mayor adjourned the meeting at 5:42 p.m.



Randy Branch, Mayor

ATTEST:



Theresa Van Meter, City Secretary



Election Results
(before Canvass)
CITY OF WEST ORANGE
SPECIAL ELECTION
Saturday, May 2, 2026

PROP.	MAIL BALLOTS	EARLY VOTERS	ELECTION DAY	TOTAL VOTES CAST
A The reauthorization of the local sales and use tax in the City of West Orange, Texas at the rate of 1/4% to continue providing revenue for maintenance and repair of municipal streets. The tax expires on the fourth anniversary of the date of this election unless the imposition of the tax is reauthorized. La reautorización del impuesto local sobre ventas y uso en la ciudad de West Orange, Texas, al tipo del 1/4% para seguir generando ingresos para el mantenimiento y reparación de calles municipales. El impuesto expira en el cuarto aniversario de la fecha de esta elección, salvo que se reautorice la imposición del mismo.				
For	4	43	15	62
Against	7	9	3	19
B Shall Article IV, Section 5 of the Charter of the City of West Orange, Texas be amended to provide that the term of office for the Mayor and Aldermen shall be four (4) years and to provide for elections every four (4) years for such positions? Debe enmendarse el Artículo IV, Sección 5 de la Carta de la Ciudad de West Orange, Texas, para establecer que el mandato del alcalde y los concejales será de cuatro (4) años y para prever elecciones cada cuatro (4) años para dichos cargos?				
For	6	43	15	64
Against	5	9	3	17
C If the term of office of the Mayor and Aldermen are changed to four (4) years under Proposition B, shall Article IV, Section 10 of the Charter of the City of West Orange be amended to provide that a vacancy in the office of Mayor or Alderman shall be filled by Special Election called within 120 days after such vacancy, except that the City Council shall fill the vacancy by appointment if the vacancy will be less than twelve (12) months of the unexpired term? Si el mandato del alcalde y los concejales se cambia a cuatro (4) años según la Proposición B, se modificará el Artículo IV, Sección 10 de la Carta de la Ciudad de West Orange, para establecer que una vacante en el cargo de alcalde o concejal se cubrirá mediante una elección especial convocada dentro de los 120 días posteriores a dicha vacante, salvo que el Ayuntamiento cubrirá la vacante por nombramiento si la vacante será inferior a doce (12) meses de un mandato no expirado?				
For	8	41	15	64
Against	3	8	3	14
D If the term of office of the Mayor and Aldermen are changed to four (4) years under Proposition B, shall Article IV, Section 2 of the Charter of the City of West Orange be amended to provide that regular municipal elections shall be held on the first Saturday in May of each year, as necessary, or on such date as directed by State election laws? Si el mandato de alcalde y los concejales se cambia a cuatro (4) años según la Proposición B, se modificará el Artículo IV, Sección 2 de la Carta de la Ciudad de West Orange para establecer que las elecciones municipales regulares se celebren el primer sábado, de mayo de cada año, según sea necesario, o en la fecha que dispongan las leyes electorales estatales?				
For	7	48	14	69
Against	3	2	4	9

UNOPPOSED CANDIDATES DECLARED ELECTED
Term: May 2026- May 2028
Michael Shugart, Sr., Alderman
Lanie Brown, Alderman
Jay Odom, Alderman

1,899 REGISTERED VOTERS