

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

**Meeting Minutes  
December 12, 2023**

A regular meeting and public hearing of the City Council, City of Blanco, Texas was held on December 12, 2023, 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 was led by Council Member McClelland and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mayor Arnold. Council members present: Mayor Arnold, Mayor Pro-Tem Thrailkill and Council Members Smith, Swinson, McClellan, and Moses.

City staff present: Warren Escovy, Laurie Cassidy, and Police Chief Scott Rubin.

Mayor Arnold made the following announcements:

- There is currently no burn ban in effect.
- The City is currently at Stage 3 water restrictions, pray for more rain.
- Laurie Cassidy, City Secretary has received the award of Hill Country Chapter, Texas Municipal Clerks Association (TMCA) 2023 Clerk of the Year.
- Mayor Arnold also presented Laurie with a certificate of appreciation (and gifts) as gratitude for her dedicated service and betterment of the Blanco community.

**Public Comments:**

- Brian Faris, Blanco County resident spoke out against the Blanco relief route bypass. He had many questions, and he believes the city is putting the “cart before the horse”.
- Jay Palmer, Blanco resident at 1072 RR 165, spoke out regarding the Blanco relief route bypass. He said he has had the pleasure to work with five administrations, spoke against the bypass, worried it will run through his property, a lot of miss information being spread around. Is the city required to put up 10% of the cost of the route? No, TxDOT did away with this requirement. He is worried the narrative being promoted is the route through his property is the best route because it is the shortest, least costly route. He doesn't believe this to be true. Sunset Ridge residents are concerned about the direction of the relief route. Who will be making the final decision, he has heard TxDOT requires a Resolution issued by the city on where they would like to see the bypass go. Would like to know how this will be handled.

**Public Hearing Opened at 6:11 pm:**

1. Approval of Variance for Building Setback at 919 9<sup>th</sup> Street (Cage & Boone SB0005, NW Blk 9, 0.268 acres, Blanco, Texas 78606, (Property Owner: Michael & Patricia Pettit).
  - No comments

**The Public Hearing closed at 6:-11 pm.**

Bobby “Mack” McClung gave a presentation on the Comprehensive Master Plan Project. Zoning created? good and useful survey created. Good information, but long overdue for update/revision. Announcement, founded 150 years ago, 1938 incorporated. Important thing consensus, he will be collaborator, gather interested parties to work together, including state park and bring them into the plan. Gem of the city with walkable park and sidewalks. Shared vision, what gives Blanco our uniqueness? Shared vision at 100. Methodology, cc, Blanco ISD, parks, etc. First step, online survey to gather opinions. Community engagement, transportation, housing, etc. economic development, 2020 survey. Implementation, take away, unite now to move forward in the next 100 years. Blanco 100 Committee, **Ryan Moses, with the support of the council asked Warren to create a committee.**

#### **Staff Presentations:**

- City Hall, Warren Escovy, City Administrator, discussed the upcoming Christmas Parade on December 16, there are a record number of entries, the city offices will be closed December 25-26, 2023, the meter audit has been completed, Chip with PSI will be doing a detailed presentation later tonight regarding the cost savings and plan moving forward, the city financials are in the plus column, \$262,635 is the current savings in the general fund and \$158,067,07 savings in the enterprise fund.
- Police Department Chief Rubin discussed the November Monthly Report. No numbers this month but the good news is the system is back up and data is being restored/entered into the system. Blanco ISD received an overseas email threat, caught in time.

**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 November 7, 2023, Special Meeting.
2. Approval of Minutes from the November 14, 2023, Regular Meeting and Public Hearing.

**A motion was made by Mayor Pro-Tem Thraillkill to approve the consent agenda item one as presented and pull item two from the consent agenda, seconded by Council Member Moses, all in favor, motion carried unanimously.**

**A motion was made by Mayor Pro-Tem Thraillkill to approve the minutes from the November 14, 2023 Regular Meeting and Public Hearing as amended on page 5 (OB #1/NB #2), seconded by Council Member Moses, all in favor, motion carried unanimously.**

#### **New Business: Consider, discuss, and take appropriate action on the following:**

1. Consideration, Discussion and Take Action on Approval of Variance for Building Setback at 919 9<sup>th</sup> Street (818 Cedar Street) (Cage & Boone SB0005, NW Blk 9, 0.268 acres, Blanco, Texas 78606, (Property Owner: Michael & Patricia Pettit). Warren Escovy said this is a vacant property at the SE corner of Cedar Street and 9<sup>th</sup> Street, home will face Cedar Street. Planning & Zoning Commission recommended approval of dual building line for 15’ on Cedar Street and 10’ building line on 9<sup>th</sup> Street. Preserve trees in the middle. Mr. Pettitt purchased property for the trees and wishes to preserve those trees. **A motion was made by Council Member Moses to approve building variance at 818 Cedar Street dual building line for 15’ on Cedar Street and 10’ building line on 9<sup>th</sup> Street not to include house and garage, seconded by Council Member McClellan, all in favor, motion carried unanimously.**

2. Consideration, Discussion and Take Possible Action on Update of Lift Station Project with Option to include time extension of contract between City of Blanco and M&C Fonseca. Warren Escovy, City Administrator shared the Lift Station project began as a rehab project which turned into a larger project to move the lift station out of the floodplain. Currently have a grant in place and a construction contract with M&C Fonseca which started in January 2023 and is set to be completed by December 31, 2023. The grant for \$300,000 is tied into the original project and is set to expire on January 30, 2024. M&C Fonseca is asking for a time extension to complete the project by January 26, 2024. JD Merritt, Langford Community Management Services spoke regarding the request for a 30 day extension of the grant contract. He further explained the grant has been ongoing for 4 years (since 2019). Not extending the contract will not hurt M&C Fonseca, it will only put the TDA grant in jeopardy. The best way forward and Langford's recommendation is to extend the contract. The council discussed options. TDA does not care about the M&C Fonseca contract, they only care about Langford and the city being in compliance with their regulations. Council Member Smith wishes M&C Fonseca would be more responsive. **A motion was made by Council Member Moses to approve lift station project contract extension between the City of Blanco and M&C Fonseca for 45 days, to end February 14, 2024, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Thrailkill, all in favor, motion carried unanimously.**
  
3. Consideration, Discussion and Take Action to include authorizing the City Administrator to contract with Performance Services, Inc. to provide the City with work in accordance with Texas Local Government Code 302 procured through TIPS contract number # 170103 contingent upon third party auditor and legal approval. Chip Woods and Karen Ellis with Performance Services of Texas, Inc. presented the Performance Services IGA Review Workshop Presentation. The Meter Testing Results showed 85.34% accuracy with 5/8" meters, 83.90% accuracy with 1" meters, 98.02% accuracy with 1.5" meters and 94.10% accuracy with 2" meters, for a total water loss around 37%. Reviewed increased revenue summary and scope of work which includes 1) water meters w/advanced metering infrastructure (AMI). AMI reads daily (no more manual reads), 2) acoustic leak detection, 3) customer portal (customers will have access to their meter readings), 4) Palomino line fix, 5) EPA/TCEQ lead and copper survey data, and 6) owner discretionary allowance added and optional. Project cash flow: total project cost of \$1.75M, total cumulative net cash flow estimate: \$1.22M to Blanco over 20 years. Reviewed project timeline (December 12, 2023 through October 2024). Recap – Why PSI and Project Benefits: guaranteed performance, zero upfront cost, no budget dollars needed, sustainable/long-term solutions, improve operational capabilities, no change orders, warranted for the life of the meters (20 years), increased revenue for the city, real time data, and customer portal. All boxes and lids are polymer. ESPC Legislation, Title 9, LGC 302, TIPS Contract #170103. **A motion was made by Council Member Smith to authorize City Administrator to contract with Performance Services, Inc. to provide the City with work in accordance with Texas Local Government Code 302 procured through TIPS contract number # 170103 contingent upon third party auditor and legal approval, seconded by Council Member Swinson, all in favor, motion carried unanimously.**

4. Consideration, Discussion and Take Possible Action to Amend Contract between the City of Blanco and Inframark to add seventh employee dedicated to street repair and maintenance of the ROW (Warren Escovy, City Administrator). Inframark is requesting an amendment to their contract to have an additional employee that will be dedicated to street infrastructure, mowing, cleaning ROW's, and doing general clean-up work around City facilities which could include keeping drainageways clear. The council discussed. There were some questions as to where the funds will come from to pay for the additional employee and how this will work once the new AMI water meters are installed and manual meter reading is eliminated. **A motion was made by Council Member Smith to table item to next month, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Thraikill, all in favor, motion carried unanimously.**
  
5. Consideration, Discussion, and Take Possible Action to Authorize the City Administrator to Negotiate and Execute Amendments of the Existing Escrow and Option Agreements relating to existing Real Property Contracts between Winona 416 LTD and City of Blanco, to effect: 1) the Full and Final Release of \$50,000 Currently in Escrow, to be Delivered and Released to the City Unconditionally, on account of the City's Satisfaction of the Ingress/Egress Conditions related to the Real Property Contract on an 0.44 acre tract (the old lift station property) and 2) the Exercise by Winona 416 LTD's of its Option to Purchase a 0.38 acre tract adjoining the aforementioned 0.44 acre tract, and the Delivery of the related Purchase Price of an Additional \$50,000 to Escrow to be Released under Satisfaction of Certain Conditions in favor Winona 416, the City of Blanco and the State of Texas. Tim Tuggey, Attorney asked the council to table this item. He said it's a moving target with ongoing dialog with the state park, highly likely to receive funds. **A Motion was made by Council Member Swinson to table the item, seconded by Council Member Moses, all in favor, motion carried 4-0 with Council Member Smith recused from vote.**
  
6. Consideration, Discussion and Take Possible Action relating to TXDOT Study of Possible Relief Route on Hwy 281 and related City Transportation Planning. Warren Escovy said this is a discussion only item. Mayor Pro-Tem Thraikill reiterated the city has not taken a position on any particular relief route. Mr. Welch asked for an update on the meeting that was supposed to happen on Thursday. Mayor Arnold gave a brief summary, explained local business leader, branch manager at the bank, his executive was recently appointed as commissioner to TxDOT and was invited to town to meet local city official with no other agenda other than handshake, PR, welcome to Blanco. With the timing of the meeting, it was decided to invite county commissioners, transportation committee members, and city council. The goal was to keep it small and as non-political as possible. After complaints were received regarding a secret meeting (which was posted publicly), the downside if we made a bad impression was great and it was decided to cancel the meeting. Ashamed of the reaction to holding a simple meeting and the animosity it created. Warren Escovy said the Transportation Committee met November 30, 2023 and will meet again in January. We don't have all the answers yet, biggest question with Joe Muck, TxDOT area engineer, is the Give Back Program to make US 281 Main Street. What does that look like, what do we want to see, and can Blanco afford that? Lots of questions, waiting on TxDOT to announce the route (whatever that route is or is not). Separate component of subcommittee, pedestrian paths. **No action taken.**

7. Consideration, Discussion and Take Possible Action relating to Approval of Payment of Survey Not to Exceed \$2,500.00 for Four Way Stop Sign Project at 4<sup>th</sup> Street and Pecan Street to be Reimbursed by TXDOT Promise Letter. Council Member Moses said the project was not coordinated with the Streetscape Committee nor was there a request for approval and since completing, has caused flooding problems. The Historic commission issued a letter to TxDOT asking what they will do to fix problems. TxDOT said they are happy to make repairs and asked for our plan of corrective action. Two steps are needed, 1) detailed topo survey to be passed on to streetscape architect and 2) resolve and mitigate the flooding in the area. Need \$2,500 to cover cost of survey. In the future will need an additional \$2,500 to pay the architect. TxDOT has verbally agreed to reimburse the cost of the survey as well as pay for repairs. Requesting commitment letter from TxDOT, could take a year to be reimbursed. Looking for creating funding ideas. The council discussed. **A motion was made by Council Member Smith to provide conditional approval of payment of survey not to exceed \$2,500 for Four Way Stop Sign Project at 4<sup>th</sup> Street and Pecan Street conditional on receipt of reimbursement letter from TxDOT, seconded by Council Member Moses, all in favor, motion carried unanimously.**
8. Consideration, Discussion and Take Possible Action on Approval to move forward with Draft Design Plan and Request for estimates on Construction of new City Hall building to include estimates for rental of current City Hall and Byars Buildings and Authorize City Administrator to look at financing terms. Warren Escovy reviewed with the council the last discussion included talk of feasibility of an engineering study (not a budgeted item and has not been completed). Also, discussed other low cost options such as looking at the current draft design, looking at estimates for construction of new city hall and also include estimates for rental of current city hall and look at design and framework of existing building. Pros/cons of existing location, tax base and various uses. The council to select realtor to assist. Two steps, 1) look at cost to rent current location and 2) feasibility study still needs to be completed. Explore the option of renting out the proposed new location. The proposal solves many issues, lack of street maintenance, sensing the public does not want to spend money on this. Warren suggested inviting Steve Perry, Financial Advisor, to come to a meeting to discuss finances further. **A motion was made by Council Member Moses to allow the City Administrator to move forward to explore options with relocation of city hall and rental of both locations with any associated costs being on a voluntary basis and any expenses coming back to City Council for approval. No Second, Council Member Moses withdrew his motion. The council is not currently in favor of moving forward on this item.**

**Old Business: Consider, discuss, and take appropriate action on the following:**

1. Consideration, Discussion, and Take Possible Action on Approval of Extension of City Services or Disannexation of 4.99 Acre Property at 1917 N. US Hwy 281 located in the H. Eggleston Survey No. 24, Abstract No. 0001, Blanco County, Texas. **Warren Escovy requested this item be moved to executive session.**
2. Consideration, Discussion and Take Possible Action on: 1) Approval to Complete "land-only" as-is conventional appraisal at a cost not to exceed \$1,800.00 on City Surplus Property at Blanco Vista Estates, Lot 3 (9.43 Acres), and 2) Specify in Advance the Use of any Resulting Proceeds, in the Event a Sale is Authorized by Separate and Future Action of Council.

Tim Tuggey, Attorney recapped previous council discussions saying the council was looking into authorizing an appraisal of the property, but before spending the money on the appraisal wanted to discuss/decide where the proceeds of the sale would go. The council discussed it in more detail. **A motion was made by Council Member Smith to approve to Complete “land-only” as-is conventional appraisal at a cost not to exceed \$1,800.00 on City Surplus Property at Blanco Vista Estates, Lot 3 (9.43 Acres) with the following restrictions that the proceeds from the sale up to the appraised value be held in reserve for a period of five years and any surplus over that may be disposed of at council’s discretion and to rescind this reserve condition would take a supermajority vote by the council, seconded by Council Member Moses, motion failed 2-3 with Mayor Pro-Tem Thraikill and Council Members McClellan and Swinson opposed.**

3. Consider and Discuss Update on USACE Evaluation of Town Creek Project, and related Next Steps. (No Action) Tim Tuggey, Attorney gave an update said conference call tomorrow, Corp of Engineers will be giving an official determination in the US Government’s interest in the rehabilitation of the rock wall and a complete feasibility analysis. Warren Escovy said participants on the call will include Patrick Sparks, Engineer, along with Chris Jurica, Surveyor, Retta Martin (for her historical knowledge) and Bobby McClung. **No Action Taken.**

**Closed regular meeting and convened into executive session at 8:59 pm.**

**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 Sections 551.071 (Consultation with City Attorney) and Section 1.05, Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct; Confer with City Attorney regarding City Water Agreements with Texas Water Company
2. Texas Government Code Sections 551.071 (Consultation with City Attorney), 551.072 (Real Estate) and Section 1.05, Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct; Confer with City Attorney regarding Pharr Paradise Utility Easement Agreement.
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 legal issues associated with the Water Treatment Plant Project; Bids, Contract. Award, and Notice to Proceed.
4. 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 TXDOT Study of Possible Relief Route on Hwy 281 and related City Transportation Planning
5. 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 Approval of Extension of City Services or Disannexation of 4.99 Acre Property at 1917 N. US Hwy 281 located in the H. Eggleston Survey No. 24, Abstract No. 0001, Blanco County, Texas.

**Closed executive session at 9:44 pm and convened into regular meeting.**


No action taken as a result of the Executive Session.

**Adjournment:**

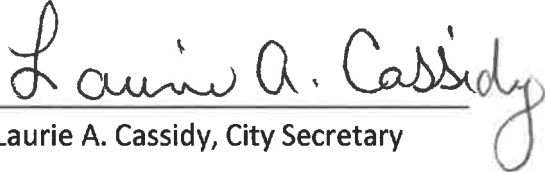
A motion was made by Council Member Moses to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Thrailkill, all in favor.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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Mike Arnold, Mayor

ATTEST:

  
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Laurie A. Cassidy, City Secretary

These minutes were approved on the 9 day of January, 2024.

