

**MINUTES OF STAFFORD CITY COUNCIL
ANNUAL TOWN MEETING
Wednesday, January 26, 2022
Stafford Civic Center
1415 Constitution Ave, Stafford, Texas
7:00 p.m.**

On the 26th day of January 2022, at 7:00 p.m., the City Council of the City of Stafford, Texas, met in special session at the Stafford Civic Center in said City with the following in attendance:

City Council

Cecil Willis, Mayor
Ken Mathew, Mayor Pro Tem
Alice Chen, City Councilmember
Wen Guerra, Councilmember
Xavier Herrera, Councilmember
Don Jones, Councilmember
Virginia Rosas, Councilmember

City Staff

Tatyana Luttschlager, City Planner
Alka Shah, Finance Director
Otis Brown, Senior Public Works Specialist
Scott McElrath, Code Compliance Administrator
Bob Jones, City Engineer, Jones Engineering
Katie Rutherford, Olson & Olson
Larry DiCamillo, Fire Chief
Richard Ramirez, Police Chief
Glynnell Horn, Assistant Police Chief
Sharyn Lueders
Sharon Moak
Susan Ricks, Recreation Director
Shanell Garcia, HR Director
Ryan Young, IT Director
Nicole Nguyen, Court Director
Laura Morales, Sr. Development Services Specialist

1. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance to Flags.

Mayor Willis called the meeting to order on Wednesday, January 26, 2022, at 7:00 p.m. Councilmen Guerra and Mayor Willis led the Pledge of Allegiance to the flags.

2. Presentation of Mayor's Annual State of the City Message and Goals for 2022.

Mayor Willis presented his State of the City and Goals for 2022, a copy of which is attached to these minutes.

Mayor Willis recognized several staff members who assisted him with tonight's presentation – Alka Shah, Tatyana Luttschlager, Susan Ricks, Norma Salcedo, Carolyn Entricht and the team from Houston Community College. Special recognition and thanks were given by the Mayor to Ms. Entricht who will be retiring after 14 years with the City.

3. Responses by Councilmembers to Mayor's Annual State of the City Message and Goals for 2022.

Mayor Pro Tem Mathew thanked Mayor Willis for his presentation and thanked those in attendance and those watching at home. He agrees with the Mayor's enumerated goals and stressed that, for him, being a member of Council is not a profession for making money but a passion to serve the people who elect you to do good for the City and make the future better for Stafford's children and its people.

As a member and President of the Stafford Economic Development Corporation, Councilmember Guerra said his job is to continue recruiting to develop the City in economic ways. The Grid development project pushed the City over the hump from the pandemic and brought revenues into the City. He also talked about the development of US 90A and said that he is working with developers on projects that will bring more revenue to the City. The situation has been different with the virus, but the City is working through it. Councilmember Guerra asked that the citizens follow the protocol from the experts. As a Councilmember, he will contribute whatever he can to the Police, Fire and Emergency Management. Without these departments, as well as Public Works and staff who do a tremendous job, you cannot have economic growth.

Councilmember Rosas commented on the positive message from the Mayor who has provided great leadership to move the City in the right direction during the past year under difficult situations. She also commented on the City's staff's roles in assisting. She likes the goals. One of the most important objectives she would like to continue is the partnership with SMSD on the "We are One" program. The incredible leadership on the school board and its superintendent is working very well with City Council. We can accomplish much working together. The City is still working through the pandemic, which is changing daily. With patience and belt tightening together as one, we will get it done with the support and the teamwork it takes to get it done.

Councilmember Jones congratulated the Mayor for completing the State of the City address. He commended Mayor Willis on his transition from Councilmember to Mayor. He does not have an easy job. It takes teamwork, a good listener, and a willingness to get the job done which he believes Mayor Willis has. Councilman Jones said the most important thing is that we are all concerned about how to generate and keep generating the sales tax revenue that is needed to manage and operate the City. Nobody has control over that especially with the pandemic that wreaks havoc to the economy. The Country and City are in a recovery mode. He talked about redevelopment of the City and redevelopment of the Texas Instruments property known as the Grid. He feels it is important to us as a governing body to be very transparent and to communicate to this City where we are and what our plans regarding economic growth. He recognized and expressed appreciation to Ms. Entricht for her loyalty and dedication to the City.

Councilmember Chen expressed appreciation for all the Mayor does for this City and thanked the voters of Stafford for giving her the opportunity to serve on City Council and work with the dedicated Councilmembers. She takes her oath of office very seriously and

will continue to work very hard to better the City, its citizens, its businesses, and SMSD. Last year was a journey both good and bad, but she admires the resilience of City and its citizens. One of her goals she presented last year was to support SMSD. She noted the accomplishments that SMSD has made since last year. Another goal was to continue to market and promote the City and pursue quality businesses and infrastructure development, noting the new Costco and the upcoming Kelsey Seybold Clinic in the City. The City has a strong fiscal policy thanks to its Finance Director, Alka Shah. She noted the City's various policies, procedures, funds balances, and revenues. She encouraged the citizens to shop locally in Stafford businesses to keep its economy stable. She discussed the infrastructure and mobility improvements in the City. According to the 2020 Census, Fort Bend County is the most diversified in the Country. The true strength of Stafford is not only shown by its diversity but its willingness to work together to be united for the City and to be Stafford Strong.

Councilmember Herrera said the sentiments mentioned by his colleagues are right on. Under this Mayor, Council, Department Heads and Administration, we are in good footing acknowledging we can always do better. The City has a great group of folks committed to serving this community. He appreciates Carolyn Entricht's dedication and service to the City and wished her well.

4. Questions and Comments from the public regarding the Mayor's Annual State of the City Message and Goals for 2022 and responses by Mayor, City Councilmembers, staff, and professional advisors regarding: **(5 minutes per person)**

- (a) City's economy, zero property tax, oil markets, sales and use taxes, and fiscal condition;
- (b) Police and fire protection, new facilities, homeland security, emergency management operations, and animal protection;
- (c) Highways, roads, streets, mobility improvements, and passenger and freight rail;
- (d) Zoning, building standards and regulations, residential unit inspections, residential and commercial expansion, and solid waste collection services;
- (e) Redevelopment of the former Texas Instruments property and progress of the GRID;
- (f) Drainage projects and future water supply;
- (g) Stafford Centre and Stafford Civic Center;
- (h) Stafford Municipal School District, including promoting student diversity and elevating academic achievement;
- (i) Stafford Municipal Educational Television Station;
- (j) Development of the FM1092 Corridor and revitalization of underutilized areas;
- (k) Budget and budgetary issues, including fund balances;
- (l) Enhanced technology for security, business safety, and municipal operations;
- (m) Parks and Swimming Pool;
- (n) Municipal Court and its operations;
- (o) Houston Community College, Stafford Campus Manufacturing Center of Excellence, and assistance of residents with securing jobs;
- (p) Comprehensive Development Plan and capital improvement projects; and

(q) Covid-19 and its impact on the City of Stafford.

Public Hearing

Christopher Caldwell – 12793 Rose Ann, Stafford

Mr. Caldwell, President of the Stafford Municipal School District (SMSD) Board of Trustees, spoke on item (h). He is very appreciative of the Mayor's and City Council's support and input in making SMSD great. They have worked together as a team and a family. As the school district goes, so does the City; as the City goes, so does the school district. He appreciates all the help, communications, and insight he receives from Councilmembers. We are going to work together to have the best school district in Texas. Our mantra is a private school education in a public school setting. We are setting the pathway to make the students successful. He again thanked Council for its support, encouraging words, and guidance. SMSD and the City need to work together as a team to make sure SMSD is the best school in Texas for its children and to provide a private school education in a public school setting. Recently, they have focused on the mental health of the students and faculty. There should be focus on that.

Dr. Robert Bostic – 1633 Staffordshire, Stafford

Dr. Bostic, SMSD Superintendent, said this is his eighth year as Superintendent in the best City and the best school district in the State of Texas. He talked about the team and family between the City and school district. He went over the highlights that people sometimes don't see. SMSD is the only district in the County that graduates students with an associate's degree. SMSD has a magnet school with a waiting list on every single grade level. We said we would have 300 students; it maxed out in the second year. He noted the services that SMSD offers. SMSD has the only stem launch pad in Fort Bend County. SMSD has had its ups and downs with Covid. He said we don't have everything right and have room to grow. We need to continue to show everybody in Texas that this is how it is done and have an academic reputation. We have to do what is right for the children and this City. He thanked Council again.

Adam Sanchez – 5010 Grove West Boulevard, Stafford

Mr. Sanchez, member of the Planning and Zoning Commission, said he would like to comment on SMSD but feels that the President of the Board and the Superintendent have said everything that needs to be said. He thanked the Mayor, City Council, and City staff for everything that has been presented tonight. Stafford had a lot of accomplishments this past year although some were difficult. He noted Public Works and the Humane Department as well as the Comprehensive Plan that the Mayor touched on. Stafford is already 90% built out. He feels the redevelopment of the Island will be a long-term project. He thanked all the City staff saying this is a great City with great people. He wasn't born here but feels the community has

accepted him. Overall, he looks forward to the great potential and possibility the City has in moving forward in 2022.

Constantine Thanos - 315 Saunter Dr., Stafford

Mr. Thanos was born in Missouri City, raised in Sugar Land, and now lives in Stafford - a great place to be. He asked what is being done to market Stafford and SMSD to bring more citizens in. Mayor Willis referred to the "We Are One" video which promotes the school and City. We plan to begin a marketing program again for the City which will include the school. Councilmember Jones invited Mr. Thanos and others to visit SMSD's schools and campuses. Mr. Pertile talked about a past \$35,000 initiative funded by the City and the school to market SMSD. Mayor Willis noted that two members of Council previously served on the SMSD Board, so we are "cross trained".

Regarding safety and security, Mr. Thanos has noticed an increase in vehicles going through Stafford and in and out of neighborhoods with paper plates. He asked if this is something the City is keeping an eye on. Chief Ramirez said that paper tags are an issue statewide and that the Police Department is doing its due diligence to check those tags. They have expiration dates on them, but it is so easy for someone to apply for and receive those paper tags.

Mr. Thanos asked if the possibility of bringing a professional sports team to Stafford has ever been considered. Regarding the Grid, he asked if contracts for its development had been lost or pushed back because of the pandemic. Mayor Willis responded "both", and the City's job is to establish rules, zoning, building permits, etc. The developers are running behind because of the pandemic and financing issues. At this moment, the Grid is not where its developers or the City envisioned it would be; but, there are things in the pipeline that may be better.

Mr. Bostic addressed what is being done to market SMSD's academic record, success, and achievements and explained how this is being done. He talked about the avenues in which a high school student can be successful. Its reputation will speak for itself. SMSM is spreading the word not only by word but by deeds.

Lana Hoelsing – 327 No. Esplanade Lane, Stafford

Ms. Hoelsing said one thing that drew her and her husband to locate in Stafford many years ago was the school. She is happy to say the school has made her proud, and she always brags about it. SMSD has brought in so many diverse classes and education. She feels it has set Safford apart from many schools in the area, and she feels SMSD will continue to move forward and outshine every school district in the State of Texas. She talked about the educational opportunities at SMSD. Overall, the City has grown and has a lot going for it. The pandemic didn't break us. Everybody works together to get things for the children and citizens of the City.

5. Comments by Mayor and Council. **(5 minutes each)**

Mayor Willis recognized Sharon Leuders, a valued employee who has been with the City for a long time and who is retiring. He thanked her for her dedication. Mayor Willis again thanked those who attended and those who watched on SMETV. He stressed communication between the citizens and the City. He commented on what staff is doing. He wants to review the process on how the meetings are structured. The best lies ahead for Stafford.

Mayor Pro Tem Mathew said the Mayor's State of the City was very good. He hopes we continue to work together and support each other to accomplish things. He thanked his colleagues who worked together to get things done and with legal counsel's assistance. The City's new addition, Alka Shah, is doing a great job as is Ms. Luttschlager who has been under pressure. He thanked the Police Chief and his department for the work they do in keeping the City safe. He commended the Assistant City Secretary. All City employees are valuable. He is very proud to be in the City. He came here in 1984. His children graduated from SMSD and are doing well, and he is very proud. He is proud that Stafford is a well-balanced, diverse city. The City has a lot of things left to do, including revitalizing the Island area in order to increase the sales tax.

Councilman Guerra thanked those in attendance and those watching. This Council is representative of the people and for the people. The City staff is tremendous and is doing a fabulous job. He commended Sharon for her service and commitment. He congratulated Ms. Entricht on her retirement and expressed appreciation for everything she has done.

Councilmember Rosas thanked the Mayor for his leadership, especially during the difficult time. He assumed the office, meeting the challenges head-on. She is proud of where he has taken us and for the support Council has given him to gain those achievements for the citizens, businesses, and families that live here. She thanked Carolyn and Sharon for their service and wished them the best. She thanked all the employees, especially the people behind the scenes that we don't always see. She appreciates everybody who has a role in making the City successful. She commended the Assistant City Secretary who took on a double role as have many other employees. She thanked Mr. Thanos for addressing Council and said that we like hearing from the public. She is very proud of the school district's successes and the City's partnership with them. The trustees, superintendent, administrators, teachers, and its employees are incredible. We want to stay united and provide the best for everybody in the City.

Councilmember Jones read the Oath of Office that each Councilmember takes. He believes that it is incumbent that Council, as a collective body, come together to cast a vision for the citizens and to live by the expectations set forth in the preamble of the Home Rule Charter. In his opinion, as a state and country, we are currently divided in ways that resemble the pre-civil rights era of the 1960's. We must demonstrate that we have learned from past history - the good, the bad, and the ugly. Always remember that together we stand, and divided we fall. Being a Councilmember is a continuum of his professional career as a lifelong public servant. It is a badge of honor for him but that does not make him invincible. For the past two years, a health condition has not allowed him to participate in many public events; and the pandemic has further limited his availability even more in face-to-face community engagements. He is well on his way to

recovery. But, unfortunately, the covid pandemic has exacerbated, compromised, and/or extended the emergency crisis for our nation's physical and mental hospital systems. He honestly believes brighter days are around the corner. His advice is that we must all take every precaution to fully recover. He will reiterate his stance on the fundamental goals. He remains committed to that for the betterment of the City at large. As a former educator, he is not a creature of the status quo when it comes to administrative leadership. It is his perpetual prayer that we manage this City by not choosing to settle for the status quo. He challenges Council to think about where we are not and imagine where we want to be. In conclusion, let us not be trapped in the moment. As elected leaders, let us consider the attributes that have made this City great and allow us to be open minded in establishing 21st century goals and/or ideas that take an innovative approach to manage our shining little City by the tracks. He thanked everyone in the City government family who manages the City for constituents. May God continue to bless.

Councilmember Chen said that 2021 was a challenging year for all of us who struggled due to the pandemic that changed our lives. We all learned how to face challenges and embrace new opportunities. Last May, the covid vaccine became available for children ages 12 and up. She worked with Mayor Willis, Dr. Bostic, local doctors, and medical clinics to host a vaccine drive at the SMSD campus for students ages 12 and up, teachers, staff, and residents. She also worked with local businesses and received a donation of 50,000 N95 face masks for the school; everyone there received a mask. During the 2021 winter freeze, the City worked tirelessly with Congressman Al Green's office and the Houston Food Bank for a winter food drive to help so many families in need. The City also partnered with the Houston Humane Society to host a free pet pantry for pet owners who had financial difficulties and struggled to care for their pets due to covid. In December, the City and Fire Department hosted a Santa Convoy toy giveaway for all Stafford kids. She continues supporting SMSD to provide more educational resources and opportunities for its students. The children are our future, and she asked that everybody work together to make SMSD the number one school district in Fort Bend County. In recent months, she and Mayor Willis visited Stafford businesses and business owners to listen to their issues and concerns. They want to create more business opportunities and promote "shop locally" to bring more sales tax to the City's funds. In closing, she thanked SMETV and the HCC team for their work in televising this meeting and to the residents in attendance and people watching at home. She expressed appreciation to Mayor Willis, her fellow Councilmembers, legal counsel, Department Heads, City employees, SEDC members, Planning and Zoning Commission members, SMSD Board of Trustees, community leaders, and all the volunteers for their hard work and commitment to achieve what we did in 2021. Now, she asks all of us to get on board and work together to bring this City to a strong 2022. She will work very hard every day, just like every City Councilmember, to make a bright future for the City. Happy New Year.

Councilmember Herrera wished Ms. Leuders and Ms. Entricht the best in their new endeavors and said their service to the community made Stafford much stronger. As we heard from Mayor Willis, there are many great things coming out of the City of Stafford; however, there is still much to be done. As we continue to navigate through uncertain waters, he wants to continue to remind everyone that we are living in uncertain times in the City's and the Nation's history. We continue to deal with covid and public


infrastructure issues but with an eye toward the future. Despite pandemic supply issues and increasing inflation, we have reasons to be optimistic about: the successful story from the Grid, the Fountains, and other venues. There are many opportunities and future projects to look forward to. Despite the many challenges 2021 had on neighboring cities, Stafford was able to navigate through the economic uncertainties. He gives much of that credit to the Mayor, City Council, and SEDC. However, without the municipal employees, this City could not function. He noted all the departments and their roles in the City. He is thankful to Council for recognizing the employees' hard work and approving a 2% raise. He firmly believes this City will continue to prosper under the stewardship and leadership of this Council and the City's boards and commissions. He looks forward to continuing to work with everyone to ensure Stafford provides the best services and opportunities for our City.

Mayor Willis again thanked those in attendance who participated in tonight's meeting, City Council, and City staff.

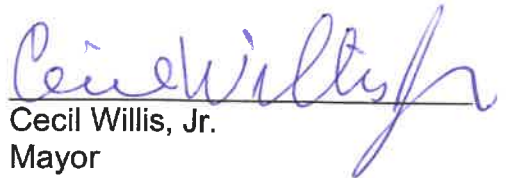
6. Adjournment.

Councilmember Herrera made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Councilmember Chen seconded the motion, and it carried 7 – 0. The meeting adjourned at 9:21 p.m.

ATTEST:



Bonnie Baiamonte
Acting City Secretary



Cecil Willis, Jr.
Mayor