



# The City of West University Place

*A Neighborhood City*

## CITY COUNCIL

Bob Higley, Mayor  
Kevin Trautner, Mayor Pro Tem  
John P. Barnes, Councilmember  
Lauri Lankford, Councilmember  
Ed Sobash, Councilmember

## STAFF

David J. Beach, City Manager  
Alan Petrov, City Attorney  
Thelma Gilliam, City Secretary

## CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES ACTA DE LA REUNIÓN DEL CONSEJO DE LA CIUDAD

The City Council of the City of West University Place, Texas, **met via Zoom** in a special meeting on **Monday, February 8, 2021**, beginning at **5:00 p.m.** due to social distancing guidelines suggested by the CDC in light of the Novel Coronavirus (COVID 19).

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### WORKSHOP (5:30 p.m.)

#### 1. Call Workshop to Order/Roll Call

Mayor Higley called the virtual meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. Mayor Pro Tem Trautner and Councilmembers Barnes, Lankford and Sobash were all present.

Staff present were City Manager Beach, City Attorney Petrov, City Secretary Gilliam, Public Works Director Barrera, and Assistant to the City Manager Thompson.

Traffic Engineer Eleni Pappas, TDI Engineers, was also present.

#### 2. Citywide Traffic Study Update

Matters related to the Citywide Traffic Study. **Mr. Gerardo Barrera, Public Works Director and Ms. Eleni Pappas, Traffic Engineer**

Public Works Director Barrera began by stating that in February 2020, staff received the notice from Council to proceed with the traffic study. He said this workshop is for informational purposes and discussion and then introduced Traffic Engineer Eleni Pappas who gave the presentation to Council.

Ms. Pappas' presentation included:

- Plan Objectives
- Existing Conditions Overview and Insights
- The Evolution of Speed Setting on City Roadways
- Case Studies
- Next Steps

Councilmember Sobash asked why use only one indicator on Buffalo Speedway where there is more traffic. Ms. Pappas said it was intentional because Buffalo Speedway is being rebuilt so conditions are changing.

In looking at the results regarding crash density, Councilmember Barnes asked Ms. Pappas if there was a reason why there are no counters in the area of Bissonnet around Westchester and Mercer. Ms. Pappas said that is a good question and said she would get with public works staff about getting a counter in that area.

Councilmember Lankford said when looking at Westchester/Mercer area, they should probably take into consideration the rebuild of Cleburne's, which she thinks will be a new factor in the area.

Councilmember Lankford also said the issue on Bissonnet at Westchester and Mercer also occurs in by Bellaire in the Cason area. Ms. Pappas said she and TDI Engineers would work with Public Works staff on finding those extra additional spots.

Regarding Cleburne's and the Mercer alignment, Ms. Pappas said she believes that the rebuilt actually made traffic better. She said it would be prudent to spend more time there since the data aligns with Cleburne's re-opening.

Councilmember Barnes said public driving Council to look at reducing the speed limit to 25 mph are from people who live in the stretch of Wakeforest south of University, but the data in that area does not show any crashes. Ms. Pappas said she would not discredit that information because it shows recorded, reported and geo-referenced crashes. She said understanding what the concerns are of residents is important and is what TDI is trying to address.

Councilmember Sobash asked about data on cut-through streets and Ms. Pappas there is no data for those streets because those streets were not part of the scope of work for this study.

After some discussion, Ms. Pappas stated that lowering the speed limit leads to measurable declines in speeds even without enforcement or engineering changes. She also said TDI will be recommending that the City implement a default citywide speed limit that is less than 30 mph and that safe speed studies be used to define posted speed limits on the key major roadways.

Ms. Pappas noted that the next steps following this study are:

- Final recommendation on City-wide speed limit
- Detailed assessment of arterials and collectors in collaboration with City staff
- Technical Report with supporting evidence for recommendations
- Development of the safe street toolbox

Mayor Pro Tem Trautner asked when would the analysis be finalized and when does the City get the recommendation. City Manager Beach said the item is currently on the April 12, 2021, agenda for Ms. Pappas to return to Council with her final recommendation. Mr. Beach said there is also a placeholder on the agenda for April 26, 2021, for Council to take any desired action.

After some discussion, Ms. Pappas said at this point, based on the data and best practices, she is comfortable with saying that the default speed limit of the City should be 25 mph.

Councilmember Lankford said she feels it is important to have the counts on Buffalo Speedway included. Mr. Barrera responded and said when the City applied for federal funding for the Buffalo Speedway project, to be eligible the speed limit could not be lower than 30 mph, so it could be detrimental to funding for the project.

Mayor Pro Tem Trautner asked Ms. Pappas what is it specifically about the West U streets that leads her to believe that the speed limit may be 25 mph. She responded because West U is a community of

people who are homeowners that want to walk to the park and the school, it is based on data from comparable cities, and because safety is a top priority of Council.

Councilmember Barnes reiterated that he would like Traffic Engineers to go back and look at those places noted where there were not counters, specifically on Bissonnet near Westchester and Mercer and along Buffalo Speedway south of University. Ms. Pappas and Mr. Barrera said they have it noted to do so.

*Audio of the full discussion is available on the City's website. You can also contact the City Secretary's office for a copy of the audio and/or a copy of the presentation.*

### **REGULAR MEETING (6:30 p.m.)**

#### **3. Call Regular Meeting to Order/Roll Call**

Mayor Higley called the virtual meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Mayor Pro Tem Trautner and Councilmembers Barnes, Lankford and Sobash were all present.

Staff present were City Manager Beach, City Attorney Petrov, City Secretary Gilliam, Public Works Director Barrera, Assistant to the City Manager Thompson, Police Chief Walker, Fire Chief Thompson, Finance Director DuBose, and Fire Chief Taylor

#### **4. Pledge of Allegiance**

Councilmember Sobash led the Pledge and a moment of prayer Captain Damien Niko.

#### **5. Public Comments**

This is an opportunity for citizens to speak to the Council relating to agenda and non-agenda items.

There were no public comments.

#### **6. COVID-19 Update**

Matters related to COVID-19. *Recommended Action: Discuss and take any desired action.* **Mr. Aaron Taylor, Fire Chief and Emergency Management Coordinator**

Chief Taylor reported:

- Texas is continuing to see a decrease in the overall number of new cases.
- Positivity rate in Texas is 11.27 percent.
- Harris County Public Health reported a 14-day average of 17.2 percent positivity rate.
- The Texas Medical Center reported a 9.0 percent positivity rate.
- West U has 502 confirmed cases – 54 are active, 446 recovered and 2 deaths.
- There are still six vaccine hubs in Harris County, with focus still on Phase IA and Phase 1B populations.

Mayor Higley asked about parks and pool usage. Chief Taylor said City parks are open and with numbers decreasing, he feels that it is safe to keep the parks open. Chief Taylor said regarding pools, staff is reviewing a proposal on how to accomplish re-opening the pools while remaining within guidelines.

**7. Purchasing Policy**

Matters related to the City's Purchasing Policy. *Recommendation: Approve resolution adopting the Purchasing Policy. Ms. Katherine DuBose, Finance Director*

Finance Director DuBose presented and stated that per feedback from Council at its January 25 workshop, the proposed policy includes the recommendations and ensures that the City is compliant with Local Government Code, Chapter 252. She said the policy also includes guidance for the City's procurement card program.

In response to a question by Mayor Higley, Ms. DuBose said finance staff and the city manager has reviewed the proposed policy, but the City Attorney has not.

Councilmember Lankford said the proposals seems to be procedural with what has occurred in the past, but suggested adding an additional requirement that any contract, maybe over "x" dollar amount or one that deviates from the City's standard general service contract, is reviewed by the city attorney. She said it might be helpful to have this proposed policy reviewed.

Ms. DuBose said staff would add additional language per Councilmember Lankford's suggestion and have the city attorney review it and bring policy back before Council at a future meeting.

**8. Debt Management Policy**

Matters related to the City's Debt Management Policy. *Recommendation: Approve resolution adopting Debt Management Policy. Ms. Katherine DuBose, Finance Director*

Finance Director DuBose presented and said the proposed policy was brought before Council at its January 25 workshop and, with the incorporated changes received from Council, ensures that the City has established guidelines for issuing new debt.

Councilmember Sobash moved to approve the Debt Management Policy as presented. Mayor Pro Tem Trautner seconded the motion. **MOTION PASSED.**

**Ayes:** Higley, Trautner, Barnes, Lankford, Sobash  
**Noes:** None  
**Absent:** None

**9. Fund Balance Policy**

Matters related to the City's Fund Balance Policy. *Recommendation: Approve the resolution adopting the Fund Balance Policy. Ms. Katherine DuBose, Finance Director*

Finance Director DuBose presented and said the City's current Fund Balance Policy was approved in November 2011 and that this proposed policy was discussed at the Council workshop on January 25, 2021. She said changes included in the proposed policy are:

- Provides additional justification for ensuring adequate fund balances.
- Modifies the unassigned fund balance and working capital minimums to be based on operating expenditures, rather than operating revenues.
- Adds language to address balances for Internal Service Funds.
- States that unassigned fund balance surpluses will not be used for recurring operations.
- Allows surplus unassigned fund balance in the General Fund to be transferred to Capital Reserve Fund.
- Establishes recommended timeframe for replenishing fund balance deficit

- Adds Monitoring and Reporting section.
- Minor grammatical and formatting changes.

After discussion regarding some of the policy verbiage, Mayor Pro Tem Trautner moved to approve the policy as presented. Councilmember Barnes seconded the motion. **MOTION PASSED.**

**Ayes:** Higley, Trautner, Barnes, Lankford, Sobash  
**Noes:** None  
**Absent:** None

## 10. Consent Agenda

All Consent Agenda items listed are considered to be routine by the City Council and will be enacted by one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a Council member requests in which event the item will be removed from the Consent Agenda and considered in its normal sequence on the agenda.

### A. City Council Minutes

Approve Minutes of the regular meeting of January 25, 2021 and the special meeting of January 28, 2021. *Recommended Action: Approve City Council Minutes of January 25, 2021 and January 28, 2021. Ms. Thelma Gilliam, City Secretary*

### B. Ordinance Calling for the 2021 General Election

Matters related to an ordinance calling the May 1, 2021 General Election. *Recommended Action: Approve ordinance calling for the May 1, 2021 General Election on the first and final reading. Ms. Thelma A. Gilliam, City Secretary*

### Ordenanza por la que se convocan las elecciones generales de 2021

Asuntos relacionados con una ordenanza que convoca a las elecciones generales del 1 de mayo de 2021. *Acción recomendada: Aprobar la ordenanza que pide las elecciones generales del 1 de mayo de 2021 en la primera y última lectura. Sra. Thelma A. Gilliam, Secretaria de la Ciudad*

### C. Chiller Replacement

Matters related to awarding a contract to replace the Chiller unit in the Police Department building and approve an ordinance to amend the budget to include funds for the replacement of the Chiller. *Recommended Action: Approve ordinance amending the FY 2021 Budget on first and final reading, award contract to the Carrier Corporation in the amount not to exceed \$101,500 for replacement and installation of the Chiller, and authorize the City Manager to execute a contract. Mr. Gerardo Barrera, Public Works Director*

### D. Replacement of Wakeforest Elevated Storage Tank Riser Pipe

Matters related to awarding a contract to replace the Wakeforest elevated storage tank riser pipe. *Recommended Action: Award contract to Central Tank Coating (CTC) in an amount not to exceed \$87,500 and authorize the City Manager to execute the contract. Mr. Gerard Barrera, Public Works Director*

Councilmember Lankford requested Item B be removed from the Consent Agenda for discussion.

Councilmember Sobash moved to approve Items A, C, and D on the Consent Agenda as presented. Mayor Pro Tem Trautner seconded the motion. **MOTION PASSED.**

**Ayes:** Higley, Trautner, Barnes, Lankford, Sobash  
**Noes:** None

**Absent:** None

Councilmember Lankford had concern regarding Section 3, Item E in the ordinance. After discussion and the City Attorney confirming that the language is correct as presented, Councilmember Barnes moved to approve the ordinance calling for the election. Mayor Pro Tem Trautner seconded the motion. **MOTION PASSED.**

**Ayes:** Higley, Trautner, Barnes, Lankford, Sobash  
**Noes:** None  
**Absent:** None

**11. Executive Session Related to Personnel**

City Council will recess the regular meeting and convene into executive session in accordance with the following provision of Chapter 551 of the Texas Government Code (TGC):

- **Section 551.074 – Personnel Matters**
  - City Manager Contract
  - Request for Qualifications for City Attorney/Legal Services

At 7:04 p.m., Mayor Higley recessed the regular meeting and convened the executive session.

**12. Adjourn Executive Session / Reconvene Regular Meeting**

Matters related to any desired action resulting from the executive session. City Council may take action on the matters discussed in Executive Session as deemed Appropriate.

At 7:53 p.m., Mayor Higley adjourned the executive session and reconvened the regular meeting.

Mayor Pro Tem Trautner said that with the increased needs of the City for legal services, he moves the accept Olson and Olson’s proposal for City Attorney services, authorize the city manager to negotiate an engagement letter with Olson and Olson and authorize the city manager to negotiate a separate engagement letter with Alan Petrov for special projects. Councilmember Barnes seconded the motion. **MOTION PASSED.**

**Ayes:** Higley, Trautner, Barnes, Lankford  
**Noes:** Sobash  
**Absent:** None

Councilmember Barnes moved to approve the City Manager’s agreement as amended. Councilmember Sobash seconded the motion. **MOTION PASSED.**

**Ayes:** Higley, Trautner, Barnes, Sobash Lankford  
**Noes:** None  
**Absent:** None

**13. Adjourn Regular Meeting**

At 7:55 p.m., Councilmember Barnes moved to adjourn. Councilmember Sobash seconded the motion.

Prepared by: Thelma A. Gilliam  
Approved by City Council on February 22, 2021