

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OF THE CITY OF SAN JUAN COMMISSION

DATE:

Tuesday, September 24, 2024

TIME:

6:00 p.m.

PLACE:

San Juan Memorial Library
Multipurpose Meeting Room
1010 S. Standard
San Juan, Texas 78589

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mario Garza, Mayor
Marco “Markie” Villegas, Mayor Pro Tempore
Adina “Dina” Santillan, Commissioner
Ernesto “Neto” Guajardo, Commissioner
Jesus “Jesse” Ramirez, Commissioner
Cris Palacios, City Attorney

STAFF PRESENT:

Benjamin Arjona, City Manager
Brenda Escalante, City Secretary
Tirso Garza, Chief of Fire
Leandro Sifuentes, Chief of Police
Leroy Gonzales, Finance Director
Adelaida Cordero, Director of Human Resources
Christina Perez, Interim Library Director
Monica Gomez, Interim Director of Planning
Israel Garza, Director of Sanitation/ Public Works
Juan Carlos Martinez, Director of Utilities
Mary Enriquez, Court Administrator
Pat Karr, Director of Information Technology
Ruben Guajardo, Director of Parks & Recreation / Police Athletic League

ORDER OF BUSINESS

I. CALL MEETING TO ORDER:

Mayor Mario Garza called meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

II. INVOCATION:

Benjamin Arjona, City Manager led the Invocation.

III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Mayor Mario Garza led the Pledge of Allegiance.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENTS.

San Juan resident Dr. Stephanie Alvarez expressed gratitude to the commission for letting her speak and said she was back to try to save the San Juan Hotel. According to Dr. Alvarez, one of the valley's historical landmarks is the San Juan Hotel. She reminded the City Commission that in order to tell them and the public about all the funding available and the preservation plan so that the San Jua Hotel can be conserved, they are still waiting for some kind of town hall meeting or public workshop. According to her, they deserve to have an opportunity to inform the public as ERO Architects. Luis Pena, San Juan resident stated he was present due to item A. 3. under executive session. Mr. Pena expressed his concerns in regards to the City Manager not residing in the city, as its stated on the city charter.

V. PRESENTATIONS

A. Presentation on a Proclamation Proclaiming October 21-27, 2024 as Red Ribbon Week.

Rolando Garcia, PSJA ISD Chief of Police, thanked the city for inviting them to the city’s meeting. Chief Garcia informed the City Commission of their upcoming major event, the Red Ribbon Parade, which will be held at the City of Alamo on October 26, 2024, at 9:00 a.m. Starting point will be at PSJA Memorial High School and run up to Old 83, then east to the Central Park in Alamo, Texas. He encouraged the San Juan community to come out and support the PSJA students to keep them drug-free. He explained this year’s theme, Life is a Movie Film Drug-Free. Chief of Police Leandro Sifuentes read the proclamation. The PSJA local police enforcement was recognized by Mayor Mario Garza for their protection of our neighborhood.

B. Presentation on Departmental Reports: Department of Finance, Fire Department, Police Department, Municipal Court, and Department of Utilities.

- 1. Department of Finance Monthly Report.
- 2. Fire Department Monthly Report.

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3. Police Department Monthly Report.
4. Municipal Court Monthly Report.
5. Department of Utilities Monthly Report.

DISCUSSION: Commissioner Jesus "Jesse" Ramirez inquired as to why the city has not received Med-Care reports in the last two months and how often they were submitted. According to the Med-Care spokeswoman, they provide reports every month. She also added that their new project manager, Gabriel Flores, has resolved several communication issues. The reports were prepared, she said, and Mr. Flores was there to carry them out. She said that they were well within compliance with the City of San Juan's response time, which averaged 9 minutes and 10 seconds. Commissioner Ramirez reported that he inquired about the condition of Lucky Drive with City Manager Benjamin Arjona, Sanitation Director Israel Garza, and Utilities Director Juan Carlos Martinez. Mr. Arjona stated Lucky Drive was a private road and the city completed a first-time sewer connection in 2007 or 2010 since it was inside the city limits and required sewage work. He further stated that now this private road has no right of way or private easements; after looking at it, they found a 24-foot easement. If for some reason the city determines to make it a public road, it would be a long process and a lot of things that would need to be taken into consideration. For one, someone has to give up their right of way; either the city purchases it or we go out to speak to the neighborhood people, as there has to be at least a 50-foot-wide easement. Mr. Arjona asked to bring this matter to some type of workshop to be discussed, as it will be very costly. Mayor Mario Garza asked if the property owners paid taxes Mr. Garza answered yes. Mayor Garza asked for the city to consult with legal to see if there was a way to assist the property owner's temporary, for example, some caliche. Commissioner Ramirez asked who serviced them for water services; Mr. Garza replied North Alamo Water Supply. Commissioner Adina "Dina" Santillan stated that if the city came up with a solution for Luck Drive, she would ask for the city to come up with a solution for Wyoming Street, as they have similar issues. Commissioner Santillan inquired with Mary Enriquez, Municipal Court Coordinator, in regards to the attendance of the three judges; one showed up zero, one for seven, and one for fifteen; the one that showed zero was the judge not called upon or was he not available, and asked Ms. Enriquez to elaborate on the discrepancy on the attendance. Ms. Enriquez stated that they did call him for the month of September, but he didn't answer.

VI. PUBLIC HEARING/ORDINANCES

- A. Consider an Ordinance in First Reading Regarding the Adoption of the City of San Juan's Standard Design Manual for Public Infrastructure Improvements.

DISCUSSION: Monica Gomez, Interim Director of Planning, stated that this was the first reading of the ordinance to approve the standard design manual for the City of San Juan, which was prepared by Trimad Consultants to assist engineers and architects during the development of infrastructure improvements. The purpose of this manual is to build public infrastructure with high standards and in a uniform manner for the City of San Juan. Mrs. Gomez further stated this manual covers the streets, drainage, water, traffic control, solid waste, paving, and subdivision. This plan also includes formulas, tables, a check-off list for new subdivisions, developer agreements, letters of credit, and details for paving, manholes, sewer lines, and pipe sites. She informed the commission that the last manual approved by the city was in March of 2017 with only 14 pages. Mrs. Gomez stated that staff recommended the approval of the ordinance as presented. Mario Garza questioned if the city had any records of anyone conducting a walkthrough of any kind, Mrs. Gomez said that they had. Mayor Garza then asked who approved those records. Mrs. Gomez stated that when they do the final walkthrough, departmental directors and city engineers will ensure that everything is in compliance. Mayor Garza expressed his concerns in regards to the sink holes and inquired who did the final walkthrough in those areas. Mrs. Gomez stated that there is documentation in case any of the testing didn't pass. Mayor Mario Garza asked for that documentation for the Oak Ridge subdivision. Commissioner Adina "Dina" Santillan stated that the proper inspection needed to be done as families are investing a lot of money in these homes.

Commissioner Jesus "Jesse" Ramirez made motion to approve and was seconded by Commissioner Adina "Dina" Santillan. Motion Passed (5-0)

- B. Consideration and Action, if any, on Ordinance Adopting and Approving the Budget for the City of San Juan, Texas for the Fiscal Year Beginning October 1, 2024, ending September 30, 2025.

DISCUSSION: Leroy Gonzales, Director of Finance, stated the budget process was initiated by the Department of Finance on April 15, 2024. Mr. Gonzales stated that the 2024-2025 budget preparation included one (1) on one (1) budget session with each department director on June 22, 2024, through June 24, 2024, to present the department's recommendations. One (1) budget workshop with the City Commission was held on August 24, 2024, to discuss the proposed budget. He stated he included his budget highlights and mentioned that in his six years, this year was the hardest budget he has had to balance. Mayor Mario Garza asked if the city was going with the 6% increase, and Mr. Gonzales replied yes. Mayor Garza also stated that after reviewing the budget book, he noticed that for all those departments requesting additional staff, they were cut off and asked to keep an eye on the city's growth, and as the city is growing, we need more employees. Mr. Gonzales stated that in March we look into the city's revenue. Commissioner Jesus "Jesse" Ramirez inquired about the surplus; it went from 5 million in 2021-2022 to 84,000. Mr. Gonzales stated that this just shows what we don't budget for. Commissioner Ramirez asked why the line item for Estrada Engineering Consultants was separate from the other engineers. Benjamin Arjona, City Manager, mentioned that this was the engineer that was taking care of the new city hall as he was still working on the reimbursement funding

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coming from the Transit Terminal. When Commissioner Ramirez questioned how long this would take, Mr. Arjona said that the government currently oversees it. Commissioner Ramirez asked the reason why every department was asking for food, water, and ice. Mr. Arjona replied that every department has different meetings to buy water and Gatorades. Commissioner Ramirez asked to remove the salary line item for Judge Perez as he is making \$38,000 yet is not coming in. He also asked for the reason for reclassifying the health inspector under Planning and Zoning. Mr. Arjona stated that the city is not making enough revenue to offset the salary. He mentioned initially they had estimated \$80,000, but in reality, they were making under \$15,000. Commissioner Ramirez stated that it was his understanding that the city was having issues with some restaurants not having their permits. Mr. Arjona mentioned that they have reached out to the Hidalgo County Health Department, and they are willing to take over those responsibilities. Monica Gomez, Interim Director of Planning, stated that they are working on an interlocal agreement between the City of San Juan and the Hidalgo County Health Department. Commissioner Ramirez further inquired about the \$50,000 under Professional and Technical Services under Planning and Zoning. Mr. Arjona stated that it was for land surveying and project testing. Commissioner Ramirez also inquired about renting a storage unit for \$5,000, and Mrs. Gomez informed them that they were renting a unit to store all their plans, and files for the planning department. Commissioner Ramirez asked for clarification in regards to the \$73,000 for assistant head coach for the summer, assistant head coach for fall and spring at \$49,000, and \$39,000 for head coach for the summer. Ruben Guajardo, Director of Parks and Recreation, stated that for head coaches, they have a total of 15 coaches, and assistant head coaches, they have a total of 30 head coaches. Commissioner Ramirez also inquired in regards to the security guards for the Parks & Recreation programs, to which Mr. Guajardo stated they implanted security guards last year and has been a blessing. Commissioner Ramirez asked if the fencing at \$130,000 was just for one park. Mr. Guajardo stated that they will be going out for bids for the whole San Juan Sports Complex. Commissioner Ramirez asked if the parks department was bringing a boxing program. Mr. Guajardo stated that with the new facility on the north side, they developed a boxing room. Commissioner Ramirez inquired about the line item about the citrus meeting, to which Mr. Martinez replied it's the meetings for their credit hours. Commissioner Ramirez inquired about the Thanksgiving line items for organizational \$6,000 and under legislative another \$6,800. Brenda Escalante, City Secretary, stated it was for the actual employee Thanksgiving luncheon and the annual Thanksgiving employee gift cards.

Commissioner Jesus “Jesse” Ramirez made motion to approve and was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Marco “Markie” Villegas. Motion Passed (5-0)

VII. RESOLUTIONS

- A. Consideration and Action, if any, on Resolution for Nomination of Candidates to the Hidalgo County Appraisal District Board of Directors for 2025-2027.**

DISCUSSION: Brenda Escalante, City Secretary, stated that each taxing unit may nominate one but no more than five candidates for the Hidalgo County Appraisal District Election. Mrs. Escalante stated that the presiding officer of each taxing unit will need to submit the names of their nominees by a written resolution to the Chief Appraisal before October 15, 2024.

Commissioner Ernesto “Neto” Guajardo made motion to nominate Pedro “Pete” Garcia and was seconded by Commissioner Jesus “Jesse” Ramirez. Motion Passed (5-0)

VIII. APPOINTMENTS

- A. Consider Removal, Appointment or Re-Appointment of Board Member(s) Related to the Civil Service Commission. Tabled**

Commissioner Jesus “Jesse” Ramirez made motion to untangle the agenda item and was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Marco “Markie” Villegas. Motion Passed (5-0)

Mayor Mario Garza made motion to re-appointed David Alvarado and Juan Vasquez and removed Eric Sanhez and appointed Rolando Casas to the Civil Service Commission. Mayor Marco “Markie” Villegas seconded the motion. Motion Passed (5-0)

IX. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON ALL THE FOLLOWING MATTERS:

- A. Consideration and Action on Submitting Entitlement Vote for Candidate to Texas Municipal League (TML) Region 12 Director Election.**

DISCUSSION: Brenda Escalante, City Secretary, stated that each TML member city is entitled to one vote, which vote must be cost by a majority vote of the city's governing body. Mrs. Escalante further stated that the officials listed on this ballot have been nominated to serve a two-year term on the TML Board of Directors. Also, a brief biography of each candidate is included after the ballot, and ballots must reach the TML office by 5:00 p.m. on October 3, 2024.

Commissioner Adina “Dina” Santillan made motion to nominate Victor Sebastian “Seby” Haddad and was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Marco “Markie” Villegas. Motion Passed (5-0)

- B. Consider Approval of Extending the Depository Contract with Lone Star National Bank for One Possible Two-Year Extension ending Fiscal Year September 30, 2026.**

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DISCUSSION: Leroy Gonzales, Director of Finance, stated that the contract with Lone Star National Bank will expire on September 30, 2024 therefore, staff is asking to be extended for one possible two-year extension ending fiscal year September 30, 2026 with no changes.

Commissioner Ernesto “Neto” Guajardo made motion and was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Marco “Markie” Villegas. Motion Passed (5-0)

- C. Consider Approval of The Economic Development Corporation's Proposed Budget for Fiscal Year 2024-2025.

DISCUSSION: Leroy Gonzales, Director of Finance informed the City Commission that the total budget for fiscal year 2024-2025 was \$1,704,875.00.

Commissioner Adina “Dina” Santillan made motion to approve and was seconded by Commissioner Ernesto “Neto” Guajardo. Motion Passed (5-0)

- D. Consider Approval of a Budget Amendment to Increase the General Fund Budget Line Item Contract Services to the Amount of \$16,214. City Secretary and \$74,408 for Repair and Maintenance on the Street, Ally and Other.

DISCUSSION: Leroy Gonzales, Director of Finance, stated that the city secretary under the election was short for \$16,214. Mr. Gonzales also stated that repair and maintenance was also short \$74,408 due to the repairs done on Standard and Rail Road and the concrete entrance by Denny’s.

Commissioner Jesus “Jesse” Ramirez made motion to approve and was seconded by Commissioner Adina “Dina” Santillan. Motion Passed (5-0)

X. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Consider Approval of the Tax Collection Report for the Month of July 2024.
- B. Consider Approval of the Tax Collection Report for the Month of August 2024.
- C. Consider Approval of the Budget Expenditure Report for the Month of July 2024.

Commissioner Adina “Dina” Santilla made motion to approve all items under consent agenda and was seconded by Commissioner Jesus “Jesse” Ramirez. Motion passed (5-0)

XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION

- A. The San Juan City Commission will Convene in Executive Session in Accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act, Vernon's Texas Statutes and Code Annotated, Government Code Chapter 551 et seq., and 551.071 Consultation with Attorney.
 - 1. Pursuant to Section 551.071 (Consultation with Attorney) of the Texas Government Code, Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Legal Issues Concerning Entertainment for 2024 Noche de Paz.
 - 2. Pursuant to Section 551.071 (Consultation with Attorney) of the Texas Government Code, Discussion Regarding Legal Issues Concerning Petition for Release of Area from the City’s Extra Territorial Jurisdiction, Specifically a 10.07 Acre Tract of Land out of the West Half of Lot 7, Block 47, Alamo Land & Sugar Company.
 - 3. Pursuant to Section 551.074 (Personnel Matters) and 551.071 (Consultation with Attorney) of the Texas Government Code, Discussion and Possible Action Regarding the Appointment, Employment, Evaluation, Reassignment, Duties, Discipline, or Dismissal of a Public Officer or Employee, Specifically the City Manager.

Mayor Mario Garza stated that regarding the items under executive session, he would proceed out of order, as follows:

- A. 2.
- A. 3.
- A. 1.

Commissioner Jesus “Jesse” Ramirez made motion to enter in to executive session at 7:05 p.m. and was seconded by Commissioner Adina “Dina” Santillan. Motion passed (5-0)

XII. RECONVENE

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A. The San Juan City Commission will Reconvene in Open Session to Take Necessary Action I any, in Accordance with Chapter 551, Open Meeting Subchapter E, Procedure Relating to Closed Meeting 551, Requirements to Vote or Take Final action in Open Meeting.

1. Pursuant to Section 551.071 (Consultation with Attorney) of the Texas Government Code, Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Legal Issues Concerning Entertainment for 2024 Noche de Paz.

No Action

2. Pursuant to Section 551.071 (Consultation with Attorney) of the Texas Government Code, Discussion Regarding Legal Issues Concerning Petition for Release of Area from the City's Extra Territorial Jurisdiction, Specifically a 10.07 Acre Tract of Land out of the West Half of Lot 7, Block 47, Alamo Land & Sugar Company.

No Action

3. Pursuant to Section 551.074 (Personnel Matters) and 551.071 (Consultation with Attorney) of the Texas Government Code, Discussion and Possible Action Regarding the Appointment, Employment, Evaluation, Reassignment, Duties, Discipline, or Dismissal of a Public Officer or Employee, Specifically the City Manager.

Mayor Mario Garza made motion to place the City Manager on a two (2) week suspension without pay in regards to the September 4, 2024 grievance and was seconded by Commissioner Jesus "Jesse" Ramirez. Opposed by Mayor Pro Tem Marco "Markie" Villegas, Commissioner Adina "Dina" Santillan, and Commissioner Ernesto "Neto" Guajardo. Motion Denied (2-3)

Mayor Pro Tem Marco "Markie" Villegas made motion to place the City Manager on a two (2) week suspension with pay and was seconded by Commissioner Ernesto "Neto" Guajardo. Opposed by Mayor Mario Garza, Commissioner Adina "Dina" Santillan, and Commissioner Jesus "Jesse" Ramirez. Motion Denied (2-3)

Commissioner Jesus "Jesse" Ramirez made motion to place the City Manager on a one (1) week suspension without pay and was seconded by Mayor Mario Garza. Opposed by Commissioner Adina "Dina" Santillan. Motion Passed (4-1)

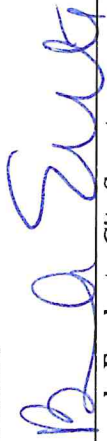
Commissioner Jesus "Jesse" Ramirez motioned to appoint Chief Tirso Garza as Interim City Manager for the time being and was seconded by Mayor Mario Garza. Motion Passed (5-0)

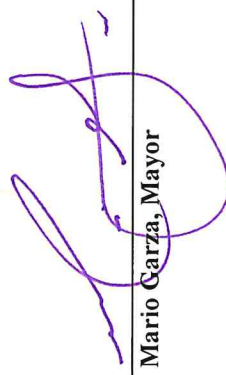
XIII. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Jesus "Jesse" Ramirez made motion to adjourn at 9:23 p.m. and was seconded by Commissioner Adina "Dina" Santillan. Motion Passed (5-0)

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ATTEST:


Brenda Escalante, City Secretary


Mario Garza, Mayor