

MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING

The City Council of the City of Brazos Country, Austin County, Texas, convened in regular session Thursday, August 15th, 2024, 7:00 PM, in the parish kitchen of St. Mary's Catholic Church, 10471 Grotto Rd, Sealy, TX.

1-2. Call to Order - Pledge of Allegiance and Invocation - Mayor Bob Ray called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. He led us in the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States flag and Mary Lou Craig offered the invocation.

3. Roll Call and Certification of a Quorum - Council members present were:

Bob Ray, Mayor
Richard Cheek, Mayor Pro Tem
Dave Carrasquillo, Alderman
Neil Howard, Alderman
Joe McSloy, Alderman

Albert Sykes was absent. Mayor Ray certified there was a quorum. Also present were City Secretary Mary Lou Craig, Constable James Clark, auditor Curtis Craig, Water Plant Operator Cullen Brotherton, and approximately 10 city residents.

4. Public Comment – John Williams reported that he would like the city to seek volunteers to do regular clean-up of the Chew Road underpass at Interstate 10. He mentioned that one resident had done weed-eating and trash pick-up and it would be a good idea to maintain the area.

5. Old Business

a. Roads – Update; consideration and action as appropriate – Neil Howard reported that he had repaired a pothole on Brazos Hill close to the Chew Road intersection and noted that there were several holes needing attention on Chew Rd. Mayor Ray said he will speak with Chip Reed about this.

b. Culverts & drainage – Update; consideration and action as appropriate – Mayor Ray reported that Chip Reed was still busy with road repairs in the county but should be available to assist with ditch clean-out soon. Dave Carrasquillo reported that an agreement had been reached between the city and a landscaping crew who would regularly clean out the ditch along Hidden Creek. Carlos Castillo asked if the same crew could possibly help clean out the creek bed running behind the houses on Winding Creek.

c. Water department – Update; consideration and action as appropriate – Mayor Ray reported that two leaks on the main line on Brazos Hill had been repaired on 8/14/24 by Hot Taps of Texas. This had been accomplished without turning off the city water. Mayor Ray reported the survey of shut-off valves within the city had been completed, finding that most of the ones located are not in working order. He reminded council that these repairs would be a “work in progress” over a period of months. City Secretary Mary Lou Craig reported that the second notice letter had been mailed to water customers requesting assistance in identifying the material(s) used in the pipes of the delivery line from the meter to the house, as well as the pipes within the house. Mayor Ray noted the TCEQ report, which is an extensive spreadsheet of data fields, is being prepared with the data collected.

6. New Business

a. Audit – Presentation of FYE 2023 audit – consideration and action as appropriate
Curtis Craig, CPA, presented council with draft reports of his findings in the audit of the fiscal year 2022-2023 for the city. He summarized the report and gave council and residents the opportunity to ask questions. Hearing none, Richard Cheek made a motion to accept and approve the audit report for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2023. Dave Carrasquillo seconded and motion carried.

b. Assistant Secretary – update – consideration and action as appropriate Mayor Ray explained that according to Texas Government Code Section 551.074 council would convene in Executive Session to discuss this personnel matter. At 7:18 pm the mayor, council members and city secretary stepped outside the meeting room. At 7:25 pm these same members returned to the open meeting. Mayor Ray reported that, recognizing City Secretary Mary Lou Craig's desire to retire in the not-too-distant future, resident Jan Shelton had been identified as a qualified candidate, and had expressed interest in the position. Richard Cheek then made a motion to hire Jan Shelton as the Assistant City Secretary beginning September 1, 2024, for an undetermined time, to train and transition to City Secretary. Neil Howard seconded and motion carried. Mayor Ray reported that Robyn Wolfberger had been offered an hourly rate to continue with special projects of the city..

c. TML Insurance – consideration and action as appropriate Mayor Ray reported that the insurance offered by the Intergovernmental Risk Pool and purchased historically by the city was increasing significantly in cost for the coming year. He offered council his opinion that there were three optional coverages, purchased in the past, which could possibly be declined in order to make the policy more affordable. The three coverages were for Cybersecurity Incidents, Excessive Auto Coverage and Law Enforcement Liability Insurance. Discussion followed. Because of comments of council, as well as residents, Mayor Ray suggested separate votes on the three sections. Dave Carrasquillo made a motion that the Cybersecurity coverage be declined. Richard Cheek seconded and motion passed. Richard Cheek made a motion that the Excessive Auto Insurance be declined. Neil Howard seconded and motion passed. Dave Carrasquillo then made a motion that the Law Enforcement coverage portion be tabled for further research. Richard Cheek seconded and motion carried. Mayor Ray asked Dave to do the research and he agreed.

d. Proposed 2024-2025 Property Tax rate – consideration and action as appropriate Mayor Ray reviewed the Tax Rate Worksheet supplied each year by the Austin County Appraisal District for the purpose of identifying rate options for the city. After discussion Joe McSloy made a motion to propose the same rate as the current year of \$0.07852 per \$100 of appraised value. Neil Howard seconded and motion carried. This represents a 6.9% increase in amount to be collected because of the increase in appraised values. This rate falls below the rate of \$0.08674, which is the voter approved rate.

e. Proposed 2024-25 Budgets – Adopt as proposed – consideration and action as appropriate Mayor Ray reviewed the proposed budgets as presented, highlighting significant changes. Richard Cheek made a motion to adopt the budgets presented as the proposed budgets, to be approved by vote at the September council meeting. Dave Carrasquillo seconded and motion carried.

f. Water operations contract – consideration and action as appropriate Mayor Ray introduced Cullen Brotherton to those present and reported that Cullen had presented a 2024-25 contract to the city with no changes in charges or scope of work. Richard Cheek made a motion that the contract be approved as presented. Dave Carrasquillo seconded and motion carried.

g. Resignation of Council Member – consideration and action as appropriate Mayor Ray reported that Richard Cheek had submitted his resignation of his position on council due to his upcoming move to Katy. Several of those present expressed their appreciation for Richard's service and his willingness to share his expertise with council and the city. He was presented with a gift certificate for a Katy restaurant in appreciation for his service. Joe McSloy made a motion that Richard's resignation be accepted. Dave Carrasquillo seconded and motion carried.

h. Appoint replacement council member – consideration and action as appropriate Mayor Ray reported that Shelly Main was available and willing to serve in the vacant position on council. Two other names were mentioned as candidates. Mayor Ray then encouraged council to reconvene in Executive Session to discuss personnel matters at 8:04 pm. Council stepped outside and returned at 8:07 pm. Joe McSloy made a motion that Shelly Main be appointed to fill the position on council vacated by Richard Cheek's resignation. Neil Howard seconded and motion carried.

i. **Swear in new council member** – Shelly Main was then sworn in by Mary Lou Craig, City Secretary.

j. **Elect mayor pro-tem – consideration and action as appropriate** Neil Howard made a motion to nominate Joe McSloy as mayor pro-tem. Dave Carrasquillo seconded and motion carried.

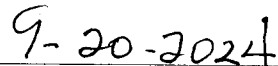
7. **Consent Agenda – consideration and action as appropriate** - Mayor Ray asked if there were any questions regarding the items in the consent agenda. Hearing none, Dave Carrasquillo made a motion to approve the minutes of the July regular meeting, the July Water Workshop, and the July financials. Shelly Main seconded and motion carried.

8. **Comments – Mayor/Council/City Secretary** – Mayor Ray reminded council that the September meeting was scheduled for the 19th and we would submit a request to meet again at St. Mary's. City Secretary reported she had received a complaint from a resident regarding the lack of city assistance with clean-up after Hurricane Beryl. Several residents present noted that many neighbors pitched in and helped other neighbors who needed it.

9. **Adjourn** – Neil Howard made a motion to adjourn. Joe McSloy seconded and motion passed. Meeting was adjourned at 8:16 pm.



Mary Lou Craig, City Secretary



Date