

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OF THE CITY OF SAN JUAN COMMISSION

DATE: Tuesday, September 9, 2025

TIME: 6:00 p.m.

PLACE: San Juan Memorial Library
Multipurpose Meeting Room
- 1010 S. Standard St.
San Juan, Texas 78589

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mario Garza, Mayor
Marco “Markie” Villegas, Mayor Pro Tempore
Mario Cantu, Commissioner
Gilbert Garza, Commissioner
Jesus “Jesse” Ramirez, Commissioner
Rick Palacios, City Attorney

STAFF PRESENT: Tirso Garza, Interim City Manager
Brenda Escalante, City Secretary
Carlos Alaniz, Interim Fire Chief
Leandro Sifuentes, Chief of Police
Adelaida Cordero, Director of Human Resources
Maria L. Beltran, Director of Finance
Christina Perez, Library Director
Ruben Guajardo, Director of Parks & Recreation
Jorge J. Garcia, Director of Planning
Israel Garza, Director of Sanitation/ Public Works
Juan Carlos Martinez, Director of Utilities
Melissa Sanchez, Administrative Assistant III
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 ON AGENDA ITEMS**
- A.** The Public Comment portion of the meeting ensures a fair and transparent process in the governance of the City. In accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act, the Mayor and City Commissioners do not respond to comments during this time; they listen. Individuals wishing to address the governing body must register with the City Secretary fifteen (15) minutes prior to the scheduled start time of the meeting by completing the registration form. The City reserves the right to refuse a speaker if the registration form is incomplete. Registered speakers may only speak on items listed on the agenda and are limited to three (3) minutes. A registered speaker may not donate time to another speaker. To promote efficiency and minimize repetitive commentary, the governing body may request that an identifiable group appoint a spokesperson to represent their views. Additionally, the number of speakers representing the same group may be limited. Once the public comments under this section conclude, no further public comments will be permitted.
- Any Public Comments regarding items listed under the Public Hearing section will be accepted when the governing body formally opens each item for discussion under the Public Hearing portion of the meeting.

Polo Flores a San Juan resident expressed his concerns regarding the city’s debt as he believes that any debt the city acquires will increase the citizens taxes. And asked to look into community grants.

- V. PRESENTATIONS**
- A. Presentation of a Proclamation Declaring October 23-31, 2025, as Red Ribbon Week.**

DISCUSSION: Chief of Police Leandro Sifuentes has announced a joint proclamation by the Mayors of Pharr, San Juan, and Alamo, alongside the PSJA ISD School Board President, declaring October 23–31, 2025, as National Red Ribbon Week. This proclamation emphasizes our community’s commitment to a drug-free environment through education and prevention. It honors the legacy of DEA agent Enrique “Kiki” Camarena, whose sacrifice inspired the

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national campaign and the red ribbon symbol. Residents are encouraged to wear red ribbons and participate in drug-free activities throughout the year. Additionally, Rolando Garcia, PSJA ISD Chief of Police stated that the Red Ribbon Parade will be held on October 18 in Pharr with the theme, “Life is a Puzzle—Solve It Drug-Free.” The event will feature floats from local schools, with contests for the best elementary, middle, and high school entries judged by representatives from all three cities.

B. Presentation on Departmental Reports: Department of Planning and Zoning, Department of Parks and Recreation, Department of Sanitation, San Juan Memorial Library

- 1. Department of Planning and Zoning Monthly Report. [Jorge J. Garcia, Director of Planning]**
- 2. Department of Parks and Recreation Monthly Report. [Ruben Guajardo, Director of Parks & Recreation]**
- 3. Department of Sanitation Monthly Report. [Israel Garza, director of Sanitation]**
- 4. San Juan Memorial Library Monthly Report. [Christina Perez, Library Director]**

DISCUSSION: Ruben Guajardo, Director of Parks and Recreation, provided an update on the Northside Park project. Drainage assessments and playground installation plans are currently underway. Completion is expected following the foundation work and an eight-week equipment delivery period. The building at the site is projected to be finished around early October, followed by a 60-day finalization phase. Additionally, Mayor Mario Garza discussed the Ridge Road project, which was successfully completed before the start of the school year, and received progress updates regarding The Grove project. City Commissioners commended the staff and directors for their effective work and timely project completions.

VI. PUBLIC HEARING/ORDINANCES

A. Hold a Public Hearing and Consider an Ordinance to Adopt the Proposed Tax Rate and Levy for the City of San Juan, Texas for Fiscal Year Beginning October 1, 2025, and Ending September 30, 2026. [Maria L. Beltran, Assistant Director of Finance]

DISCUSSION: Maria L. Beltran, Assistant Director of Finance, stated that the City of San Juan held a public hearing to consider adopting the proposed property tax rate of \$0.6775 per \$100 valuation for fiscal year 2025–2026, which remains the same as previous years and does not represent a tax increase.

Mayor Mario Garza opened the public hearing at 6:15 p.m.

Polo Flores, expressed his concerns about property appraisals, debt, and fairness in tax burdens, including questions about business tax abatements and city grants. Mrs. Beltran explained that while the tax rate has not increased, property valuations—set by the county—can affect individual tax bills. Rick Palacios, City Attorney clarified that abatements often come with job-creation requirements and that property taxes are only one source of city revenue, alongside sales taxes and grants.

Mayor Mario Garza closed the public hearing at 6:24 p.m.

Mayor Pro Tem Jesus “Jesse” Ramirez made a motion to approve and was seconded by Mayor Mario Garza. Motion Passed (5-0)

VII. APPOINTMENTS

A. Consideration and Possible Action on a Resolution Appointing One (1) New Member to the Police Athletic League (PAL) Board, Expanding the Board from Five (5) to Seven (7) Members. [Brenda Escalante, City Secretary]

DISCUSSION: Brenda Escalante, City Secretary stated that staff is currently recommending the appointment of one (1) new member to the Police Athletic League (PAL) Board. This recommendation follows the expansion of the Board from five (5) to seven (7) members.

Mayor Pro Tem Marco “Markie” Villegas made a motion to appoint Juan Javier “JJ” Ayala and was seconded by Commissioner Jesus “Jesse” Ramirez. Motion Passed (5-0)

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

A. Discussion and Possible Action, if any, Authorizing the City Manager to Approve a Budget Amendment to Increase the San Juan Fire Department’s Other Equipment (30-470.7957) Account for \$62,400 for the Fiscal Year 2025-2026. [Tirso Garza, Fire Chief]

DISCUSSION: Interim City Manager Tirso Garza has announced that a new Collective Bargaining Agreement has been negotiated between the City of San Juan and the San Juan Professional Firefighters Association Local 4697. Following three negotiation meetings, both parties agreed to a 14% pay increase over two years (7% each year), as well as adjustments to education and certification pay. Longevity pay will remain unchanged. Additionally, the

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agreement includes future planning for assignment pay positions to support the recruitment and retention of firefighters. Rick Palacios, stated legal counsel has reviewed and approved the contract's form.

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

B. Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Future Events in the Wetlands in Coordination with the Keep San Juan Beautiful Board. [Israel Garza, Director of Sanitation]

DISCUSSION: Israel Garza, Director of Sanitation, and the Keep San Juan Beautiful (KSJB) Board President recently informed the City Commission of plans to host a small, educational Halloween-themed event at the city wetlands on October 11. The event, titled "Creepy Crawlers and Freaky Flyers," will feature a guest speaker discussing local insects and birds, as well as a costume contest for children. This event is designed to engage school-aged children in nature education while remaining respectful of the wetlands' primary purpose. Officials have clarified that this will be a small-scale activity, rather than a large celebration, to ensure the area remains suitable for birdwatching.

Mayor Pro Tem Marco "Markie" Villegas made a motion to approve and was seconded by Commissioner Gilbert Garza. Motion Passed (5-0)

C. Discussion and Possible Action to Amend the Procurement Manual to Increase the Threshold for Requiring Three Written Quotes from \$2,500 to \$5,000 for Purchases Ranging from \$2,500 to \$99,999.99 [Lori A. Maldonado, Purchasing Agent]

DISCUSSION: Lori Maldonado, Purchasing Agent, has recommended amending the city's procurement manual to increase the threshold for requiring three written quotes from \$2,500 to \$5,000 for purchases up to \$99,999. This change aligns with updated state limits and aims to streamline the purchasing process. Additionally, staff confirmed that cooperative purchasing programs, such as BuyBoard, will continue to be used. These programs meet procurement standards while offering rebates to simplify and save on city purchases.

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

D. Discussion and Possible Action to Award RFP NO. 25-013-09-04 Ambulance Service Contract to the Most Reliable and Responsible Bidder and Authorize the Interim City Manager to Execute all Related Documents. [Lori A. Maldonado, Purchasing Agent]

Mayor Pro Tem Marco "Markie" Villegas made a motion to award RFP NO. 25-013-09-04 Ambulance Service Contract to City of Pharr EMS. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Jesus "Jesse" Ramirez and passed with a 4-0 vote; Mayor Mario Garza abstained.

E. Consider Approval of the San Juan Economic Development Corporation's Proposed Budget for Fiscal Year 2025-2026. [Maria L. Beltran, Interim Director of Finance]

No Action Taken

XI. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Consider Approval of the Budget Expenditures Report for the Month of July 31, 2025. [Maria L. Beltran, Interim Director of Finance]

Commissioner Jesus "Jesse" Ramirez made a motion to approve and was seconded by Mayor Mario Garza. 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 on Legal Matters Concerning the Lease Agreement with Sabores by Pastelissimo.
2. Pursuant Section §551.071 of the Texas Government Code, Consultation with Attorney; Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Legal Matters Concerning Vexus Fiber Cable.
3. Pursuant to Section §551.071 of the Texas Government Code, Consultation with Attorney; Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Legal Issues Concerning Entertainment for 2025 Noche de Paz.
4. Pursuant to Section §551.074 Personnel Matters; Discussion Regarding the Appointment, Employment, Evaluation, Reassignment, Duties, Discipline or Dismissal of a Public Officer or Employee - City Manager.

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Mayor Pro Tem Marco "Markie" Villegas made a motion to enter executive session at 6:38 p.m. and was seconded by Mayor Mario Garza. Motion Passed (5-0)

Mayor Pro Tem Marco "Markie" Villegas made a motion to reconvene at 7:49 p.m. and was seconded by Commissioner Gilbert Garza. Motion Passed (5-0)

XI. RECONVENE

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 on Legal Matters Concerning the Lease Agreement with Sabores by Pastelissimo.

Mayor Mario Garza made a motion to approve as discussed under executive session and was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Jesus "Jesse" Ramirez. Motion passed (5-0)

2. Pursuant Section §551.071 of the Texas Government Code, Consultation with Attorney; Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Legal Matters Concerning Vexus Fiber Cable.

Mayor Mario Garza made a motion to proceed as directed under executive session and was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Marco "Markie" Villegas. Motion passed (5-0)

3. Pursuant to Section §551.071 of the Texas Government Code, Consultation with Attorney; Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Legal Issues Concerning Entertainment for 2025 Noche de Paz.

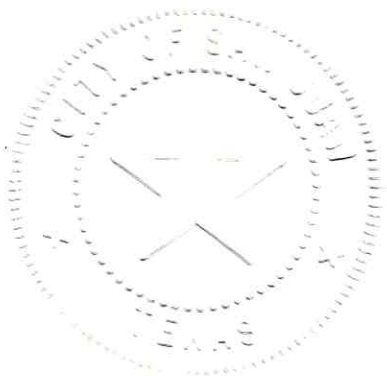
No Action Taken

4. Pursuant to Section §551.074 Personnel Matters; Discussion Regarding the Appointment, Employment, Evaluation, Reassignment, Duties, Discipline or Dismissal of a Public Officer or Employee - City Manager.

Mayor Mario Garza made a motion to nominate Ruben Guajardo for City Manager with a proposed salary of \$125,000. This motion also authorized Interim City Manager Chief Tirso to negotiate the contract. The motion was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Marco "Markie" Villegas and approved. Motion passed (5-0)

XII. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Jesus "Jesse" Ramirez made a motion to adjourn at 7:50 p.m. and was seconded by Commissioner Gilbert Garza. Motion passed (5-0)



CITY OF SAN JUAN, TEXAS


Mario Garza, Mayor

ATTEST:


Brenda Escalante, City Secretary