

A regular meeting of the Groves City Council was held April 8, 2024 in the Groves City Council Chamber with Mayor Chris Borne, Mayor Pro Tem Mark McAdams, Councilmember Rhonda Dugas and Councilmember Paul Oliver in attendance. Councilmember Pete Konidis was not in attendance. Mayor Borne called the meeting to order and welcomed the attendees. A representative from the local VFW 4820 post then led the prayer and pledge of allegiance.

DELIBERATE AND ACT TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MARCH 25, 2024 CITY COUNCIL MEETING: Mayor Pro Tem Mark McAdams moved to approve the minutes of the March 25, 2024 City Council Meeting and Councilmember Oliver seconded. Mayor Borne asked for questions and there were none. Motion passed unanimously.

RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE APRIL 1, 2024 PLANNING AND ZONING MEETING: Mayor Borne stated that all of Council has a copy in their packets.

Mayor Borne then asked for reports.

DELIBERATE PRESENTATION OF NEW FIRE MARSHAL/ASSISTANT FIRE CHIEF PAUL WASHBURN AND NEW ASSISTANT PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR GLEN BOUDOIN: Fire Chief Lance Billeaud introduced the new Fire Marshal/Assistant Fire Chief Paul Washburn. Chief Billeaud then informed Council that Mr. Washburn comes from the City of Port Arthur Fire Department with 32 years of experience. Chief Billeaud also informed Council of his many accomplishments throughout his years of service, including the last eight as Fire Marshal. Mr. Washburn then addressed Council and expressed what an honor it is for him to accept this position.

Public Works Director Troy Foxworth then introduced the new Assistant Public Works Director Glen Boudoin. Mr. Foxworth then informed Council of Mr. Boudoin's past 35 years of management experience along with a bachelor's degree in Marketing from Lamar University. Mr. Boudoin then addressed Council and stated that he appreciates the opportunity and is looking forward to getting started.

Mr. Ken Lofton of the local 4820 VFW then gave a report over the country of Somalia and how it has affected the U.S. military operations over there.

Mayor Borne then asked if there were any citizen comments and Oscar Proenza of 6001 Martin St. addressed Council. Mr. Proenza stated that he is speaking on behalf of his wife and sister-in-law whom recently inherited this house. Mr. Proenza then stated that they are in the process of cleaning up the house and they tore down an

old shed in the back and brought the remnants to the front of the house by the street to be thrown away. Mr. Proenza then stated that they received a letter from the city stating that they would have to pay \$600 for the trash from the shed to be picked up. Mr. Proenza is asking the city for a break in the price because he was not aware that anything over 2 cubic feet would have a charge. City Manager Kevin Carruth asked Mr. Proenza to call City Clerk Clarissa Thibodeaux to set up an appointment to discuss this issue.

James Pallone on 3034 Elm Avenue addressed Council about an issue with a neighboring property at 3048 Elm Avenue, a property that is engaged with what appears to be a lot of illicit activity. City Manager Kevin Carruth instructed Mr. Pallone to talk to the City Marshal Chris Robin before he leaves the meeting.

Cody Taylor of 3555 Cleveland Avenue addressed Council and informed them that two years ago Mayor Borne presented a proclamation recognizing Parental Alienation Awareness Day. Mr. Taylor would like to see something within the city recognizing Parental Alienation Awareness month. There were no further citizen comments.

RECEIVE AND DELIBERATE FYE 2023 ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT: Finance Director Lamar Ozley then introduced Pat O'Neill from the City Auditor of Wathen, DeShong & Juncker, L.L.P. Mr. O'Neill then passed out what he called the Cliff Notes version of the audit. The first page he went over is the Summary of the Auditor's Results and this is a single audit that is required since the City had Federal money that was being spent. Mr. O'Neill stated that the City had an unmodified report or what they call a "clean opinion". There internal control over financial reporting had no material weaknesses identified or significant deficiencies identified. There was a significant deficiency identified under Federal Awards which was in the 21.027 Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds. The City did not include the Build America, Buy America Act requirements in their August 3, 2022 bid documents. Mr. O'Neill then touched on the Corrective Action Plan that will help keep this deficiency from happening again. The next page was a snapshot of revenue and expenses for the business enterprise funds which is water and sewer. Mr. O'Neill then went over the governmental funds, balance sheet for governmental funds, statement of net position for the governmental funds and enterprise funds. The next page goes into the reconciliation of the governmental funds balance sheet to the statement of net position. Mr. O'Neill then went into the changes in net position, reconciliation of the governmental funds statement of revenues, expenditures, and changes in fund balances to the statement of activities for the year ended September 30, 2023. The last report Mr. O'Neill touched on was the changes

in net pension liability and related ratios for the Texas Municipal Retirement System. Please see attached report for more details regarding the Summary of Auditor's Results.

Councilmember Dugas asked Mr. O'Neill how he sees the City overall regarding finances and Mr. O'Neill stated his main concerns would be the finding related to the federal program and the water and sewer not being able to generate enough operating income. City Manager Kevin Carruth stated that they were handing out the Covid money but didn't have a set of rules yet on what you could or couldn't do with it. Mayor Borne asked Mr. O'Neill how long has he been doing our audit and he stated 4 years. Mayor Borne then asked if he could do a comparison from the first audit to the one they just completed and he stated that the City is pretty much just breaking even. Councilmember Oliver asked if we do adjust our water and sewer rates then that would give us help and Mr. O'Neill stated yes there is no question that the rates will have to go up.

DELIBERATE AND ACT ON A REQUEST BY THE GROVES CHAMBER OF COMMERCE TO OPERATE A BEER GARDEN DURING THE 2024 GROVES PECAN FESTIVAL: Mayor Pro Tem McAdams made a motion to deliberate and act on a request by the Groves Chamber of Commerce to operate a beer garden during the 2024 Groves Pecan Festival and Councilmember Oliver seconded. Chamber Director Letha Knaus stated that last year's beer garden was a trial run and they told Council that they would return this year to look at everything to make sure there were no issues. Mrs. Knaus then stated that the Chamber would like to ask Council to go ahead and make the beer garden a yearly thing and only re visit it if something bad happens. Mrs. Knaus also stated that they are wanting to extend the beer garden this year to include the horseshoe pits. Mrs. Knaus also provided a copy of the Insurance Policy that includes the City of Groves. Councilmember Dugas asked if they will still have alcohol on Sunday and Mrs. Knaus stated they will, the only night that will not have it is Thursday for Faith, Worship and Praise night. There were no further questions. Motion passed with Mayor Chris Borne, Mayor Pro Tem Mark McAdams and Councilmember Paul Oliver in favor of the motion. Councilmember Rhonda Dugas voted against the motion.

DELIBERATE AND ACT TO APPROVE AN AGREEMENT WITH SOUTEX SURVEYORS AND ENGINEERS TO UPDATE THE GROVES WATER CONSERVATION AND DROUGHT CONTINGENCY PLAN AND AUTHORIZE THE CITY MANAGER TO NEGOTIATE AND EXECUTE ALL NECESSARY DOCUMENTS: Councilmember Dugas made a motion to deliberate and act to

approve and agreement with Soutex Surveyors and Engineers to update the Groves Water Conservation and Drought Contingency Plan and authorize the City Manager to negotiate and execute all necessary documents. Mayor Pro Tem McAdams seconded. City Manager Kevin Carruth then informed Council that at least every five years the City is required to update our Water Conservation and Drought Contingency Plan. Mr. Carruth then stated that the City is also going to try with TCEQ to come up with an Alternative Capacity Requirement. TCEQ has a standard figure they use per water connection and using those calculations they determine the minimum capacity you should have in your water production and storage. The City feels like they can demonstrate by the actual data that we have a lower number and by adopting that number it will give us more leeway by expanding the timeline we have with having to expand the plant. It will also save with the additional expense we would have with the capital and the treatment for capacity that we don't need. There were no further questions and the motion passed unanimously.

DELIBERATE AND ACT ON ESTABLISHING A DATE FOR A JOINT PUBLIC HEARING WITH THE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION ON THE RENEWAL OF A SPECIFIC USE PERMIT FOR A GAME ROOM AT 5130 TWIN CITY HIGHWAY: Mayor Pro Tem McAdams made a motion to deliberate and act on establishing a date for a Joint Public Hearing with the Planning and Zoning Commission on the renewal of a Specific Use Permit for a Game Room at 5130 Twin City Highway. Councilmember Rhonda Dugas seconded. Mayor Pro Tem McAdams amended his previous motion to include the date of May 6, 2024 at 5:00 p.m. and Councilmember Dugas seconded. There were no further questions and the motion passed unanimously.

DELIBERATE AND ACT ON ORDINANCE CLOSING, ABANDONING, AND VACATING A PORTION OF A DEDICATED UTILITY EASEMENT AT 5901 39TH STREET: Mayor Pro Tem McAdams made a motion to deliberate and act of ordinance closing, abandoning, and vacating a portion of a dedicated utility easement at 5901 39th Street. Councilmember Dugas seconded. Mayor Borne then read the caption as follows: "An ordinance closing, abandoning and vacating a portion of a dedicated utility easement in the City of Groves, Texas, described herein below, and providing an effective date." City Manager Kevin Carruth stated that this appears to be an orphaned remnant of a utility easement from who knows how far back. It runs through the middle of what use to be the Mason's building. The City has no use for this utility easement and have no future plans for it so staff recommends approval the abandonment of this utility easement. There were no further questions and the motion passed unanimously.

INVOICES: City Manager Kevin Carruth presented invoices for payment totaling \$52,575.89 as follows:

1. Frakes Construction	Materials and construction of grading Replacement at water plant.	\$35,714.29
2. PVS DX, Inc	Chlorine for Water Plant.	\$6,861.60
3. Wathen, DeShong & Junker	Interim bill for City Auditor.	\$10,000.00

Councilmember Rhonda Dugas moved to approve payment of the invoices totaling \$52,575.89 and Councilmember Paul Oliver seconded. Councilmember Dugas asked if the payment to Wathen, DeShong & Junker is our last payment and Finance Director Lamar Ozley stated that this is the second out of three payments. There were no other questions and motion passed unanimously.

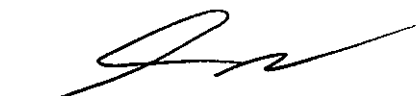
Mayor Borne asked for Councilmember comments. Council congratulated and welcomed the two new hires. Mayor Borne thanked VFW 4820. There were no further comments.

There was no further business and Mayor Borne adjourned the meeting at 6:10 p.m.



Mayor

ATTEST:



City Clerk

