

MINUTES
SPECIAL CALLED CITY COUNCIL MEETING
CITY OF STAFFORD, TEXAS
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2024

On the 13th day of November, 2024, at 6:30 p.m., the City Council of Stafford, Texas met in the Council Chambers. The following members of the City Council were present: Mayor Ken Mathew, Mayor Pro Tem Alice Chen, and Council Members William K. Bostic Jr., Tim Wood, Christopher Caldwell (left at 8:41 p.m.), Virginia Rosas, and Xavier Herrera. Absent: None. The following City Staff were present: Assistant City Secretary Shandra Phillips, Director of Human Resources Shanell Garcia, Director of Public Works/Development Services Kyle Jung, Fire Chief Larry Di Camillo, Fire Marshal Jon Lopez, Chief of Police Richard Ramirez, Assistant Chief of Police Kelly Wright, Police Captain Nathan Cohn, Police Captain Joe Williams, Police Lieutenant Luciano Lopez, and City Attorney Bridgette Begle.

1. Call to Order.

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

2. Pledges of Allegiance.

Mayor Mathew led the pledge to the United States flag. Mayor Mathew led the pledge to the Texas flag.

3. Public Comments.

None.

At this time, Council Member Rosas made a motion to take Agenda Item 9 out of order after Agenda Item 4, and Council Member Caldwell seconded the motion. Mayor Mathew, Mayor Pro Tem Chen, and Council Members Bostic, Wood, Caldwell, Rosas, and Herrera voted "Aye". "Nay" – None. Motion carried 7-0.

4. Update from the Operations Task Force.

Council Member Caldwell provided an update including the rubric, timeline, and purpose of the task force.

Council Members commended Council Member Caldwell and spoke on the Operations Task Force, efficiency audit, and rating system.

9. (a) Discussion regarding withdrawal from the Fund Balance for the purchase of vehicles for the Police Department.

Council Member Rosas advised that she requested this item be added to the agenda. She advised that she received a memo from Chief Financial Officer Alka Shah. Council Member Rosas asked what was the legality and did Mayor Mathew have the authority to arbitrarily approve funds being spent from the fund balance without City Council approval.

Chief of Police Richard Ramirez spoke on the difficulty of securing police vehicles and waitlist timelines.

City Attorney Bridgette Begle advised that she wanted to go into executive session to discuss due to attorney-client privilege.

Council Member Bostic advised that the purchase of police vehicles was discussed at the October 22nd SEDC Meeting.

At this time, Council Member Wood made a motion to go into executive session to gain clarity before attorney, and Council Member Rosas seconded the motion. Mayor Mathew, Mayor Pro Tem Chen, and Council Members Bostic, Wood, Caldwell, Rosas, and Herrera voted "Aye". "Nay" – None. Motion carried 7-0.

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.

The City Council went into executive session at 6:55 p.m.

The City Council came out of executive session at 7:29 p.m.

The City Council meeting resumed at 7:29 p.m.

At this time, Council Member Wood made a motion to reopen public comments, and Council Member Bostic seconded the motion. Mayor Mathew, Mayor Pro Tem Chen, and Council Members Bostic, Wood, Caldwell, Rosas, and Herrera voted "Aye". "Nay" – None. Motion carried 7-0.

(b) Public Comments on item (a).

Public Comments were received from the following:

- Cliff Cowperthwait, who lives at 111 Squires Bend, advised that he hoped something was decided. He also advised that the Mayor should have the ability to pull funds in an emergency or a quick deadline. Mr. Cowperthwait advised that they did not have the funds for an internal audit and would turn into a loyalty test.
- Lana Hoelsing, who lives at 327 N. Esplanade Lane, advised that the Mayor should have the authority and tell City Council after it had been done. She also advised that when it comes to the safety of the policeman such as needing new cars, they should automatically allow the Mayor to do what he needs to do for their safety.
- Greg Holsapple, who lives at 13111 Naples Lane, advised that he appreciated what they were doing by trying to solve things as they come up. He suggested that they take the most conversative way to fund the

police cars. Mr. Holsapple spoke about the fund balance and not having the funds when needed.

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

Council Member Wood made a motion to sanction the Mayor's decision to authorize the full amount of \$482,388 for the purchase of the police cars as stipulated on the agenda item, and Mayor Pro Tem Chen seconded the motion. Mayor Mathew, Mayor Pro Tem Chen, and Council Members Bostic, Wood, Caldwell, Rosas, and Herrera voted "Aye". "Nay" – None. Motion carried 7-0.

5. (a) Discussion regarding amending the Budgeting and Long-Range Financial Planning Policy.

Council Member Wood read a memo from Chief Financial Officer Alka Shah.

Mayor Pro Tem Chen spoke on the previous fund balance policy.

Council Members discussed the balance in the general fund.

(b) Public Comments on item (a).

Public Comments were received from the following:

- Cliff Cowperthwait, who lives at 111 Squires Bend, advised that no one said anything about the agenda item, and they just ignored it. Mr. Cowperthwait suggested that if funds were borrowed there should be a plan to repay.
- Johnny Baiamonte, who lives at 12819 Linda St., spoke on when to use contingency, how to release funds in the contingency, and proper project control.
- Lana Hoelsing, who lives at 327 N. Esplanade Lane, advised that the budget should not be changed and the City deserved better.

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

No action was taken.

6. (a) Discussion regarding funding for the Police Department Step Program.

City Council and Chief of Police Richard Ramirez discussed the dynamic of the Step Program, budget, and funding.

(b) Public Comments on item (a).

Public Comments were received from the following:

- Cliff Cowperthwait, who lives at 111 Squires Bend, advised that the Step Program should be discussed for Fiscal Year 2026. He also advised that it would be a reoccurring expense and according to the policy it could not be taken from the fund balance.

- Greg Holsapple, who lives at 13111 Naples Lane, advised that he did not disagree with the Chief of Police. Mr. Holsapple spoke on the Step Program at the school district.
- Police Captain Nathan Cohn, spoke on the importance of the Step Program and that it was imperative in addition to the cost-of-living allocation (COLA).

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

Council Member Wood made a motion to approve scheduling a Finance Committee Meeting as soon as possible to bring the item back to City Council, and Mayor Pro Tem Chen seconded the motion. Mayor Mathew, Mayor Pro Tem Chen and Council Members Bostic, Wood, Rosas, and Herrera voted “Aye”. “Nay” – None. Motion carried 6-0.

7. (a) Discussion regarding hiring seven (7) additional firefighters for the Fire Department.

Council Member Rosas advised that the item should be presented to the Finance Committee.

Fire Chief Larry DiCamillo spoke on the reasons for hiring the additional personnel, level of public service to the City, the closure of fire stations, and being understaffed.

(b) Public Comments on item (a).

Public Comments were received from the following:

- Cliff Cowperthwait, who lives at 111 Squires Bend, spoke on the Fire Department budget being short for Fiscal Year 2025, closure of fire stations, and not amending the budget. Mr. Cowperthwait suggested they plan for Fiscal Year 2026.

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

After a brief discussion, Council Member Rosas made a motion to take the item to the Finance Committee Meeting for recommendation and review, and Mayor Pro Tem Chen seconded the motion. Mayor Mathew, Mayor Pro Tem Chen and Council Members Bostic, Wood, Rosas, and Herrera voted “Aye”. “Nay” – None. Motion carried 6-0.

8. (a) Discussion regarding uniforms and safety equipment for Public Works employees.

Council Member Rosas advised that she requested this item. She spoke on the employees not having uniforms, safety equipment, and budget.

Director of Public Works/Development Services Kyle Jung spoke on the current budget and prior budgeted amounts for uniforms and safety equipment.

Mr. Jung answered questions from the Council Members.

(b) Public Comments on item (a).
None.

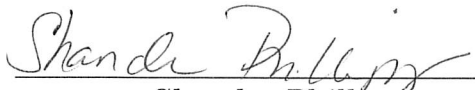
(c) Possible Consideration of appropriate action on item (a).

After a brief discussion, Council Member Rosas made a motion to approve \$40,000 from contingency to purchase uniforms and safety equipment for Public Works employees, and Council Member Herrera seconded the motion. Council Members Rosas and Herrera voted "Aye". "Nay" – Mayor Mathew, Mayor Pro Tem Chen, and Council Members Bostic and Wood. Motion failed 2-4.


10. Adjournment.

Without objection, the meeting was adjourned at 9:04 p.m.

ATTEST:



Shandra Phillips
Assistant City Secretary



Ken Mathew
Mayor