



The City of West University Place

A Neighborhood City

CITY COUNCIL

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

STAFF

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

CITY COUNCIL MINUTES

The City Council of the City of West University Place, Texas, met **via audio/video conferencing** in a special session on **Monday, September 21, 2020**, due to social distancing guidelines suggested by the CDC in light of the Novel Coronavirus (COVID 19).

Agenda Items were as follows:

1. Call to Order / Roll Call (Remotely)

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

Staff attending via video/teleconference from the Council Chambers: City Manager Beach, City Secretary Gilliam, Police Chief Walker, Parks and Recreation Director White, Finance Director DuBose, Public Works Director Barrera, Assistant to the City Manager Thompson, and Fire Chief Taylor.

Staff attending remotely: Interim IT Director McFarland.

2. 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:

- Governor Abbott sent out a new Executive Order (GA-30), which increases the capacity at certain places (i.e. retail stores, gyms, museums, etc.) in certain regions of the state from 50 percent to 75 percent. Chief Taylor said the City does not anticipate an increase to its recreational facility as it is bound by the guidelines of social distancing.
- Positivity rates are still declining and is at 6.64 percent statewide; The Medical Center is reporting 3.4 percent, and Harris County Public Health is still showing 7.74 percent as that number has not been updated since last week.
- West U now has 53 confirmed cases – 4 active, 49 recovered, and 0 deaths.
- The Harris County COVID-19 threat level system remains at Level 1, which is the highest level despite the improving conditions.
- Staff sent an email to Harris County Public Health for any orders or guidelines regarding reopening playground areas in City parks and no response received to date. He said the current plan is to have everything in place (i.e. signage and any maintenance) to reopen the playground facilities on Saturday, September 26.

Councilmember Sobash asked if there is any guidance on resuming in-person council meetings. Fire Chief Taylor said not that he is aware of.

Councilmember Lankford said that she doesn't know if there is a deadline date, but the order relating to remote meetings was extended. Councilmember Sobash said that gives the City the choice to continue remote meetings, but he wanted to know if there was anything keeping the City from resuming more normal council sessions. Councilmember Barnes stated that the order requiring social distancing is what will keep the City from holding normal council meetings at this time.

City Manager Beach said resuming normal council meetings is at the discretion of council as long as social distancing measures and guidelines are implemented.

Mayor Pro Tem Trautner said until it is clearer that Council can meet indoors in groups, he is not yet comfortable with meeting in person.

Fire Chief Taylor then provided an update on Tropical Storm Beta.

3. Public Hearing on the 2021 Budget

Matters related to the first and final hearing to hear comments on the proposed 2021 Budget. *Recommended Action: Hold first and final public hearing on the 2021 Budget. Ms. Katherine DuBose, Finance Director*

Finance Director DuBose was prepared to give a presentation to Council, but because it's basically the same presentation given at the workshop and with no members of the public attending remotely for the hearing, she did not give the presentation and asked if Council had any questions.

Having no questions from Council, Mayor Higley opened the public hearing at 6:41 p.m.

There was no one signed up to speak from the public.

4. Close Public Hearing

With no comments from the public, Councilmember Barnes moved to close the first and final public hearing on the 2021 Budget at 6:43 p.m. Councilmember Lankford seconded the motion. **MOTION PASSED.**

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

Note: The proposed budget and a copy of the presentation is on file in the City Secretary's office.

5. Resolution Declaring a Public Necessity

Matters related to the adoption of a resolution declaring the existence of a public necessity for the acquisition of a drainage easement and temporary construction easement in connection with the Buffalo Speedway project. *Recommended Action: Adopt Resolution. Mr. Dave Beach, City*

City Manager Beach said adopting the resolution is the first step in acquiring the easement related to the Buffalo Speedway project.

Councilmember Barnes moved to adopt the resolution declaring the public necessity. Councilmember Sobash seconded the motion. **MOTION PASSED.**

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

4. Adjourn

With no other business before Council, Councilmember Sobash moved to adjourn the special meeting at 6:45 p.m. Mayor Pro Tem Trautner seconded the motion. **MOTION PASSED.**

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

Prepared by: Thelma A. Gilliam, TRMC, City Secretary

Council Approved: September 28, 2020