

A regular meeting of the Groves City Council was held August 28, 2023 in the Groves City Council Chamber with Mayor Chris Borne, Mayor Pro Tem Mark McAdams, Councilmember Rob Vensel, Councilmember Rhonda Dugas, and Councilmember Paul Oliver in attendance. Mayor Borne called the meeting to order and welcomed the attendees. The prayer and pledge of allegiance was then held by the local VFW.

APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 14, 2023 CITY COUNCIL MEETING AND JOINT PUBLIC HEARING: Mayor Pro Tem McAdams moved to approve the minutes of the August 14, 2023 City Council meeting and Joint Public Hearing as written. Councilmember Oliver seconded. Mayor Borne asked for discussion and there was none. Motion passed unanimously.

RECEIVE MINUTES FROM THE AUGUST 21, 2023 PLANNING AND ZONING MEETING: Mayor Borne asked Council if everyone had received the August 21, 2023 Planning and Zoning Meeting Minutes and they all stated yes.

Mayor Borne asked for reports and there was a report from Interim City Manager Lance Billeaud regarding health insurance and rates. Mr. Billeaud then informed Council that Higginbotham reached out to Blue Cross Blue Shield for a last effort to get our rates lowered. Mr. Billeaud then stated our current plan came in 40% higher than what it was last year and the next day they came back with a better coverage but at the same rate. City Attorney Brandon P. Monk informed Mr. Billeaud that the City just needed to inform Council of the change in coverage and that it would be voted on with the budget because all of the numbers are the same.

The next report was from the Groves Chamber of Commerce regarding small business Wednesdays from the Chamber Director Letha Knaus. Mrs. Knaus stated that she has exciting news regarding our business district. Mrs. Knaus informed Council that a lot of the Groves businesses have joined in with the small business Wednesdays to offer discounts or free items to patrons that come in with a receipt from a Groves business. Starting in September the Groves Chamber of Commerce is joining in with these local businesses to help make small business Wednesdays even better. There will also be a new food truck each week. Councilmember Oliver asked City Attorney Brandon P. Monk if this will interfere with our Ordinance regarding Food Trucks and Mr. Monk stated that it does not because the Chamber Events are an exception to that Ordinance. There were no further reports.

Mayor Borne then asked if there were any citizen comments and there were none.

**CONSIDER APPROVAL TO ALLOW THE GROVES CHAMBER OF COMMERCE TO OPERATE A BEER GARDEN DURING THE GROVES PECAN FESTIVAL:**

Mayor Pro Tem McAdams made a motion to consider approval to allow the Groves Chamber of Commerce to operate a Beer Garden during the Groves Pecan Festival and Councilmember Vensel seconded. Burt Lampson Vice President of the Groves Chamber of Commerce along with the Director Letha Knaus were both there to answer questions. Councilmember Dugas asked if they had a written plan and that one should have been given to Council to review ahead of time. Mr. Lampson stated that he can answer any questions that Council may have. Mayor Borne asked if there will be a fence around the Beer Garden along with Police Officers and Mr. Lampson said there would be. Mr. Lampson also stated that the only way someone can enter the fenced in area would be to have their ID checked and they would have to be 21 years of age. The Groves Knights of Columbus will be selling the beer and the profits will be split between them and the Chamber. Councilmember Dugas informed everyone that the contract with the Chamber is not currently valid. Mayor Borne asked Mr. Lampson if all of the servers would be TABC Certified and will they be following all of the rules set forth by the State of Texas and he stated that they would.

Councilmember Dugas voiced her thoughts regarding having a Beer Garden at the Groves Pecan Festival and she was not in favor of having one. Mayor Pro Tem McAdams, Mayor Borne and Councilmember Oliver then spoke in favor of having a Beer Garden. There were no further questions. Motion passed with Mayor Chris Borne, Mayor Pro Tem Mark McAdams, Councilmember Rob Vensel and Councilmember Paul Oliver in favor of and Councilmember Rhonda Dugas against it.

**CONSIDER APPROVAL TO ALLOW THE PAWS OF HOPE TO HAVE AN ARTIST DONATE A PAINTING ON THE SIDE OF THE ANIMAL SHELTER BUILDING:**  
Councilmember Vensel made a motion to consider approval to allow the Paws of Hope to have an artist donate a painting on the side of the animal shelter building and Councilmember Oliver seconded. Interim City Manager Lance Billeaud informed Council that the Paws of Hope have been working on this for over a year. They also had all of the materials donated and the Paws of Hope Organization saved the money to pay for the artist. There were no further questions and the motion passed unanimously.

**CONSIDER SETTING A DATE FOR A JOINT PUBLIC HEARING ON A REQUEST FOR A SPECIFIC USE PERMIT FOR GAMING MACHINES AND GAME ROOMS**

2600 MAIN AVE. AND 2610 MAIN AVE: Mayor Pro Tem McAdams made a motion to consider setting a date for a Joint Public Hearing on a request for a Specific Use Permit for Gaming Machines and Game Rooms at 2600 Main Ave. and 2610 Main Ave. and Councilmember Rob Vensel seconded. Councilmember Dugas informed Council that these are the locations that were previously denied and they have fixed everything and reapplied. Mayor Pro Tem McAdams amended his previous motion to include the date of September 25, 2023 and Councilmember Vensel seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF THE COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF GROVES, TEXAS AND THE GROVES FIREFIGHTERS ASSOCIATION FOR 10/1/2023 – 9/30/2024: Councilmember Rob Vensel made a motion to consider approval of the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the City of Groves, Texas and the Groves Firefighters Association for 10/1/2023 – 9/30/2024 and Councilmember Dugas seconded. Interim City Manager Lance Billeaud informed Council that the City and the Firefighters Association were able to come to an agreement. There is a letter from the Groves Firefighters Association President Haden Grove showing an agreement has been met. Councilmember Oliver suggested doing a contract longer than just one year. There was no further discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

DISCUSS AND APPROVE THE CONTRACT PROPOSED BY SOUTEX FOR ENGINEERING SERVICE FOR THE INSTALLATION OF A NEW MECHANICAL BAR SCREEN AND A NEW GRIT CLASSIFIER AT THE CITY OF GROVES WASTEWATER TREATMENT FACILITY: Councilmember Vensel made a motion to discuss and approve the contract proposed by Soutex for engineering service for the installation of a new mechanical bar screen and a new grit classifier at the City of Groves Wastewater Treatment Facility and Mayor Pro Tem McAdams seconded. Mayor Borne asked Finance Director Lamar Ozley how much money is left in the CLFRF Grant and Mr. Ozley stated that currently it is just over 2 million. Mr. Ozley then informed Council that once the pipe bursting is done then it will be about 1.8 million. Council was informed that we have until December of 2025 to use this grant money. Councilmember Dugas asked if we are only voting on the pricing for the engineering service and that was correct. There were no further questions and the motion passed unanimously.

CONSIDER APPROVAL TO AWARD LEASE OF COPIERS FOR USE AT CITY HALL, PUBLIC WORKS AND LIBRARY: Councilmember Dugas made a motion to consider approval to award lease of copiers for use at City Hall, Public Works and

Library. Councilmember Oliver seconded. Interim City Manager Lance Billeaud informed Council that Hernandez Office Supply offers DIR state contract pricing for all three printers and Ubeo only offers it for two of them. Councilmember Dugas asked which option would be best and City Clerk Clarissa Thibodeaux suggested the 36-month plan with the \$1 buy out option. Councilmember Dugas amended her motion to nominate Hernandez Supply Office Solutions to lease the copier for use at Public Works, City Hall and the Library. Councilmember Oliver seconded. Motion passes unanimously.

RECEIVE "CERTIFICATION OF UNOPPOSED CANDIDATES" FOR THE CITY OF GROVES GENERAL ELECTION PREVIOUSLY ORDERED FOR NOVEMBER 7, 2023: Mayor Borne stated that he has received the "Certification of Unopposed Candidates" for the City of Groves General Election previously ordered for November 7, 2023.

CONSIDER APPROVAL TO HOLD A VOTE FOR PURPOSE TO ADOPT THE CITY OF GROVES' PROPOSED FY 2023-2024 BUDGET AT THE REGULARLY SCHEDULED CITY COUNCIL MEETING ON SEPTEMBER 11, 2023:

Councilmember Dugas made a motion to consider approval to hold a vote for purpose to adopt the City of Groves' proposed FY 2023-2024 Budget at the regularly scheduled City Council Meeting on September 11, 2023 and Mayor Pro Tem McAdams seconded. Finance Director Lamar Ozley informed Council that this is just one more step for approving the budget and tax rate for the Fiscal Year and this is all in accordance with state law. There were no further questions and the motion passed unanimously.

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF THE PROPOSED TAX INCREASE AND RATE OF \$0.609690 / \$100 FOR THE 2023-2024 BUDGET VIA RECORD VOTE:

Councilmember Vensel made a motion to consider approval of the proposed tax increase and rate of \$0.609690 / \$100 for the 2023-2024 budget via record vote and Mayor Pro Tem McAdams seconded. Finance Director Lamar Ozley informed Council that this vote is not to set the tax rate but to approve for the vote of the tax rate to be put on the next agenda. Mayor Chris Borne, Mayor Pro Tem Mark McAdams, Councilmember Rob Vensel, Councilmember Paul Oliver and Councilmember Rhonda Dugas all voted in favor of the FY 2023-2024 Tax Rate to be put on the September 11, 2023 agenda to be voted on.

CONSIDER APPROVAL TO HOLD A PUBLIC HEARING AT GROVES CITY HALL ON SEPTEMBER 11, 2023 AT 5:00 P.M. FOR THE PURPOSE TO REVIEW THE

CITY OF GROVES' PROPOSED FY 2023-2024 TAX RATE AND INCREASE: Mayor Pro Tem McAdams made a motion to consider approval to hold a Public Hearing at Groves City Hall on September 11, 2023 at 5:00 p.m. for the purpose to review the City of Groves' proposed FY 2023-2024 tax rate and increase. Councilmember Vensel seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF ORDINANCE 2023-12 CANCELING THE CITY OF GROVES GENERAL ELECTION PREVIOUSLY ORDERED FOR NOVEMBER 7, 2023: Councilmember Vensel made a motion to consider approval of Ordinance 2023-12 canceling the City of Groves General Election previously ordered for November 7, 2023 and Councilmember Oliver seconded. City Attorney Brandon P. Monk then read the caption as follows: "An Ordinance of the City Council of the City of Groves, Texas, declaring the election of unopposed candidates to office and canceling the election previously ordered to be held of November 7, 2023, in accordance with section 2.053 of the Texas Election Code, providing for posting of notice of the declaration of election to office of the unopposed candidates, providing that all notices pertaining thereto be bilingual, TO-WIT: printed in English and Spanish; providing a savings clause; and providing an effective date". Mayor Borne asked if we still wait to swear in the unopposed candidates and City Attorney Brandon P. Monk stated that is correct, they will swear in after the election date. There were no further questions and the motion passed unanimously.

INVOICES: Interim City Manager Lance Billeaud presented invoices for payment totaling \$191,812.01 as follows:


Backyard Escapes	New kennel building for the Animal Shelter.	49,063.00
Chemtex Environmental	June lab charges and TCLP sample.	5,334.00
DXI Industries, INC.	Chlorine for Water Plant.	6,861.60
Fuelman of Lafayette	Gas and diesel for July 2023.	19,728.94
Groves Chamber	Quarterly payments for 2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarters.	30,000.00
Gulf Coast	HP cold mix asphalt for street patching.	5,344.00


Heil of Texas	Repairs to Jet Truck.	12,333.00
Lower Neches Valley Authority	Raw water purchased.	25,258.20
Martin Asphalt Company	CRS-2 Chip Seal Rocking Oil for Lincoln, Hansen, Washington, Capital, Jefferson and Coolidge St.	17,196.30
Mastercard Gold	Mastercard payment for July 2023 – Fire and City Hall.	7,074.51
Republic Services	Sludge disposal for July 2023.	8,182.71
Sabine Equipment, LLC	Blower for Water Plant.	5,435.00

Councilmember Rob Vensel moved to approve payment of the invoices totaling \$191,812.01 and Mayor Pro Tem McAdams seconded. Councilmember Dugas asked if the new kennel building was budgeted for and Mr. Billeaud stated it was. Councilmember Dugas then asked about the Mastercard purchases and Mr. Billeaud explained that the Fire Department and City Hall are currently sharing a card. Mr. Billeaud then stated that it was various purchases including multiple Fire Fighters getting certifications, office supplies, A&M Fire School and Back to School Event purchases as well. Councilmember Vensel asked about the blower motor for the water plant and Mr. Billeaud informed Council it was unexpected because the other one went out. There was no further discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Borne asked for Councilmember comments and Mr. Billeaud commended our employees at Public Works and the great job they have done with all of the water leaks. Councilmember Oliver then asked about 25<sup>th</sup> St. and Main, he stated that the new road is starting to crack. Mr. Billeaud stated that he will get our engineer to give a report into why certain streets are cracking. There were no further Councilmember comments.

There was no further business and Mayor Borne adjourned the meeting at 6:34 p.m.

  
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Mayor

ATTEST:  
  
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City Clerk

