

MINUTES
REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING
CITY OF STAFFORD, TEXAS
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2022

On the 7th day of December, 2022, at 7:00 p.m., the City Council of Stafford, Texas met in regular session in the Council Chambers. Mayor Willis called the meeting to order. The following members of City Council were present: Mayor Cecil Willis Jr., Mayor Pro Tem Don Jones (arrived at 6:39 p.m.), and Council Members William Bostic Jr., Alice Chen (arrived at 6:56 p.m.), Wen Guerra, Xavier Herrera, and Ken Mathew. Absent: none. The following City staff were present: City Secretary Roxanne Benitez, Fire Chief Larry Di Camillo, Director of Public Works/Development Services Jose Pastrana, City Planner Thomas Coon, Code Compliance Administrator Scott McElrath, City Attorney Art Pertile, and Olson & Olson Attorney Mary Ann Powell.

NOTE: Items appearing in these minutes are in the order they were discussed, not necessarily in the order they appeared on the agenda.

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 employee.

City Council reconvened at 7:00 p.m.

3. Pledges of Allegiance.

Council Member Chen led the pledge to the United States flag. Council Member Herrera led the pledge to the Texas flag.

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

City Council did not go into Executive Session.

5. Public Comments on items on the agenda.

- Virginia Rosas, who lives at 619 Elm View Court, spoke in regard to Item (xii) of 10. Consent Agenda and suggested changing the name of the Juneteenth Committee to the Multi-Cultural Events Committee. She also suggested that the committee celebrate other cultural events.

6. (a) Discussion of an ordinance amending Chapter 102 of the Code of Ordinances, the same being the City's Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance, to grant a Specific Use Permit for the operation of an Auto Repair Garage, located at 503 Dulles Avenue.

City Planner Thomas Coon provided a presentation regarding the proposed specific use permit.

Code Compliance Administrator Scott McElrath advised that the Planning & Zoning Commission recommended approval of the specific use permit at the meeting held on November 22, 2022. He also advised that the building was in good shape, however, some repairs, such as the parking lot and screening were needed to become in compliance with current codes. Mr. McElrath advised that if approved, the owner would have one-year to become in compliance.

City Council Members, Staff, and City Attorney Art Pertile discussed the proposed specific use permit and modifications needed to become in compliance with current City ordinances.

- (b) Public Hearing on Ordinance Amendment.

The public hearing opened at 7:18 p.m.

Public Comments were received from the following:

- Jolly Mgboji, who owns the property at 503 Dulles Avenue, advised that he had owned the property for several years and never had any issues. He also advised that his business supported Stafford schools and the community. Mr. Mgboji advised that the issue came about due to a change of ownership.

The public hearing closed at 7:21 p.m.

- (c) Consideration of appropriate action on item (a).

Council Member Guerra motioned to approve Ordinance No. 1234, granting a specific use permit for the operation of an Auto Repair Garage, located at 503 Dulles Avenue, as presented, and Mayor Pro Tem Jones seconded the motion. Mayor Willis, Mayor Pro Tem Jones, and Council Members Bostic, Chen, Guerra, Herrera, and Mathew voted "Aye". "Nay" – none. Motion carried 7-0.

7. (a) Discussion of an ordinance amending Chapter 102 of the Code of Ordinances, the same being the City's Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance, to grant a Specific Use Permit for the operation of an Auto Paint and Body Shop, located at 507 Dulles Avenue.

City Planner Thomas Coon provided a presentation regarding the proposed specific use permit.

Code Compliance Administrator Scott McElrath advised of what would be required for the property to become in compliance with current City codes.

(b) Public Hearing on Ordinance Amendment.

The public hearing opened at 7:28 p.m.

Public Comments were received from the following:

- Renzo Ormsbee, who is the franchise owner for the property located at 507 Dulles Avenue, appeared before the City Council to answer any questions the Council may have.

The public hearing closed at 7:30 p.m.

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

Council Member Guerra motioned to approve Ordinance No. 1235, granting a specific use permit for the operation of an auto paint and body shop, located at 507 Dulles Avenue, as presented, and Mayor Pro Tem Jones seconded the motion. Mayor Willis, Mayor Pro Tem Jones, and Council Members Bostic, Chen, Guerra, Herrera, and Mathew voted "Aye". "Nay" – none. Motion carried 7-0.

8. (a) Discussion in regard to scheduling a special called meeting to discuss possible adjustments to the Fiscal Year 2022-2023 budget.

Mayor Pro Tem Jones read a letter providing some history regarding previous Council and Compensation, Personnel, Policy, and Benefits Committee meetings regarding budget. He requested that a special called meeting be held for Staff and Council to discuss options, that other municipalities use, to generate revenue.

Council Member Bostic expressed his concerns regarding transitioning the Fire Department from a volunteer fire department to a staffed fire department. He also suggested holding a workshop to allow for public input.

Council Member Guerra asked if any of the fire stations were closed since November 21, 2022. Chief Di Camillo advised that they had to shut down a fire station four times since then. Council Member Guerra advised of probable issues that could cause further depletion of budget funds.

Council Member Herrera asked if there was a finance issue when the fire station shut down or was there an issue with lack of staff. Chief Di Camillo advised that there was a lack of staffing, therefore the fire station was closed.

Public comments were received from the following:

- Virginia Rosas, who lives at 619 Elm View Court, asked Chief Di Camillo if there was available staff when one of the fire stations closed due to a lack of staff. Chief Di Camillo advised that there was available staff at the

other two fire stations. Ms. Rosas asked Mayor Pro Tem Jones for clarification regarding his term economic model.

- Cliff Cowperthwait, who lives at 111 Squires Bend, advised that when the budget was approved, there were Council Members who voted against it, and at that time, he asked what the reasons were for not voting in favor of the budget, but never received an answer. He also advised that he was a strong supporter of the employee salary increases. Mr. Cowperthwait advised that he saw the contingency dwindle down to nothing. He also advised that if a meeting were to occur, he would like the Council to discuss in open forum as he was interested in the City's budget.

Mayor Pro Tem Jones advised that there was a problem in the way the City generated revenue. He also advised that Staff were constrained by the current budget, which was a serious issue.

Mayor Willis advised that what was discussed in the Committee meetings and what was being discussed today was contradictory. He also advised that the fund balance had not decreased. Mayor Willis advised that the 2020-2021 Fiscal Year budget was unbalanced and in the negative. He also advised that the 2021 audit provided an excess of four million. Mayor Willis advised on various finance policies that had passed while he has been in office as the Mayor, such as the fund balance policy, investment policy, and purchasing policy. He also advised that he presented two balanced budgets in a timely manner per the home rule charter. Mayor Willis advised that the 2022 audit should be received in January. He also advised that the Fire Department was previously comprised of full-time employees, part-time employees, and volunteers. Mayor Willis advised that previously there were over thirty volunteer firefighters, currently there were only nine. He also advised that it was very difficult to acquire any volunteers or part-time employees as they have full-time jobs elsewhere. Mayor Willis did not recommend holding a meeting for an issue that does not currently exist but would continue to monitor the budget. He also advised that everyone was doing the best they could.

Mayor Pro Tem Jones advised that it was incumbent on Council to take the lead and added that he believed there was an issue. He agreed with Mayor Willis that there needed to be a commonsense approach. Mayor Pro Tem Jones advised that he believed the current status quo was not working. He also advised that the livelihood of Staff should be taken care of.

Council Member Mathew exited the meeting at 8:27 p.m.

Mayor Pro Tem Jones advised that there needed to be a further increase in Fire Department staffing to be functional and prepared. He requested that a meeting be held to discuss other strategies to generate revenue.

Council Member Chen suggested waiting to hold a meeting until after the audit was received to see true numbers.

Council Member Mathew entered the meeting at 8:35 p.m.

Council Member Herrera advised that he preferred to receive the audit and review it prior to holding a meeting.

Mayor Pro Tem Jones advised that the budget could be strained due to an unexpected incident.

Public comments were received from the following:

- Cliff Cowperthwait, who lives at 111 Squires Bend, apologized if he previously offended anyone. He also advised that the current budget was good, with options for earning interest. Mr. Cowperthwait thanked Council Member Chen for meeting with him previously.

Mayor Willis advised that employees were concerned about livelihoods due to compensation. He also advised that the benefits provided to employees were better than neighboring cities.

City Attorney Pertile exited the meeting at 8:49 p.m.

Mayor Willis advised that all vacant positions were funded in the current budget. He also advised that the difficulty was finding people to fill the positions.

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

Mayor Pro Tem Jones made a motion to conduct an emergency workshop to discuss strategies to generate revenue, and Council Member Bostic seconded the motion.

Council Member Guerra made an amended motion to hold quarterly meetings, and Council Member Bostic seconded the motion.

Council Member Herrera asked when the meeting would be held. Mayor Pro Tem Jones advised sometime in December.

Council Member Guerra advised that he preferred the meeting be held after the audit had been received.

City Attorney Pertile entered the meeting at 8:55 p.m.

Council Member Chen made an amended motion to hold quarterly meetings, with the first meeting being held after the audit was received, and Council Member Bostic seconded the motion. Council Members Bostic, Chen, Guerra, Herrera, and Mathew voted "Aye". "Nay" – Mayor Willis and Mayor Pro Tem Jones. Motion carried 5-2.

A vote was held on the motion made by Council Member Guerra. Mayor Pro Tem Jones, and Council Members Bostic, Chen, Guerra, Herrera, and Mathew voted "Aye". "Nay" – Mayor Willis. Motion carried 6-1.

A vote was held on the motion made by Mayor Pro Tem Jones. Mayor Pro Tem Jones, and Council Members Bostic, Chen, Guerra, Herrera, and Mathew voted "Aye". "Nay" – Mayor Willis. Motion carried 6-1.

9. Council Reports

Mayor Willis

- Spoke in regard to the attack on Pearl Harbor, that occurred on December 7, 1941. He also advised that 2,400 soldiers lost their lives that day.
- Advised that tickets for the annual Stafford Rockin' New Year's Eve Bash would go on sale tomorrow, December 8, 2022, at 10:00 a.m.

Council Member Chen

- Advised that Santa's Village was held last week after not for two years due to Covid. She also advised that there were hot dogs, face painting, ice cream, and various booths. She advised that eighty bikes and scooters were given away. She thanked all vendors, sponsors, volunteers, and all City employees.

Council Member Bostic

- Encouraged everyone to volunteer.
- Advised that Meals on Wheels was a good organization that delivered meals and performed welfare checks on the elderly.

Council Member Herrera

- Advised that the Head Start program for the Harris County Department of Education was hiring teachers and staff.
- Advised that it was tax season.
- Advised that the Harris County Appraisal District changed their name to the Harris Central Appraisal District.

Council Member Guerra

- Encouraged older citizens, especially those with health conditions, to get their Covid booster.
- Advised that Houston and Harris County purchased the Ruffino track and would create an outfall for Keegan's bayou to assist with drainage.

Mayor Pro Tem Jones

- Advised that he attended the Asian American Pacific Heritage Association Appreciation Reception, on December 5, 2022, held at the HCC Stafford campus. He also advised that a room on the campus had been renamed in honor of Asian American Pacific Heritage Association.

At this time, Mayor Willis asked for a moment of silence for those sacrificed their lives 80 years ago at the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941.

- 10.(a) Consent Agenda (Items i.-xiv.). 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.) Investment Report for period ending October 31, 2022.
- (ii.) Approval of Request by Director of Information Technology Ryan Young to Purchase Microsoft Software Licensing in the Amount of \$91,307.78.
- (iii.) Approval of Request by Director of Information Technology Ryan Young to accept donations of computer peripheral devices.
- (iv.) Resolution accepting grant award for Crime Victims Liaison program.
- (v.) Training requests by Chief of Police Richard Ramirez for the following:
 - New Supervisor (First Line) virtual training course, for V. Lopez, in the amount of \$90.00.
 - Cell Phone Evidence: From Seizure to Courtroom training, for S. Flagg, in the amount of \$830.83.
- (vi.) Resolution accepting grant award for patrol fleet replacement program.
- (vii.) Resolution approving agreement with Civic Plus for ordinance supplements.
- (viii.) Resolution selecting Sam's Club as an authorized provider for City-related purchases.
- (ix.) Resolution adopting a purchasing policy for the City of Stafford.
- (x.) Request from Fire Chief Larry Di Camillo for the creation of four full-time positions for the Fire Department.
- (xi.) Resolution appointing Municipal Court Prosecutors.
- (xii.) Appointment of Ed Rector, Suzette Thompson, and Alicia Lacy-Castille to the Juneteenth Freedom Celebration Committee.
- (xiii.) Removal of Al Mock and Alex Reyes (Rios) from the Juneteenth Freedom Celebration Committee.
- (xiv.) Request by Director of Public Works / Development Services Jose Pastrana for Senior Development Services Specialist L. Morales to attend TML Leadership Academy in the amount of \$1,982.76.

Mayor Willis advised regarding a typo in item (ix.) on the fourth page that needed to be changed from may to must listed under Personal, Professional, and Planning Services.

Council Member Chen advised that if item (iv.) was not received for next year, the cost of \$79,000 would need to be included in the next fiscal year's budget. Mayor Willis advised that this grant had been received in previous years.

Council Member Guerra exited the meeting at 9:20 p.m.

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

Council Member Herrera made a motion to approve all items on the Consent Agenda as presented, and Council Member Chen seconded the motion. Mayor Willis, Mayor Pro Tem Jones, and Council Members Bostic, Chen, Herrera, and Mathew voted "Aye". "Nay" – none. Motion carried 6-0.

- 11.(a) Approval of Minutes from the June 22, 2022 Joint Workshop with the Stafford Municipal School District (SMSD) Board of Trustees.

- (b) Approval of Minutes from the July 14, 2022 Joint Workshop with the Stafford Municipal School District (SMSD) Board of Trustees.
- (c) Approval of Minutes from the August 8, 2022 Joint Workshop with the Stafford Municipal School District (SMSD) Board of Trustees.
- (d) Approval of Minutes from the October 5, 2022 Regular City Council Meeting.
- (e) Approval of Minutes from the November 16, 2022 Regular City Council Meeting.

Council Member Guerra entered the meeting at 9:22 p.m.

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

Council Member Chen made a motion to approve all minutes as presented, and Mayor Pro Tem Jones seconded the motion. Mayor Willis, Mayor Pro Tem Jones, and Council Members Bostic, Chen, Guerra, Herrera, and Mathew voted “Aye”. “Nay” – none. Motion carried 7-0.

12. (a) Discussion of requests by Council Members for future agenda items.

No requests were made.


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

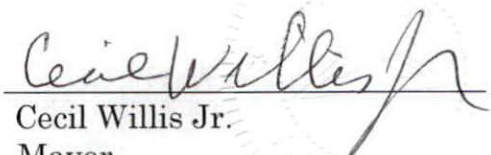
No action was taken.

13. Adjournment.

Council Member Herrera made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:24 p.m., and Council Member Chen seconded the motion. Mayor Willis, Mayor Pro Tem Jones, and Council Members Bostic, Chen, Guerra, Herrera, and Mathew voted “Aye”. “Nay” – none. Motion carried 7-0.

ATTEST:


Roxanne Benitez
City Secretary


Cecil Willis Jr.
Mayor