

ROBIN J. ELACKATT
Mayor

VASHAUNDRA EDWARDS
Councilmember at Large Position No. 1

LYNN CLOUSER
Councilmember at Large Position No. 2



CHERYL STERLING
Councilmember District A
JEFFREY L. BONEY
Councilmember District B
ANTHONY G. MAROULIS
Mayor Pro Tem
Councilmember District C
FLOYD EMERY
Councilmember District D

CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

The City Council of the City of Missouri City, Texas, met in special session on **Monday, April 19, 2021**, at the City Hall, Council Chamber, 2nd Floor, 1522 Texas Parkway, Missouri City, Texas, 77489, at **5:30 p.m.** to consider the following:

Due to the COVID 19 Disaster and the Center for Disease Control's recommendation regarding social distancing measures, the Mayor, City Council, City Staff members, and members of the public were not physically present during this meeting. The meeting was made possible through the cloud-based video conferencing platform Zoom.

1. ROLL CALL

Mayor Elackatt called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m.

Those also present: Mayor Pro Tem Maroulis, Councilmembers Edwards, Clouser, Sterling, and Boney; City Manager Jones, City Attorney Iyamu, City Secretary Jackson, Assistant City Manager Atkinson, Assistant City Manager Martel, Fire Chief Partida, Director of Communications Walker, Director of Financial Services Portis, Director of Information Technology Cole, Utilities Manager Hoover and Purchasing/Risk Manager Pleasant. Absent: Councilmember Emery.

The **CLOSED EXECUTIVE SESSION** was removed.

4. DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION

(a) Discuss returning to in-person City Council meetings.

Assistant City Manager Atkinson presented on City Council meetings returning to in-person meetings. Mayor Elackatt inquired where the meetings would be held. Atkinson stated the meetings would take place in the Community Center.

Councilmember Edwards stated the Governor made a disaster declaration on April 15, 2021 and suggested they remain virtual or the option should be given to the elected official. Councilmember Boney stated Councilmembers have attended public events and because the setup would be according to COVID-19 guidelines, they should move forward with in-person meetings. Edwards stated events attended were held during short periods and they were outside events. Councilmember Sterling agreed with Edwards and asked about the capacity of the Community Center and how many people would be allowed in the center. Atkinson stated he did not have the seating capacity with him.

Edwards asked if they had spoken to Dr. Anzaldua about their plan. Atkinson stated he was aware of the recommendation and reviewed the plan that was put together by staff. Boney noted they received a press release where Fort Bend County lowered the COVID-19 risk level to low moderate. He also noted that at a recent meeting they were informed that Dr. Anzaldua authorized them to return to in-person meetings. City Manager Jones confirmed. Mayor Pro Tem Maroulis stated if they were asking employees to return to work that Council should set the example, as well. Councilmember Clouser was in favor of returning to in-person meetings. Chief Partida confirmed the County had lowered the level to low moderate. Sterling reiterated she would like to know about the capacity of the center.

Edwards inquired if the Governor's order superseded the City's order. City Attorney Iyamu noted the order did not preclude in person meetings but if there was a conflict, the Governor's order would supersede. Boney inquired if the vote taken on March 15, 2021 meant they could move forward with having in-person meetings beginning May 3 with staff only providing an assessment. Iyamu stated that was correct. Edwards asked if a Councilmember could decide at their discretion if they would come in or attend virtually. Elackatt stated that decision would be up to the Council body. Iyamu stated Council could decide to create exceptions.

Jones stated the capacity would be 125-150 and that staff would follow up. Elackatt stated the next City Council meeting would be held at the Community Center.

(b) Discuss the selection of the City's newspaper of record.

Purchasing/Risk Manager Pleasant presented on the selection of the City's newspaper of record for legal and advertising services. Councilmember Sterling inquired why the item was included on the agenda. Mayor Elackatt stated the item was included due to an email sent by Mr. Kumar and it provided Council an opportunity to ask any questions. City Manager Jones noted this was an administrative contract item and it was to avoid a walking quorum.

Mayor Pro Tem Maroulis stated that from the bid tabulation sheet it seemed they were getting a better deal with Fort Bend Independent and asked why the Fort Bend Star was chosen. Jones stated when the entire bid tabulation was taken into context, staff recommended Fort Bend Star because it was a better deal when you take into consideration advertising costs. He noted it was not an exclusive contract and that the City could use the Fort Bend Independent, as well.

Councilmember Boney asked how they verified that the newspaper chosen had distribution within the City. Jones stated they utilized material received. Boney also inquired why it was put out for bid. Jones stated that based on the evaluation of staff, it was determined it was the best deal for the City and nothing would prohibit them from using another newspaper for legal publications. Director of Communications Walker noted she was not involved in the bid process but was asked about daily newspapers. She stated that her recommendation was based on the overall best value and services shown on the bid. Walker noted the Star had provided more coverage of City events than other newspapers including on their calendar page.

Boney asked how it was determined to put items back out for bid. Pleasant noted a bid had a 90-day expiration and a bid was not selected within the period. She added that at the time, a contract analyst working with the City Secretary's Office to publish the bid and get a contract however failed to do so. Boney asked if only one vendor responded, what would prevent the City from moving forward if this vendor was qualified. Pleasant stated the department would make the determination if the vendor qualified and they reserved the right to do so. Councilmember Edwards stated it was a great opportunity for another newspaper to do business with the City and be unbiased. Boney inquired on the reasons for the department not moving forward when they received a bid in a timely fashion. Walker noted the Communications Department did not have a role in the decision but only provided a list of newspapers that were qualified for the bid. Jones provided clarity on the City's selection of vendors. Sterling commended staff for their work on the operational side. Mayor Elackatt stated something did not add up as a vendor placed their bid on time and they were qualified. He asked for the City Manager to come up with a practice moving forward. Jones stated the process was legal and appropriate but noted he would go back and look at the process.

5. ADJOURN

The special City Council meeting adjourned at 6:25 p.m.

Minutes PASSED AND APPROVED this the 3rd day of May 2021.

Maria Jackson, City Secretary