

REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, April 6, 2022

The Stafford City Council met in regular session on Wednesday, April 6, 2022, in Council Chambers at City Hall with the following in attendance:

City Council

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

City Staff

Kathie Rutherford, Olson & Olson
Art Pertile, Olson & Olson
Shanell Garcia, HR Director
Larry DiCamillo, Fire Chief
Richard Ramirez, Police Chief
Bonnie Baiamonte, Acting City Secretary

Others Present

Andy Meyers, Fort Bend County Commissioner, Precinct 3

1. Call to Order.

Mayor Willis called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

2. Executive session as authorized by Chapter 551, Texas Government Code, Section 551.071(1)(A), pending or contemplated litigation; Section 551.071(2), authorized under the Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct of the State Bar of Texas. Professional Conduct of the State Bar of Texas, Section 551.074 (1), to deliberate the appointment, employment, evaluation, reassignment, duties, discipline, or dismissal of a public officer or employee including Director of Public Works/Development Services and City Secretary.

Council went into Executive Session at 6:31 p.m. and reconvened in open session at 7:00 p.m.

3. Pledge of Allegiances.

Councilmember Herrera led the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States flag, and Mayor Willis led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Texas flag.

4. Consideration of appropriate action on items discussed in Executive Session.

Mayor Willis nominated Travis Tanner as Director of Public Works/Development Services. Councilmember Rosas made a motion to approve the nomination of Travis Tanner as Director of Public Works/Development Services. Councilmember Guerra seconded the motion, and it carried 7 – 0.

5. Council Reports: The Mayor and Council may make announcements of community interest on the following items:
 - (1) expressions of thanks, congratulations, or condolence.
 - (2) information regarding holiday schedules.
 - (3) an honorary or salutary recognition of a public official, public employee, or other citizen, except that a discussion regarding a change in the status of a person's public office or public employment is not an honorary or salutary recognition for purposes of this subdivision.
 - (4) a reminder about an upcoming event organized or sponsored by the governing body.
 - (5) information regarding a social, ceremonial, or community event organized or sponsored by an entity other than the governing body that was attended or is scheduled to be attended by a member of the governing body or an official or employee of the political subdivision; and
 - (6) announcements involving an imminent threat to the public health and safety of people in the political subdivision that has arisen after the posting of the agenda.

Mayor Willis announced that the Spring Clean Up will be held on April 23, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., at the Codes Department Facility. It will be drive-thru for disposing electronics, paper, and prescription drugs. There also will be heavy trash pickup. Please visit the City's website for a list of items that can and cannot be picked up and other information. Before next year's Spring Clean Up, Mayor Willis welcomes suggestions on how this event can be improved and expanded.

Mayor Willis recognized the Stafford Fire Department's Battalion Chief Jose Magana, Fire Fighter and Paramedic Melvin Evanicky, and Lt. Matt Ricks. Since March 20, the Department has been providing assistance to the State of Texas to combat significant wildfires occurring throughout the State – in Canadian, San Angelo, and Big Spring - by deploying personnel and a vehicle. Currently, the Strike Team is in the Big Spring area performing vehicle and equipment checks before responding to the next fire which could come at any moment. They were to return to Stafford on April 8. That changed, and their service was extended. Chief DiCamillo has a crew that will swap out, so the fire fighters can come back. The replacements will be Fire Fighter Micah George and Lt. Matt Ricks, who's going back.

Mayor Willis feels it is necessary to correct misinformation, disinformation, and false information on social media. It is his responsibility to protect the City, employees, and City Council when nonfactual information is disseminated on social media. There were no further comments.

Councilmember Jones talked about the redistricting in Stafford. Stafford now has two Commissioners, Grady Prestage and Andy Meyers, and a new State Representative in Position 76. He introduced Commissioner Meyers who spoke about his position in Precinct 3. Since Stafford residents pay County taxes, he wants to be certain they get the services they pay for. He is available to discuss any issues and work on solutions. He reported that the value of average homes went up 28% in Fort Bend County. The amount taxable is capped at 10%, and counties and cities that levy a property tax are capped at 3 ½ percent of revenue. He reminded everyone to file a homestead exemption in order to lower taxes; and, of course, one can protest the value of one's property. Mayor Willis remarked that he would like to continue working on the Interlocal Agreements.

Councilmember Rosas announced there will be two Candidates' Forums. One is by SMSD's Trustees, with Manuel Hinojosa and Jackie Jean-Baptiste as moderators, on April 19, at 6:30 p.m., at the

Hunts Building. The Fort Bend Chamber will conduct its Forum on April 21, at 6 p.m., at the Civic Center. Also, the Exchange Club of Fort Bend will have Awareness Field Dedication Day on Friday, April 8, at 5:30 p.m., at the intersection of Highway 90A and Present Street, to highlight that April is Child Abuse Prevention Month. SMSD's Ag Barn will have its ribbon cutting on April 23, at 10 a.m.

Councilmember Guerra noted that Martin Luther King was assassinated 54 years ago this past Monday and that his passing, along with that of President John F. Kennedy and Robert Kennedy, has impacted civil rights in this country.

Councilmember Herrera recognized Fire Chief DiCamillo and his staff for their great action in suppressing a recent Stafford area fire. He also recognized Councilmembers Rosas and Jones, and community leaders Susanne Thompson, Tricia Montelongo, and Adam Sanchez for participating in a benefit to support the family. He also recognized Police Chief Ramirez and his staff and officers for their assistance in a certain situation. Lastly, April is National Financial Literacy Month.

Mayor Pro Tem Mathew noted that the shrubs along Highway US 90A and Kingsway Drive have been removed for better visibility of oncoming traffic and thanked Mayor Willis.

Councilmember Chen announced that the FDA authorized the second booster for Covid 19 which can be administered four months after the first booster.

6. Public Comments on items on the agenda.

There were no public comments.

7. (a) Discussion of Public Utility Commission of Texas 2022 consumer price index (CPI) adjustment to municipal telecommunications right-of-way access line rates.

Mr. Pertile commented that if no action is taken, the City gets the automatic increase. He recommends taking no action.

There were no public comments.

(b) Consideration of appropriate action on item (a).

No action was taken on item (a).

8.

(a) Discussion of setting dates for joint Stafford City Council and Stafford Municipal School District Board of Trustees Budget Workshops and Public Hearing on SMSD budget and tax rates.

The proposed dates recommended by the SMSD Board of Trustees are:
Thursday, June 16, 2022 - Budget Workshop.
Thursday, July 14, 2022 - Budget Workshop.
Monday, August 8, 2022 - Budget Workshop.
Thursday, August 25, 2022 - Public Hearing on budget and tax rates.

There is a meeting of the Fort Bend County Mayor and Council Association on Thursday, August 25, in conflict with the Public Hearing on the budget and tax rates. Optional dates for the Public Hearing are Monday, August 22, and Wednesday, August 24. Those will be submitted to SMSD.

There were no public comments.

(b) Consideration of appropriate action on item (a).

Councilmember Rosas made a motion to accept the June 16, July 14, and August 8, 2022 dates for the joint Budget Workshops with SMSD Trustees and to suggest Monday, August 22, 2022, or Wednesday, August 24, 2022, as an alternate date for the Public Hearing. Councilmember Chen seconded the motion, and it carried 7 – 0.

9.

(a) Discussion of a “Shop Local” promotion to be paid out of the Hotel Occupancy Tax Funds.

Councilmember Rosas pointed out that one of Councilmembers' goals this year was to start a "Shop Local" program. She displayed the original "Shop Local" flyer, created by Planning and Zoning Commissioner Adam Sanchez, to kick off such a program. A new rendering created by Tracy Armintor was shown. The more revenue we generate in the City, the more we can invest in the City for infrastructure, etc. We have to get the community involved. They need to know that whatever they are spending in Stafford is going to the City of Stafford and that they are supporting Stafford businesses. The City is a member of the Fort Bend Chamber of Commerce. If they support this program, their logo can be added to the design. The flyers can be distributed to hotels and at conventions. She does not think it would cost much to produce the flyers.

Councilmember Chen commented that Mr. Joslove, who gave a presentation on the Hotel Occupancy Tax recently, said HOT funds could be used. The logo would be "Shop Local", "Dine Local", "Stay Local". Mr. Pertile recommended that Council establish guidelines. Councilmember Guerra pointed out that the SEDC has and will discuss matters related to this subject. Councilmember Rosas remarked that Council can promote the City without going through the SEDC.

Mr. Clifford Cowperthwait, 111 Squires Bend in Kingsway, agrees with spending HOT funds to promote Stafford. He commented that you don't need to promote Stafford to local residents. They all know where the best restaurants are. The HOT is to promote the area and not just Stafford. You want to reach the people who are coming in.

Mayor Willis asked Councilmembers to think about this matter, and send two or three bullet points to Ms. Baiamonte. He will forward the list to Legal Counsel for review. Mr. Pertile suggested that Council "google" other cities to see what they are doing related to "Shop Local" and get ideas from them. It's not a new concept; you don't have to start from scratch.

(b) Consideration of appropriate action on item (a).

No action was taken on item (a).

10.

(a) Discussion regarding a continuing education and training policy for City Staff and Councilmembers.

Councilmember Jones previously talked about having a training development policy that has a clear purpose and objective for Council and staff. The HR Director, Shanell Garcia, shared the current policy with him which he read to Council. Director Garcia suggested a brainstorming session to make the policy clearer or to add verbiage of our initiative of overall organizational development. Mayor Willis had added that it be extended to Council as well.

Director Garcia noted that one of her goals this year was to start developing a training calendar for all City employees focusing on leadership training and skilled training - making it strategic to make sure that the training we are providing or the training that employees are taking is job specific - and offering more opportunities to provide training here at the City. Another goal is to coordinate training throughout the departments so it is more strategic and aligned, and it reaches more employees. Councilmember Jones added that we want our staff to be professionally trained in the areas that will make them better employees and proud of whom they work for. He would like to workshop this with the Compensation, Benefits, Insurance, and Personnel Policy Committee and bring back to Council with revisions. Councilmember Rosas commented that the City provides all that for the most part. Director Garcia said HR is working with the Police Department to set up active shooter training for all employees and with TML to host safety training for the Public Works Department. Councilmember Jones knows there is a cost to all training. His concern is equitability as far as each department receiving the same consideration for that type of support. Police Chief Ramirez talked about the various training for police officers. He added that the Stafford Police Department has the best training.

Councilmember Herrera asked what the training costs would be and also about continuing education. Councilmember Chen asked if there is a policy for training for Councilmembers. Last month, she proposed

training in accounting. Mr. Pertile responded that all you need is four votes. If you see a training event you want to attend, ask to put it on the agenda, get the four votes, and register for the conference. Staff training is different. Discussion followed. Mr. Pertile pointed out that attending a “free” training is not free, because being gone all day from work for that training has a cost. Such a request still needs Council’s approval. Mayor Willis does not think the policy needs to be changed.

Mr. Cowperthwait came forward and asked how the training funds are allocated. Mayor Willis responded that each department has its own budget with a line-item for training approved by Council.

(b) Discussion of the distribution of a Special Political Edition of the City Newsletter for the month of April 2022.

Councilmember Jones suggested distributing an April Newsletter designed to educate the community on “who’s who” in the upcoming local election. We now have a second County Commissioner, and there is a run-off race for a second State Representative. He believes it is Council’s responsibility to communicate significant information, and he can’t think of anything more significant than who is representing the constituents as far as our political positions are concerned. A special edition of the Newsletter is a source that would benefit the City. Mr. Pertile explained what can and can’t be included in the Newsletter and referred to a copy of the Ethics Law included in Council’s meeting packet. Discussion followed on the distribution of the Newsletter. Mayor Willis added that, if we get the voting precincts and maps from Fort Bend County, we will post the links on the City’s website.

Mr. Cowperthwait commented on how to disseminate information, but understands there is no money in the budget for mailings.

(c) Consideration of appropriate action on items (a) and (b).

No action was taken on items (a) and (b).

11.

(a) Consent Agenda (Items i. – ix.). Any item tagged will be discussed and considered at the conclusion of this item or at the next regular City Council Meeting; any item approved will include payment of expenses.

- i. Approval of recommendation from the 4th of July Committee for fees for the 2022 July 3 and 4 Celebration.
- ii. Approval of request by Bonnie Baiamonte, Acting City Secretary, for authorization to proceed with Supplement No. 15 to the City's Code of Ordinances at an estimated cost of \$4,799.00.
- iii. Approval of request by Camille Scott, Director of Multimedia Communications, to declare old electronic equipment as surplus for removal.
- iv. Approval of request by Fort Bend County Elections for use of site, large conference room, at Stafford City Hall in the upcoming Primary Runoff Election to be held on May 24, 2022.
- v. Approval of an Ordinance of the City of Stafford, Texas, adopting Amendment Number 3 to the original budget of the City of Stafford, Texas, for the 2021-2022 fiscal year; allocating unappropriated funds; providing detailed line item increases or decreases, providing for severability; and containing other provisions relating to the subject.
- vi. Approval of a Resolution of the City Council of the City of Stafford amending the Interlocal Agreement with the City of Meadows Place for Fire Fighting, Fire Protection, and Fire Investigation Services.
- vii. Approval of request by Police Chief Richard Ramirez for training for certain Police Department personnel as specified in his memo to Council dated March 30, 2022, for a cost of \$385.00.
- viii. Approval of request by Police Chief Richard Ramirez to auction 2011 Ford Crown Victoria.
- ix. Approval of HOT funds application including no time frame for applications this year.

Councilmember Rosas said she would like to pull item i. and Councilmember Chen said she would like to pull item ix.

Councilwoman Rosas asked, under item i., that the amount recommended for the DJ not exceed \$700.00 instead of \$600.00 as listed in the memo. Councilmember Chen said there is one item missing under item i. The July 4th Committee met several times and made a recommendation for the Grand Marshal, although it is not listed in the memo. She asked if Council could approve the Grand Marshal recommendation under consent agenda item i. Mr. Pertile said the approval of the Grand Marshal could not be covered under this item.

Councilmember Chen asked about the deadline for the HOT funds application. Mayor Willis said that the recommendation from the Stafford Centre Committee and the attorneys is to start this new program with no deadline for one year. If needed in the future, we will come back and add a deadline. The maximum is \$100,000.00 a year, whether it is all for one applicant or split among several.

There were no public comments.

(b) Consideration of appropriate action on items i. - ix.

Mayor Pro Tem Mathew made a motion to approve the consent agenda items i.- ix., as presented, with the amount amended in item i. from \$600.00 to \$700.00. Councilmember Chen seconded the motion, and it carried 7 – 0.

12. Approval of the following City Council Meeting Minutes:

- (a) Annual Town Meeting of January 26, 2022.
- (b) Regular City Council Meeting of February 16, 2022.
- (c) Regular City Council of March 2, 2022.
- (d) Special Joint Meeting of City Council and Stafford Economic Development Corporation of March 22, 2022.

Councilmember Chen asked for a correction to page 12, line 9, of the minutes of the Regular City Council Meeting of February 16, 2022, by adding “Chen” after Councilmember.

(e) Consideration of appropriate action on items (a) - (d).

Councilmember Chen made a motion to approve the City Council Meeting Minutes 12. (a) - (d), as presented, with the correction as noted in the February 16, 2022 minutes. Councilmember Mathew seconded the motion, and it carried 7 – 0.

Councilmember Rosas commended those who prepared the minutes. Ms. Baiamonte said it was a joint effort with Marian Rocha.

13. (a) Discussion of requests by Councilmembers for future agenda items.

(b) Consideration of appropriate action on item (a).

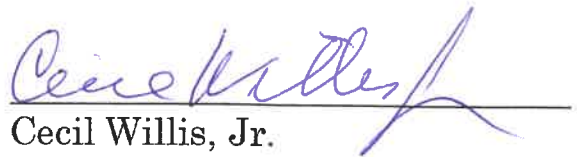
No action was taken on item (a).

14. Adjournment.

Councilmember Herrera made a motion to adjourn. Councilmember Mathew seconded the motion, and it carried 7 – 0. The meeting adjourned at 8:54 p.m.



Bonnie Baiamonte
Acting City Secretary



Cecil Willis, Jr.
Mayor