

**MERCEDES CITY COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
JUNE 7, 2022 – 6:30 P.M.
MERCEDES CITY HALL – COMMISSION CHAMBERS**

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

OTHERS PRESENT: Axel Vallejo, Brianna Casares, Isaias Rodriguez, Isaac Huacuja, Ramon Mejia, Hector Castillo, Yolanda Molina, Rick Ramos

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

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

2. ESTABLISH QUORUM

All members of the Commission were present which constitutes a full quorum.

3. INVOCATION

Mayor Montoya said the Invocation.

4. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Commissioner Saldana led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

5. OPEN FORUM

- Mr. Ramon Mejia addressed the Commission about professionalism due to the agenda having the former Commissioners listed at the top. He stated that a Commissioner's platform was to stop the negativity and added that they are not negative, they are concerned. Mr. Mejia later stated he would like the sidewalks cleaned in front of the theater and recommends hiring a professional company to clean the downtown area. Mr. Mejia then welcomed the new Commission.
- Mr. Hector Castillo addressed the Commission regarding the Keep Mercedes Beautiful project for a Butterfly Garden. Mr. Castillo stated that KMB now has 2 National Certifications and they are working diligently on the Community Garden.

- Ms. Yolanda Molina expressed her concern for the protection and security of the students at school. She stated that the people have been ignored and the City has hit rock bottom. Ms. Molina added that if the Commission is not listening to the community then they are not doing their service. Ms. Molina stated she takes pride in her city and streets and that there is no connection in Mercedes. She expects the Commission to do their job when representing the City.
- Mr. Albert Cano thanked the Hidalgo County Precinct 1 Commissioner David Fuentes and Raul Sesin for the Drainage Improvements in Mercedes and the Mile 8 North Road Improvements. He added that EMS was contacted and they were responsive and professional. Mr. Cano informed everyone of the call for EMS was a heart attack and EMS saved the patient's life. He added that EMS was well trained and having the Commission support helps morale.

6. CONSENT AGENDA:

- a. Approval of Minutes for Meeting(s) held May 17, 2022 & May 26, 2022.**
- b. Approval of Budget Amendment from Human Resources to Police Vehicle Maintenance.**

Mayor Pro-Tem Martinez made a motion to approve consent agenda items A & B. Commissioner Saldana seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

7. CITY MANAGER COMMENTS:

- a. Proclamation for the Mercedes High School Softball Team (Comm. Howell & Martinez).**

Mayor Montoya presented the proclamation to the Mercedes High School Softball Team.

- b. Recognition and Welcome of New Corporals**

The Corporals were not present for this item. No action required.

- c. Update on continued preparations for potential drop in revenue due to continued economic uncertainty. (Comm Howell & Martinez)**

Commissioner Howell stated that the national inflation rate has increased 8.6 percent and are currently at 8.3 percent. He stated to prepare, the City needs to be proactive and have a financial plan in place. Commissioner Howell added he does not want to cut employees or services to the community. Mr. Perez stated he monitors the budget and the City has a fund policy was approved. He added that the city is well on the way to the target goal and there is a 3-month reserves. Mr. Perez stated that his plan does not impact essential services and there are monies due to un-filled positions. Mr. Perez agrees to solidify what the city is practicing.

- d. Update on TIRZ and Opportunity Zone**

Mr. Perez informed the Commission that the TIRZ is being straightened out and the County Auditors are reviewing all the information sent by the City. He stated that the TIRZ is for business incentives. Commissioner Howell stated he would like job creation to bring in revenues to the City by stating the larger tax base, the more opportunity to provide.

Mayor Montoya called the meeting into executive session at 7:08 p.m.

8. EXECUTIVE SESSION:

- a. **Discussion and Consultation with Attorney regarding personnel matters -Section 551.074**
- b. **Consultation with Attorney regarding industrial waste – Section 551.071**
- c. **Consultation with Attorney regarding update on legal matters – Section 551.071**
- d. **Deliberation with Attorney regarding Real Property Encroachment – Section 551.072**
- e. **Deliberation with Attorney regarding procurement of Real Property – Section 551.072**
- f. **Deliberation with Attorney regarding contract for Waste Connections – Section 551.071**
- g. **Consultation with Attorney regarding Water Rate Study – Section 551.071**

Mayor Montoya called the meeting back to order at 9:56 p.m. At this time, the Commission moved to item 9D.

9. ORDINANCE/RESOLUTIONS: *Present, Discuss, Consider, and Possible Take Action Regarding:*

a. Resolution #2022-07 for Request to Increase the Credit Card Limit.

Ms. Meredith Hernandez addressed the Commission requesting to increase the credit card limit from \$10,000 to \$20,000 and requested an additional card for the same account. Ms. Hernandez added that due to COVID restriction being lifted there has been more travel and Hotels are no longer accepting checks; therefore, the credit card is used for the payment and the credit card is mostly used for emergencies. Mr. Perez informed the Commission that a P.O Request is required and approval needed prior to the release of the credit card. Mayor Pro-Tem Martinez motioned for approval. Commissioner Saldana seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

b. Resolution #2022-08 to update Bank Signatories

Mayor Pro-Tem Martinez made a motion to approve resolution 2022-08. Commissioner Saldana seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

c. Resolution #2022-09 to approve the Funding Opportunity Announcement for WaterSMART Drought Response Program: Drought Resiliency Projects for Fical Year 2023.

Commissioner Howell made a motion to approve. Mayor Pro-Tem Martinez seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously. City Engineer Isaac Huacuja informed the Commission that the resolution is to request approval to submit for a grant. The grant they are applying for is a 50% match up to three million dollars. The project of for a water reservoir for clean drinking water and to possibly provide a 30 day water storage for three weeks. Mr. Perez stated that if the City gets awarded then the city can still decline if its not feasible.

d. Resolution #2022-10 to resell properties acquired through tax foreclosure proceedings.

Commissioner Howell made a motion to approve Resolution 2022-10. Mayor Pro-Tem Martinez seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously. At this time the Commission returned to item 9A.

e. Ordinance #2022-08 to implement the recommended water rate schedule based on recommendations from the Water Rate Study.

Mr. Jeff Snowden presented to the Commission the water rate study. He stated he recommends the City go easier on residential and heavier on Multi-Family and Small Business and Outside City limits. Mr. Snowden provided a comparison of the rates in Mercedes to the surrounding cities. Mr. Snowden stated the Mercedes had the same minimum rate for all meters. He stated that the recommendation will address the bond rating concerns, will pay operations, pay debts, and have revenues. He recommended a gradual increase for the next five years with the first increase being July 1, 2022 then October 1, 2023. Mayor Pro-Tem Martinez made a motion to approve. Commissioner Garcia seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously. Commissioner Saldana thanked Mr. Snowden for his work on the Water Rate Study.

f. Ordinance #2022-09 to update the Planning and Building Permit Fees.

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

10. MANAGEMENT ITEMS: *Present, Discuss, Consider, and Possibly Take Action Regarding:*

a. Elida Fest Sponsorship Request

Mr. Rick Ramos addressed the Commission about a project they began to bring Tejano music to the schools. The project included having a music festival in Mercedes at the Rio Grande Livestock Show Grounds for an academic scholarship and is requesting sponsorship from the City. Mr. Ramos stated they are looking at having the event annually. The concert will be July 30, 2022. He stated the sales tax revenues will go to Mercedes and La Quinta will be the official hotel. Mr. Ramos stated they will have five digital billboards. At a question, Mr. Ramos estimated \$90K in revenues and stated that they will donate half of the proceeds to the scholarship fund. Commissioner Howell made a motion to approve. Commissioner Saldana seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously. Mr. Ramos added that the tickets will be \$10 for the concert.

b. Appointing a Member from the Commission to the DCM Marketing Committee

Mayor Pro-Tem Martinez made a motion to appoint Commissioner Howell to the DCM Marketing Committee. Commissioner Garcia seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

c. Approval on new Appointment of Member to the Keep Mercedes Beautiful Committee.

Mayor Pro-Tem Martinez made a motion to appoint Ms. Janet Schofield. Commissioner Saldana seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

d. Partnership to promote improved maintenance of the downtown area.

Commissioner Saldana stated that he was briefed by EDC about entering an agreement to clean the downtown area to promote business development.

Commissioner Garcia stated this would revitalize the downtown area. No action was required.

11. BIDS/CONTRACTS: *Discuss, Consider, and Possibly Take Action Regarding:*

a. Directing City Manager and Legal to renew the contract with Waste Connections

Mayor Pro-Tem Martinez made a motion to proceed as discussed in executive session. Commissioner Garcia seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

12. OPEN SESSION: *Present, Discuss, Consider, and Possibly Take Action Regarding:*

a. Item A listed in executive session.

No action was taken on this item.

b. Item B listed in executive session

Mayor Pro- Tem Martinez made a motion to proceed as discussed in executive session. Commissioner Saldana seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

c. Item C listed in executive session

Commissioner Howell made a motion to proceed with legal team and move forward. Commissioner Garcia seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

d. Item D listed in executive session

Mayor Pro-Tem Martinez motioned to proceed as discussed in executive session. Commissioner Howell seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

13. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Saldana motioned to adjourn. Mayor Pro-Tem Martinez seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 10:59 P.M.