

**REGULAR MEETING AND PUBLIC HEARING
OF THE GOVERNING BODY OF
THE CITY OF BLANCO**

**Meeting Minutes
February 11, 2025**

A regular meeting and public hearing of the City Council, City of Blanco, Texas was held on February 11, 2025, at 6:00 pm at the Byars Building, 308 Pecan Street, Blanco, Texas.

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm by Mayor Arnold, followed by roll call announcing a quorum was present. The Invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mayor Arnold. The Council members present: Mayor Arnold, Mayor Pro-Tem Mack-McClung and Council Members Swinson, Moses, Cargill, and Moore.

City staff present: Warren Escovy, City Administrator, Laurie Cassidy, City Secretary, Jose Martinez, Finance Director, and Chief Jerry Thornhill.

Mayor Arnold made the following announcements:

- Burn ban is off.
- The City is still under Stage 4 Drought Restrictions
- Council Member Swinson announced she just got married and since she and her new husband will be living outside the city limits, she is resigning from her place on the Council. In spite of the vacancy, she will remain a holdover until the Council chooses to fill the vacancy.
- The Mayor will move New Business Item #7 up to the first item under New Business since many people are here tonight to discuss. Mayor Pro-Tem Mack-McClung added he just wanted to start a discussion with the overlay districts (The City, ESD and The Library) regarding sales tax revenues.

Public Comments:

- Ann Hall, President, Emergency Services District since 2012, spoke regarding the overlapping ESD's and their sales tax and the ongoing problem. They are capped at \$0.10/\$100 valuation. She provided the Council with a flow sheet handout and also one from TML/Bill Langley and said she is open to meeting with The Council to discuss at any time.
- Matt Herden, City of Blanco resident and ESD Board Member, spoke asking what is this New Business Item 7, sales tax referendum dedicated for. He also suggested that any future meetings between the City, ESD, and the Library include Warren Escovy because he is doing a good job.
- Nancy Cline, President, Blanco County South Library District Board of Trustees, spoke against New Business Item 7 which calls for consideration of an election referendum or similar action to reallocate sales and use tax in areas of the library district which overlap with the city limits of Blanco, she asked for this item to be tabled.
- Trey Atchley thanked Council Member Swinson for her service. He also thanked Chief Thornhill for the work he has done reestablishing the Police Department. Lastly, he thanked Warren Escovy for his professionalism and service to the city.

- Dan Murrah, City of Blanco resident, spoke saying he disagrees with Mr. Atchley regarding the City Administrator position and asked the Council to consider other options.
- Wayne Gosnell, City of Blanco resident and President of the Blanco County Friends of the Night Sky, spoke in support of New Business Item 9, hiring of a part time code enforcement officer. The Night Sky worked over 5 years to obtain the dark sky designation and another two years to write the ordinance which was approved by the Council in 2018 and amended in 2023 but recently there have been numerous businesses in Blanco with Night Sky violations. The Night Sky has filed 11 official ordinance violation complaints against local businesses. Today only one business has corrected their lighting but the other ten remain non-compliant. The Night Sky is willing to train the code enforcement officer and will donate \$1,200 to cover expenses.
- Mike Ethridge spoke saying when the weather gets good, he wants to gather the Council together to go look at the property. The Mayor agreed.
- Wesley Murrah, City of Blanco resident, said he has lived in area since 1985. He spoke out in opposition of Warren Escovy, City Administrator, suggesting the Council keep the position and hire new official.
- Retta Martin, City of Blanco resident, spoke regarding Old Business Item 2, the Streetscape Committee. She shared the history of the Committee, the hard work they have done in the past as well as what they are continuing to accomplish currently. She is the Chair of the Committee.
- Greg Vest, City of Blanco resident, spoke regarding general attitude and Texas stereotypes, most genuine, friendly people you will meet. He shared that he feels like we have stepped away from this. Spelling out FRIEND: F-free ideas, R-respectful, I-independence, E-even tempered, N-neighorly, D-decent. Charles Pickering, former judge of the 5th Circuit of Appeals.
- Rodney Thrailkill, City of Blanco Resident (statement read by Laurie Cassidy, City Secretary), shared his opposition in moving forward with an MOA with “Blanco Heritage” regarding Old Business Item 2
- Mike Smith, City of Blanco resident (statement read by Laurie Cassidy, City Secretary), thanked the Council for the opportunity to address them at the meeting and also for their commitment and time serving on Council. Then reminded them to always be respectful of the citizens they represent. Lastly, he shared his support for Warren Escovy, City Administrator referencing Executive Session Item 4.
- Tommy Koch, Blanco County resident, spoke regarding New Business Item 7. He shared the legislation on taxes has made it difficult to provide services while limiting annexations. Need to get the County involved and somehow review this issue.
- Crystal Spybuck, City of Blanco resident and Director of the Blanco County South Library District said she appreciates Bobby providing the clarification. She also clarified how and why the Library District was formed. She spoke in opposition to New Business Item 7 saying this would greatly impact our community and could result in a reduction of library staff and services.

- Kenneth Welch, Blanco County resident, spoke in support of the bond. Secondly regarding New Business Item 7, the referendum on ESD and the Library District it is his understanding taxation is divided and the only way to work out is through negotiations. Regarding New Business Item 8, Wheels and Feet, he spoke in support of (turn talking about it into walking about it”). Regarding New Business Item 10, AI Policy, he spoke in support of and sees it as a tool the City could use and asked the Council to please present a draft copy to the public. Lastly Old Business Item 2, restructuring of the Streetscape Committee, please support them moving forward.

Opened Public Hearing at 6:07 pm. There being no public comments, the Public Hearing was closed at 6:27 pm.

1. Approval of Short-Term Rental Permit Application at 1312 Greenlawn Pkwy. (Greenlawn Place Subdivision, Lot 06, 0.2767 Acres), Blanco, Texas 78606, (Property Owner: Tejas Heritage Homes, LLC).

PROCLAMATIONS:

1. George Washington’s Birthday by Blair G. Rudy.
2. American Red Cross Month, March 2025 by Mayor Arnold

Staff Presentations:

1. City Hall, Warren Escovy, City Administrator, shared the following, election application period closes on February 14 at 5:00 pm, he discussed the focus on infrastructure and public safety, he announced new stop signs being installed at the corner near Old 300 and the Post Office, installing generator at the Police Department and a portable generator for the Public Works facilities, and replacing 10 underperforming fire hydrants. New projects include new fencing at the Water Treatment Plant, replacement of pumps and motors at the Water Treatment Plant and working on a bond for future improvements in the City. He also announced the City received a \$300,000 Resilient Communities grant for work on the Blanco Comprehensive Master Plan.
2. City Hall, Jose Martinez, Finance Director, shared the January Monthly Financial Report.
3. Police Department, Chief Thornhill presented the January 2024 monthly report. Chief Thornhill shared Officer Griffin comes to Blanco with over 10 years of experience Mayor Arnold swore in Christopher B. Griffin as new Police Lieutenant.

Consent Agenda: The following items may be acted upon in one motion. No separate discussion or action is necessary unless requested by the Mayor or a Council Member, in which those items will be pulled for separate consideration.

1. Approval of Minutes from the January 14, 2025, Regular Meeting.

A motion was made by Council Member Moore to approve the consent agenda item one as presented, seconded by Council Member Cargill all in favor, motion carried unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS: Consider, discuss, and take appropriate action on the following:

New Business Item 7 (*moved by Mayor Arnold to New Business Item 1*) Consideration, Discussion, and Take Possible Action to Call an Election, Referendum or Similar Action to Reallocate Sales & Use Tax in the Present or Future Combined Areas Overlapping the Limits of the City of Blanco, Blanco County South Library District, and Blanco County Emergency Services District No. 2. The Council discussed trying to get more details from the Comptroller’s office. A procedure is needed to ensure the collection of the correct funds. They appreciate the input from the ESD and the Library District. The goal is not to take money away

from anyone. The Mayor suggested all groups/districts meet with the Comptroller in mediation. The Council would like to discuss it further at the next workshop. Ann Hall suggested two members from each district get together to discuss solution. **Item Tabled; No Action Taken.**

1. Consideration, Discussion, and Take Possible Action on Approval of Special Use Permit to allow for restaurant drive through window as per Table 4.4 of the UDC on a property zoned as R-5 at 603 Main Street (Harrison Heirs, Block 23 (SE ¼), 0.32 Acres), Blanco, Texas 78606, (Property Owner: Thomson Real Estate Investments LLC). Warren Escovy discussed; Planning & Zoning Commission tabled this item and requested revised information. The Main concern is traffic back up on Main Street. Item will be back on the agenda in March 2025. **Item Tabled; No Action Taken.**
2. Consideration, Discussion, and Take Possible Action on Approval of Resolution 2025-R-002 approving the 2024 Hazard Mitigation Plan (Patty Swords, Langford Management Services). **A motion was made by Council Member Moses to Approve Resolution 2025-R-002 approving the 2024 Hazard Mitigation Plan, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Mack-McClung, all in favor, motion carried unanimously.**
3. Consideration, Discussion and Take Possible Action on Approval of Ordinance 2025-O-002 Calling a Bond Election to be held on May 3, 2025. Angela Avila, Bond Council spoke. **A motion was made by Council Member Cargill to adopt Ordinance 2025-O-002 calling a bond election with Proposition A in the amount of \$4,411,843 and Proposition B in the amount of \$12,224,157, seconded by Council Member Swinson, all in favor, motion carried unanimously.**
4. Consideration, Discussion, and Take Possible Action on Approval of Resolution 2025-R-003 RESOLUTION CONCURRENT TO ADOPTION OF ORDINANCE CALLING A BOND ELECTION TO BE HELD IN THE CITY OF BLANCO, TEXAS; MAKING PROVISION FOR THE CONDUCT OF THE ELECTION; AND RESOLVING OTHER MATTERS RELATED A TO THAT ELECTION. Tim Tuggey, City Attorney submitted a revised Resolution for the Council consideration. The Council discussed. **A motion was made by Mayor Pro-Tem Mack-McClung to approve Resolution 2025-R-003 It is the fiscal policy of the City of Blanco that at all times the long-term general obligation debt of the City to total taxable assessed value for capital improvement projects as presented ratio be maintained at its current level of 5.0% or less, seconded by Council Member Swinson, all in favor, motion carried unanimously.**
5. Consideration, Discussion and Take Possible Action on Creation of a Bond Committee and Bond Election Procedures to fund Restoration and/or Replacement of Water, Wastewater, and Street Infrastructure. The Council discussed the draft community bond oversight committee information, and the Mayor presented the seven proposed bond committee members. **A motion was made by Council Member Moses to approve creation of a bond committee, with approval of proposed seven members being Sidney Cox, Dennis Moore, Sr., Harvie Lindermann, Danny Uballe, Paul Grandberg, Kenny Fuller, and Matt Herden plus add two additional ex officio members, bringing the total to nine, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Mack-McClung, motion carried 4-0 with Council Member Moore abstained.**
6. Consideration, Discussion and Take Possible Action on Approval of Task Order No. 1 Services to be Performed by the Engineer on a Monthly Basis: Agreement between Owner (the City of Blanco) and Engineer (Schaumburg & Polk, Inc.). Warren Escovy, City Administrator, discussed Task Order No. 1. This Task Order covers general services to be performed by the Engineer on a monthly basis.

A motion was made by Mayor Pro-Tem Mack-McClung to approve Task Order No. 1 as presented, seconded by Council Member Moore, all in favor, motion carried unanimously.

7. (New Business Item 7 was moved to New Business #1)
8. Consideration, Discussion, and Take Possible Action on Approval of the Pedestrian Alternative Transportation Modes Committee applying for the TxDOT Transportation Alternatives Grant (Council Member Swinson). Sarah Munger, Chair of the Pedestrian Committee, spoke and gave an update on the TxDOT Transportation Grant. The Council Discussed. **No Action Taken.**
9. Consideration, Discussion, and Take Possible Action to Establish a Part-Time Code Enforcement Officer. Warren Escovy shared plan and the Council discussed costs and budget allocation. Friends of the Night Sky have agreed to donate \$1,200 to assist with the night sky violations. **A motion was made by Council Member Moses to establish a temporary part time code enforcement officer, with cost capped at \$1,500 this fiscal year, to be paid out of professional services, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Mack-McClung, all in favor, motion carried unanimously.**
10. Consideration, Discussion, and Take Possible Action on Creation of AI Policy. The Mayor spoke and shared there is not a draft policy yet but just wanted to discuss AI. He will be meeting with the staff tomorrow morning. More efficient, more transparent, more cost effective. **No Action Taken.**
11. Consideration, Discussion, and Take Possible Action on Recommendation to Appoint Tiffany Perdue to fill Planning & Zoning Commissioner Vacancy. P&Z recommends approval. Tiffany was in attendance and spoke, sharing a little about herself. **A motion was made by Council Member Moore to appoint Tiffany Perdue to fill the Planning & Zoning vacancy, seconded by Council Member Cargill, all in favor, motion carried unanimously.**
12. Consideration, Discussion, and Take Possible Action on Recommendation to Appoint Betty Jones to fill Historic Preservation Commissioner Vacancy. **A motion was made by Council Member Moore to appoint Betty Jones to fill the Historic Preservation Commission vacancy, seconded by Council Member Moses, all in favor, motion carried unanimously.**

OLD BUSINESS: Consider, discuss, and take appropriate action on the following:

1. Consideration, Discussion and Take Possible Action on hiring a contractor to replace existing fence at the Water Treatment Plant at a cost not to exceed \$30,000. Warren Escovy and the Council discussed. **A motion was made by Mayor Pro-Tem Mack-McClung to hire a contractor to replace the fence at the Water Treatment Plant at a cost not to exceed \$30,000, seconded by Council Member Moore, motion carried 4-1 with Council Member Cargill opposed.**
2. Consideration, Discussion and Take Possible Action on Restructure of Streetscape Committee and Possible Related Memorandum of Agreement. The Council discussed moving the committee up under the Council with a council member (non-voting) liaison assigned to the committee. **A motion was made by Council Member Moses do not approve the restructuring of the Streetscape Committee and leave as is, seconded by Council Member Cargill, motion carried 4-1, with Mayor Pro-Tem Mack-McClung opposed.**

Closed regular meeting -9:17 pm and convened into executive session.

Executive Session in accordance with Texas Government Code: in accordance with the authority contained in the Texas Government Code, Sections 551.071, 551.072, and 551.074.

1. Texas Government Code Section 551.071 (Consultation with City Attorney) and Section 1.05, Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct. Confer with City Attorney regarding legal issues associated with the Water Treatment Plant Project, Bids, Contract. Award and Notice to Proceed.
2. Texas Government Code Sections 551.071 (Consultation with City Attorney) and Section 1.05, Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct; Consultation with City Attorney regarding Economic Development Project.
3. Texas Government Code Section 551.071 (Consultation with City Attorney) and Section 1.05, Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct. Confer with City Attorney regarding water infrastructure at Cielo Springs Subdivision.
4. Texas Government Code Section 551.074 (Personnel Matters) to deliberate the appointment, employment, evaluation, reassignment, duties, discipline, or dismissal of City Administrator.
5. Texas Government Code Section 551.071 (Consultation with City Attorney), Section 551.072 (Real Estate), and Section 1.05, Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct. Confer with City Attorney regarding Pending Legal and Real Estate Matters.


Closed executive session at 11:24 pm and convened into regular meeting.:

Adjournment:


A motion was made by Council Member Moore to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Council Member Cargill, all in favor.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:24 pm.

Respectfully submitted,


Mike Arnold, Mayor

ATTEST:


Laurie Cassidy, City Secretary, TRMC

These minutes were approved on the 11 day of March, 2025.

