

**MINUTES**  
**EMERGENCY CALLED**  
**SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING**  
**March 19, 2020 at 3:00 p.m.**

**1. Call to order.**

Mayor Danner called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

**2. Quorum check.**

Mayor James W. Danner, Mayor Pro Tem John McAnelly, Councilwoman Ann-Michelle Long, Councilman Eric Torres, Councilman John Villa, Councilman Bobby Vela, City Attorney Jessie Lopez, City Manager Kim Davis, and Assistant to City Secretary Elsa T. Robles.

**Staff present:** Director of Public Works Michael Schmidt, Police Chief Brian Valenzuela, Director of Aviation Ryan Elder, Economic Development Director Genevieve Flores, Assistant Public Works Director Buddy Stewart, Assistant Finance Director Dee Willman, IT Network Administrator Josh Rodriguez, and Human Resource Coordinator Sharon Garcia.

**3. Citizens' Comments:**

Mr. Chavel Lopez, 1002 Avenue S, Hondo, TX, stated he was a candidate for Place 4 City Council May 2<sup>nd</sup> Election. He stated he observed city staff not practicing social distancing and felt it was important to not be one of the "spreaders" of the Coronavirus.

He also asked for Council to inform election candidates if the City plans to move the May 2<sup>nd</sup> General Election to November 3<sup>rd</sup> so that they can better prepare themselves.

Mr. Jose Ytuarte, 2810 Southern Breeze, Hondo, TX, stated he too was a candidate for the May 2<sup>nd</sup> General Election. He stated like Mr. Lopez, he hoped that Council consider keeping the General Election for May 2<sup>nd</sup>.

He also expressed concern with Section 8 of the upcoming proposed Declaration of Health Disaster Area which states that, "A person knowing or intentionally violates this declaration commits an offense, punishable by a fine up to \$1,000." Mr. Ytuarte questioned how the City planned to enforce this and cautioned that even though the City may close the parks, the Easter holiday will be celebrated by families.

**4. Discuss and consider extending Declaration of Health Disaster Area.**

Mayor Danner stated he had previously issued a proclamation with a declaration on March 16<sup>th</sup> that unfortunately was now outdated with the rapidly evolving measures being taking by Governor Greg Abbott in response to COVID-19. The previous declaration limited gatherings to fifty (50) or less, but the latest Governor's order limits people to ten (10) or less. He stated that his previous declaration was good for seven (7) days. At this time, he stated Council would have to vote to extend it. He was recommending extending it for ninety (90) days.

Mayor Danner stated that today Governor Abbott ordered all restaurants to cease opening their dining areas as of midnight tomorrow night. They are allowed to offer take-out or curbside service only. This will also be added to the declaration today.

He stated that after today, the City will limit gatherings to ten (10) or less people for a fourteen (14) day period. He did not foresee the Governor changing either one of these orders at the end of fourteen days because he felt this particular situation will continue for a while and added the City will do the best it can to address this situation.

Mayor Danner stated Governor Abbott had also addressed the upcoming May 2<sup>nd</sup> General Election. He allowed cities and counties to postpone their elections to November 3<sup>rd</sup>. Mayor Danner stated that the City contracts their elections with the Medina County Election Department and added that he anticipated the county would opt to postpone the elections until November 3<sup>rd</sup> and so would the City. He stated the City Council would have to meet soon to adopt a resolution to postpone the elections.

Mayor Danner stated the City Attorney would be updating the declaration with any adopted changes the Council would make after today's meeting.

Councilman Villa recommended extending the declaration for thirty (30) days. Councilwoman Long made a motion to extend the declaration as recommended by Councilman Villa. She added that it could be shortened or extended if need be. No action was taken on the motion.

Ms. Davis suggested Council note that they would be following Governor Abbott's order of not allowing for dining-in service at restaurants and to decrease gatherings to ten (10) people because the current declaration did not specify that. Mayor Danner agreed it would need to be added to today's declaration.

Councilman Villa asked who would be monitoring local restaurants to see if they will comply with the closure of dining areas. Ms. Davis stated she felt confident local establishments would be aware and comply. She added that these measures would be reported by our local media, and word of mouth since this meeting is currently on Facebook Live.

Councilman Villa also expressed concern with large gatherings at our local parks. Ms. Davis stated that currently, the City had ceased taking reservations at our three major parks, City Parks #1, #2, #3. However, with today's order, all city parks are to be closed to the public except for the green spaces and only gatherings of 10 people or less will be allowed. Should a complaint come in, the Hondo PD will go out and remind people that they need to comply with the Governor's order and will be asked to vacate. If they do not vacate, then they will be issued a citation.

Councilman Villa stated he hoped people would realize that the City is doing this for their own safety and protection. Ms. Davis agreed and reiterated that this order will affect all the city parks, to include Sunset, Skate, Dinosaur, Torres, and Jungman Parks.

Ms. Davis addressed Mr. Chavel Lopez's Citizen's Comment regarding social distancing among staff. She said it is difficult to think about social distancing with people you work with and who are around you all the time. She added that the City is trying to be as fluid and as flexible as possible with the current situation changing hour by hour, minute by minute.

Mayor Danner asked Ms. Davis to send a message out through Facebook alerting citizens of the new declaration since the papers are only printed once a week and this's weeks paper had just come out today. He asked for a motion to accept the declaration with the latest updates per Governor Abbott's order to include a 30-day extension of the declaration, 10 person gathering limit, closing of dining areas in local restaurants, and leaving park green spaces open to gatherings of 10 people or less.

Mayor Pro Tem McAnelly stated the City and State officials can do things to protect citizens, but it is really important for the public at large to take a lot of responsibility at this time for their own safety. Mayor Danner concurred that the City Council and City Management have been very proactive with this situation and added that there are things that the citizens may not like or want to comply with, but in the end, it's in place for the safety of all citizens.

Councilwoman Long moved to approve the declaration with noted changes to comply with the new Governor's order. Motion seconded by Councilman Vela. Motion carried 5-0.

#### **5. Update on measures by the City of Hondo to address the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) pandemic.**

Before beginning her report, City Manager Kim Davis said she wanted to thank Valeria Lopez for hosting the Council meeting on Facebook Live. She also thanked staff and the executive leadership team for stepping up, being flexible and proactive during the past few days.

Ms. Davis went over a timeline of measures the City has taken to address the COVID-19 pandemic.

- The Hondo Public Library and the Recreation Center were the first to close their doors because there are surfaces that this virus can continue to inhabit and grow on. Staff is still working. Anyone can call the library for help or any information they may need. Staff will deep clean the library and additionally, will take online training courses.
- City staff will not be traveling unless there is an essential meeting in Austin for example.
- The Community Center, Recreation Center, and City Parks #1, #2, and #3 were closed. Front office staff called every person who had a reservation at the parks or community center. They offered one of two options, a refund or a reschedule of their event for a future date. Should they have to reschedule again due to the virus, they may do so. Again recreation staff will be working, prepping for summer programs and prepping the swimming pool. Online training courses will also be taken.

- City Hall has not closed completely. The lobby was closed to patrons at 5:00 p.m. on March 18<sup>th</sup>; however, any business can be conducted via the drive-thru window which remains open normal business hours. Staff was divided into two groups so that half the staff will be working at City Hall and half will be working from home on various projects. The reason for this is so that if someone gets exposed, then only half of the staff gets exposed. If this happens, the next group will get split into two groups so that we may continue to provide services to the public.

She said Municipal Court has been postponed indefinitely by the Governor's office.

Ms. Davis stated none of these decisions were made lightly and knows it may be an inconvenience to our customers. She added that every city measure has been posted on our Facebook page and on our City website link - Coronavirus Updates.

- Animal Control Shelter has stopped adoptions, but will continue to place animals in shelters. Staff will also be split in two and will work similar to City Hall staff, one week on, one week off.
- Senior staff will be divided as well. Half will be working onsite and half will be working remotely so that we protect staff from possibly exposing everyone all at once.
- The Medina County Sheriff's department and Hondo PD are working closely together to assist each other should manpower be affected in either department.
- The City has been in contact with the school district, hospital and sheriff's department every day.
- Public Works facility will also be splitting shifts and no one will be allowed in the building. Staff will be working Monday – Saturday to avoid interruption of service for customers.
- Hondo PD will be working in two facilities. Chief Valenzuela and LT Garza will be working in separate locations and they will not be taking non-emergency calls. They will have personal protective equipment necessary to address any COVID-19 related calls and avoid becoming infected. Non-emergency calls will be handled over the telephone.
- South Texas Regional Airport Terminal building has been closed to anyone who is not a pilot. Staff will also be split. Tech staff will be working out of separate offices and will use separate equipment to avoid cross contamination. Anyone who is a general aviation tenant will have to do self-service fuel during this time.
- Solid waste will continue to function as normal to include brush pick-up. Out contractor is still fully staffed. They have noticed an increase in trash and asked for customers to make sure they placed their trash in the provided bins. They encouraged customers to request additional bins if needed. A reminder, brush pick-up is the same day as your trash pick-up. The recycling drop-off point will be temporarily stopped due to health concerns and for the safety of their employees.
- A message was sent out today via social media and I-INFO regarding public water systems. This virus has not been proven to spread through any public water system. Our water team has been working on keeping our water disinfected and the city is encouraging the public not to spend money on bottled water since you have safe drinking water at home.
- All these various messages are being shared with the public through our social media Facebook page - City of Hondo, and the City of Hondo website. Additional information can be found on the GoMedina and Medina County websites.
- The City of Hondo employees will continue to get paid during this whole process. Our employees are our greatest resource and we will continue to protect our employees to the best of our ability.
- Story time, tiny tots, all Library and Recreation programs have been cancelled until further notice. The Heritage Festival, the hangar dance, car show and Airstrip Attack have been postponed until Labor Day weekend, Sept. 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup>.

Ms. Davis thanked the Council for giving management the liberty to work hard to put this plan together to keep everyone safe.

Councilman Torres expressed concern on how the City would be managing local businesses like

HEB, Walmart, and convenience stores where more than ten (10) people are present throughout the day. Ms. Davis stated it will be dependent on what the governor's office will be doing. They along with the City Council and public health officials will be the ones to determine how these business will be handled. She reiterated that bars are included with restaurants.

Councilman Villa was concerned with informing the public about all the measures being taken by the Governor and local Council. Ms. Davis stated blanket statements were mailed to all citizens with the information as well as postings to social media, newspapers, etc. She stated another letter will be mailed following the decisions made today.

Ms. Davis informed Council that the next step would be to hold Council meetings via a conference call line where citizens can call in and be able to participate. With the gathering limit set at ten (10) people, that would limit audience participation to the Council, City Manager and essential City staff.

Ms. Davis also clarified that the election postponement came about because the Governor declared the option for cities and counties to do so. If the county decides they are postponing elections until November 3<sup>rd</sup>, then the city would follow suit because we do not have the equipment readily available to hold an election.

Mayor Danner added that the State of Texas Emergency Act of 1975 gives the authority to the Governor, County Judges, and Mayors to be able to issue these emergency proclamations and declarations in an event of an emergency such as what we are facing today.

Mayor Pro Tem McAnelly pointed out that the City currently didn't have any bond elections coming up and only had the two Council seats and the Home Rule Charter amendment elections. Ms. Davis concurred.

Ms. Davis continued to state that the South Texas Regional Training Center has stayed open even though the SWTJC classes have been suspended. Workforce Solutions Alamo continues to work out of the building to help people who are being displaced due to business closures or furloughing of employees. Because of this, one city staff member will be at the training center at all times while the other will be working remotely or at city hall.

Mayor Pro Tem McAnelly gave thanks to the City Manager and the Mayor for all the work that has been done up to this point. He expressed his appreciation on behalf of the Council and the City.

Mayor Danner thanked the public for being very receptive and cooperative. He stated he felt for all the businesses, especially the local restaurants. He stated everyone has been understanding and cooperative and the City appreciates it very much.

6. Adjourn.

Mayor Pro Tem McAnelly moved to adjourn the meeting at 3:53 p.m. Motion was seconded by Councilman Vela. Motion carried 5-0.

**PASSED AND APPROVED THIS 27<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF APRIL, 2020.**



**JAMES W. DANNER, SR., MAYOR**

**ATTEST:**


  

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**Miguel Cantu, City Secretary**



**Prepared by:**

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**Elsa T. Robles, Assistant**