

**MERCEDES CITY COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
DECEMBER 19, 2023 – 6:30 P.M.
MERCEDES CITY HALL – COMMISSION CHAMBERS**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Oscar D. Montoya Sr. Mayor
Dr. Ruben Saldana Mayor Pro-Tem
Armando Garcia Commissioner
Joe Martinez Commissioner
Dr. Jacob Howell Commissioner

STAFF PRESENT: Alberto Perez City Manager
Martie Garcia-Vela City Attorney
Joselynn Castillo City Secretary
Javier Ramirez Asst. City Manager
Meredith Hernandez Asst. Finance Director
David Jimenez I.T Manager

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. Commissioner Martinez arrived at 6:35 p.m.

3. INVOCATION

Mayor Pro-Tem Saldana said the invocation.

4. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Commissioner Garcia led in the pledge of allegiance.

5. OPEN FORUM- There were no citizens signed up for open forum.

6. PRESENTATIONS:

a. **Presentation by Marco A. Arredondo Inc. regarding city lighting improvements.**

Mr. Marco Arredondo provided a list of services they provided for the City of Mercedes. They worked with AEP to account for every utility meter belonging to the City. He discussed lighting at all city parks and reported lighting issued belonging to AEP. The city has used 3% less energy this year from last year. A brief discussion was held in consideration of LED lights. No further questions.

b. **Presentation update regarding Dilapidated Structures**

Chief Building Official Alvaro De Leon presented to the Commission the voluntary demolition of dilapidated homes. Mr. De Leon quoted the codes they need to follow to approve the abatement of a property. Mr. De Leon provided photos of the homes that did a demolition and full remodel of their homes. Permits are required for remodeling homes. Mr. De Leon stated the citizens can call city hall to complain of the run-down homes and planning can proceed with the properties. Commissioner Martinez would like the City to start looking at the businesses down Texas Ave. No further discussion.

c. **Presentation by SWG regarding status update on GIS mapping**

Mr. Randy Winston with SWG engineering presented to the Commission. The GIS for storm Maps has been completed. The Waterline GIS Map has also been completed. The Sanitary line GIS map is currently on-going. Mr. Winston stated that these maps are live maps and when a new project or subdivision come in, the map needs to be updated. At a question, Mr. Winston stated that the maps could help avoid digging for lines in the wrong location. Data was collected from old maps and gathering points for manholes and water meters. The GIS map will provide size of the pipe, length of the pipe, water valves, fire hydrants, etc. The GIS Map covers the city's CCN but not the ETJ. 696 Manholes were surveyed, 136 were opened, 558 could not be opened, 2 were bolted and 115 are unknown. Mr. Alegria stated that the intention is to replace the manhole covers. Mr. Winston stated they can go with Public works to record some of those manholes on the GIS map. Mr. Perez stated that the city is pumping water out but the water is coming back in through the gate structure. Mr. Winston stated he has been meeting with Mr. Sesin to find a solution for the long term. Mr. Perez would like a short-term solution until the long-term solution is corrected. Mercedes wants to be in charge of the gate structure when there is a rain event. The Anacuitas drain will be expanded. A demo of the mapping system was shown. Mr. Winston stated that the city GIS map could overlay the county map.

d. **Presentation of Water Treatment Plan Solids Handling by Freese and Nichols**

Mr. Avalos with Freese and Nichols stated they are pending on the data of the 50 manholes. Mr. Chris Callahan presented on current dewatering operations, review of technical Memorandum recommendations, review of Pilot and Bench Scale Dewatering Test Results, review of Estimated Construction and Operational Costs. The current Dewatering operations stated the hauling is currently hauling about 85% water instead of solids. Proceed with competitive procurement of Centrifuge for solids dewatering and perform a review of the holding pond mixing/decanting operations to provide consisted feed to centrifuge. Driest cake and highest dewatering efficiency equals less money spent on solids hauling. The estimated annual savings is

\$312,175 from decreasing the water hauling from 85% water to hauling 35% solids. At a question, Mr. Callahan informed of the process required to proceed with the project and get approval from TCEQ. The construction cost is included but not the engineering costs. Depending on the complexity of the design it could be 12% for engineering costs. The next step is to secure funding and engineering services, then the preliminary design and final design, go through the bid phase. TCEQ regulations are required, engineering services is required and funding is available. Net Annual average savings from getting a 20 year loan is \$153,199 each year for the first 20 years after the payment of \$158,976. No further discussion.

e. **Presentation of NAD Bank Funding Opportunities**

Mr. Ramirez stated they had a meeting with NAD Bank about the projects and developments and the funding opportunities they have and what the city can do to secure funding. Mr. Ivan Garcia with Rio Delta Engineering informed the Commission of the meeting with NAD Bank. Mr. Garcia stated they do environmental projects. There is one program called community assistants program that requires a 10% match, the city can apply and if awarded constructions can start in 6 months. Mr. Perez stated that there are some TCEQ violations that the City is looking to secure funding for. The deadline to apply is January 8, 2024. At a question, Mr. Garcia stated that the ranking is based on the highest safety project. Capisallo Terrace project for example is sanitary sewer which involves the health of the community can rank high. Develop a funding strategy. A Bank may have a higher interest rate than funding from TWDB.

Commissioner Martinez motioned to go into executive. Commissioner Garcia seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously. The meeting went into executive session at 8:19 p.m.

Mayor Montoya called the meeting back to order from Executive Session at 11:16 p.m.

7. BIDS/CONTRACTS:

a. **Awarding contract to Ambiotec regarding Integrated Technical Managerial Financial Utility Enterprise Assessment and Strategic Funding Plan Proposal**

Commissioner Martinez motion to agree with review by legal and negotiation with City Manager. Commissioner Garcia seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

b. **Approval of Contract with Xoana Entertainment**

Mr. Perez stated this agreement is for the signage in Mexico. Ms. Mia Cantu spoke in Spanish. She stated the location of the signs in Mexico. Ms. Cantu provided the amount of people their signs attract and the advertisement on social media. Mr. Perez stated that the new signs will have a QR code for Discover Mercedes, TX. Commissioner Martinez motioned to approve the contract. Commissioner Garcia seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

8. CONSENT AGENDA:

a. **Approval of Minutes for Meeting(s) held December 5, 2023**

b. **Approval of Items for surplus**

c. **Approval of 4th Quarterly Investment Report**

Commissioner Martinez motioned to approval all items under consent agenda. Commissioner Garcia seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

9. ORDINANCES/RESOLUTIONS:

a. **Resolution 2023-25 supporting the Affordable Housing Project in the City of Mercedes ETJ**

Commissioner Martinez motioned to approve and forgo the reading. Mayor Pro-Tem Saldana seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

10. MANAGEMENT ITEMS:

a. **Approval of appointment/reappointment of DCM Board Members**

Commissioner Martinez motioned to approve the reappointments of Mr. Joe Flores, Ms. Peggy Chavez-Yanez, and Mr. Marcos Garcia. Mayor Pro-Tem Saldana seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

11. MONTHLY REPORTS

Rec Center, Public Works Dept., Library, Finance, Fire, Planning, City Sec/HR

The reports are included for the Commission to review. No action required.

12. Executive Session: Chapter 551, Texas Government Code, Section 551.071 (Consultation with Attorney), Section 551.072 (Deliberation regarding Real Property), Section 551.074 (Personnel Matters) and Section 551.087 (Economic Development)

a. Discussion with City Manager regarding personnel matters – Section 551.074

b. Consultation with Attorney regarding update on litigation – Section 551.071

c. Discussion regarding Project M30 – Section 551.087

d. Discussion regarding economic development negotiations – Section 551.072

e. Discussion regarding Project Knights – Section 551.087

f. Discussion regarding Project 150 – Section 551.087

13. Open Session:

a. **Item A from Executive Session** – No action

b. **Item B from Executive Session** – No action

c. **Item C from Executive Session** – No action

d. **Item D from Executive Session** – Ms. Melissa Ramirez recommendation is to deny. Commissioner Martinez motioned to deny. Commissioner Garcia seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

e. **Item E from Executive Session** – Commissioner Martinez motioned to approve \$150K for Project Knight. Mayor Pro-Tem Saldana seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

f. **Item F from Executive Session** – No action.

14. Adjournment

Commissioner Martinez motioned to adjourn. Commissioner Garcia seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 11:29 P.M.