

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OF THE CITY OF SAN JUAN COMMISSION

DATE: Tuesday, May 27, 2025

TIME: 6:00 p.m.

PLACE: Amigos Del Valle
601 W. 1st Street
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
Rick Palacios, City Attorney

STAFF PRESENT: Tirso Garza, Interim City Manager
Brenda Escalante, City Secretary
Carlos Alaniz, Assist. Chief of Fire
Leandro Sifuentes, Chief of Police
Adelaida Cordero, Director of Human Resources
Leroy Gonzales, Finance Director
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:** Gabriel Ozuna addressed the City Commission to inform them about efforts related to historical preservation. He explained that all that is required is a consent letter to apply for preservation funding on behalf of the City. Mr. Ozuna read the letter aloud and provided a copy for their reference. Sergio Treviño expressed his appreciation to Fire Chief Tirso Garza for his opening prayer. He voiced concern regarding Operation Lone Star, stating that it will result in family separations and cause prolonged pain and suffering within the community. Juventina Herrera respectfully requested that the City Commission hold a workshop to explore options to save the San Juan Hotel, emphasizing the importance of community engagement in the process. Stephanie Alvarez, a professor of Mexican Studies, also requested a workshop dedicated to preserving the San Juan Hotel. She noted that advocates have been working on this effort for the past year and asked the city to allow them to apply for federal funding in support of the hotel's historical preservation.
- V. **PRESENTATIONS**
 - A. **Presentation to Introduce and Promote the 2025 LISTO RGV Annual Conference Hosted by the LRGVDC-Public Safety Division.**

DISCUSSION: The presentation introduces and promotes the 2025 LISTO RGV Annual Conference, now renamed the "Resource Conference," which will be held from September 24th to 26th in Margaritaville hotel & resort at SPI. The speaker, the Director of Public Safety at the Globe Development Conference in Mexico, reflects on the success of last year's event in Puerto Rico that focused on emergency preparedness for law enforcement and fire services. This year, the focus has shifted more toward recovery from incidents, especially in light of recent regional challenges like the March flood. The conference continues to cater to professionals in law enforcement, fire, medical, and mental health fields, offering specialized training—including mental health credits and SEQUEL training. Registration currently costs \$100, though the goal is to make it free next year through increased regional participation. The speaker emphasizes that the event is open not only to first responders but also to civilians, as recovery efforts require whole-community involvement.

B. Presentation on a Proclamation Declaring June 6, 2025, as National Gun Violence Awareness Day.

DISCUSSION: The proclamation announces June 6, 2025—the first Friday in June—as National Gun Violence Awareness Day, highlighting the urgent and ongoing impact of gun violence in the U.S. Every day, 125 Americans are killed and over 260 are shot, with Texas alone seeing over 4,600-gun deaths annually. The movement was inspired by the tragic 2013 shooting of 15-year-old Hadiya Pendleton in Chicago, and her friends began wearing orange to honor her life—orange symbolizing the value of human life and safety. Leandro Sifuentes, Chief of Police read the proclamation emphasizes the need for community-wide involvement, including civilians, law enforcement, and local leaders, to address gun violence through evidence-based solutions and responsible gun ownership. Volunteer Leon Hu from Moms Demand Action also spoke, linking gun violence with mental health, youth suicide, and school shootings—including the 2022 Robb Elementary tragedy. He noted recent progress like the passage of the Uvalde Strong Act in Texas and emphasized the importance of secure firearm storage, community education, and policy change. The overall message calls for unity in preventing gun violence and honoring victims by taking collective, meaningful action.

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 thanked Mr. Leroy Gonzales, Director of Finance Gonzalez for providing budget adjustments, which will help guide upcoming budget workshops. It was noted that many department directors had not previously had time to review their budgets, so starting early was appreciated. Commissioner Adina “Dina” Santillan inquired with for legal advice on possible additional funding related to a hotel grant. Rick Palacios, City Attorney clarified, if the commission wants to proceed with a third-party grant application on behalf of the city, it would need to be placed on the agenda and approved by a majority vote, even for workshops though not legally required it is best practice to post a notice in advance to comply with open meeting laws, especially if discussions could lead to city commitments.

VI. PUBLIC HEARING/ORDINANCES

A. Hold a Second Public Hearing of a Voluntary Annexation Petition of the 0.73-Acre Tract of Land Out of Lot 13, Block 47, 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]

DISCUSSION: Jorge J. Garcia, Director of Planning and Zoning stated a second public hearing was held regarding a voluntary annexation petition for 75 acres of land. The property owner requested the annexation in accordance with Texas law and the city charter. The hearing opened at 6:33 p.m., and no comments were made for or against the petition.

Mayor Mario Garza opened the public hearing at 6:33 p.m.

Mayor Mario Garza closed the public hearing at 6:33 p.m.

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

B. Consider an Ordinance Amending the Budget for the 2024-2025 Fiscal Year by Providing Additional Appropriation to the General Fund, Utility Fund, and the Stormwater Fund. [Leroy Gonzales, Director of Finance]

DISCUSSION: Leroy Gonzales, Director of Finance, stated that a budget amendment was presented and approved to address shortfalls in the general, utility, and storm water funds for the fiscal year. The amendments allocate \$3,319,281 to the general fund, \$891,969 to the utility fund, and \$13,041 to the storm water fund. These adjustments are being covered by healthy fund balance accounts. Staff noted this was a planned mid-year adjustment, and budget workshops are expected to begin in the second week of June and continue through August, ahead of the October 1st fiscal year deadline.

**CITY OF SAN JUAN
CITY COMMISSION MEETING
TUESDAY, MAY 27, 2025**

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

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

- A. Discussion and Possible Action, if any, on a Variance Request to Encroach 5 feet onto the Required 5-foot North Side Setback of Lot 30, Stewart Coves Phase 1 Subdivision, as Requested by Melden and Hunt, Inc. [Jorge J. Garcia, Director of Planning]**

DISCUSSION: Jorge J. Garcia, Director of Planning and Zoning stated that the applicant is requesting a variance to encroach 5 feet onto the required 5-foot north side setback of Lot 30, Stewart Coves Phase 1 Subdivision. Being that the area to the North of the lot will never be built on due to being an existing irrigation district easement he noted staff had no objection to this request.

Commissioner Jesus “Jesse” Ramirez made motion to approve and was seconded by Mayor Mario Garza. Motion passed (5-0)

- B. Discussion and Possible Action, if any, to Award RFP NO. 25-009-05-06 Purchase of Sodium Chlorite (NaClO₂) to the Lowest Most Responsible Bidder and Authorize the Interim City Manager to Execute any Related Documents. [Lori A. Maldonado, Purchasing Agent]**

DISCUSSION: Lori Maldonado, Purchasing Agent, stated that on Wednesday, April 16, 2025 and April 23, 2025, staff solicited proposals in The Advance News Journal for RFP NO. 25-009-05-06 Purchase of Sodium Chlorite (NaClO₂). A Bid Opening was held on May 6, 2023 with three proposals submitted by the following:

Pure Line Treatment Systems
JCS Industries, Inc.
Evoqua Water Technologies LLC

Mrs. Maldonado stated after review, Evoqua Water Technologies LLC was recommended as the most responsible and responsive bidder.

Commissioner Adina “Dina” Santillan made motion to approve and was seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Marco “Markie” Villegas. Motion passed (5-0)

- C. Discussion and Possible Action, if any, to Award CSP NO. 25-008-05-01 RE-BID City of San Juan Police Building Expansion to the Lowest Responsible Bidder and Authorize the Interim City Manager to Execute any and all Related Documents. [Lori A. Maldonado, Purchasing Agent]**

DISCUSSION: Lori Maldonado, Purchasing Agent stated that on April 2, 2025 and April 9, 2025, Staff solicited proposals for CSP NO. 25-008-05-01 RE-BID City of San Juan Police Building Expansion in the Advance News Journal. A Pre-Bid Conference was held on April 17, 2025 and a Bid Opening on May 1, 2025. A total of eight proposals were submitted from the following:

The Trevino Group
Gerlach Builders
ICE
Broaddus Construction
NM Contracting
Tri-Gen Construction LLC
Spawglass
Real Steel Canopies

The commission discussed and approved the awarding of CSP NO. 25-008-05-01, a construction project, after reviewing bids and evaluation rankings from multiple companies. Although some concerns were raised about the low bidder, ICE, having no comparable building project experience, their proposal was the lowest and deemed responsible based on staff evaluations. Commissioner Adina “Dina” Santillan asked Edgar Villanueva, CEO of ERO Architects if he had time to review all the bid and proposals to which he replied, yes. Commissioner Santillan asked for their recommendation to which he stated Gerlach Builders based on the ranking criteria. Due to significant cost differences ICE's bid being \$2.2 million over budget versus others up to \$3.5 million over the commission approved awarding the contract to ICE in a majority vote.

**CITY OF SAN JUAN
CITY COMMISSION MEETING
TUESDAY, MAY 27, 2025**

Commissioner Jesus “Jesse” Ramirez made motion to award CSP NO. 25-008-05-01 RE-BID to ICE and was seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Marco “Markie” Villegas. Motion passed (5-1)

D. Discussion and Possible Action, if any, to Approve and Include Juneteenth to the City Observed Holidays for 2025. [Adelaida Cordero, Director of Human Resources]

DISCUSSION: Adelaida Cordero, Director of Human Resources stated that at the last meeting an enhancement package was presented for consideration, with a prior request for further review.

Mayor Mario Garza made motion to approve and was seconded by Mayor Ori Tem Marco “Markie” Villegas. Motion passed (5-0)

E. Discussion and Possible Action, if any, to Authorize Staff to Solicit Bid Proposal for the Street Paving Improvements on Nebraska Avenue, Ridge Road, and The Grove. [Israel Garza, Director of Sanitation]

DISCUSSION: Israel Garza, Director of Sanitation, recommended that authorization be granted to initiate the solicitation of bid proposals for street paving improvement projects. The proposed work includes major repairs and overlays on the following roadways, with a total estimated cost of \$935,000:

Nebraska Avenue (from Business 83 to 12th Street)
Bridge Road (from Boulevard to San Antonio)

Due to the poor pavement conditions and inadequate foundation, both roadways require full rehabilitation. Additionally, a recommendation was made to engage local school districts for potential funding support, given the high volume of school-related traffic in the area. This project supports ongoing efforts to enhance infrastructure and beautify the downtown area.

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

F. Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Approval of the Downtown San Juan Cultural Arts District Spring Internship Program.

DISCUSSION: Miriam Gelman, Founder and Director of the Downtown Arts District addressed the commission to thank the city for its support of the spring 2025 internship program in partnership with PTRGB. The program placed eight interns across various local entities, including the city’s museum, IT, and library departments. Staff members shared positive feedback, noting the interns gained valuable real-world experience, learned teamwork, and developed professional skills. The program also aligns with the university’s strategic goal to have 90% of students complete internships to build essential life and workplace skills.

Mayor Pro Tem Marco “Markie” Villegas made motion to approve and was seconded by Commissioner Adina “Dina” Santillan. Motion passed (5-0)

G. Discussion and Possible Action, if any, to Approve the Proposed Keep San Juan Beautiful Board Logo. [Israel Garza, Director of Sanitation]

DISCUSSION: Kelly Longoria, President of the Keep San Juan Beautiful Board, recently attended a conference in Austin, Texas, where discussions on civic branding and sustainability sparked inspiration for a new city logo. Motivated by the insights shared, the City of San Juan has adopted a refreshed logo that more accurately reflects its identity, values, and vision for the future. The updated design carries deeper meaning than its predecessor, symbolizing the city's strong roots and its commitment to a cleaner, greener tomorrow. Each color within the logo has been carefully chosen to represent a core aspect of San Juan:

- Green represents ongoing environmental initiatives and the city’s dedication to sustainability.
- Blue signifies the Rio Grande and the network of local irrigation canals vital to the community.
- Orange pays tribute to San Juan’s rich agricultural heritage.

The result is a modern, versatile design that blends culture, nature, and progress. Though the city currently operates only a few large trucks featuring the older branding, this transition presents an opportunity to incorporate the new logo across future city assets and communications. The design has been well-received for its uniqueness, contemporary aesthetic, and digital adaptability. The Board concluded its meeting with unanimous approval to officially adopt the new logo, marking a proud step forward for San Juan.

**CITY OF SAN JUAN
CITY COMMISSION MEETING
TUESDAY, MAY 27, 2025**

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

VIII. RESOLUTIONS

- A. Consideration and Appropriate Action on a Resolution by the City Commission of the City of San Juan, Texas Authorizing and Approving the Publication of a Notice of Intention to Issue Certificates of Obligation; Complying with the Requirements Contained in the Securities and Exchange Commission Rule 15c2-12; and Providing an Effective Date.**

DISCUSSION: During the meeting, the city discussed its current financial standing and future funding plans. The city holds about \$48 million in debt but has improved its tax rate over recent years, saving taxpayers nearly two cents. Staff emphasized strong sales tax growth, rising property values, and incoming businesses as positive indicators. A proposal was introduced to issue up to \$8 million in certificates of obligation to fund projects including a new police station, a fire truck, police units, garbage trucks, and street improvements. Although final project details and costs are still being determined, officials aim to move forward without increasing the tax rate. The commission approved the notice of intent to proceed, with further discussion on specific needs and priorities, like grapplers for waste collection, set for the next agenda. The bond pricing is expected in about 45 days.

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

- B. Consideration and Appropriate Action on a Resolution Establishing the Intention of the City of San Juan, Texas to Reimburse itself for the Prior Lawful Expenditure of Funds Relating to Acquiring, Constructing and Equipping Various City Improvements from the Proceeds of one or more Series of Tax-Exempt Obligations to be Issued by the City for Authorized Purposes; Authorizing other Matters Incident and Related Thereto; and Providing an Effective Date.**

DISCUSSION: The commission approved a resolution to accelerate the process of acquiring, constructing, and equipping various city improvements using proceeds from one or more tax-exempt obligations. The approval also included authorization of related administrative matters.

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

- C. Consider a Resolution Authorizing the City of San Juan to Submit an Application for Funding to the Office of the Governor, Homeland Security Division for the Hidalgo 2024 Operation Stonegarden Project. [Leandro Sifuentes, Chief of Police]**

DISCUSSION: Leandro Sifuentes, Chief of Police stated that this resolution authorizes the City of San Juan to submit a grant application to the Office of the Governor's Homeland Security Division for the 2024 Operation Lone Star Guard project. The primary purpose of the resolution was to update the authorized signatory, reflecting the transition from the previous city manager to the newly appointed city manager. The grant, estimated at approximately \$30,000, is intended to support law enforcement oversight and operational efforts. Chief Sifuentes clarified during the meeting that, in accordance with grant guidelines, the San Juan Police Department does not engage in the enforcement of immigration laws.

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

- D. Consideration and Action on a Resolution Suspending the June 25, 2025, Effective Date of the Rate Increase by Texas Gas Service Company, Under the Gas Reliability Infrastructure Program (GRIP).**

DISCUSSION: Tirso Garza, Interim City Manager stated this resolution was related to gas reliability, specifically addressing a \$25 fee. The discussion clarified that the fee cannot simply be suspended.

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

IX. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Consider Second and Final Reading of an Ordinance Providing a Conditional Use Permit Regarding the Sale of Alcoholic Beverages (BG – Wine and Beer Retailer’s Permit) at “Valley Ranch Drive-In” Located at 601 E. Hall Acres Road, Legally Described as Lot 95, Valley Ranch No. 5 Subdivision, as Requested by Valley Ranch Drive In, LLC. [Jorge J. Garcia, Director of Planning]**

CITY OF SAN JUAN
CITY COMMISSION MEETING
TUESDAY, MAY 27, 2025

- B. Consider Second and Final Reading of an Ordinance Providing a Conditional Use Permit Regarding the Sale of Alcoholic Beverages (BG – Wine and Beer Retailer’s Permit) at “The Craft” Located at 234 E. Business Hwy 83, Legally Described as Lot 1, Block B, Lettered Blocks (San Juan), as Requested by MAG Investments RGV, LLC. [Jorge J. Garcia, Director of Planning]
- C. Consider Approval of the Tax Collection Report for the Month of April 2025. [Leroy Gonzales, Director of Finance]
- D. Consider Approval of the Budget Expenditure Report for the Month of April 30, 2025. [Leroy Gonzales, Director of Finance]

Commissioner Jesus “Jesse” Ramirez made motion to approve all items under consent agenda and was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Marco “Markie” Villegas. Motion passed (5-0)

X. 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 (Consultation with Attorney).
 - 1. Pursuant to Section 551.071 of the Texas Government Code Consultation with Attorney; Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Legal Matters Related to a Grievance.
 - 2. Pursuant to Section 551.071 of the Texas Government Code Consultation with Attorney; Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Legal Matters Related to the Professional Services Contract with Cruz-Hogan Consultants, Inc.

Commissioner Jesus “Jesse” Ramirez made motion to enter into executive session at 7:18 p.m. and was seconded by Commissioner Adina “Dina” Santillan. Motion passed (5-0)

Commissioner Jesus “Jesse” Ramirez made motion to reconvene at 7:54 p.m. and was seconded by Commissioner Adina “Dina” Santillan. Motion passed (5-0)

XI. 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 Matters Related to a Grievance.

No Action was Taken
 - 2. Pursuant to Section 551.071 of the Texas Government Code Consultation with Attorney; Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Legal Matters Related to the Professional Services Contract with Cruz-Hogan Consultants, Inc.

Mayor Mario Garza made motion to approve as discussed under executive session and was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Marco “Markie” Villegas. Motion passed (5-0)

XII. ADJOURMENT

Commissioner Jesus “Jesse” Ramirez made motion to adjourn at 7:55 p.m. and was seconded by Commissioner Adina “Dina” Santillan. Motion passed (5-0)



ATTEST:


Brenda Escalante, City Secretary

CITY OF SAN JUAN, TEXAS


Mario Garza, Mayor