

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OF THE CITY OF SAN JUAN COMMISSION

DATE: Monday, January 27, 2025

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
Commissioner Ernesto "Neto" Guajardo
Adina "Dina" Santillan, Commissioner
Jesus "Jesse" Ramirez, Commissioner
Rick Palacios, City Attorney

STAFF PRESENT: Tirso Garza, Interim City Manager
Brenda Escalante, City Secretary
Tirso Garza, Chief of Fire
Leandro Sifuentes, Chief of Police
Adelaida Cordero, Director of Human Resources
Lulu Beltran, Asst. Director of Finance
Christina Perez, Library Director
Ruben Guajardo, Director of Parks & Recreation / PAL Director
Jorge Garcia, 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

ORDER OF BUSINESS

- I. **CALL MEETING TO ORDER:**
Mayor Mario Garza called meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.
- II. **INVOCATION:**
Tirso Garza, Interim City Manager led the Invocation.
- III. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:**
Mayor Mario Garza led the Pledge of Allegiance.
- IV. **PUBLIC COMMENTS:**
Carla De Leon, a resident of San Juan, expressed concern regarding her well-being in relation to the potential paving of Lucky Drive, which she stated was in poor condition.
Virginia Gause stated that she was present to request the City Commission's consideration in preserving the San Juan Hotel and in pursuing the historical grant available to restore the building. She once again requested a workshop to discuss saving the San Juan Hotel.
Juventina Herrera, representing the City of Edinburg, stated that they had the personnel needed to restore the San Juan Hotel and to work on securing the grant that would assist the city in doing so.
Luis Peña asserted that the city should investigate a questionable charge allegedly incurred by the former City Manager and two members of the City Commission during a meeting at a local restaurant. He also expressed concerns regarding the San Juan Police Department's policies and the officers' uniforms.
- V. **PRESENTATIONS**
 - A. **Presentation of the 89th Annual RGV Golden Gloves Regional Championships Event.**
[Ruben Guajardo, Director of Parks & Recreation.]

DISCUSSION: Ruben Guajardo, Director of Parks & Recreation stated that the City of San Juan, in collaboration with the San Juan Police Athletic League and USA Boxing, will host the 89th Annual RGV Golden Gloves Regional Championships at Payne Arena on February 1st and 2nd. This event has grown significantly since it first began in 2021 as a small, outdoor tournament during the post-COVID period. Now in its fourth year, it will feature 122 boxing matches across two days, with preliminaries on Saturday and championship bouts on Sunday. In addition to the matches, live performances from local artists will entertain the crowd during breaks. The event serves as a qualifier for the Texas State Championships in Fort Worth in March. Many of the young athletes who compete have grown in the program, and some have even turned professional. The Police Athletic League plays a key role by securing sponsorships, which help fund future

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youth programs. Payne Arena will manage ticket sales, concessions, and vendor arrangements, while Golden Gloves will provide a donation back to the PAL after the event. Tickets are available at the door and online, with general admission priced at \$35 and VIP options also available. The city is also exploring the idea of hosting future tournaments at a new gym facility currently under development in San Juan.

B. Presentation Esteban Ali Garza-WWBO North American Boxing Champion. [Ruben Guajardo, Director of Parks and Recreation.]

DISCUSSION: Ruben Guajardo, Director of Parks & Recreation, introduced a rising professional boxer from San Juan who began his journey through the RGV Golden Gloves program in 2021 or 2022. Since then, he has built an impressive undefeated professional record of 7–0. His development through this local program stands as a testament to the city’s investment in youth athletics and the potential such initiatives have to shape future success stories. Although he was scheduled to be formally recognized at a recent City Commission meeting, he was unable to attend due to a conflict with his training schedule. He is set to compete professionally once again on February 8th at Payne Arena, and the city plans to honor his accomplishments at a future meeting. His journey underscores the powerful impact that community-based programs such as the Golden Gloves and the Police Athletic League can have on local youth not only in developing athletic skills, but in creating real pathways to personal and professional achievement.

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

DISCUSSION: Commissioner Jesus “Jesse” Ramirez raised a concern regarding the lack of a formal rental agreement between the City of San Juan and the Economic Development Corporation (EDC) for the space currently being used by the EDC. Lulu Beltran, Assist. Director of Finance stated that no written agreement existed and that previous arrangements, including utility cost-sharing, had been discussed informally during budget sessions under the former city manager. City staff were directed to investigate the matter further and determine what payments, if any, were being made and what those payments entitled the EDC to. Additional questions were directed to the police department regarding patrol schedules and enforcement actions. Leandro Sifuentes, Chief of Police confirmed that Thursday patrols were still ongoing in certain neighborhoods and that efforts were being made to address issues such as loud music from vehicles. A question was also raised about a specific delay code listed in a MedCare report. Tirso Garza, Interim City Manager stated he would follow up with MedCare operations to obtain clarification. There was also a discussion regarding staffing at the municipal court. Mayor Mario Garza suggested exploring options such as hiring a part-time city marshal or administrative clerk to support current staff. Although no decision was made during the meeting, Mayor Garza recommended that the department head and police chief meet to determine what staffing changes would be most beneficial for improving operations.

VI. PUBLIC HEARING/ORDINANCES

- A. Hold a Public Hearing for the Rezoning Request from Single-Family Residence District (R-S) to General Business District (C-2) of the 1.894-acre tract of land out of the East 500.00 feet of the South 5.00-acre tract out of the North One-Half of Lot 42, Stewarts Addition to the Conway Gardens, as Requested by RCA Holding & Trading, LLC. [Jorge J. Garcia, Director of Planning]

No Action was taken.

VII. APPOINTMENTS

- A. Consider Removal and Appointment of Board Member(s) Related to the Keep San Juan Beautiful Board. [Brenda Escalante, City Secretary]

DISCUSSION: Brenda Escalante, City Secretary, stated that the Board was to consist of fifteen (15) members. Each member was required to be a resident of the City of San Juan and/or work in or operate a business within the city. Additionally, members were to be at least eighteen (18) years of age and possess good moral character and standing within the community.

The Keep San Juan Beautiful Board had eight (8) vacancies. Mrs. Escalante noted that the following individuals had expressed interest in serving on the Board:

- Eric Ismael Jimenez
- Alejandro Hernandez

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- Arturo Ramirez Jr.
- Mirta Ramirez-Espinola
- Tania Viveros
- Fernando A. Betancourt
- Daniel Garza Flores
- Marta Rosales

Commissioner Jesus “Jesse” Ramirez made motion to approve all the recommendations and was seconded by Commissioner Ernesto “Neto” Guajardo. Motion passed (4-0)

B. Consider Removal and Appointment of Board Member(s) Related to the San Juan Library Advisory Board. [Brenda Escalante, City Secretary]

DISCUSSION: Brenda Escalante, City Secretary, stated that the Library Board Bylaws provided that a member who was absent from more than three consecutive meetings would be automatically removed from membership. Staff brought to my attention that Ms. Leticia Hernandez Muro had exceeded this limit. In light of this, staff requested that the Board consider the removal of Ms. Hernandez Muro from her position on the San Juan Advisory Library Board.

Commissioner Adina “Dina” Santillan made motion to remove Leticia Hernandez Muro and appoint Melyna Montoya and was seconded by Mayor Mario Garza. Motion passed (4-0)

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

A. Preliminary Plat Approval with Variances at Sioux Heights Subdivision being a 7.47-acre tract of land out of the Lot 4, Block 39, Alamo Land and Sugar Company's Subdivision, located approximately a quarter of a mile West from Cesar Chavez Road, along the South side of Sioux Road, as Requested by TRIMAD Consultants, Inc. [Jorge J. Garcia, Director of Planning]

DISCUSSION: Jorge J. Garcia, Director of Planning and Zoning, stated that the Commission had reviewed a proposed subdivision request for a 7.47-acre tract of land located approximately a quarter mile west of Cesar Chavez Road, along the south side of SE Road. The developer proposed the creation of 23 multifamily lots with a new street running through the subdivision. The tract was located within Flood Zone B, and the developer had requested three variances from city standards: a reduction in utility easement width from 15 feet to 10 feet; allowance for lot depths shorter than the required 150 feet; and permission for various lot widths below the standard 150 feet. Water service was to be provided by the North Alamo Water Supply Corporation, while sewer services would be supplied by the City of San Juan. City staff recommended preliminary approval of the subdivision, contingent upon feedback from the city engineer and relevant departments. Mr. Garcia stated that the Planning and Zoning Commission had already reviewed the request and voted 4-0 in favor of recommending approval, including the requested variances.

Commissioner Ernesto “Neto” Guajardo made motion to approve and was seconded by Commissioner Adina “Dina” Santillan. Motion passed (4-0)

B. Discussion and Possible Action on the San Juan Municipal Court Amnesty Program Beginning February 6, 2025. [Mary Enriquez, Court Administrator]

DISCUSSION: Maria Enriquez, Court Administrator, presented a proposal for the City of San Juan's Municipal Court Amnesty Program, which will run from February 6 through April 30, 2025. The program is designed to help residents clear outstanding warrants without fear of arrest. As part of the amnesty, the court will waive the \$206 failure-to-appear fee, and in some cases, reduce or waive additional court fees. Citizens can resolve their cases either in person or online. To ensure public awareness, the city will promote the program through social media, the official website, and city television channels. Additionally, court staff will make phone calls to notify individuals with outstanding warrants. Commissioner Adina “Dina” Santillan recommended that some flexibility be shown even after April 30 for those who call and show a willingness to resolve their cases. There was also discussion about possibly extending the program if it proves successful. Ms. Enriquez agreed to return after April 30 to provide a report on participation and outcomes.

Commissioner Jesus “Jesse” Ramirez made motion to approve and was seconded by Commissioner Adina “Dina” Santillan. Motion passed (4-0)

IX. RESOLUTIONS

A. Consideration and Action, if any, on Resolution Issuing an Order and Notice of the City of San Juan General Municipal Election for May 3, 2025, for the Election of Mayor, Commissioner Place 2 and Commissioner Place 3, and Designating Election Precincts and Polling Places. [Brenda Escalante, City Secretary]

DISCUSSION: Brenda Escalante, City Secretary, stated that the City of San Juan had issued a resolution for its General Municipal Election to be held on Saturday, May 3, 2025. The election was set to cover the offices

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of Mayor, Commissioner Place Two, and Commissioner Place Three, each for a four-year term. The deadline to file to appear on the ballot was Friday, February 14, 2025, by 5:00 p.m. Early voting was scheduled to take place from April 22 through April 29, 2025, with varying hours each day. There would be no early voting on Sunday, April 27. Two polling locations were designated for both early voting and Election Day: The North Fire Station No. 2 and the San Juan Memorial Library. Notably, the county was responsible for appointing both presiding and alternate judges for the election.

Commissioner Adina “Dina” Santillan made motion to approve and was seconded by Commissioner Ernesto “Neto” Guajardo. Motion passed (4-0)

X. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Consider Second and Final Reading of an Ordinance for a Conditional Use Permit Regarding the Sale of Alcoholic Beverages (BG – Wine and Malt Beverage Retail Dealer’s On-Premise Permit) at Santa Chelada Drive-Thru, located at 4101 N. Veterans Boulevard, legally described as Lot 5, Block 5, John Closner Subdivision, as Requested by KSNA, LLC. [Jorge J. Garcia, Director of Planning]
- B. Consider Second and Final Reading of an Ordinance for a Conditional Use Permit for the Sale of Alcoholic Beverages (BG – Wine and Beer Retailer’s Permit) at Mariscos El Bucanero located at 205 W. Nolana Avenue Suite #3, legally described at Lot 1, San Juan Plaza Subdivision, as Requested by Mariscos El Bucanero, LCC. [Jorge J. Garcia, Director of Planning]
- C. Consideration Second and Final Reading of an Ordinance Regarding the Voluntary Annexation Petition of the 7.82-acre tract of land out of Lot 12, Block 27, Alamo Land and Sugar Company's Subdivision, Hidalgo County, Texas, according to the plat or map thereof recorded in Volume 1, Pages 24-26, Map Records, Hidalgo County, Texas. [Jorge J. Garcia, Director of Planning]

Commissioner Jesus “Jesse” Ramirez made a motion to approve all items under the consent agenda and was seconded by Commissioner Ernesto “Neto” Guajardo. Motion passed (4-0)

XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION

- A. The San Juan City Commission will Convene in Executive Session in Accordance with the Texas Open Meeting Act, Vernon's Texas Statutes and Codes Annotated, Government Code Chapter §551.071
 - 1. Pursuant to Section 551.071 of the Texas Government Code (Consultation with Attorney), Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Cause No. C-4765-18-M, City of San Juan, Texas v. Rigney Construction & Development, et al;
 - 2. Pursuant to Section 551.074 of the Texas Government Code (Personnel Matters), Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Personnel Matters Concerning City Manager Benjamin Arjona; and
 - 3. Pursuant to Section 551.071 of the Texas Government Code (Consultation with Attorney), Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Personnel Policies and Procedures.
 - 4. 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 of Tirso Garza, Interim City Manager.

Commissioner Jesus “Jesse” Ramirez made motion to enter into executive session at 6:39 p.m. and was seconded by Commissioner Ernesto “Neto” Guajardo. Motion passed (4-0)

Commissioner Ernesto “Neto” Guajardo made motion to reconvene at 7:59 p.m. and was seconded by Commissioner Jesus “Jesse” Ramirez. Motion passed (4-0)

XII. RECONVENE

- A. The City Commission will Reconvene in Open Session to Take Necessary Action if any, in Accordance with Chapter 551, Open Meeting Subchapter E, Procedures Relating to Closed Meeting 551, Requirements to Vote or Take Final Action in Open Meeting.
 - 1. Pursuant to Section 551.071 of the Texas Government Code (Consultation with Attorney), Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Cause No. C-4765-18-M, City of San Juan, Texas v. Rigney Construction & Development, et al;

Mayor Mario Garza made motion to approve the settlement as discussed under executive session and was seconded by Commissioner Jesus “Jesse” Ramirez. Motion passed (4-0)

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2. Pursuant to Section 551.074 of the Texas Government Code (Personnel Matters), Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Personnel Matters Concerning City Manager Benjamin Arjona; and

Commissioner Jesus "Jesse" Ramirez made motion to turn the preliminary resolution regarding the removal of the former City Manager, Benjamin Arjona, into a final resolution and was seconded by Mayor Mario Garza. Motion passed (4-0)

3. Pursuant to Section 551.071 of the Texas Government Code (Consultation with Attorney), Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Personnel Policies and Procedures.

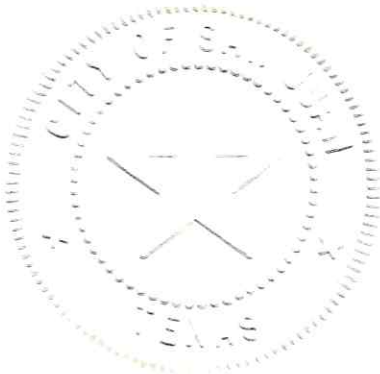
No Action was Taken

4. 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 of Tirso Garza, Interim City Manager.

Mayor Mario Garza made motion to appoint Chief Tirso Garza as the interim city manager with a supplemental weekly pay of \$1,500 and was seconded by Commissioner Ernesto "Neto" Guajardo. Motion passed (4-0)

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Jesus "Jesse" Ramirez made motion to adjourn at 8:01 p.m. and was seconded by Commissioner Ernesto "Neto" Guajardo. Motion passed (4-0)



CITY OF SAN JUAN, TEXAS


Mario Garza, Mayor

ATTEST:


Brenda Escalante, City Secretary