

Notice of Regular Meeting Minutes
CITY OF BEVIL OAKS, TEXAS

July 17, 2025

1. **Call to Order @ 6:30 pm**
2. **Pledge of Allegiance/Invocation (given by Councilman Merendino)**
 - 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. **Moment of silence for victims of the 2025 flash flooding in Texas**
4. **Roll Call:** All but Councilman Clayton present
 - a. Since a quorum of Councilmembers will be physically present, the Council hereby provides notice that one or more Councilmembers may participate via video conference.
 - b. The announcement of those participating by videoconference will be announced at roll call and all members of the public attending the meeting shall be able to hear and see remotely attending Councilmembers.
5. **Conflict of Interest Statement-** None
6. **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-
 - **Charles Cramer (Public Maintenance Employee)-** States that he would like to bring items forward from last year. States that signs throughout the City need to be replaced. States that he brought it up last year, but the signs haven't been replaced. States that it has now become an emergency management issue. States that during the recent storm, there were barriers put up to close Riverbend, but a citizen removed them to get through. States that he asked to purchase barriers. The Councilmember over that had a plan in place to purchase the barriers, however, there was no follow through. States that we had a port a potty at the sewer plant that could have been cleaned and used for the 4th of July for \$115, but we no longer have it because he was told that it wasn't ADA compliant so we couldn't use it. States that all the things he is bringing up, were brought up last year and these things haven't been followed through on. Being that it hasn't been taken care of, they are now matters of emergency. States that he doesn't like to hear himself talk. States that he brings stuff up so that it gets taken care of. Asks that Council takes the stuff that he brings to them into consideration. States that we are now in hurricane season. States that hopefully nothing happens, and emergency management can find the streets if there is an emergency being that there are signs missing. Thanks Council for their time.
7. **Review/Approve Consent Items- M/M/2/C- Councilman Wright/Councilman Merendino- Approved- Unanimous**
 - a. **Financial Reports for City of Bevil Oaks**
 - b. **Financial Reports for Public Works**
 - c. **Utility Innovations Report**
8. **Presentation**
 - a. **Presentation** given by Fire Chief Chris Gonzales regarding Sales and Use Tax Allocation (**Chief Gonzales was unable to make it.**)
 - **Councilman Merendino-** States that the sales tax that everyone pays is 8.25%. 6.25% of that goes to the state. States that .5% goes to the County. States that the rest of the tax currently goes to the states because it isn't allocated to anything else. States that Bevil Oaks is already allocating the remainder of the tax to the fire department, so it won't affect money that the City is currently getting. States that the fire chief asked that the Council

puts the word out to the people of Bevil Oaks to get them to vote for this event though the money is already allocated the citizens still have to vote.

- **Councilman Wright-** States that the other parts of the district that ESD # 1 services don't have those taxes allocated right now. States that it doesn't cost the other districts anything either, it is just reallocating the money that they are already paying to ESD # 1.
- **Councilman Merendino-** States that with the help of the people of Bevil Oaks vote on it. States that the fire department is waiting to decide whether or not to put it on the ballot until they put fillers out to see if it's worth the money it will cost for the election.
- **Councilman Thibodeaux-** States that he and Sabrenna attended the meeting that the fire station had regarding this. States that there isn't a downside for the residents of Bevil Oaks. States that there would be a downside to the areas that don't currently have the sales tax set at 6.25% because if this passes, they will pay more tax (8.25% sales tax if it passes).

9. Review/Approve Action Items

- a. **Consideration/Discussion/Approval** of setting a budget to replace and/or repair street signs throughout the City. *Presented by Councilman Merendino M/M/2/C- Councilman Wright/Councilwoman Cramer- Approved a budget of \$10,000- Unanimous*
- **Councilman Merendino-** Reiterates that some ambulances haven't been getting to homes due to the road signs not being in the right place or that there is a sign missing. States that the budget also includes the cost of labor to put new signs up. States that Charly will now have a helper to get this done. States that there are a lot of poles that need to be straightened and several signs that need to be replaced. States that they have to be put up per the state regulations. States that the amount that we are asking for wasn't in the budget, but the Council can set a budget for it regardless.
 - **Charles Cramer-** States that there will be a checklist for all the signs so that it is easier to replace them.
 - **Councilman Mannette-** Suggests concreting the signs in the ground.
 - **Councilman Merendino-** States that if they are concreting the signs in, then there are requirements by the state that must be followed for it.
 - **Councilman Thibodeaux-** States that the requirement might be that the pole must have a breakaway on it if it's concreted in the ground.
 - **Charles Cramer-** States that when it rains, it causes the poles to lean sometimes.
 - **Councilman Merendino-** States that he and Charly straightened a bunch of signs in the back that were leaning.
 - **Charles Cramer-** States that he has some material that he wants to experiment with for a stop sign to see if it will work better.
 - **Councilman Mannette-** Asks if there is a regulated height that the signs have to be set at/
 - **Charles Cramer-** Yes
 - **Councilman Mannette-** States that at some of the corners of the streets there are still the old concrete street signs.
 - **Mayor Mitchell-** asks if there is enough in the requested budget of \$7,000 to get some of the barricades that Charly is requesting?
 - **Councilman Merendino** States that he isn't sure. States that if there isn't, then we can come back to Council to set a budget on purchasing barricades.
 - **Charles Cramer-** States that the barricades are around \$2,000.
 - **Councilman Merendino-** States that we need to make sure that we have enough money in the budget that is set, to work on the signs as well.
 - **Councilman Wright-** Asks if the \$7,000 budget that he is asking for include labor and materials?

- **Councilman Merendino-** Yes.
 - **Councilman Wright-** Suggests setting the budget of \$10,000, to be safe. States that the process of anchoring the signs be based on the soil and anything else that may occur.
 - **Councilman Merendino-** States that no matter what the approved budget is, we will make sure that we spend the money wisely and that it will only be spent on road signs and barricades.
- b. Consideration/Discussion/Approval** of resolution designating City owned "green space" as a Memorial Park. *Presented by Mayor Mitchell M/M/2/C- Councilwoman Cramer/Councilman Thibodeaux- Tabled until there is more information*
- **Councilman Wright-** Asks what the cost was
 - **Mayor Mitchell-** States that she doesn't have a cost, but she would like Council to set a budget, and she would work on getting donations
 - **Councilman Wright-** Where would this be located?
 - **Mayor Mitchell-** States that originally, it was going to be on a green space, however, Charly suggested putting it on the right-hand side of City Hall.
 - **Councilman Wright-** States that it is a low area.
 - **Mayor Mitchell-** States that Larousse Park is a donated space.
 - **Councilman Merendino-** States that Larousse Park was donated in remembrance of the Larousse's that gave the park to the City. States that the presented design would require a lot of maintenance and upkeep. States that the design needs to be more planned before anything is approved. States that the design is more of a concept.
 - **Mayor Mitchell-** States that the concept doesn't have a dollar amount.
 - **Councilman Wright-** States that a concept has to have at least a wag. States that we also need to know what the cost of operation and maintenance is going to be. States that we also need to know what other cost and needs this would be competing in. States that until there needs to be a vision of the City and a plan on what needs to be done. States that until there is a vision and a plan, he wouldn't approve it.
 - **Mayor Mitchell-** States that this could start off with just a couple of benches.
 - **Councilman Merendino-** States that there would need to be a parking lot and a sidewalk for something like this. States that our park equipment currently needs to be cleaned.
 - **Charly Cramer-** States that the City owns a power washer. Suggests that Councilman Merendino turn in a work order and he would clean it.
 - **Councilman Merendino-** States that there isn't a long-term plan for the City. There is a lot of stuff that needs to be done. States that it was a tragic incident, but we need a plan.
 - **Councilman Thibodeaux-** States that this is more of a master plan for the City.
 - **Councilwoman Cramer-** States that this doesn't have to be done all at one time. States that a space be designated for the memorial and we set a budget during the budget meeting.
 - **Mayor Mitchell-** States that there is still money in the budget that was set for the abandoned homes. We could take what is left of that budget and add it to the budget for this. States that the resolution is to designate an area to do the memorial.
 - **Councilman Merendino-** States that the property will still be there.

- **Councilman Wright-** States that we are pursuing a grant that involves planning. Suggests adding this to that grant. States that he thinks the idea of the park is beneficial.
- **Mayor Mitchell-** Asks if Council wants her to look for a grant for the memorial park?
- **Councilman Thibodeaux-** States that we have grants in the works already.
- **Councilman Wright-** States that he needs more information to be able to vote on the resolution.
- **Sabrenna Crain-** States that the grant that they are referring to may not cover the planning for the memorial park. States that the grant is already designated to other plans. States that she could be wrong. States that she could check into it.
- **Councilman Wright-** States that every time we discuss spending money on something, his first thought is what it will cost to operate and maintain whatever they are deciding to spend money on. States that it may be within the budget to do it, but what will it add to our monthly costs?
- **Charly Cramer-** States that this came up because there was some kick back on flags being hung up last time and we were trying to think of an idea on how to show our patriotism. States that we could put flags at the park to show our patriotism.
- **Councilman Merendino-** Asks if Charly is suggesting that the flags being hung up at the memorial park take place of hanging flags throughout the City?
- **Mayor Mitchell-** Yes. States that we could table this until August. States that she could get with Councilman Thibodeaux and see how much it would cost since he is in that line of work. States that if this park could take some of the weight off of Councilman Thibodeaux on hanging up flags, then it would be a good idea.
- **Councilman Thibodeaux-** States that we found a semi-key to hanging the flags. States that last time the flags were hung, he hired two young boys to hang the flags and paid them \$1/per flag out of his pocket. States that while him and Charly were putting the flags up, they were talking about hanging flags up somewhere for each branch of the military.
- **Mayor Mitchell-** States that if we ask citizens to donate, then they might also volunteer to maintain it as well.
- **Councilman Wright-** States that if we were to put it by City Hall and put walking trails on the 13 acres that the City owns behind it, they could tie in together, but it's not going to be cheap.
- **Councilman Merendino-** States that the Council talks about doing several things, but it never gets done. States that the Council talked about selling some of the property that was purchased behind City Hall to recoup the money that was spent, but that never happened.
- **Councilwoman Cramer-** Suggests tabling the resolution until further details can be disclosed.
- **Mayor Mitchell-** States that there are several green spaces that the City can put the memorial on, but states that it would be best at City Hall.
- **Councilman Merendino-** Suggests putting it next to the Fire Station where the City Hall was temporarily at. States that there is already a parking lot there.
- **Mayor Mitchell-** Asks if there is room in the Community Development budget to purchase picnic tables for Larousse Park?

- **Councilman Merendino-** States that we need to purchase a picnic table anyways because one of them are damaged. States that we need better made picnic tables.
- **Councilman Thibodeaux-** States that we can build them out of wood for a lot cheaper and they would be more resilient.
- **Councilman Wright-** States that property that has been donated to the City needs to be kept the way to the standard it was donated for.

10. Reports

a. Mayor Mitchell- No Report

b. Councilman Clayton- Not Present

c. Councilwoman Cramer

- States that the ordinance sweep will begin next week.

d. Councilman Thibodeaux-

- Hands the expense report out for the 4th of July event. States that even though it rained, it was a good turnout. Suggest that next July 4th event should have some kind of water event. The original budget was set at \$5,000. The total amount spent was \$3,220.
- States that the next event is the Car show.
- **Councilwoman Cramer-** Asks why the car show is being brought up? It isn't a City event.
- **Councilman Thibodeaux-** States that he is talking about it because it is his report. States that he didn't realize that there was a port a potty at the sewer plant. States that for \$12 per day, we are getting two port a potty and a hand washing station. States that he tried to use Republic for the port a potty and the handwash station, but they no longer do that. States that he went with a company that he uses for his personal jobs. States that the port a potty will be picked up by the end of August. States that the movie night is scheduled for September 12th. States that the car show will be on September 13th, but that is not a City event. States that we need to revisit the new park fee schedule. The effective date was several days after we voted on it. The acceptance date is not the day that we vote on it. States that it is stated in the legal code. During the investigation on the effective date, the attorney that he was speaking with stated that we need to be careful about how much we charge for things. States that the attorney that he was speaking to stated that the City should only charge the cost to maintain the event. States that he would like this to be on the next agenda. States that he turned in an agenda request for it to be on this Council meeting, but the agenda request was denied.
- **Councilman Wright-** Regardless of when the ordinance went into effect, we didn't have an ordinance to rent the park, therefore, it could not be rented until the ordinance went into effect. If the fee is a separate issue, then he suggests that the park not be rented out.
- **Councilwoman Cramer-** States that the amount that is charged to rent the park came from something that he (Councilman Thibodeaux) pulled up on his computer from the City of Beaumont.
- **Councilman Thibodeaux-** States that we matched the cost to rent out the Event Center.
- **Councilman Wright-** The issue that is being brought up is pertaining to a particular person. States that the City lost money on the last car show and that's why we aren't participating in it. States that if the City wants to make revenue, then the City rents out the park and stays out of the event.

- **Councilman Thibodeaux-** We just need to make sure that we aren't charging an unconstitutional tax.
- **Councilman Merendino-** States that is why the City has an attorney.
- **Councilman Wright-** States that we have a fee for renting the pavilion.
- **Councilman Merendino-** States that when the building was renovated, it was intended to be rented out to produce revenue for the City.
- **Councilman Mannette-** States the Councilman Thibodeaux is saying that we need to make sure that we are following the guidelines for the state.
- **Mayor Mitchell-** Asks what the government code is for this situation?
- **Councilman Wright-** States that if we need to look at all the costs for the building and change the fee, then we can do that.
- **Mayor Mitchell-** States that the only reason she denied his agenda request to put this on the agenda is because on his request, he asked for a legal opinion and Dru wasn't able to attend the meeting. It wasn't personal. States that she suggested to Councilman Thibodeaux that he get a legal opinion and bring it back to Council because Council isn't qualified to give legal opinions.
- **Councilman Thibodeaux-** It is legal government code 52.003.11 and for the fees, refer to the TML revenue manual for Texas cities.
- **Councilman Merendino-** If he wants to help the City make revenue, then he can rent the park then donate his proceeds back to the City. States that he doesn't think that the City should be involved in the car show again because the City lost money last time.
- **Councilman Wright-** States that whoever wants to do an event, can do an event and the City will make money off the rental.

e. **Councilman Wright**

- States that there have been several issues with I & I with the sewer system. States that we are looking into some short-term fixes. States that we had a meeting with the engineer to see what we needed to be looking at. We are looking at the rain fall totals to see if the I & I increases with rain totals. States that we will eventually have to involve the engineer and that is going to be expensive.
- **Councilman Merendino-** Asks if Councilman Wright is looking into any grants to help with that.
- **Councilman Wright-** States that we did apply for a couple, but we haven't heard back from them yet.
- **Mayor Mitchell-** States that one grant has been approved. The planning grant.
- **Councilman Wright-** States that grant isn't going to help with the issues that we are having.
- **Councilman Merendino-** Asks how many water meters are not reading right now.
- **Councilman Wright-** About 30.
- **Sabrenna Crain-** The reason why there are so many out right now is because the meters are only rated for 10 years. We are in the middle of trying to figure out the warranty that we currently have. We want to see if there are any deals that we can get with our current warranty before purchasing new ones.
- **Councilman Merendino-** Asks if the money that we are losing per month more than what we would spend on new meters?
- **Councilman Wright-** States that there are a couple more problems other than just the cost of the meters. We have had some issues with the supplier. We have had a

couple meetings with the supplier and the engineering firm out of Katy. States that we aren't getting a reading from some of the new ones that we are putting in, so we are trying to figure that out as well. States that putting new meters in that aren't working, isn't the right thing to do. We are trying to figure out what's wrong with the new ones before we install any more. States that we are trying to figure out the warranty because if a meter goes out after 9 years, we get a new one in, but it only has a 1-year warranty on it because that's what was left on the old one.

- **Councilman Merendino-** States that he understands that it's complicated. He just wanted to know.
- **Councilwoman Cramer-** Asks if some of the meters' registers may not work, but they can still send a signal back? On those meters that are out, we aren't getting anything?
- **Councilman Wright-** Some of them can still be manually read.
- **Sabrenna Crain-** States that we are still having to pay Utility Innovations to read those meters, so we are still not making money off of those.
- **Councilwoman Cramer-** How does the signal get back to Utility Innovations?
- **Sabrenna Crain-** It doesn't go to them.
- **Councilman Wright-** It goes back to Munibilling
- **Sabrenna Crain-** The signal goes to Badger.
- **Councilwoman Cramer-** Asks if it is similar to a cell signal?
- **Councilman Wright-** Yes. States that they have fixed some of those. States that he thinks the issue is between the meter and the endpoint.
- **Sabrenna Crain-** A lot of the issue is that the device that we were using to activate the endpoints wasn't working and we had no idea. Accurate meter (supplier for the meters) told us that the device doesn't work for the endpoints that we have. States that we have had a lot more manual reads because the endpoints weren't activating.
- **Councilwoman Cramer-** Is there a way to audit that.
- **Sabrenna Crain-** Yes.
- **Councilman Wright-** States that the software is good.
- **Sabrenna Crain-** States that her and Heather are going to a training on the 31st with Badger to see if there is something that they are doing wrong or if there is something that they don't know that they need to be doing. It isn't a snap of the finger fix.
- **Councilman Wright-** States that there has also been an issue with our other software with people logging into the site to pay their bill.
- **Councilwoman Cramer-** Asks if Sabrenna has contacted them?
- **Sabrenna Crain-** Yes. States that Munibilling said the problem is on the City's end.
- **Councilman Wright-** States that Sabrenna has also talked to other software companies as well.
- **Sabrenna Crain-** States that it is a little more difficult to find a new software because you have to make sure that they can meet all of our needs. States that it's not as easy as just choosing a new software company.
- **Councilman Wright-** Addressing Councilman Merendino's concern. The meters not reading costs the City's revenue.

f. Councilman Mannette- No report

- **Sabrenna Crain-** States that she would like to give a report on the new website. States that due to former employees not doing everything correctly, before the website can go live, all the documents must be made ADA compliant.
- **Councilman Merendino-** Asks how you make a document ADA compliant?
- **Sabrenna Crain-** States that the documents have to be searchable and they have to be able to be read aloud by a system that blind people might use.
- **Mayor Mitchell-** Suggests making the last 3 years ADA compliant and make the site live. Then slowly add the other documents.
- **Councilwoman Cramer-** Asks if we could hire an intern to type them in?
- **Sabrenna Crain-** States that we could.

g. Councilman Merendino

- States that there were 17 people that signed up for the LAG (lowest adjacent grade) surveys to be able to obtain a LOMA. States that the homes that weren't in compliance with being at base flood elevation, have until September 15th to do what they need to do to get into compliance.
- **Sabrenna Crain-** Out of the 17, there were 11 that needed to fix their LAG's to get into compliance. The other 6 can obtain their new elevation certificate.
- **Councilman Mannette-** Asks what Councilman Merendino means "to move their house into flood zone x"?
- **Sabrenna Crain-** States that the point in a LOMA is to take a structure out of AE and put it in X. There are several out here that aren't in compliance with the 2-foot rule, but they could potentially qualify for a LOMA.
- **Councilman Merendino-** States that the City got a deal because Sabrenna got several people together to do the surveys. States that the survey company gave us a deal of \$175 up front and \$350 for the elevation certificate instead of the \$700 that it usually costs for an elevation certificate. States that with this survey company gave us a break on this because under regular circumstances, you would have to pay for an elevation certificate not knowing if your LAG was too low. This way, we got to see what our LAG was, fix it if we needed to, then we will be able to get a new elevation certificate.
- **Councilman Mannette-** States that when the previous survey was done a few years ago, they called and told him that his house would need to be raised 4 feet. States that he asked for the base flood elevation and they wouldn't give it to him.
- **Councilman Merendino-** States that there was a lot of stuff like that that happened.
- **Councilman Merendino -**States that the County has had a lot of equipment that has broken. States that the County is going to start the process of the road work that was voted on for Chimney Rock, the Blvd and Thousand Oaks. States that it will be closed to the end of the year before they are able to start on that project.
- States that he called them about bringing the side mower back out. States that he told the County that the City would pay them to come out and mow again. States that their normal charge to mow is \$100/hr. States that Commissioner Willis said that he would do it for \$25/hr. States that the County is going to trim Riverbend, River Road and the end of Inwood.
- States that he brought the easement paperwork to DD6 for the easement that the City gave them on River Road. States that they are trying to obtain the easement on the East side of Sweetgum to be able to maintain the other side of the ditch that they recently done on the South side of the Blvd. States that while DD6 is out

here, he is going to get them to look at the ditch on Riverbend and see if they will put barriers up. States that it is dangerous because it is deep. States that there wasn't going to be a barrier all the way down Riverbend, just in the curve where the deep ditch is.

11. Adjourn Meeting @ 7:45 pm Councilman Merendino/Councilman Mannette



Mayor Cheri Mithell

Attest:


City Secretary, Jeff Thibodeaux

Approved this 16 day of October, 2025.