

**MERCEDES CITY COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING
JUNE 9, 2022 – 6:30 P.M.
MERCEDES CITY HALL – COMMISSION CHAMBERS**

MEMBERS PRESENT:	Oscar D. Montoya Sr. Joe Martinez Armando Garcia Ruben Saldana	Mayor Mayor Pro-Tem Commissioner Commissioner
MEMBERS ABSENT:	Jacob Howell	Commissioner
STAFF PRESENT:	Alberto Perez Martie Garcia-Vela Joselynn Castillo Javier Ramirez Kristine Longoria Ervin Vilchis Blanca Sanchez Nereida Perez Joaquin Hernandez Richard Morin Javier Campos Marisol Vidales	City Manager City Attorney City Secretary Asst. City Manager Human Resources IT Assistant Interim Chief of Police Finance Director Public Works Director Recreation Direction Fire Chief Library Director

OTHERS PRESENT: Isaias Rodriguez and Isaac Huacuja

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Mayor Montoya welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

2. ESTABLISH QUORUM

Four members of the Commission were present which constitutes a quorum.

3. INVOCATION

Commissioner Saldana said the invocation

4. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Commissioner Garcia led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

5. OPEN FORUM

- No one signed up for open forum

Mayor Montoya called the meeting into executive session at 6:34 p.m.

6. EXECUTIVE SESSION:

- a. Consultation with legal counsel pursuant to Texas Government Code §551.071 (2) to receive legal advice and information protected by the attorney client communication privilege and deliberation pursuant to Texas Government Code §551.097 regarding Pending Litigation.**

Mayor Montoya called the meeting back to order at 7:15 p.m.

7. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING ITEMS DISCUSSED IN EXECUTIVE SESSION.

No action was taken on items discussed in executive session. Mayor Pro-Tem Martinez motioned to move to item 22. Commissioner Garcia seconded the motion. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

8. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON SECOND AND FINAL READING OF ORDINANCE # 2022-08 TO IMPLEMENT THE RECOMMENDED WATER RATE SCHEDULE BASED ON RECOMMENDATIONS FROM WATER RATE STUDY.

Mayor Pro-Tem Martinez motioned to approve the second reading of ordinance 2022-08. Commissioner Saldana seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

9. UPDATE ON MAINTENANCE OF DOWNTOWN AREA

Commissioner Howell met with EDC and Chamber and a company for the maintenance of downtown are off the expressway exit and entry ramps, Texas to 4th street. Public Works will continue to work and they will be assisting the company. Mayor Montoya expressed his concern with the uproots of the trees in downtown Texas. Commissioner Saldana recommended to get an arbore to look at the trees for recommendations.

10. GENERAL SESSION RECONVENE

No action.

11. UPDATE ON GIS MAPPING PROJECT

Mr. Isaac Huacuja stated that the project is 100% complete. They collected the elevations, diameters of the pipes, depth and flow. The projects are separated by layers. It's an interactive living document to view on any computer. This is modern technology to map the drainage and sewer lines. At a question, Mr. Huacuja stated that link can be uploaded to the City website and can be viewed by anyone. All the sewer and water lines can be viewed through augmented reality.

12. UPDATE ON MASTER DRAINAGE PLAN

Mr. Huacuja stated the projected completion date is end of June 2022 and is 70% complete. The GIS mapping was grant funded and they wanted to complete the project first. The mapping can provide and identify a problem area with cost estimate. The grant was \$25000 and covered a part of the project.

13. UPDATE ON CAPISSALLO TERRACE WATE WATER PROJECT

First time service to 125 lots, master lift station for the area, 4489 LF of 8" pipe and 1855 LF of 10" pipe of sanitary sewer, decommission existing septic tanks. Bids are currently open for the project. The installation needs to be done prior to the decommissioning of the septic tanks. Mayor Pro-Tem Martinez expressed his concern with hurricane season being here and the project will not be completed prior to a storm. There is no charge to the citizens. There are plans ready for the storm sewer after the sanitary sewer is completed.

14. UPDATE ON WATER WELL PROJECT

Mr. Huacuja informed the commission of the Water Well Project. The City was selected and awarded the grant for \$450K funding for a water well and is a 50% match. The grant was applied for 2 years prior and selection process took 1 year. There is a design plan.

Makes 1.2 million gallons per day. The proposal is for a 1-million-gallon water well. At this time the Commission moved to item 17.

15. UPDATE ON TCEQ VIOLATIONS

Mr. Ramirez stated there was a TCEQ investigation that produced 12 potential violations and have resolved 10 to date with 2 pending. Oxidation ditch with sludge and the clarifier are still pending. The wear and baffle already had a P.O for about \$30 to \$40K. Plans are to empty out the oxidation ditch, the clarifier is currently down but only the sludge is the violation for being stored there.

16. UPDATE ON INSTALLATION OF LIFT STATION PUMPS WITH GENERATORS (LS 1, 2, 3, 5 & 8)

Power outages cause the lift stations to go out and sewer to backup. The generators will keep the pumps going to avoid the drainage issues. Lift Station 1, 2, 3, 5 and 8 are most prone to power outages. Mr. Hernandez stated one 6 in. pump has already been installed for lift station 1 which is the biggest lift station in the city. Pump 3 is being worked on and the concrete pad. The other 3 pumps are expected to arrive in two weeks. The pump on 17th street, the pump might be too small for the area so the engineer is assessing.

Commission moved to item 18.

17. DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENTS UPDATES

a. COLLIER PARK PUMP STATION

Collier Park Pump Station can pump 3.25 million gallons per day. There is an existing structure and existing levee crossing which will be reused and provide savings to the city. New pumps, new piping and rehab of the structure will be installed to mitigate flooding in the surrounding area. The project is currently under construction. Mayor Montoya wants someone to look at the pumps out on Maryland from 10th to 14th. The water pools in that area and city puts a pump and the water would pump out of that area.

b. COLLIER PARK DETENTION PONDS

Mr. Huacuja stated that this project will not help that area along frontage as the outfall is to the west. The water flows west from the park. The ponds will be a critical part to the ditch when it is overwhelmed. Every drop of water that is collected by the ponds is a drop less that goes to the residential area. City currently has 6 pumps of their own. 8-acre pond can hold 3 million gallons.

c. CITIZENS COLLECTIONS (ANAQUITAS) DETENTION POND

Drainage District 1, irrigation district 9 and City have an interlocal in place for the project. City and Irrigation are donating land for the anaquitas drainage project. He stated that the ditch bottlenecks when it passes under the expressway. Placing a detention pond will assist to have 22-acre feet of storage for rain water. City needs storage north of the highway. At a question, it was stated that this will increase the size of the outfall and increase the width of the ditch. It is not cost effective to plan for a 500-year storm but it will help to mitigate the storm waters. Currently almost 50% complete with phase 1 of the project.

d. DOME INTERIM DRAINAGE PLAN

FEMA Dome drainage improvements cost estimate is \$625K to store 36-acre feet of water. Joaquin Hernandez provided photos of the current status of the FEMA dome

drainage project. A pump is set on Vermont and armory into the ditch that would then be pumped into the floodway.

e. UNION PACIFIC DETENTION POND

Union Pacific detention pond will provide 6.2-acre feet of storage. Railroad company is asking \$189K land acquisition price. The project is ready to proceed once acquiring the land. The ponds can be used for other purposes. The playground will be installed in the area of the pond. Southwestern stormwater regional detention facility (RDF) will hold 22-acre feet water and the city will have an interlocal with HCCID9. At this time the Commission moved to item 15.

18. UPDATE ON MANHOLE COVERS STATUS

Mr. Hernandez stated there were 130 manhole covers, 61 were installed by contractor, 42 were installed by the city and 12 are pending 24-inch covers. 32" covers 15 were ordered and installed by the city. At this time, the Commission moved to item 20.

19. UPDATE ON STREET REPAIRS – Item 19B was discussed first, then 19A and finally 19C.

a. MILE 8 PROJECT

Mr. Ramirez informed the Commission that the City partnered with the County for a 70/30 split on material. The project started June 3 and will continue for 16 weeks. The Mile 8 street improvement will expand from FM 491 to Mile 2 East. County of Hidalgo will provide the labor. No action required.

b. MILE 1 EAST PROJECT

Mr. Grant Martinez from KCI addressed the Commission regarding the Mile 1 East widening project. He stated KCI is working on a re-evaluation on the environmental, preliminary, and design. Mr. Martinez discussed the curb & gutter and sidewalks. He informed the Commission that they are pending approval from TxDOT for the letters to send out for public comment on the project. He added that the construction costs is about \$10 Mil. This project will benefit the housing corridor and can bring in business. At a question. Mr. Ramirez stated that the County will oversee the project after KCI completes their part. He added that an AFA will be needed with the County in order for the County to proceed with the project. No action required.

c. CITY STREETS

Mr. Hernandez addressed the Commission about the city's budget for streets. The previous budget had \$35K and the current year he budgeted \$150K with \$57K spent year to date. He stated in FY 20-21 there were 18 work orders and in 21-22 there were 126 work orders for pothole patching. Mr. Hernandez provided a update on the paving of Vermont St; there was a valve under the asphalt and replaced the a section with 8" pipe that was under the street, then paved the street. Mr. Hernandez stated he identified 10 streets needing a full repair and added he will work on streets that have not been paved at all. No action required.

At this time the Commission moved to Item 23.

20. UPDATE ON PARK REPAIRS

Mr. Hernandez stated they are replacing benches and tables and received a grant for the park. Mr. Hernandez informed the commission of the projects done by the city for the parks including the

restrooms, lighting, fields. Commissioner Howell recommended using the paver to go over the basketball area. There is a cost estimate of \$55K for the soccer field area. Commissioner Saldana had done park improvements in different areas with funding from the center of disease control to encourage residents to be active. Mayor Pro-Tem Martinez expressed his concern with parks and investing in the parks. Mr. Hernandez informed the Commission that in FY 20-21 there were 2827 work orders for the entire year and in FY 21-22 which is currently at 66% of year there are 2853 work order requests. Commissioner Garcia commended parks division on their work during the elections at the park.

21. UPDATE ON TCEQ AUDIT

Mr. Ramirez informed the Commission of the City's contract with Ambiotec for the TCEQ Self Audit. The City receives immunity of the Audit and put the violations on a schedule to correct the issues. City has 6 months to report to TCEQ and are on schedule. Due in September 4, 2022. At this time, the Commission moved to item 24.

22. STATUS OF CURRENT GRANTS AND GRANT APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED

Mr. Humberto Garza, President of Border Affairs addressed the commission to provide an update on the current grants and grant applications submitted. Mr. Garza explained the process for grants from beginning to awarded. He stated he contacted 26 State and Federal Agencies for funding. He added the city has received \$76,535 from awarded grants, \$3.6 Million are from pending grants, and applications are at \$2.3 Million in the ten-month period Border Affairs have been contacted with the City. At question, Mr. Garza stated the one of the grants would be for a new fire truck. Mayor Pro-Tem Martinez asked for grants to assist in park development and prevention of school violence. Mr. Garza and staff stated the list of grants the city has received and have been awarded which included Texas Book Festival, Stone Garden, body cameras, Walmart Small Community Grant, new vehicles and the Valley Baptist Foundation. After discussion, Mayor Pro-Tem Martinez motioned to move to item 19 and then item 23. Commissioner Saldana seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously. At this time Commission moved to item 19 of the agenda.

23. BUILDING REPAIRS UPDATE

a. PD REHABILITATION PROJECT

Mr. Juan Cantu with ERO provided an updated schedule. He stated PD should be able to move in on June 2023. They are currently working on the abatement of building. Mr. Perez stated that mold, asbestos and lead were identified and needs to be cleaned properly following state regulations. The funding is available for the project some from CO fund and ARPA funds. Mr. Cantu stated they reassessed what was left after the abatement. Assessed the mechanical, structural and electrical and are working on completing the design. Starting construction in September 2022. The building is in good shape. The abatement company Terracon cleared the building prior to anyone going back into the building. Mayor informed about the Commission about the history of the PD building and the funding to repair it. Commissioner Saldana asked if there are any unanticipated surprises that may come up that are unforeseen. Mr. Cantu stated they are assessing the building trying to limit any unforeseen costs.

b. CITY HALL ROOF REPAIR

Mr. Hernandez stated that the façade of the building of city hall was redone due to the storm. There are water leaks in the building. The city received two bids that need to be opened. No further action was taken.

c. DOME AC REPAIRS/REPLACEMENTS

The Dome needs some A/C units, there are coils leaking and compressors are not working properly. Mechanical engineers are looking at the plans to evaluate the units and see what repairs are necessary.

At this time, the Commission moved to item 8 of the agenda.

24. BUDGET

a. CURRENT BUDGET (EXPENDITURES VS. REVENUES)

Ms. Perez informed the Commission that the Revenues received is at 79.6%, Sales tax is at 62.63%, and Expenditures is at 64.31% of the 66.67% of the year. Sales tax is continuing and steadily increasing. Ms. Perez informed of the line items that are currently over budget. Some included the PD, PW vehicle and building maintenance and fire vehicles. The utility fund is in line with budget on revenues and expenditures are low. Provided the items over budget in the utility fund. She stated they have 89 meters in stock and pending 500 meters to receive. The EMS fund is under budget for revenues and under in expenditures for the current fiscal year. ARPA funds, CO funds, and the vactor trailer for smaller utility lines has been ordered.

Ms. Perez provided the cash position as of 5/31/2022 that the city has with Texas national Bank. All the funds in the bank were listed with amounts. The reserves, I&S, H/M, City receives 180K from Hotel/Motel. Wells Fargo Bank has the reserves.

b. BUDGET FY 2023

Ms. Perez provided the tentative dates for the budget cycle for 22-23.

Mayor Montoya thanked Mr. Perez for his leadership and the staff. Mayor Pro-Tem Martinez said a few words to thank staff. Commissioner Saldana thanked the department heads. Commissioner Garcia thanked everyone.

25. ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Montoya adjourned the meeting at 11:08 P.M.