

**MINUTES
CITY OF HONDO
REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING
March 8, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.**

1. Call to order.

Mayor Danner called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. Quorum check.

Mayor James W. Danner, Sr., Mayor ProTem John E. Villa, Councilman John McAnelly, Councilman Wes Huesser, Councilman Jose "Porky" Ytuarte, Councilman Bobby Vela, City Attorney Jessie Lopez (Remote), Interim City Manager/Chief of Police Brian Valenzuela, City Secretary Miguel Cantu

Staff Present: Assistant to the City Secretary Megan Rodriguez, Police Lieutenant Rick Garza, IT Network Administrator Josh Rodriguez, STRTC Administrative Assistant Lillian Bales, Assistant Public Works Director William "Buddy" Stewart, Interim Electric Superintendent Val Sanchez, Electric Lineman Helper Danny Miranda, Human Resources Director Sharon Garcia, Parks and Recreation Manager Karissa Gonzalez.

3. Invocation by Pastor Beverly Kelling, St. Paul Lutheran Church.

4. Pledge of Allegiance led by Mayor Danner.

5. Citizens'/Public Comments:

Richard McEnroe of 160 County Road 251 stated he wants the members of the council and the City operatives to look at opening the town up as much as feasibly possible. Mr. McEnroe stated that we are at a point now where the rest of the state is going to be opening up to one degree or another and the big chains such as Walmart and HEB will have their own mask policies and will be reinforcing those policies. Mr. McEnroe stated we have street upon street of small businesses that need every chance they can get to have customers and patrons into them. Mr. McEnroe stated he has been following the COVID numbers for Medina County and they have been largely stable for the last several weeks. Mr. McEnroe stated there have been 98 deaths [due to COVID] as of today, adding it is a small number over the multi-year period. Mr. McEnroe noted that we lose more people in this town, in this county, every year to heart disease, pneumonia, and traffic accidents. Mr. McEnroe stated he is not asking anybody to diminish or dismiss those losses for the living, it is time to open the doors and get the town back into activity again. Thank you.

Deborah Leigh stated she concurred with Mr. McEnroe's public comment. Ms. Leigh stated there are 41 active cases noted on the City website. Ms. Leigh questioned whether this was Medina County wide or is it City wide because the website did not state that information clearly. Ms. Leigh stated there are a total of 97 deaths total for the area in comparison to the population of the City of Hondo which is just under 10,000 people. Ms. Leigh stated we have to open Hondo up and leave it to personal responsibility as to when to take precautions. Ms. Leigh asked that Council trust the citizens and not to do what was done to the prospect show last year and Christmas in God's country because it is killing this town. Ms. Leigh stated if someone runs a business, it's understood that if there are 14 tables, you can't run a business on seven tables; you have to have everything opened up. Ms. Leigh noted that people will choose whether they want to go to dine or shop someplace and they have to go to one of two stores here in town to get groceries; trust in them. Ms. Leigh added that the governor never said that citizens could not wear a mask, he just said they didn't have to. Ms. Leigh stated she is under CDC guidelines saying that somebody with respiratory problems like herself doesn't have to wear one. Ms. Leigh stated she went through COVID two years ago before it was announced and it was diagnosed as an upper respiratory infection, where I was given a steroid and an antibiotic and they sent you home to heal. Ms. Leigh asked for council to trust the people you serve and let them do what is good for them; adding if some want to wear masks and others don't then they are protected. Ms. Leigh stated that after reading the article in the Hondo Anvil Harold she believed Mayor Danner has already made up his mind and it is to do exactly what was done to the prospect show last year and to Christmas to God's country. Ms. Leigh stated what council did to people last year was a tragedy, silliness of the utmost.

Ms. Leigh went on to address there not being a way to contact councilmembers unless a message is left with a secretary. Ms. Leigh stated she was told that to visit the City website but the numbers are not listed on the website.

Ms. Leigh questioned why there is not a business phone dedicated solely to serving the people since council members do not have offices at City Hall. Ms. Leigh asked Council to think back to mumps, measles, shingles, chicken pox, all that kind of stuff we have been through and made it. Ms. Leigh thanked Council for the time and consideration.

6. **Discuss and consider adoption of revised City of Hondo COVID-19 Declaration in compliance with Governor Abbott GA-34 Executive Order.**

Mayor Danner read the part of the City of Hondo COVID-19 Declaration that had been revised.

SECTION 1. That a local state of disaster for public health emergency is hereby declared for the City of Hondo, Texas, pursuant to Section 418.108(a) of the Texas Government Code.

SECTION 2. That pursuant to Section 418.108(b) of the Texas Government Code the state of disaster for public health emergency shall become effective at **12:01 AM on March 10, 2021** and continue until terminated by the City Council.

SECTION 3. That pursuant to Section 418.108(d) of the Texas Government Code, this declaration of a local state of disaster activates the City of Hondo, Texas, emergency management plan.

SECTION 4. This Declaration shall incorporate and adopt the most recent executive order GA-34 issued by Governor Abbott on March 3, 2021, and any subsequent orders by the Governor relating to the COVID-019 disaster. GA-34 specifically states that “Nothing in this executive order precludes businesses or other establishments from requiring employees or customers to follow additional hygiene measures, **including the wearing of face coverings.**”

SECTION 5. Therefore, in accordance with CDC guidelines, it is recommended that individuals wear cloth face coverings in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain. Therefore, this Declaration, as authorized by Governor Abbott’s GA-34 Order, **the City will require the use of cloth face coverings over the nose and mouth when inside any City owned building or at any city owned facility**, including city owned outdoor public space wherever it is not feasible to maintain six feet of social distancing; provided, however, that this face-covering requirement does not apply to: 1) any person younger than 10 years of age; 2) any person with a medical condition or disability that prevents wearing a face covering; 3) any person while the person is consuming food or drink, or is seated at a restaurant to eat or drink; 4) any person while the person is (a) exercising outdoors or engaging in physical activity outdoors and (b) maintaining a safe distance from other people not in the same household; 5) any person while the person is driving alone or with passengers who are part of the same household as the driver; 6) any person obtaining a service that requires temporary removal of the face covering for security surveillance, screening, or a need for specific access to the face, such as while visiting a bank or while obtaining a personal care service involving the face, but only to the extent necessary for the temporary removal; 7) any person while the person is in a swimming pool, lake, or body of water; 8) *any person* who is voting, assisting a voter, serving as a poll watcher, or actively administering an election: and 9) any person who is actively providing or obtaining access to religious worship.

SECTION 6. For any outdoor gathering to be held on City owned property, whether indoors or outdoors, that is in excess of ten (10) people, **the gathering is prohibited unless the Mayor approves of the gathering**, and such approval can be made subject to certain conditions or restrictions and the minimum standard health protocols recommended by DSHS.

SECTION 7. In the enforcement of Sections 5 and 6, and following a verbal or written warning for a first-time violator of the face covering requirement, a person’s second violation shall be punishable by a fine not to exceed \$250. Each subsequent violation shall be punishable by a fine not to exceed \$250 per violation. **But no Hondo police or other official may detain, arrest, or confine in jail any person for a violation of this Declaration.**

SECTION 8. To the greatest extent possible, this Declaration shall be interpreted as consistent with and supplemental to GA-34 and any executive order issued by the Texas Governor. All provisions of the executive orders of the Texas Governor either existing or as, if and when issued, which are made applicable to all jurisdictions by law shall be automatically incorporated into and constitute terms of this Declaration, enforceable as if set forth herein without necessity for the issuance of any further orders.

SECTION 9. The sections, paragraphs, sentences, clauses and phrases of this Declaration are severable and if any phrase, clause, sentence, paragraph or section of this Declaration should be declared invalid by the final judgment or decree of any court or competent jurisdiction, such invalidity shall not affect any of the remaining phrases, clauses, sentences, paragraphs and sections that can be given effect without the invalid provision, and to this end, the provisions of this Executive Order are severable.

SECTION 10. That this declaration shall take effect **12:01 AM on March 10, 2021** and continue until terminated or modified by City Council.

Mayor ProTem Villa moved to approve the revised City of Hondo COVID-19 Declaration in compliance with Governor Abbott's GA-34 Executive Order. Motion seconded by Councilman Ytuarte. Motion carried 5-0.

7. Discuss and consider approving the minutes from the City Council of February 8, 2021 regular meeting and March 1, 2021 special meeting.

Mayor ProTem Villa moved to approve the minutes for February 8, 2021 regular meeting. Motion seconded by Councilman Huesser. Motion carried 5-0.

8. City Manager Report(s)

a. COVID-19 Update

Chief Valenzuela stated the City of Hondo lobbies have reopened as of Wednesday, March 3, 2021 creating a lot of happy customers and there are no issues to report. Chief Valenzuela stated there seems to be a good response to the thermal scanners that were implemented in all the division locations.

Chief Valenzuela stated that the City celebrated International Women's Day by handing out goodie bags at the different divisions to say thank you to the women of the City of Hondo for their continued hard work. Chief Valenzuela stated there would be a food distribution going on at the Fairgrounds from 9:30am to 10:30am and the number to call for registration is on our Facebook page as well as the City website. Chief Valenzuela stated volunteers for the food distribution are needed and any information pertaining to that can be found on the website and on the City Facebook page as well.

Chief Valenzuela stated he would like to warn the citizens of a fraudulent cell phone application that is going around on social media stating it is the easiest way to submit payment for utility bills for the City of Hondo. Chief Valenzuela reiterated that the City of Hondo is in no way associated with this application or any other application allowing for bill payment. Chief Valenzuela noted that the easiest way to submit a payment would be in person, by phone, or online by visiting the www.hondo-tx.org. Chief Valenzuela noted that citizens having fallen victim to this application have had the assistance of staff to get them reestablished.

Chief Valenzuela reported that one person has paid off the COVID payment arrangement this last week, and there are 36 payment arrangements remaining. Chief Valenzuela stated that as per Council's request there are no disconnect or reconnect fees being imposed. Chief Valenzuela stated there are currently 43 accounts on a disconnection list and out of the 43, 36 have come in to pay and 19 people applied for extensions this month with 13 of those being related to the winter storm. Chief Valenzuela added that extensions were due today by 5pm and as of now 9 have paid off their extensions.

Chief Valenzuela stated the City of Hondo held its annual employee chili cook-off on Friday, March 5, and instead of everyone under one roof we had our judges' travel to different locations to sample the chili and desserts. Chief Valenzuela stated the judges this year were Councilman Ytuarte, Hondo Athletic Director Joe Cary, and Airport Advisory Board member Jorge Rivera. Chief Valenzuela read off the winners of the chili cook-off:

Best Chili went to team Make It Rain which consisted of the City Secretary's Office and the Utilities and Finance departments.

Best Baked Goods and Best Decor went to the Reading Railroad which consisted of the Library staff.

b. Employee Recognition

Chief Valenzuela recognized Electric Department member, Danny Miranda for five years of dedicated service to the City of Hondo, noting Mr. Miranda is a great asset to the City and is always willing to help.

c. Main Street Program

Chief Valenzuela reported that this program will be placed on hold and will be revisited within the next fiscal year. Mayor Danner stated that addressing this program the following budget year would be the best for a program like this.

9. Public Works Report

a. Water Division

i. State 1 Water Restrictions

Mr. Stewart reported on the stage one water restrictions put into place by the Edwards Aquifer Authority from February 24th through March 4th. Mr. Stewart reported that our current aquifer level is at 661 feet,

660 feet is the trigger for stage one restrictions, so the City is no longer under the restriction. Mr. Stewart noted it is uncommon to enter into stage one this early in the year, so the Water division will be keeping a close eye on aquifer levels.

Mr. Stewart gave a report on the information Councilman Vela requested in regard to the Water Division work orders. Mr. Stewart reported there are 24 work orders open to include one meter leak, one service tap, two service leaks, one meter change out, nine main leaks, and 10 miscellaneous such as changing out a valve or meter box or concrete around a valve; no urgency to them.

Councilman Vela requested a spreadsheet of all remaining work orders similar to that of the Street department spreadsheet. Councilman Vela stated that a majority of the issues with the streets lies from the utility repairs that have been made; noting they go hand in hand.

Councilman Ytuarte state there are cones in the road at 18th Street and Avenue P which is a major thoroughway and asked that Mr. Stewart make a note and not wait until next week to get it fixed due to the cones being in the middle of the intersection.

b. Winter Storm- Follow Up

i. Permits

Mr. Stewart reported on winter storm permits stating that Development Services waived two permit fees for larger repairs since the winter storm and there were about two dozen minor repairs that were reported that did not require a permit.

ii. Estimated Damage Report

Mr. Stewart reported 14 City locations that were affected by the storm, totaling about \$8,000 in damages. Mr. Stewart stated the Water division reported minor issues with a couple of batteries for our SCADA system, plastic fittings that froze on a piece of equipment, and small plumbing repairs, like a water valve freezing and breaking totaling about \$300 in repairs. Mr. Stewart stated the Wastewater department reported one pump and a gear on the bar screen that froze up causing damages of around \$5500. Mr. Stewart stated the Street department reported the sweeper truck has issues with the water pump after the storm and is currently in the shop and we will know more on the cost of repair the inspection is complete. Mr. Stewart stated the Senior Center, nature trails, Avenue U restroom, City Park One, City Park Two, swimming pool, PD substation, Animal Control, building shop, golf course, recreation center, streets/grounds shop and old PD building require insurance claims and in-house repairs will be done on those locations.

iii. Repair Fittings to the Public

Mr. Stewart reported there were two dozen citizens requiring fittings and reported that 130 fittings were given out in the last week. Mr. Stewart praised Chief Valenzuela for supporting the ideas of helping the customers with the fittings and encouraging us to think outside the box, and to do whatever we can to help the citizens, so we really appreciate that kind of leadership from above.

c. Street and Alley Projects

i. Alley Project Update

Mr. Stewart stated the alley project is complete and they have already started putting that Street crew on the secondary work orders. Mr. Stewart stated by the next council meeting, council should see that secondary list start to shorten at a faster rate and once everything is caught up on both the primary and secondary, streets can get prepped for larger repairs.

ii. 14th Street Update

Mr. Stewart reported the 50% plans were submitted to the City and the projected cost was higher than anticipated, and the engineers were asked to go back and cut out all the “extras”, leaving the cost for construction at around \$725,000, originally being estimated at \$600,000 with a 10% contingency. Mr. Stewart stated the plans are on track.

iii. Avenue M Update

Mr. Stewart reported that M&S will be presenting their assessment to council at the next council meeting on March 22nd, bringing forth different options in and council can decide which direction to choose to move forward with the Avenue M project.

d. Street Maintenance

i. Potholes

Mr. Stewart reported Street crews have repaired 37 potholes since last week.

ii. Work Orders

Mr. Stewart reported crews have completed 16 work orders since last week.

10. Discuss and consider authorizing the Interim City Manager to offer a one-time hazard pay to 63 employees resulting from hours worked during the declared disaster event.

Ms. Garcia reminded Council that on February 11, 2021 the State of Texas experienced a record breaking winter storm. This storm caused major unpredicted situations causing staff to close streets, manage rolling electric outages, and battle freezing temperatures. Many City of Hondo employees worked tirelessly day and night to ensure the safety of our citizens, and that utility services continued when outages affected the State. On February 19, 2021, Mayor Danner signed a Disaster Declaration for the City of Hondo; noting that on February 14, 2021, President Joseph R. Biden, Jr. declared that an emergency exists in the State of Texas and ordered federal assistance to supplement state and local response efforts due to the emergency conditions resulting from a severe winter storm. Given the dedication and hard work during these hazardous environments, City Administration recommends compensating employees by providing a one-time hazard pay. The recommendation is for a hazard pay adjustment for 63 employees at \$1,000 each for the work completed during this storm. Currently, the City of Hondo does not have a hazard pay ordinance and that is something that we would like to present to Council in the near future. Hazard pay is not a budgeted line item. If approved, a budget adjustment will follow at a later date which will increase the department salary expense lines. The expected cost of this will be \$63,000. Through February 2021, the City's total expenditures are approximately 37% of budget, which is less than anticipated in the General Fund. With the current expenditures being less than appropriations, the General Fund can absorb the additional cost. The other funds are in good financial position to afford the additional pay. Mayor ProTem Villa moved to authorize the Interim City Manager to offer a one-time hazard pay to 63 employees resulting from hours worked during the declared disaster event. Motion seconded by Councilman Vela. Motion carried 5-0.

11. Discuss and consider authorizing the Interim City Manager to enter into an agreement with Advanced Exercise for the purchase of strength cable machines in the amount not to exceed \$36,811.95. (Karissa Gonzalez)

Ms. Gonzalez stated that during the FY 2020 – 2021 budget process, Council designated \$51,000.00 for the purchase of weight room cable machines for the Recreation Center. Our current cable machines were purchased over eight years ago from a Kerrville gym that was shutting its doors and declaring the equipment surplus. The Cybex equipment at the Recreation Center are a discontinued model from the early 2000s. All equipment is serviced quarterly on a preventative maintenance schedule; however, one of our biggest concerns with the current equipment is that when any of the machines need any repairs, parts are scarce and expensive to replace. This in turn causes a longer downtime for our equipment to be serviced and unavailable to our members and guests. The new cable machines will use less space by incorporating dual options into the area and allow for more readily available parts when repairs are necessary.

Staff has two options for discarding the old equipment:

- Declaring surplus and making available through the City's regularly scheduled surplus auction.
- Advanced Exercise offers a buyback program that we could utilize and receive a small payment for the removal and disposal of the pieces.

Funds for this purchase will be under budget at \$36,811.95.

Councilman Vela moved to authorize the Interim City Manager to enter into agreement with Advanced Exercise for the purchase of strength cable machines in an amount not to exceed \$36,811.95. Motion seconded by Councilman Ytuarte. Motion carried 5-0.

12. Discuss and consider award of the management/administration services contract for the preparation of the City's 2021-2022 Texas Community Development Block Grant (TxCDBG) Downtown Revitalization Project application and subsequent administration contract if funded to Langford Community Management Services. (Miguel Cantu)

Mr. Cantu reported working with the Texas Community Development Block Grant (TxCDBG) for the downtown revitalization project. Mr. Cantu asked for City Council to approve Langford Community Management Services to assist the City of Hondo on this grants. Mr. Cantu stated RFPs went out and Langford was the only one who replied. Mr. Cantu made the recommendation to move forward and accept Langford's services.

Councilman Vela moved to award of the management/administration services contract for the preparation of the City's 2021-2022 Texas Community Development Block Grant (TxCDBG) Downtown Revitalization Project application and subsequent administration contract to Langford Community Management Services. Motion seconded by Councilman McAnelly. Motion carried 5-0.

13. Discuss and consider awarding of the engineering services contract for the preparation of the City's 2021-2022 Texas Community Development Block Grant (TxCDBG) application and subsequent engineering contract if funded. (Miguel Cantu)

Mr. Cantu stated engineering work needed to be completed with the Texas Community Development Block Grant (TxCDBG). As a part of the application process requests were sent out for RFQs for this project on engineering services. Mr. Cantu stated that M&S Engineering and TRC Engineering replied and it was found that TRC Engineering was the best candidate for the project. Mr. Cantu stated he is asking City Council to award the engineering services contract to TRC Engineers. Mr. Cantu reported that the City should not expect any financial impact to the City of Hondo unless we are awarded the grant.

Mayor ProTem Villa moved to award TRC engineering services contract for the preparation of the City's 2021-2022 Texas Community Development Block Grant (TxCDBG) application and subsequent engineering contract. Motion seconded by Councilman Vela. Motion carried 5-0.

- 14. Executive Session:** The City Council of the City of Hondo convened in Executive Session at 6:59 p.m. and reconvened in Open Session at 8:08 p.m. in accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act, Texas Government Code, *Section 551.071* (Consultations with Attorney) on matters in which the duty of the attorney to the governmental body under the Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct of the State Bar of Texas clearly requires discussion in closed session); Pending or contemplated litigation; *Section 551.072* (Deliberations about Real Property); and *Section 551.087* (Deliberations Regarding Economic Development Negotiations):
- a. Discussion regarding potential lease, purchase or value of real property.
 - b. Discussion regarding potential lease/sale of property located at the South Texas Regional Airport.
 - c. Discussion regarding potential development incentives and negotiations with a prospect for development at the South Texas Regional Airport.
 - d. Discussion about ongoing procedures in search for new City Manager.

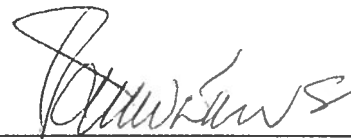
15. Discuss and consider appropriate action resulting from Executive Session.

No action.

16. Adjourn.

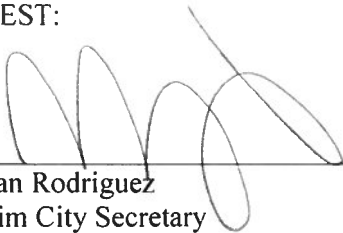
Mayor ProTem Villa moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:08 p.m. Motion seconded by Councilman McAnelly. Motion carried 5-0.

PASSED AND APPROVED THIS 22nd DAY OF MARCH 2021



JAMES W. DANNER SR., MAYOR

ATTEST:



Megan Rodriguez
Interim City Secretary

