

**MERCEDES CITY COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
MARCH 19, 2024 – 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
	Nereida Perez	Finance Director
	Michael Rocha	I.T Manager
	Francisco Sanchez	Police Chief
	Javier Campos	Fire Chief
	Reynaldo Alegria	Public Works Director
	Marisol Vidales	Library Director
	Richard Morin	Recreational Director

OTHERS PRESENT: Juan Vasquez, Mary Jane Hernandez, Isabel Mendoza, Janie Palacios, Anthony Cardenas, Tristan Garza, and Francisco Rivas

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 commission.

3. INVOCATION

Commissioner Martinez said the invocation.

4. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Commissioner Garcia led in the pledge of allegiance.

5. OPEN FORUM

There were no residents that signed up for open forum.

6. PRESENTATIONS:

a. Proclamation by the Mayor for the Church of the Living Word Pastor L.T. & Weeda Moss

This item was postponed.

b. Proclamation for TMLDA Library of Excellence Award

Mayor Montoya presented the proclamation to the Dr. Hector P. Garcia Memorial Library for receiving the Excellence Award for serving the underserved and providing outstanding programming. Only 84 of 545 libraries have been bestowed with this award, underlining the library's exceptional commitment and dedication.

Following the proclamation Ms. Vidales introduced her dedicated team. Members of the commission expressed heartfelt gratitude to the library staff, acknowledging their invaluable contributions to the community.

7. CONSENT AGENDA:

a. Approval of Minutes for Meeting(s) held February 20, 2024

Commissioner Howell motioned to approve the minutes. Commissioner Garcia seconded the motion. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

8. CITY MANAGER COMMENTS:

a. Update regarding contracts for services

Mr. Perez introduced Reynaldo Trevino regarding going out for bids. Mr. Trevino stated the city has posted 10 RFP's for Electrical, Plumbing, HVAC, Auto Parts, Auto repair, fuel, oil, road repair, roof repair and sidewalk repair. He informed the Commission that the bids are posted on the website and published in the paper. The next step is to contact some vendors to inform them of the open bids so that companies can submit. No action is required for this item.

9. ORDINANCES/RESOLUTIONS:

a. Approval of Resolution 2024-15 to adopt the suspension of AEP's Rate Filing

Mr. Perez stated that AEP is looking at increasing the rates and the resolution is to suspend the rate increase. Commissioner Martinez motioned to approve the resolution. Commissioner Garcia seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

b. Approval of Resolution 2024-16 regarding Border Zone Fire Department

Commissioner Martinez motioned to approve and forego the reading. Commissioner Howell seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

c. Approval of Resolution 2024-17 regarding State Crisis Intervention Grant Program

Commissioner Howell motioned to approve. Commissioner Martinez seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

10. MANAGEMENT ITEMS: *Present, discuss, consider, and possibly take action regarding:*

a. Discussion of 10th Street repairs/study – Commissioner Howell

Commissioner Howell is exploring alternative options for the city to proceed with the 10th street repairs, rather than waiting for the county's assistance.

Commissioner Howell recommends starting the repairs for Florida Street to FM 491. At a question, Mr. Ramirez clarified that the April start date pertains to the waterline relocation. Funding for the project will be provided through the Urban County Program. Mr. Ramirez further explained that the existing waterline, located beneath the pavement, will need to be abandoned in place and a new waterline will be installed closer to the curb. The recent survey indicated the presence of other utility lines in the area. The process of abandoning the existing waterline is expected to take one month. The bidding process is still underway, and the city is considering working on the project during the summer when school is out and traffic in the area is reduced. Mr. Perez added that specific details are

currently unavailable as the city is awaiting confirmation from the Urban County program regarding the possibility of phasing out the project. If this is not feasible, the city will be responsible for funding the project and may potentially utilize labor from the county.

b. Discussion of Drone Technology regarding Amazon delivery options – Commissioner Howell

Commissioner Howell expressed the city's openness to embracing technological advancements. Specifically, regarding the use of drone technology for deliveries and drop-offs. Commissioner Howell voiced support for Amazon's utilization of drone technology for package deliveries. The City's legal team noted that an ordinance would be necessary to regulate the land use associated with drone operations. They committed to researching approaches taken by other cities to develop an appropriate ordinance.

c. Approval to ratify the purchase of Skid Steer

Commissioner Martinez motioned to approve. Commissioner Garcia seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

d. Sponsorship Request for the City of McAllen for the TML Region 12 Workshop

Commissioner Martinez motioned to approve. Commissioner Garcia seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

e. Approval of changes to the Library Policy

Ms. Vidales informed the commission about the changes to the Hotspot loan agreement and the meeting room policy for the use of the study pods, program room and Texas room. The Texas room can accommodate for 30 people and is available for rent at a rate of \$25 for a four-hour block. Commissioner Martinez motioned to approve. Commissioner Garcia seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

f. Approval to apply for the Certified Local Government with the Texas Historic Commission

Ms. Vidales stated they are ready to apply for certified Local government status. The CLG status is a local, state and federal government partnership to empower local communities to better protect historic resources. The benefits of the program include access to technical assistance, a network of preservation commissioners and officers in the state, workshops and trainings. Commissioner Howell motioned to approve. Commissioner Martinez seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

g. Approval of appointment to the Planning and Zoning Commission

At this time, Legal recommended discussing this item in executive session. The Commission proceeded with Item 11 bids/contracts.

Mayor Pro-Tem Saldana motioned to nominate Nancy Garza. Commissioner Garcia seconded. With no other nomination Ms. Garza was appointed. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

11. BIDS/CONTRACTS:

a. Ratifying the Approval of E-Rate Internet Service Contract to Smartcom Telephone, LLC for Dr. Hector P. Garcia Memorial Library

Ms. Vidales stated that the application has not been submitted but it's a lengthy process. The price is \$599 per month and the library pays 10%.

Commissioner Howell motioned to approve the contract with Smartcom at \$599 per Month. Commissioner Garcia seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

b. Approval of Memorandum of Agreement for Stormwater Task Force

Commissioner Howell motioned to approve. Commissioner Garcia seconded. Mr. Ramirez informed the commission that the city is participating in a program to apply for funding for the planning phase of a project aimed at installing sensors in the drainage canals. The objective is to implement an early detection system to monitor the capacity of the canals and enhance the city's drainage infrastructure. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

c. Approval of EMS Billing Contract renewal

Commissioner Martinez motioned to approve. Commissioner Garcia seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

12. DEPARTMENTAL MONTHLY REPORTS

Commissioner Martinez brought to Mr. Alegria's attention the presence of potholes and overgrown lots on Willacy St., suggesting he also inspect the north side of town.

Mr. Rocha updated the commission on the issues with the City's website. He expressed concerns that the current website provider's platform is susceptible to hacking. Mr.

Rocha advised the public to access the city website directly by typing

www.cityofmercedes.com into the browser, rather than clicking on search engine links.

He has researched the costs associated with replacing the city's website and introduced Juan Vasquez, the new IT technician. Mayor Montoya concurred with Commission Martinez's suggestion to issue Requests for Proposals for the redesign or reconstruction of the city's website.

Commissioner Martinez motioned to go into executive session. Commissioner Garcia seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously. The commission went into executive session at 7:33 p.m.

13. 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 and upcoming events – Section 551.074

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

c. Consultation with Attorney regarding contracts – Section 551.071

14. OPEN SESSION: Mayor Montoya called the meeting back to order at 8:57 p.m. At this time, the commission proceeded to move to Item 9G on the agenda.

a. Item A from Executive Session

b. Item B from Executive Session

c. Item C from Executive Session

No action was taken on the items discussed in executive session.

15. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Martinez motioned to adjourn. Commissioner Garcia seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:58 p.m.