

**MERCEDES CITY COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING  
JANUARY 4, 2024 – 6:30 P.M.  
MERCEDES CITY HALL – COMMISSION CHAMBERS**

<b>MEMBERS PRESENT:</b>	Oscar D. Montoya Sr.	Mayor
	Dr. Ruben Saldana	Mayor Pro-Tem
	Armando Garcia	Commissioner
	Joe Martinez	Commissioner
	Dr. Jacob Howell	Commissioner
<b>STAFF PRESENT:</b>	Alberto Perez	City Manager
	Martie Garcia-Vela	City Attorney
	Joselynn Castillo	City Secretary
	Javier Ramirez	Asst. City Manager
	Kristine Longoria	Human Resources
	Meredith Hernandez	Asst. Finance Director
	Michael Rocha	I.T Manager
	Francisco Sanchez	Police Chief
	Javier Campos	Fire Chief/EMC
	Reynaldo Alegria	Public Works Director

**OTHERS PRESENT:** State Representative Armando Martinez, Ruth Valdez, Paula Salinas, Irma Morales, Orlando Diaz, Nellie Zamora, Colleen Blanchard

**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**

Commissioner Howell said the invocation.

**4. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Commissioner Garcia led in the pledge of allegiance.

Mayor Montoya took some time to recognize Ms. Paula Salinas, Payroll Bookkeeper for her 28 years of service to the City of Mercedes. The Commission expressed their appreciation for the contributions Ms. Salinas has made to the city. Ms. Salinas expressed her gratitude and thanked the city for the opportunity to work.

**5. OPEN FORUM:**

There were no comments during open forum.

**6. PRESENTATIONS:**

- a. Presentation by Finance Director: Audit & TIRZ**

Ms. Meredith Hernandez stated they are about 45% complete with the audit. She stated that they have met with the County regarding TIRZ expenditures and contributions from previous years. TIRZ is 10% complete and should be completed in a few months. The city is aiming to complete the audit in March and the city is currently on track to meet that goal. The field work by the auditors should be completed by the end of the month. Ms. Hernandez referenced the power point presentation regarding the reserves and cash balance.

**b. Presentation by GoERO regarding Police Department Building Update**

Albert Cronus Project Manager, the contractor is on phase 2 and toward the end of the project. Phase 1 – Construction started in December 2022. Phase 2 is currently in progress. Mr. Cronus provided photos of the police department construction. They are currently working on the windows and doors for the front entrance and the ceiling in the booking area. There was one A/C unit that was determined to be good but gave out. Melden and Hunt is the civil engineer and is looking at the issue of the drainage next the funeral home and alley. The close out process includes coordinating with the subcontractors for the warranties to the items in the building. Substantial completion should be in February and police department personnel should be able to move in in March. Commissioner Howell would like the commission to consider naming the building.

**c. Presentation by SWG regarding Drainage Master Plan and Capihallo Terrace Update**

Mr. Jose Reyes Project Engineer with SWG presented to the Commission and update on Capihallo Terrace. There was no update on the drainage master plan due to pending information from the City. The completed sections as of January 4, 2024 are as follows: the wet well lift station, 2100 linear feet of 8” force main, 1021 LF of 15” Sanitary Sewer Line and 100 LF of 8” Sanitary Sewer line. 4 manholes have been installed of the 50 manholes in the subdivision.

Mayor Montoya moved to item 10A at this time.

**7. CONSENT AGENDA:**

- a.** Approval of Minutes for Meeting(s) held December 19, 2023.  
Mayor Pro-Tem Saldana motioned to approved. Commissioner Garcia seconded.  
Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

**8. CITY MANAGER COMMENTS:**

**a. Update regarding contracts for services**

Mr. Perez informed the commission that the city would be going out for bids for one-year agreement to assist the city with paving, sidewalks, vehicle mechanics, fuel, etc. The agreements have been sent to legal for review. Once the city receives the bids, they would be brought to the commission for approval. Mayor Pro-Tem Saldana recommended to have two companies on rotation for the same product in case one company does not have the items in stock.

**b. Departmental Goals and Objectives for 2024**

Mr. Perez stated that the departments goals and objective have been provided to the commission. The next step following up with the details on ensuring staff meets their goals.

**9. ORDINANCE/RESOLUTIONS:**

**a. Postpone: Approval of First Reading of Ordinance 2024-01 regarding elections and political signs (Electioneering)**

Mayor Pro-Tem Saldana motioned to adopt the ordinance and forego the reading. Commissioner Howell seconded. Ms. Garcia Vela presented to the commission the changes made to the election ordinance to ensure voter safety. Mayor Pro-Tem Saldana expressed his appreciation to the time taken to update this ordinance since it allows the city to enforce certain rules that were not part of the previous ordinance. The changes include but are not limited to posting time frames for political signs, penalty amount, parking, and campaigning. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

**10. MANAGEMENT ITEMS:**

**a. Approval of change order request for Capisallo Terrace**

Mr. Reyes informed of the difference in elevation on three of the 4 manholes and would like to cut the manhole and put them at the right elevation which is the cause of the change order. This is not a common occurrence for the elevation to change by 2 feet. Mr. Reyes recommends approval. Mr. Reyes stated that as per TCEQ the donut spacers can only be placed for 6 to 8 inches in changes so his recommendation is to cut the manhole to meet the right elevation and be in compliance with TCEQ. Commissioner Garcia motioned to approve the change order. Mayor Pro-Tem Saldana seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

**b. Approval of request for sponsorship for 2024 Rio Grande Valley Livestock Show**

Mayor Pro-Tem Saldana motioned to approve the sponsorship request by RGV Live Stock Show of \$5000 and \$8000 in kind for police service. Commissioner Garcia seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

**c. Approval to Proceed with the Submittal of the Texas Traffic Safety Program FY 2025- STEP Grant and approval of Resolution 2024-01**

Mayor Pro-Tem Saldana motioned to approve. Commissioner Garcia seconded. Mr. Diego Saenz with border affairs addressed the Commission regarding the grant. The goal is to increase effective enforcement of traffic stops and to help reduce fatalities. There will be enforcement zones that are high risk areas. TxDOT will be paying out about \$12K. The state of Texas has not had a day without fatalities. TxDOT uses historic data for identifying the locations to enforce. At a question, Mr. Saenz stated the 20% match could be indirect costs. There are requirements the city will need to follow to meet the grants expectations. There is a negotiation period for the locations. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

**11. BIDS/CONTRACTS:**

**a. Approval of Interlocal Agreement between the City of Mercedes**

Fire Chief Campos presented to the Commission the agreement with the County for the use of an ambulance. The agreement is for \$12 per month for 10 months and the agreement is for one year and can be renewed every year. The agreement is just for the ambulance but not manpower. Mayor Pro-Tem Saldana motioned to approve. Commissioner Garcia seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Montoya called the meeting into executive at 7:59 p.m.

**12. EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

- a. Discussion with City Manager regarding personnel matters – Section 551.074**
- b. Consultation with Attorney regarding update on litigation – Section 551.071**

Mayor Montoya called the meeting back to order at 8:58 p.m.

**13. OPEN SESSION:**

- a. Item A from Executive Session**  
No action
- b. Item B 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 8:59 P.M.