

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OF THE CITY OF SAN JUAN COMMISSION

DATE: Tuesday, February 25, 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
Marco "Markie" Villegas, Mayor Pro Tempore
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
Leroy Gonzales, 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:**
Mae Trevino was present to once again request the preservation of the San Juan Hotel, noting that it has been registered as a landmark. She also asked the City Commission to review the revenue generated from metal. Additionally, she urged the city to inspect the records and logs related to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), stating that she had submitted a Public Information Request but was informed that no records were available in response to her inquiry. Stephanie Alvarez stated that this marked the eleventh month she had been requesting a workshop to have the opportunity to engage in dialogue with the City Commission regarding the preservation of the San Juan Hotel, which has been recognized as a historical landmark. She also inquired about all email correspondence between the former City Manager and Mr. Godinez of ERO. Luis Pena asserted that the city should investigate a questionable charge incurred by the former City Manager and two members of the City Commission during a meeting at a local restaurant.
- V. **PRESENTATIONS**
 - A. **Presentation on E-Citation for Traffic Enforcement by Trusted Driver Inc. [Leandro Sifuentes, Chief of Police]**

DISCUSSION: Leandro Sifuentes, Chief of Police, stated that the city is considering transitioning from paper citations to electronic citations (e-citations) to improve efficiency in traffic enforcement and recordkeeping. Charles Hoskins, representing Trusted Driver, explained that the proposed system would replace handwritten tickets with digital citations processed through smartphones or tablets. This technology streamlines the citation process for officers, automates data entry (including racial profiling statistics), and transmits information instantly to the court. Courts would have the option to apply an administrative fee to help offset associated costs. Violators could pay or contest citations online via a QR code. The cloud-based software requires no printers and costs \$2,500 annually, which includes data storage. A six-month free trial is available, and the vendor provides 35 complimentary devices. The only recurring expense is the monthly airtime—approximately \$1,500—partially offset by T-Mobile service credits. The system integrates

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seamlessly with existing court management software, reducing manual workload and increasing efficiency for both clerks and officers. It also includes analytics and investigative features such as GPS tagging and access to vehicle and license databases. Some concerns were raised regarding the potential for increased citation issuance due to improved efficiency, the risk of over-policing, and limited accessibility for individuals without smartphones. In response, kiosks will be installed at the court and police department to allow for in-person payment or contesting of citations. Payments will be processed via Stripe, with all violation revenues directed to the city. The vendor is compensated solely through convenience fees paid by violators. Overall, the program is cost-effective, enhances officer productivity, reduces administrative burden, and provides valuable data analysis and public service tools for the court and police department.

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

DISCUSSION: During the City Council meeting, department heads presented their reports, and a council member commended Animal Control for its outstanding service. The police department was also recognized for its efforts during cruise nights. A subsequent discussion focused on the city pageant's finances and scholarship awards. Concerns were raised regarding scholarships being distributed prior to students' official college enrollment. Additional concerns centered on a lack of communication and transparency surrounding the planning and execution of the pageant. Several council members noted they had not been properly informed or invited to participate and only became aware of changes to the event through social media. In response, council members requested all relevant documentation related to the pageant, including bylaws and any formal procedures, to ensure improved oversight and involvement in future events.

VI. RESOLUTIONS

A. Consider a Resolution Authorizing the City of San Juan Police Department to Submit and Accept an Application for Funding to the Office of the Governor, Criminal Justice Grant Program FY2026 for the City of San Juan. [Leandro Sifuentes, Chief of Police]

DISCUSSION: Leandro Sifuentes, Chief of Police, stated that this resolution was for the approval of the San Juan Police Department's application for a grant that does not require a matching contribution.

Commissioner Jesus "Jesse" Ramirez made motion to approve and was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Marco "Markie" Villegas. Motion passed (4-0)

B. Consider a Resolution Authorizing the City of San Juan Police Department to Submit and Accept an Application for Funding to the Office of the Governor, Rifle-Resistant Body Armor Grant for the City of San Juan. [Leandro Sifuentes, Chief of Police]

DISCUSSION: Leandro Sifuentes, Chief of Police, stated that this resolution authorizes the city's police department to apply for and accept funding from the Office of the Governor for rifle-resistant bulletproof vests. The grant does not require a financial match.

Commissioner Jesus "Jesse" Ramirez made motion to approve and was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Marco "Markie" Villegas. Motion passed (4-0)

C. Consider a Resolution Authorizing the City of San Juan Police Department to Submit and Accept an Application for Funding to the Office of the Governor, Armored Vehicle- SHSP LETPA for the City of San Juan. [Leandro Sifuentes, Chief of Police]

DISCUSSION: Leandro Sifuentes, Chief of Police, stated that the purpose of the resolution was to authorize the San Juan Police Department to apply for funding from the Office of the Governor under the SHSP LPA grant for the purchase of an armored vehicle. Although Chief Sifuentes acknowledged that securing the \$320,000 grant is a long shot, the department is pursuing the opportunity to replace its outdated vehicle. He emphasized the importance of ensuring the safety of the regional SWAT team, which is based in San Juan. The grant does not require a financial match.

Commissioner Jesus "Jesse" Ramirez made motion to approve and was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Marco "Markie" Villegas. Motion passed (4-0)

D. Consider a Resolution Authorizing the City of San Juan Police Department to Submit and Accept an Application for Funding to the Office of the Governor, Crime Victims Liaison-

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**Violence Against Women Justice and Training Program FY2026 for the City of San Juan.
[Leandro Sifuentes, Chief of Police]**

DISCUSSION: Leandro Sifuentes, Chief of Police, stated that the purpose of this resolution is to authorize the San Police Department to apply for and accept funding from the Office of the Governor for the Crime Victim Liaison Violence Against Women Justice and Training Program for Fiscal Year 2026. The department is requesting an additional victim liaison in response to the city's growth and the resulting increase in caseload. The grant requires a 30% match, which would amount to approximately \$10,800 annually from the city. If awarded, the funds would be available after October.

Commissioner Jesus "Jesse" Ramirez made motion to approve and was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Marco "Markie" Villegas. Motion passed (4-0)

- E. Consider a Resolution Authorizing the City of San Juan Police Department to Submit and Accept an Application for Funding to the Office of the Governor, Operation Lonestar Grant Program FY2026 for the City of San Juan. [Leandro Sifuentes, Chief of Police]**

DISCUSSION: Leandro Sifuentes, Chief of Police, stated that this resolution authorizes the council approved a resolution for the San Juan Police Department to apply for and accept funding from the Office of the Governor through the Operation Lone Star Grant Program for fiscal year 2026. The grant, which requires no city match, would fund UTVs and additional mobile surveillance trailer cameras. Stephanie Alvarez citizen expressed concerns about the program's ties to immigration enforcement and its negative impact on community trust and city finances. In response, Chief Sifuentes clarified that their department does not engage in immigration enforcement and that the request is solely for equipment to help reduce criminal activity related to border crime.

Commissioner Jesus "Jesse" Ramirez made motion to approve and was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Marco "Markie" Villegas. Motion passed (4-0)

- F. Consider a Resolution Authorizing the City of San Juan Police Department to Submit and Accept an Application for Funding to the Office of the Governor, Drone, and Shields-SHSP-R for the City of San Juan. [Leandro Sifuentes, Chief of Police]**

DISCUSSION: Leandro Sifuentes, Chief of Police, stated that this resolution would authorize the San Juan Police Department to apply for and accept funding from the Office of the Governor through the Drone and Shield SHSP-R Grant. The department is requesting ballistic shields and a smaller drone to enhance the safety of SWAT personnel during building entries. No financial match is required.

Commissioner Jesus "Jesse" Ramirez made motion to approve and was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Marco "Markie" Villegas. Motion passed (4-0)

VII. CONTRACTUALS

- A. Consideration and Action, if any, on an Interlocal Agreement Between the City Of San Juan and the City of Edinburg for Waste Disposal. [Israel Garza, Director of Sanitation]**

DISCUSSION: Israel Garza, Director of Sanitation, stated that this interlocal agreement between the City of San Juan and the City of Edinburg pertains to waste disposal services. The agreement, which has been in place for approximately ten years, was recently updated primarily to reflect changes in pricing—particularly for tire disposal. San Juan primarily disposes of solid waste at the Edinburg landfill. Mr. Garza noted that both staff and the city attorney reviewed the contract and found it consistent with the previous agreement. The updated contract includes an automatic five-year extension clause, making it a potential ten-year agreement unless either city opts not to renew.

Commissioner Jesus "Jesse" Ramirez made motion to approve and was seconded by Commissioner Ernesto "Neto" Guajardo. Motion passed (5-0)

VIII. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Consider Second and Final Reading of an Ordinance Regarding 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]**
- B. Consider Approval of the Budget Expenditure Report for the Month of December 2024. [Leroy Gonzales, Director of Finance]**
- C. Consider Approval of the Tax Collection Report for the Month of January 2025. [Leroy Gonzales, Director of Finance]**

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D. Consider Approval of City Commission Meeting Minutes:
November 26, 2024

Commissioner Jesus "Jesse" Ramirez made a motion to approve all items under the consent agenda and was seconded by Mayor Mario Garza. Motion passed (5-0)

IX. 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 Legal Issue Concerning the Construction of San Juan Parks & Recreation Phase 1.
2. Pursuant to Section §551.087 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT NEGOTIATIONS; Consideration of Economic Development Matters on the Cesar Chavez Project.

Mayor Mario Garza asked to go out of agenda order moving forward with IX. A. 2. First then after IX A. 1.

Commissioner Jesus "Jesse" Ramirez made motion to enter into executive session at 6:48 p.m. and was seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Marco "Markie" Villegas. Motion passed (4-0)

Mayor Pro-Tem Marco "Markie" Villegas made motion to reconvene at 8:07 p.m. and was seconded by Commissioner Jesus "Jesse" Ramirez. Motion passed (3-0)

X. 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 Legal Issue Concerning the Construction of San Juan Parks & Recreation Phase 1.

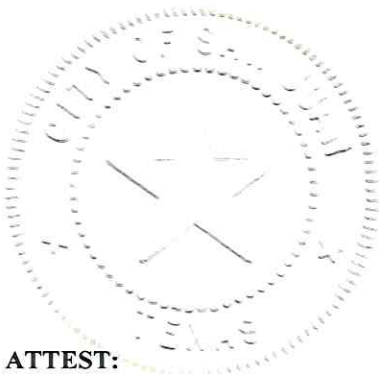
Mayor Mario Garza made motion to approve as discussed for change orders 1-7 and was seconded by Commissioner Jesus "Jesse" Ramirez. Motion passed (4-0)

2. Pursuant to Section §551.087 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT NEGOTIATIONS; Consideration of Economic Development Matters on the Cesar Chavez Project.

No Action was Taken

XI. ADJOURMENT

Mayor Pro-Tem Marco "Markie" Villegas made motion to adjourn at 8:08 p.m. and was seconded by Commissioner Adina "Dina" Santillan. Motion passed (4-0)



ATTEST:


Brenda Escalante, City Secretary

CITY OF SAN JUAN, TEXAS


Mario Garza, Mayor