

**MERCEDES CITY COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
APRIL 6, 2021 – 6:00 P.M.
MERCEDES CITY HALL – COMMISSION CHAMBERS**

MEMBERS PRESENT:	Oscar Montoya Joe Martinez Leonel Benavidez Jacob Howell Jose M. Gomez	Mayor Mayor Pro-Tem Commissioner Commissioner Commissioner
STAFF PRESENT:	Kevin Pagan Joselynn Castillo Anthony Troiani Nereida Perez Hugo Perales Jose Figueroa Javier Campos	Interim City Manager City Secretary City Attorney Finance Director I.T Director PW Director Fire Chief
OTHERS PRESENT:	Melissa Ramirez	DCM Director (webex)

1) CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Mayor Montoya called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM

2) ESTABLISH QUORUM

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

3) INVOCATION

Commissioner Benavidez said the invocation.

4) PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Commissioner Howell lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

5) OPEN FORUM-

- . Mr. Jacob Howell addressed the Commission about working together and informed everyone of the projects the Commission is working on.
- . Ms. Cristella De Leon Hernandez addressed the Commission regarding items 13A and 13B.
- . Mr. David Garza expressed his opinion to the Commission about item 9A regarding the CO's and item 13B regarding the City Manager.

6) PRESENTATIONS:

A.) WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS PRESENTATION

Ms. Mere Vela with Workforce Solutions was present via webex. She informed the public to visit their facebook page RGV Get hired. Ms. Vela stated the programs that were available which included: A youth program for the summer, an E-3 Program for work experience for 18 to 24 year olds and Workforce pays them and pay for clothing and gas and can help with school if necessary. She stated that open enrollment on child care assistance application can be downloaded online.

B.) EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION-CODE RED

Fire Chief Campos addressed the Commission about Code Red. This is a platform to communicate with the citizens on emergencies. A link was placed on the City website for ease of access to the program. Mr. Campos provided a list of the Cities with CodeRED. CodeRED is a company and is used as a community alert system, for example sandbag events, water main breaks, city closures, etc. There is no cost for registration for the Citizens. Citizens can go to the City website, text, in person at City Hall, contact Fire Chief Campos, or call City hall and register over the phone. Chief Campos would like a committee to help out the elderly to get registered for the emergency alerts. The phone number is an 866 number and need to inform the public to

save that number as Code Red. Fire Chief Campos stated the plans for the system is to form a committee and have dispatch send out 90 percent of the notifications.

C.) UPDATE ON MERCEDES DRAINAGE PROJECTS INCLUDING PROACTIVE EFFORTS.

Commissioner Benavidez stated he would like an update on previous Public works workshop drainage projects. Mr. Pagan stated that some projects are currently on the agenda and there was a workshop today at 5:00 pm. Commissioner Benavidez acknowledged the Workshop with the Drainage District. He would like some proactive measures and bring it back to the Commission. He wants to discuss the status of the retention ponds. Commissioner Benavidez motioned to table. Mayor Pro-Tem Martinez seconded the motion. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

At this time, Commissioner Benavidez made a motion to move to item 9B followed by item 9C. Mayor Pro-Tem Martinez seconded the motion. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

7) CONSENT AGENDA:

A.) POSSIBLE ACTION TO AUTHORIZE BUDGET AMENDMENT FOR NEEDED POWER TO THE MERCEDES EOC

B.) APPROVAL AND ACCEPTANCE OF A GRANT AGREEMENT FLOOD INFRASTRUCTURE FUND FROM TWDB.

C.) APPROVAL OF INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT WITH THE CITY OF WESLACO FOR MILE 2 ½ W. ROAD.

Mayor Pro-Tem Martinez made a motion to approve all items under Consent agenda. Commissioner Howell seconded the motion. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

8) CITY MANAGER COMMENTS

Mr. Pagan recognized Mr. Figueroa by stating he appreciates his work and has accepted his resignation. Mayor Montoya congratulated Mr. Figueroa for all his work. Commissioner Howell thanked Mr. Figueroa for his service.

9) ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS:

A.) CONSIDERATION AND POSSIBLE ACTION TO ADOPT A RESOLUTION PURSUANT TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT CODE SECTION 21.003 AUTHORIZING ELECTED OFFICIALS TO SERVE AS VOLUNTEERS FOR, AMONG OTHER THINGS, THE MERCEDES VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT.

Mr. Pagan stated that Commissioner Howell wants to serve as a volunteer firefighter. LGC 21.003 authorizes elected officials. A Resolution needs to be passed by Commission and anyone who individually applies any form of incentive must be waived. Commissioner Gomez stated that there are some liability issues when an elected official will be running into a burning building. Ms. Castillo stated that the volunteers do not have health insurance but are covered under worker's compensation.

Commissioner Benavidez made a motion to approve. Mayor Pro-Tem Martinez seconded the motion. Upon a called vote, the motion passed. Commissioner Gomez voted against. Mr. David Garza stated that the legal representation in 1996 stated that the Commissioner cannot give direct orders. Fire Chief Campos stated there is a chain of command and that Commissioner Howell go with someone with experience to report to. Mr. Campos asked that as far as the incentive then that would be waived as well. The Commission agreed.

B.) CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL OF A RESOLUTION BY THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF MERCEDES, TEXAS AUTHORIZING AND APPROVING PUBLICATION OF NOTICE OF INTENTION OT ISSUE CERTIFICATES OF OBLIGATION; COMPLYING WITH THE REQUIREMENTS CONTAINED IN SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION RULE 15C2-12; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Mr. Pagan recommended that the CO be issued at this time to be issued this summer so that the project can move forward and hopefully at a minimal cause. Collier Park Pump replacement cost was added to the CO's. Pump Station, Capisallo Terrace, and CO's. The reimbursement resolution is for the City can use funds and then request that once the CO's come in then the City can get reimbursed for those expenses. 2 retention ponds and the pump will impact a large area in the City.

C.) CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL OF A RESOLUTION RELATING TO ESTABLISHING THE CITY'S INTENTION TO REIMBURSE ITSELF FOR THE PRIOR LAWFUL EXPENDITURES OF FUNDS RELATING TO CONSTRUCTING VARIOUS CITY IMPROVEMENTS FROM THE PROCEEDS OF TAX-EXEMPT OBLIGATIONS TO BE ISSUED BY THE CITY FOR AUTHORIZED PURPOSES; AUTHORIZING OTHER MATTER INCIDENT AND RELATED THERETO; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Mr. Dusty Traylor finance advisor addressed the Commission. The City has a debt service is approx. \$3.163 Million dollars per year. In Current FY is \$3.163 and will decrease next year to \$2.85. Mr. Traylor provided the Commission with a packet for them to review. The City is at an A+ rating. The City will continue to be favorably. The packet included the 2 options, option 1 was for the amount of \$2.25 Mil for one project and option 2 was for \$2.5 mil for both projects. Mr. Traylor stated the annual debt service is in shape to continue decreasing. The city will be adding 250k to the CO's as a new project. Commissioner Benavidez made a motion to approve 9B & 9C to go with the two projects for \$2.5 mil with contingent that the Commission get the specifics on paper of the details. Mayor Pro-Tem Martinez seconded the motion. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

10) MANAGEMENT ITEM(S):

A.) DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING HIDALGO ST. BETWEEN N. OHIO AVE. & N. ILLINOIS AVE.

Mr. Pagan stated that the street was not closed, it was abandoned and now is private property. Mr. Pagan ask if the Commission would like to pursue the various avenues to, in effect, turn it back into a street. Need to ask the property owners if they would like to turn it back to a street and city will need to maintain it and pave it. The City can make an agreement with a compensation to acquire that property. Option 3 would be to exercise the power of Eminent domain. Commissioner Howell would like to proceed with eminent domain and would like to see businesses come in. Commissioner Gomez stated there is more paperwork on this item because he was on the commission when there was discussion on Illinois St. Commissioner Howell made a motion to explore some of the options available to the City on that street. Commissioner Gomez seconded the motion. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously. Mr. David Garza stated that the road was closed because Martin Schwarts was going to open a hospital.

B.) DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON APPOINTMENT OF ONE NEW MEMBER TO THE KEEP MERCEDES BEAUTIFUL COMMITTEE

Ms. Rodriguez stated that there is a vacancy in the KMB Committee and they have an application from Ms. Laura Lopez. Mayor Pro-Tem Martinez made a motion to appoint Ms. Laura Lopez to the KMB Committee. Commissioner Howell seconded the motion. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

C.) DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON THE CITY OF MERCEDES WORK SAFE PLAN REGARDING THE OPENING OF CITY BUILDINGS.

Fire Chief Campos addressed the Commission regarding the work safe plan to re-open the City services. The plan includes all city buildings. Commissioner Howell motioned to approve the re-opening plan. Mayor Pro-Tem Martinez seconded the motion. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

D.) DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION FOR AN EQUIPMENT NEEDED ASSESSMENT FOR ALL OF THE DEPARTMENTS OF THE CITY OF MERCEDES.

Mr. Pagan stated he has already met with staff regarding a capital assets fund to help identify the immediate needs and long term needs then the fund will help the City have funds when equipment and assets needs to be replaced. Commissioner Benavidez stated that the fund is like a savings account. He would like to conduct a review of the equipment needs to efficiently run the departments. Mr. Pagan stated that staff can present their needs during the budget workshops. Commissioner Howell motion to approve inventory and maintenance of the equipment be done every 6 months. Mayor Pro-Tem Martinez wants the cost analysis on new equipment and the purpose for the equipment. Commissioner Benavidez seconded the motion. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously. Mr. Figueroa stated that a backhoe is needed that has passed its lifespan.

E.) DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING AN INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT WITH HIDALGO AND CAMERON COUNTIES IRRIGATION DISTRICT NO. 9