

**City of West Orange
Monday, June 14, 2021
Regular Session**

**West Orange Community Center
2700 Western Avenue (rear entrance)
West Orange, Texas
5:00 P.M.**

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mayor Randy Branch
Brent Dearing

Meritta Kennedy

Shirley Bonnin

COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT:

Michael Shugart, Sr.

Dale Dardeau

APPOINTED OFFICIALS PRESENT:

Chris Leavins
David Roberts

Theresa Van Meter
Simmie Gibson

Jon Sherwin
Carl Thibodeaux

OTHERS PRESENT:

Dan Perrine
Jay Odom
Pam Cooper
Blake Breaux

Bryce Broussard
Richard Jones
Micaela Thibodeaux
Linda Atkisson-Pettee

Kenneth Wiemers
Jane Branch
Cory Frankum
Melinda Smith

Call to Order

Mayor Branch called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. Council Member Bonnin gave the invocation. The mayor then led in the Pledges of Allegiance to the American and Texas flags.

Consent Agenda

Discussion and Possible Action on approval of the minutes of the May 10, 2021 and May 14, 2021 City Council meetings – Both sets of minutes were unanimously approved by vote after a motion was made by Mayor Pro-Tem Kennedy, followed by a second by Council Member Bonnin.

Regular Session

Presentation by TxDOT for MacArthur Drive Illumination Project – Mr. Wiemers, representing TxDOT, explained that he was present to discuss with Council a proposal to add lighting and sidewalks to MacArthur Drive. Between 2015 and 2021, there have been eight fatalities on the road, with the majority occurring at night.

He explained that TxDOT's original project plan was to eliminate the outer two lanes of MacArthur Drive and turn them into bicycle lanes, separated from the road by the yellow bollards. However, this idea received a great deal of opposition from the public. The plans were therefore changed. The new plans are to install 17 or 18 lights on each side of the road and sidewalks on each side as well, but these sidewalks will sit a bit further back from the road, with a bit of grassy area separating them from the roadway.

In order to move forward with this plan, however, TxDot must enter into a 4-party agreement. They are asking the cities of West Orange and Pinehurst to pay the electric bill for the lighting (estimated at \$1,300 per year) and the City of Orange for the maintenance of the lights and light poles. TxDOT would cover the costs of materials and construction. Although a contractor has already been hired, and is working on the change orders, work cannot begin until this 4-party agreement between TxDot, West Orange, Pinehurst and Orange has been executed.

Mr. Wiemers stated that he has already made this presentation to the City of Pinehurst, and is scheduled to meet with Orange. If they are agreeable, after that time, an Agreement for Contract Maintenance will be prepared and presented to each City for approval by their Councils.

Mayor Branch stated that he feels \$1,300 would be well worth the expense for the benefits derived from the project.

Mayor Branch thanked Mr. Wiemers for his presentation.

Discussion and Possible Action on transferring account balance (\$5,899.73) from DRS220215 for use toward purchase of fire truck – Mayor Branch explained that, back in 2015, the City used Disaster Recovery Grant funds to demolish several properties deemed structurally unsafe, and whose owners were unable to either repair or demolish them. However, after one structure was demolished, the owner did reimburse the City for the amount of funds spent (\$5,899.73). These funds were deposited into the grant account where they have sat ever since.

Mrs. Smith added that, since the City meets the citywide LMI threshold, these funds would be used toward the fire truck and it would not count as program income. (This would be in addition to the \$315,000 grant.)

Mayor Pro-Tem Kennedy then made a motion that these funds ((\$5,899.73) from DRS220215 for use toward purchase of the fire truck. Council Member Dearing seconded her motion. With there being no further discussion, Mayor Branch called for a vote. The motion passed unanimously.

Discussion and Possible Action on awarding bid for new fire truck – Mrs. Smith reported that all fire truck bids received on June 10, 2021 met all contract requirements and timeliness of submittal. Mayor Pro-Tem Kennedy then moved that the City accept the 2021 model 4-door pumper truck meeting the NFPA standards with the maximum 400-hp engine for \$499,000 from Deep South. Council Member Dearing seconded her motion. Mr. Leavins asked for clarification in that Deep South was Fire Trucks of Texas. He was informed that it was.

Mayor Branch stated that he has done some research and he feels that the Deep South truck is the best one for the City to buy.

Mr. Leavins asked if Mayor Pro-Tem Kennedy's motion was to accept Deep South's Alternate Bid #2 for a Custom truck. Mrs. Smith responded that it was. Mayor Branch stated that that truck comes with a 450-hp engine rather than a 400-hp.

Council Member Bonnin questioned where the additional funds needed in addition to grant funds were going to come from. The mayor responded that the City does have the funds – that the budget does allow for it. He added that the truck will not be ready until next year.

Mayor Branch called for a vote on the motion. Those voting for the motion were Mayor Branch, Mayor Pro-Tem Kennedy and Council Member Dearing. Voting against the motion was Council Member Bonnin. The motion carried by majority vote.

Discuss and consider awarding by resolution Archstone Group for appraisal services for the City's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) – Disaster Recovery (DR) Acquisition Program funded through the Texas General Land Office (GLO) to provide fair market value estimations for approximately 20 properties located in the City of West Orange, Contract Number 20-066-029-C223 – Mrs. Smith explained that this grant would provide funding for approximately twenty (20) properties. Archstone Group submitted the only bid for appraisal services. This is the second time to go out for bids for this project. The bid did meet all contractual requirements. Mayor Pro-Tem Bonnin then made a motion that the Archstone Group be awarded the contract for appraisal services for the City's CDBG – Disaster Recovery Acquisition Program funded through the Texas General Land Office - Contract Number 20-066-029-C223. Mayor Pro-Tem Kennedy seconded her motion. A vote was cast; motion passed unanimously.

Discuss and consider awarding by resolution Security Abstract & Title Co. for title services for the City's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) – Disaster Recovery (DR) Acquisition Program funded through the Texas General Land Office (GLO) to provide title work and closing services for approximately 20 properties located in the City of West Orange, Contract Number 20-066-029-C223 - Mrs. Smith explained that this grant would provide funding for the title work for the properties being purchased through the grant project Security Abstract & Title Company submitted the only bid. This is also the second time to go out for bids for this project. The bid did meet all contractual requirements. Mayor Pro-Tem Bonnin then made a motion that the Security Abstract & Title Company be awarded the contract for title work for the City's CDBG – Disaster Recovery Acquisition Program funded through the Texas General Land Office - Contract Number 20-066-029-C223. Mayor Pro-Tem Kennedy seconded her motion. A vote was cast; motion passed unanimously.

Discussion and Possible Action on specifications for a grant administrator to administer funds for the American Rescue Plan Act (ARP) and authorizing City Secretary to advertise requesting said proposals – Mayor Branch explained that the City has been awarded this grant of approximately \$702,739.43 by the US Department of Treasury, to primarily

aid in COVID-related expenses. It will be administered by the Texas Department of Emergency Management. Council Member Bonnin made a motion that the specifications be approved as presented and that the City Secretary be authorized to advertise requesting proposals for grant administrator for this project. Council Member Dearing seconded her motion. Mayor Branch called for a vote on the motion, which passed unanimously.

Discussion and Possible Action on approval of the following mayoral appointments:

- a. **City Attorney – Christopher Leavins**
- b. **Municipal Court Judge – Carl Thibodeaux**
- c. **WOVFD Fire Chief – David Roberts**
- d. **WOVFD Assistant Fire Chief – Simmie Gibson**

Mayor Pro-Tem Kennedy made a motion that Mayor Branch's appointments be approved as presented. Council Member Bonnin seconded her motion. A vote on the motion was cast; motion passed unanimously.

These appointees then completed their Statement of Elected Officials and took their Oath of Office.

Discussion and Possible Action on approval of a solid waste franchise application submitted by G & H Solutions, LLC – Mayor Branch explained that this application would allow G & H Solutions to deliver dumpsters within the City. Council Member Dearing made a motion that this franchise application be approved. Mayor Pro-Tem Kennedy seconded his motion. The mayor called for a vote, which passed unanimously.

Discussion and Possible Action on accepting into record the Amended Annual Investment Report for October 2019-September 2020 – Council Member Bonnin made a motion that the Amended Annual Investment Report for October 2019-September 2020 be approved into record as presented. Her motion was seconded by Council Member Dearing. A vote was cast; motion carried.

Discussion and Possible Action on accepting into record the Quarterly Investment Report for January – March, 2021 – Council Member Dearing made a motion that the Quarterly Investment Report for January – March, 2021 be accepted into record as presented. His motion was seconded by Council Member Bonnin. A vote was cast; motion carried.

Discussion and Possible Action on a WOVFD membership application submitted by Marvin Burke Weems – Fire Chief Roberts asked that this application be tabled until he could have time to meet with the mayor to discuss the department's bylaws. Council Member Dearing asked Chief Roberts if there was a conflict with Mr. Weems. Chief Roberts responded that, per the bylaws, the department was supposed to have a committee in place to review all applicants. He would like to investigate the possibility of doing away with the fire department charter and operate under the city charter. He then stated that he cannot call a meeting of the department because he is not a volunteer through the department. He stated that he is a city employee.

Mr. Leavins stated that he has not seen this document, but if Council wants to table this item at this time, he would be happy to take a look at it and see how to make it consistent.

Mayor Branch then asked for a motion to table the item. Mayor Pro-Tem Kennedy moved that it be tabled for now. Council Member Bonnin seconded her motion.

Council Member Dearing then stated that this could possibly mean that everyone who has come into the department since they have been here are not "legal" to be in the department. Mr. Leavins asked for time to review the City's Charter and the Fire Department's bylaws before any further action is taken.

The mayor then called for a vote on the motion to table the item. Motion carried. The mayor stated that the item is tabled, but will be brought up at a future meeting.

Discussion and Possible Action on renewing employees' health, vision and dental insurance coverage with TML Health Benefits Pool for the 2021-2022 FY – Council Member Bonnin made a motion TML Health renewal coverages for the 2021-22 year be approved. Mayor Pro-Tem Kennedy seconded her motion. With there being no discussion, Mayor Branch then called for a vote, with the motion passing unanimously.

Announcements

Mayor Branch then announced that City offices would be closed in observance of Independence Day on Monday, July 5, 2021. He also stated that the next Council meeting was scheduled for Friday, July 9, 2021 at noon.

Adjournment

With there being no further business before Council, Mayor Branch adjourned the meeting at 5:46 p.m.



Randy Branch, Mayor

ATTEST:



Theresa Van Meter, City Secretary

