

Notice of a Regular Meeting Minutes
CITY OF BEVIL OAKS, TEXAS

March 20, 2025

1. Call to Order @ 6:30 P.M.

*****Due to technical difficulties, the recording didn't start until halfway through the discussion on agenda item 7.d. *****

2. Pledge of Allegiance/Invocation

- a. The United States Flag
- b. The Texas state flag: *"Honor the Texas flag; I pledge allegiance to thee, Texas, one state under God, one and indivisible."*

3. Roll Call- All but Councilman Mannette

4. Conflict of Interest Statement- None

5. Citizen Comments (3 minutes each) – An opportunity for the citizens to address Council on agenda items or concerns not on the agenda – those wishing to speak must complete the comment card, present the comment card to the City Secretary prior to the beginning of the meeting, and observe a 3-minute time limit.
No Citizen Comments

6. Review/Approve Consent Items-M/M/2/C- Councilman Clayton/Councilman Merendino- *Approved- Unanimous*

- a. **Financial Reports for City of Bevil Oaks**
- b. **Financial Reports for Public Works**
- c. **Utility Innovations Report**
- d. **Previous Meeting Minutes**

***** A motion was made by Councilman Merendino to convene in executive session. Councilman Clayton seconded. Council convened in executive session at 6:38 p.m. The regular meeting resumed at 7:20 p.m.***

7. Review/Approve Action Items

- a. **Consideration/Discussion/Approval** for budget for installation of wall-mounted shelving in City Hall- **M/M/2/C- Councilwoman Cramer/Councilman Thibodeaux- *Approved a budget of \$4,000, but an additional bid must be obtained.***
 - **Councilman Wright-** Asks if there is another quote?
 - **Councilman Merendino-** Suggests tabling the item
 - **Councilman Merendino-** Suggests a \$4,000 budget/Councilman Wright seconded
 - **Councilwoman Cramer-** suggests getting another quote
- b. **Consideration/Discussion/Approval** of resolution for revised financial policy- **M/M/2/C- Councilman Merendino/Councilman Clayton- *Approved- Unanimous***
- c. **Consideration/Discussion/Approval** of resolution for revised procurement policy and procedure- **M/M/2/C-Councilman Wright/Councilwoman Cramer- *Approved- Unanimous***
- d. **Consideration/Discussion/Approval** of resolution for revised City spending policy. - **M/M/2/C- Councilman Merendino/Councilman Thibodeaux- *Approved- Unanimous- receipts must be turned in within 15 days after the expenditure or event.***
 - **Councilman Wright-** States that most of the stuff in the new policy was in the policy that Council approved last year.
 - **Councilman Thibodeaux-** States that the way that the events are, only having 7 days to turn the receipts in would be difficult because there is a lot of in and outs with the money that is spent.

- **Councilwoman Cramer-** Asks if he waits until after the event to get reimbursed?
 - **Councilman Thibodeaux-** Most of the time, yes.
 - **Councilman Merendino-** States that he thinks it would be easier if receipts were turned in when the purchase is made.
 - **Councilman Wright-** Suggests that Council approves the policy with the change of turning in receipts within 30 days of the expenditure.
 - **Mayor Mitchell-** Suggests adding a clause that receipts must be turned in within 14 days of the completion of the event.
 - **Councilman Thibodeaux-** Suggests that receipts be turned in by the Council meeting following the event or within 14 days of the event, whichever is feasible.
 - **Councilwoman Cramer-** Suggests that receipts be turned in within 14 days or a written request be turned in to ask for more time to submit the receipt.
- e. **Consideration/Discussion/Approval** of proclaiming March 2025 as Red Cross Month. **M/M/2/C- Councilman Wright/Councilman Merendino- *Approved- Unanimous***
- f. **Consideration/Discussion/Approval** of resolution for easement that runs East and West on residential property. **M/M/2/C- Councilman Thibodeaux/Councilman Clayton- *Approved- Councilman Merendino abstained from voting***
- **Councilman Merendino-** explains that the City will only release the easement if the owner agrees to sign the paperwork for DD6
 - **Dru Montgomery-** States that the easement serves no purpose. When the survey was completed, the surveyor made a mistake and put the easement in the wrong place on the property. It serves no purpose for the City.
 - **Councilman Merendino-** States that DD6 recommended that we hold the resolution on the easement until the owner signs the paperwork for the easement for DD6 because there have been complications with getting this easement signed.
 - **Councilwoman Cramer-** Asks if we give the homeowners the easement, if the homeowners build something, will it block the easement for DD6?
 - **Councilman Merendino-** No. States that this easement runs through the middle of the property. It is away from the easement that DD6 is trying to obtain. States that he would suggest that the City holds the easement until the owners sign the easement that DD6 needs to obtain to clean the ditch that runs parallel to the property.
 - **Dru Montgomery-** States that the City can't do that.
 - **Councilman Clayton-** States that the City should release the easement on good faith that the owners will release the easement that DD6 needs.
- g. **Consideration/Discussion/Approval** of revised Mobile Home Ordinance (currently # 241) **M/M/2/C- Thibodeaux/Cramer *Approved***
- **Cramer-** Asks what the current charge is for the mobile home parks is
 - **Mayor-** \$100/per park per year.
 - **Councilwoman Cramer-** Asks if the current fee has been paid?
 - **Mayor Mitchell-** No
 - **Councilwoman Cramer-** By passing this ordinance, do we expect that the new fee will be paid?

- **Mayor Mitchell-** She is hopeful that if the ordinance passes that we will be able to recoup some of the funds that we haven't received since the fee was raised.
- **Councilman Wright-** States that in Mr. Frederick's mobile home park, the residents all have their own trash can, but in Mrs. Vautrot's mobile home park, they do not so that is around another \$20 roughly that the City will be receiving in franchise fees as well. States that with the changes, it's roughly an extra \$2,500 a year revenue for the City.
- **Councilman Wright-** Asks how the City would make sure that the money is paid for the unit if they still haven't paid the 100/yr?
- **Dru Montgomery-** States that the ordinance was originally structured for the trailer park that was on Sweetgum. States that \$100 permit fee wasn't the goal of the ordinance. It was the rules that were in the ordinance. States that with the ordinance that is currently in place, the City was only getting \$200/yr, so it wasn't worth him visiting the owners of the mobile home parks because it would have cost the City more than \$200 to pay for his time spent trying to get the money. With this new ordinance, the money that the City will get will cover his fees plus give the City some additional revenue.
- **Councilman Wright-** The City won't be collecting the fees that the owners haven't paid for the past few years, correct?
- **Dru Montgomery-** No, but states that he can use that as leverage because the mobile home park owners have gotten away with not paying the current fee for the past few years.
- **Councilwoman Cramer-** Asks if the tenant changes, do the mobile home park owners have to pay another fee?
- **Mayor Mitchell-** States that the fee isn't based off the tenants, it is per unit per year. The fee is assessed if there is a unit on a lot meaning if they have a vacant lot, they won't pay a fee for it, but as long as there is a unit on the lot, whether it is occupied or not, they will pay the fee.

h. Consideration/Discussion/Approval of contractor permit placard requirement.

M/M/2/C- Councilman Clayton/Councilman Thibodeaux- All but Councilwoman Cramer approved

- **Councilman Thibodeaux-** The placard is new?
- **Mayor Mitchell-** Yes. When someone pulls a permit, they will receive a placard with the permit number on it. That way there is no question on whether or not there has been a permit pulled to do work on the home.
- **Councilman Clayton-** States that a placard is different than a yard sign. States that in his experience, a placard goes on the house with the permit information on it.
- **Dru Montgomery-** States that the permit number must be visible from the road.
- **Mayor Mitchell-** States that the point in doing this is so that we know if they have pulled a permit.
- **Councilwoman Cramer-** States that she doesn't agree with having a sign in the yard because she doesn't want anyone to know that work is being done and the house might be vacant. States that it is a safety issue.
- **Councilman Clayton-** States that having a visible permit is universal.
- **Mayor Mitchell-** States having a visible permit will let the Mayor and Council know that there has been a permit pulled.

- **Councilwoman Cramer-** Asks how getting a placard is going to make someone pull a permit
- **Mayor Mitchell-** States that if someone on the Council drives by a property that is having work done and a placard isn't present, the Council and the Mayor have the authority to issue a stop work order.
- **Councilwoman Cramer-** States that if her husband is on the roof doing work and there isn't a placard in the yard and someone issues a stop work order, she would have an issue with that.
- **Dru Montgomery-** States that having one person on the roof wouldn't raise a concern, however, a crew on the roof would.
- **Councilwoman Cramer-** States that mandating that a permit placard be in the yard of someone that is having work done, isn't going to make them pull a permit.
- **Councilman Wright-** Suggests looking in the window to see if there is a permit because that is where the permit is supposed to go.
- **Councilwoman Cramer-** Asks if the placard is so that people in the neighborhood to see if there is a permit pulled or for the office to see if there is a permit pulled.
- **Mayor Mitchell-** Anyone
- **Dru Montgomery-** States that it is less likely that someone will steal something if there are contractors going in and out of the home doing work.

i. **Consideration/Discussion/Approval** of authorizing the Mayor (and any additional Councilperson) to negotiate and enter an agreement, subject to final approval by the City Council, to upgrade the City's website in order to provide additional functionality to citizens. The agreement would be for a limited term and not exceed the charges stated in the attached materials. **M/M/2/C-Thibodeaux/Councilwoman Cramer- tabled**

- **Councilman Thibodeaux-** States that there are two quotes. States that there are several things included in the proposals
- **Councilman Wright-** Asks what the initial and annual cost would be?
- **Councilman Thibodeaux-** States that there are several things included in the bids that we may not use, suggests that the Council gives some leniency on the cost. States that it could cost more for the initial website than the annual cost. States that the premium set up would work for what we would need. Asks Sabrenna how long it takes to put the packets together and prep everything else including the meeting minutes?
- **Sabrenna Crain-** Around 9 to 10 hours
- **Councilman Thibodeaux-** States that there is a feature on one of the website proposals that will take some of that time that Sabrenna spends on Council packets.
- **Wright-** Asks how much it is for the websites?
- **Councilman Thibodeaux-** \$4,600/year. The start up fee is \$850/year, but there are a lot of add-ons. The other quote is \$10,600.
- **Dru Montgomery-** Asks how the agenda and minutes are done through the website? AI?
- **Councilman Thibodeaux-** No, it is a template.
- **Councilman Clayton-** Asks if the vendor can come do a presentation for the Council? Suggests tabling the item until a presentation can be done.
- **Councilman Thibodeaux-** Yes. States that unless you view the websites, then everything that is offered means nothing.

- **Councilman Wright-** States that he needs more details to make a decision.
 - **Councilman Thibodeaux-** States that there has been several hours put into figuring out exactly what we need to make it beneficial for the City
 - **Councilman Wright-** States that you have to get it as close as possible to comparing apples to apples to make a decision.
 - **Council Thibodeaux-** States that we have never had to pay this much for a website.
 - **Councilman Wright-** States that decision making needs to have structure.
 - **Councilman Thibodeaux-** States that the template, which is the cheaper version, is what we would need. Goes over the cost of some things that are needed. States that the start of both websites are around \$10,000 and around \$4,500/year.
 - **Councilwoman Cramer-** Is there money in the budget for this?
 - **Mayor Mitchell-** No
 - **Councilman Thibodeaux-** The agenda item isn't what he listed on his agenda request. He asked for an amount to be approved.
 - **Councilman Wright-** Ask if having a new website would do away with some of the expenses that we currently have for anything else?
 - **Councilman Thibodeaux-** States that he isn't sure, but it could generate some revenue.
 - **Councilman Clayton-** States that with the proposal, it could potentially do away with some costs.
 - **Councilwoman Cramer-** Asks why there would be more ADA exposure with the website than there is at the Civic Center?
 - **Councilman Thibodeaux-** States that there isn't.
 - **Mayor Mitchell-** States that our current I.T. guy doesn't do websites any more or he could do.
 - **Councilwoman Cramer-** States that unless there is room in the budget for this, she doesn't think that it should be approved. Suggests planning for it in the budget for next year.
 - **Councilman Thibodeaux-** States that he isn't going to spend any more time looking for a website until Council can approve a budget for it.
 - **Councilman Merendino-** States that he has the same opinion as Councilwoman Cramer. States that until we find out exactly what we need before we decide to purchase the website.
- j. **Consideration/Discussion/Approval** of installing Starlink internet service at select locations *Moved to after item k*
- k. **Consideration/Discussion/Approval** of revision of agenda item 8.d. from previous agenda - temporarily suspending permit fees for owner-occupied homes.
- M/M/2/C- **Councilman Thibodeaux/Councilman Clayton- Approved**
- **Councilman Wright, Councilman Clayton & Councilman Thibodeaux- voted yes on continuing to charge for permit fees**
 - **Councilwoman Cramer & Councilman Merendino- voted to not charge for permit fees**

Discussion starts here:

- **Councilwoman Cramer-** States that the City would lose \$8,000 if we temporarily waived the cost of the permits for the owner-occupied homes.

- **Mayor Mitchell-** States that is why she brought it back to Council for reconsideration. States that beautifying a home doesn't require a permit.
- **Councilwoman Cramer-** States that beautifying the home is any work that is being done on it.
- **Councilman Merendino-** Asks how much was budgeted for permits?
- **Councilwoman Cramer-** \$8,000
- **Councilman Merendino-** Then if we have already made \$6,000 on permits, then we would only lose \$2,000.
- **Councilman Wright-** States that based on the spreadsheet that was provided for the permit fees that have been paid, the City would lose 67% of the money in the budget if we waived the fees.
- **Councilwoman Cramer-** States that she suggested not doing any events the rest of the year so that the cost would weigh out.
- **Mayor Mitchell-** States that Councilwoman Cramer has a good idea.
- **Councilwoman Cramer-** States that people need to quit coming to her talking out of both sides of their mouth saying that we need to quit spending money because when she comes up with a solution to the problem that they brought up, that person objects to it.
- **Councilman Wright-** States that isn't what was talked about in the last Council meeting.
- **Councilwoman Cramer-** States that in the last meeting she had a couple of agenda items. States that she suggested canceling events to make the Civic Center ADA compliant. States that this discussion was to take the citizens into consideration by letting them do work on their homes without paying for a permit, but if it would help offset the cost then canceling events would be beneficial for both items.
- **Councilman Wright-** States that he could be wrong about what happened at the last meeting.
- **Councilwoman Cramer-** Goes over what her agenda items were the previous meeting.
- **Dru Montgomery-** States that the citizens benefit from the events as well. States that if the contractors pulling the permits aren't benefitting from the events, so it is different.
- **Councilwoman Cramer-** States that the citizens are paying for the permits too.
- **Mayor Mitchell-** States that the City has to pay the inspector to do the inspections and that's why there is permit fees.
- **Councilwoman Cramer-** States that we don't pay the inspector right now.
- **Heather Steelman-** The City is about to pay him because he is retiring from his other job. States that people have to pull permits in order for them to be held accountable.
- **Councilman Wright-** States that this isn't about pulling permits, it's about paying for the permits.
- **Councilwoman Cramer-** States that it has been stated several times that the permits still have to be pulled, but there isn't a fee.
- **Heather Steelman-** States that there are only two Cities that don't charge for permits. States that in the other Cities, the contractor has to pay for the permit.
- **Councilwoman Cramer-** That's not how it works. The homeowner is still being charged for the permit fee. States that if you hire a contractor,

the permit fee is on the invoice that they give to the owner. States that it is absurd that a proposal was made to spend \$14,000 on a website, but people are complaining about losing \$4,600. There needs to be some kind of direction.

- **Councilman Thibodeaux-** States that the enticement of having the events is getting people back into the neighborhood.
- **Councilwoman Cramer-** States that the events aren't the reason people move to Bevil Oaks. States that there is so much drama in Bevil Oaks and most of the drama comes from the events. States that no one moves here because there is fireworks, but if someone could move here and not pay \$500 to pull a permit to fix their house, that would be great.
- **Councilman Thibodeaux-** States that there has to be other things that can be cut other than not charging for a permit.

j. Consideration/Discussion/Approval of installing Starlink internet service at select locations- **M/M/2/C- Councilman Clayton/Councilwoman Cramer- *Approved- Unanimous- approved the purchase of one piece of equipment at the Sewer Plant***

- **Councilman Thibodeaux-** States that he checked into this because the current cameras that are installed at the public utilities do not work. States that getting Wi-Fi at those locations then we will be able to get better cameras. States that Starlink is also cheaper than Sparklight.
- **Mayor Mitchell-** Asks Sabrenna if she knew when the contract was up with Sparklight?
- **Sabrenna Crain-** Not off the top of my head.
- **Councilman Merendino-** Asks who is going to monitor the alerts that we get from the cameras?
- **Councilman Wright-** States that it is TBD
- **Councilwoman Cramer-** We could do the Starlink service at the Sewer Plant before the contract with Sparklight ends so that we knew if it worked before we switch everything else over to them.
- **Councilman Wright-** Asks if there is a contract?
- **Councilman Thibodeaux-** States that it's month to month.
- **Councilman Merendino-** Asks how many problems there have been at the water and sewer plant that require camera surveillance?
- **Councilman Wright-** There has been a few suspicious events.

8. Reports

- a. Mayor Mitchell- No report**
- b. Councilman Clayton- No report**
- c. Councilwoman Cramer**
 - States that she has gone through 70 ordinances and categorized them. Suggests that any ordinance that pertains to safety be revisited.
- d. Councilman Thibodeaux**
 - 75 meals have been served with the lunch bunch so far. States that the lunch bunch is doing well.
 - States that there is a new camera installed for the videos for the meetings. States that the issues that we were previously having with the cameras was because the internet wasn't working properly.
- e. Councilman Wright**
 - States that he attended the SETRPC meeting and it only lasted 14 minutes with the items that they had on the agenda
- f. Councilman Mannette- Not present**

- g. **Councilman Merendino-** States that he is hoping that the easement through property on Sweetgum gets taken care of. States that the County filled potholes recently.

9. **Adjourn Meeting @ 9:30 p.m. Councilman Wright/Councilman Clayton**

Approved on this 19 day of June, 2025.



Mayor Cheri Mitchell

Attest:


City Secretary, Jeff Thibodeaux