

**City of West Orange
Monday, April 11, 2022
Regular Session**

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

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mayor Randy Branch
Shirley Bonnin
Meritta Kennedy
Brent Dearing
Michael Shugart, Sr.

COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT:

Dale Dardeau

APPOINTED OFFICIALS PRESENT:

Jon Sherwin
Chris Leavins
Theresa Van Meter
David Roberts
Mike Stelly
Simmie Gibson

OTHERS PRESENT:

Dustin Hartsfield
Jane Branch
Jay Odom
Jayson Wells
Kirk Roccaforte
Lanie Brown
Frances Lopez
James Fisette
Billy Moore
Gail Langton
Rufus Flurry
Jessica Hill
Crystal Wells
Donna Howland

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 March 14, 2022 Council meeting – These minutes were unanimously approved by vote after a motion was made by Mayor Pro-Tem Kennedy, followed by a second from Council Member Bonnin.

Public Comments

Mrs. Frances Lopez, 2820 Smith Street, addressed Council and those present, stating that she did not believe it to be a good idea to change the color of the new fire truck to blue. She added that she has spoken with other citizens who feel the same way. She then presented several reasons to support her point:

- A blue and silver truck would appear to the public to belong to the school district.
- Will other trucks then need to be painted to match?
- It would appear to serve the school district only – not citizens of West Orange.
- Safety is a major concern. There would not be enough contrast in color at night, should the truck be used to block a road. If the lights were not working, or not on, the truck would not be as visible painted a dark blue color. The City could be held liable should an accident occur under these conditions.
- People are conditioned from childhood to react to red fire trucks. A blue truck with lights may not be recognized at first site as a fire truck, but possibly as another large vehicle such as a tow truck.

Mrs. Lopez again stated that she does not believe changing the color of the new fire truck from red to blue to be a good idea.

Regular Session

Presentation by Donald Coronado, TML Health Benefits Pool – Mr. Coronado expressed the appreciation of the Texas Municipal League Health Benefits Pool for the support of the City through its long-term membership. On behalf of the Pool and its Board of Directors, he presented the City with a “longevity award.” He explained that the pool was not-for-profit and able to return over \$7,400 in renewal credits to the City of West Orange.

Presentation and discussion by Orange County EDC regarding growth strategies of our area – Mrs. Hill gave a brief presentation on the “high points” brought to the EDC from a recent industry growth strategy. They did bring up traffic and connectivity concerns, as well as low workforce coordination.

A deep analysis of the county’s strengths and weaknesses was done. They went through a comprehensive property checklist. They reviewed all of the EDC’s listed properties, as well as properties listed with local real estate agents.

In their findings, it was pointed out that having the county serviced by Entergy is a retail advantage. There are opportunities that exist with the Port of Orange that can be developed. There are traffic and connectivity concerns. The addition of more cultural amenities would be beneficial, as well. The need for increased number of affordable healthcare and housing options was brought out. These would also help attract and keep workforce local.

There are resources available at Lamar State College-Orange which need to be promoted for those students who are not college-bound, but wish to enter the job market in the area.

She added that the EDC needs to be the bridge between education and the workforce.

In conclusion, she thanked the City for its continued support of the EDC and its efforts.

Presentation from, and discussion with, Rufus Flurry on his request for Council's assistance and support with efforts to address drainage issues at his property – Mr. Flurry stated that he wished to address Council regarding the drainage of storm water (not tidal flow) near his property on Dayton Street at the end of Crabtree. There has been much work done recently in the Crabtree Street neighborhoods to improve drainage problems. However, his concern is that storm water flowing through those culverts will be going toward the bayou and under Dayton Street. At one time, there was a drainage ditch that directed those waters into the bayou. It has become almost flat over the years due to lack of maintenance. If there is no place for that water to go, it will back up and flood the Crabtree neighborhood yards, as well as his own and that of his next-door neighbor, Mr. Martin.

He then explained the photos that he had provided to Council, showing before and after the recent culvert work had been done. He stated that he had very recently spoken with representatives of the Orange County Drainage District and they agreed with him that downstream should have been addressed before all of the money was spent upstream.

Mr. Flurry stated that he was asking Council for the City’s support in working with the Drainage District in finding a solution to this problem.

Mr. Flurry added that if a solution cannot be found, he would be requesting permission to fill in the ditches going that way so that the water from those neighborhoods will stop draining across his property on the way to the bayou.

Mayor Pro-Tem Kennedy asked if there was a resolution or something else that the City could do to help out. Mr. Sherwin responded that the City has a great working relationship with the Drainage District, and he and they have been out there together to look at the area, and have started looking at options to alleviate this water.

Discussion and Possible Action on a request submitted by Arceneaux Wilson & Cole for an extension/amendment to the Professional Services Agreement for the WWTP project, dated 09/09/2019, contingent upon approval of the GLO – A motion was made by Mayor Pro-Tem Kennedy to grant the request submitted by Arceneaux Wilson & Cole, contingent upon approval of the GLO, for an extension/amendment to the Professional Services Agreement for the WWTP project, dated 09/09/2019. Council Member Bonnin seconded her motion. Chief Stelly added that approval of this request would extend the agreement until December 31, 2023. Mayor Branch asked if the engineering work had been completed. Chief Stelly replied that it was almost complete. With there being no further discussion, the mayor then called for a vote on the motion, which passed unanimously.

Discussion and Possible Action on a membership application to the WOVFD submitted by Jayson E. Wells – Council Member Shugart made a motion to approve the membership application to the WOVFD submitted by Jayson E. Wells. This motion received a second from Council Member Dearing. With there being no discussion, Mayor Branch called for a vote on the motion, which passed unanimously.

Discussion and Possible Action on a membership application to the WOVFD submitted by Crystal Wells – A motion was made by Council Member Shugart, followed with a second from Council Member Dearing, to approve the membership application to the WOVFD submitted by Crystal Wells. There was no discussion on the motion, therefore the mayor called for a vote. The motion was unanimously approved.

Discussion and Possible Action on a membership application to the WOVFD submitted by Travis Dupuy - Council Member Shugart made a motion that Council approve the application submitted by Travis Dupuy for membership in the WOVFD. This motion received a second from Council Member Dearing. With there being no discussion, the mayor called for a vote on the motion, which passed unanimously.

Discussion and Possible Action on approval of a change order pertaining to the color of the new fire truck – Mayor Pro-Tem Kennedy made a motion that the change order pertaining to the color of the new fire truck be denied. Council Member Bonnin seconded her motion. Mayor Branch asked if there was any discussion on the motion. There was none. He then called for a vote on the motion. Mayor Pro-Tem Kennedy and Council Member Bonnin voted in favor of the motion to deny the change order, while Council Members Shugart and Dearing and Mayor Branch voted against the motion to deny it. Therefore, with majority voting against the motion, it did not pass.

Council Member Shugart then made a motion to approve the change order pertaining to the color of the new fire truck. Council Member Dearing seconded his motion. Mayor Branch asked if there was any discussion on the motion. There was none. He then called for a vote on the motion. Voting in favor of the motion to approve the change order were Council Members Shugart and Dearing and Mayor Branch. Voting against the motion were Mayor Pro-Tem Kennedy and Council Member Bonnin. With the majority voting for the motion to approve the change order pertaining to the color of the new fire truck, the motion passed.

Announcements

Mayor Branch then made note of the following:

- Non-emergency departments of the City closed in observance of Good Friday and Easter Sunday on Friday, April 15, 2022 and Monday, April 18, 2022
- City of WO Spring Clean-up: Friday & Saturday, April 22 & 23, 2022
- Early Voting by Personal Appearance (*at City Hall*): Monday, April 25 – Tuesday, May 3, 2022; 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
- Election Day (*in Community Center*): Saturday, May 7, 2022; 7:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.
- Next Council Meeting: Monday, May 16, 2022; 5:00 p.m.
(*Note: May, June and July meetings will be held on third Mondays of month: May 16th, June 20th and July 18th.*)

Adjournment

With there being no further business to be brought before Council, the mayor adjourned the meeting at 5:41 p.m.



Randy Branch, Mayor

ATTEST:


Theresa Van Meter, City Secretary

