

A regular meeting of the Groves City Council was held March 25, 2024 in the Groves City Council Chamber with Mayor Chris Borne, Mayor Pro Tem Mark McAdams, Councilmember Rhonda Dugas, Councilmember Pete Konidis and Councilmember Paul Oliver in attendance. Mayor Borne called the meeting to order and welcomed the attendees and news media. Mayor Borne then led the prayer and pledge of allegiance.

APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MARCH 11, 2024 CITY COUNCIL MEETING: Mayor Pro Tem McAdams moved to approve the minutes of the March 11, 2024 City Council meeting as written and Councilmember Oliver seconded. Mayor Borne asked for questions and there were none. Motion passed unanimously.

PRESENTATION OF A PROCLAMATION DESIGNATING HAEN GROVE AS THE 2023 GROVES FIREMAN OF THE YEAR: Mayor Borne then presented Haden Grove with the proclamation.

Mayor Borne asked for reports and the first report was the Annual Fire Department Report from Fire Chief Lance Billeaud. Chief Billeaud then addressed Council stating that he was going to hit the highlights from this report. Chief Billeaud then read the mission statement of the Groves Fire Department along with the Core Values. Chief Billeaud then went over the Emergency Responses for 2023 that were a total of 2058 calls. Chief Billeaud gave Council a comparison of the amount of calls over the last four years. The Annual Fire Report also breaks down the years of service for all firefighters and volunteer firefighters along with their number of training hours. The Special Events portion of the report wasn't tracked the whole year so Mr. Billeaud informed Council that it will be tracked better for the upcoming year. The end of the report listed all of the inspections that were done for 2023 with a total of 72 for commercial occupancies. Chief Billeaud then asked if Council had any questions. Mayor Pro Tem McAdams asked Chief Billeaud to explain about the agreement we have with Port Neches and Nederland. Mr. Billeaud stated that we have an automatic assistance meaning that if there is a structure fire in any one of the cities then the other two cities automatically send an engine and two personnel. Councilmember Dugas asked if there are any inspections for the game rooms and Mr. Billeaud stated that the way it was documented they would not show up on this report but he could get those for her.

Mayor Borne stated the next report will be a discussion of public sculpture from the Chamber of Commerce and Groves Pecan Festival. Groves Chamber of Commerce Director Letha Knaus passed out the scale drawings of the sculpture to Council. Mrs. Knaus then explained where this idea came from stating the Chamber President was

traveling through Seguin Texas with his family. While visiting Seguin they found out that they were known for having the world's largest pecan and then they were determined that Groves needed one bigger and better. Mrs. Knaus then started researching to find the most economical way to get one for the City of Groves. Mrs. Knaus and the Chamber Board decided to use fiberglass to make this sculpture and also to make it 17 feet long. By making the sculpture 17 feet long it will make it the largest pecan in the world. Mrs. Knaus then stated the purpose of this statue is to bring people into Groves. The goal is to have it built before the 2024 Pecan Festival begins and to have it dedicated to the City during that time. Councilmember Konidis asked how it would fasten to the ground and Chamber President Bert Lamson stated that it would be sitting on a concrete base. Mrs. Knaus stated that she hopes Council likes the sculpture and also hopes that Council will accept it. City Manager Kevin Carruth stated that for tonight this is just a discussion and Council can act at a later date. There were no further reports.

Mayor Borne then asked for citizen comments and there were none.

DELIBERATE AND ACT ON HOTEL OCCUPANCY TAX FUNDING REQUEST BY KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS FOR THE 18TH ANNUAL ESTELLE AND ALLEN FETTERS CENTER GOLF TOURNAMENT: Councilmember Pete Konidis made a motion to deliberate and act on Hotel Occupancy Tax Funding request by Knights of Columbus for the 18th Annual Estelle and Allen Fetters Center Golf Tournament. Councilmember Paul Oliver seconded. Mr. Leroy Falcon spoke on behalf of the KC's informing Council that because of the City's donation last year they were able to donate a total of \$15,000 to the Fetters Center to help with their expenses throughout the year. Mr. Falcon then invited Roxanne Somerville who is the person that runs the Fetter's Center. Mrs. Somerville gave a brief history about the Fetter's Center and how she became involved with the organization. Mrs. Somerville then informed Council that because of the KC's the Fetter's Center did not end up having to close its doors in 2005. Mrs. Somerville then stated that this center is very needed so that the special citizens in our area have a place to go. Council then looked at the history of what they have donated over the years to this event. Councilmember Dugas stated that \$4,198 would be acceptable as to what the Hotel Occupancy Tax is allowed to go towards. Councilmember Konidis amended his previous motion to include not to exceed \$4,000 and Councilmember Oliver seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

DELIBERATE AND ACT ON THE APPOINTMENT OF A SELECTION REVIEW COMMITTEE FOR RESPONSES TO THE AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR PROFESSIONAL ADMINISTRATION

SERVICES: Councilmember Rhonda Dugas made a motion to deliberate and act on the appointment of a selection review committee for responses to the American Rescue Plan Act request for proposals for professional administration services. Mayor Pro Tem Mark McAdams seconded. City Manager Kevin Carruth stated that a couple of weeks back Council had authorized the City to go out for an RFP to select a grant administrator and that RFP is due April 2, 2024. The idea is to bring it back to Council on April 22, 2024 and part of that process includes selecting a review committee. The committee can be any size but staff is recommending three people made up of the Mayor, Finance Director and Public Works Director. Once the RFP's come in on April 2nd that committee will get together and evaluate the proposals using the review sheet then make a recommendation to Council. Councilmember Dugas stated she would like to be on the committee, be there in the meeting or at least have all of the information first hand. Mr. Carruth stated that you can have four people on the committee but you would still have to have a majority decision. Mr. Carruth also stated that you have to be careful because if you have more than two Councilmembers then it becomes an open meeting requirement. Councilmember Dugas then stated that if she is not on the committee then she wants to know when the meetings are and she wants to be there. City Attorney Brandon P. Monk stated that if you let more than the committee attend the meeting then it may cause posting requirements. Mayor Borne stated that he would be ok with just the three committee members there. Councilmember Oliver asked if there would be minutes taken at the meeting and City Manager Kevin Carruth stated that it would just be rating sheets.

Mayor Borne asked if Council has to accept the recommendation of the committee and Mr. Carruth stated they do not. Mayor Borne then stated that the Council still has ultimate control in selection process. Councilmember Dugas stated that she wants a copy as soon as the committee gets theirs and City Attorney Brandon P. Monk stated that by giving out copies to Council before a selection is made then that could make that public information. Councilmember Dugas amended her previous motion for the selection review committee to include the Mayor, Finance Director and Public Works Director. Mayor Pro Tem McAdams seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

DELIBERATE ON POSSIBLE REVISIONS TO CODE OF ORDINANCES CHAPTER 21, ARTICLE III – GAME ROOMS AND GAMING DEVICES AND POSSIBLE WORKSHOP DATE:

Councilmember Dugas made a motion to deliberate on possible revisions to Code of Ordinances Chapter 21, Article III – Game Rooms and Gaming Devices and possible workshop date. Councilmember Konidis seconded. Councilmember Dugas stated that at the last Planning and Zoning Meeting quite a

few questions came up regarding the Game Room Ordinance that needs to be addressed. Ms. Dugas stated that one of the things in question would be maybe limiting the zones that game rooms are allowed to be in. Councilmember Oliver asked how many game rooms we have in Groves and Mayor Borne stated that we have five. Mayor Borne asked how this item came to be on the agenda and City Attorney Brandon P. Monk stated that Councilmember Dugas requested that it be on the agenda. Mayor Borne then stated that if she requested it to be on the agenda then she would have needed another councilmember to second it. Mr. Monk then stated that it is his understanding that the City Attorney is also allowed to place items on the agenda. Mayor Borne then stated so that without a legal explanation of why you want an item on there you can just put things on our agenda. City Attorney Brandon P. Monk then stated that there were questions raised by Planning and Zoning that he thought needed to be discussed with all of Council. Councilmember Oliver asked since we went over all if this last year is there anything else that can be done to change the Ordinance that is set now for example the dollar amount. Mr. Monk stated that you would have to review the cost over the previous year to see if they are keeping the city even and not raising money by the fees and expenses for the machines. Mr. Monk also stated that any increase in fees would have to come with review of what resources the city is using and are we not adequately getting compensated. City Attorney Brandon P. Monk then stated without looking at the cost from the city closer he doesn't see a justification for an increase.

Councilmember Dugas amended her previous motion to include a workshop date of April 3, 2024 at 5 p.m. and Councilmember Oliver seconded. Motion passed with all in favor except for Councilmember Konidis.

DELIBERATE AND ACT ON ORDINANCE 2024-04 SUSPENDING THE RATES PROPOSED BY TEXAS GAS SERVICE COMPANY'S GAS RELIABILITY INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM FILING OF FEBRUARY 9, 2024: Mayor Pro Tem Mark McAdams made a motion to deliberate and act on Ordinance 2024-04 suspending the rates proposed by Texas Gas Service Company's Gas Reliability Infrastructure Program filing of February 9, 2024. Councilmember Oliver seconded. City Attorney read the caption as follows: "Finding that the meeting complies with the open meetings act; making other findings and provisions related to the subject, and declaring an effective date." Mayor Borne asked if this is our standard we don't agree then they fight it out and Mr. Monk replied yes. There were no further questions and the motion passed unanimously.

INVOICES: City Manager Kevin Carruth presented invoices for payment totaling \$699,259.35 as follows:

1. City of Port Arthur	Landfill sludge disposal for February 2024.	\$5,200.00
2. Fuelman of Lafayette	Gas and diesel for February 2024.	\$16,639.05
3. Patterson Equipment	Sewer Jetter Trailer.	\$107,105.00
4. Republic Services	Sludge Disposal for February 2024.	\$9,315.30
5. Siddons – Martin Emergency Group	Down payment for new Pumper ordered in November.	\$561,000.00

Mayor Pro Tem McAdams moved to approve payment of the March 25, 2024 invoices totaling \$699,259.35 and Councilmember Konidis seconded. Mayor Borne asked since we received the sewer trailer if we are going to try and sell the other one and Public Works Director Troy Foxworth stated as soon as we get another one to be able to clean the culverts. City Manager Kevin Carruth stated that in the meantime we are using the big purple truck to clean the culverts. Councilmember Dugas asked Mr. Carruth what he said about the Pumper Truck and Mr. Carruth stated that the lead-time on fire trucks is about 4 years. Councilmember Dugas asked how many more payments we have and this payment was just half of the total cost which was the leftover bond money. Motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Borne asked for Councilmember comments. Councilmember Pete Konidis wanted to congratulate Haden Grove again on winning Fireman of the Year. Mayor Borne also congratulated Haden. There were no further comments.

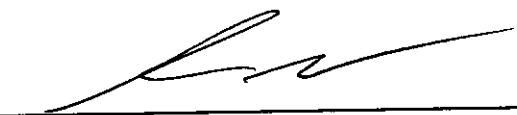


Mayor Borne thanked everyone for their attendance and adjourned the meeting at 6:06 p.m.



Mayor

ATTEST:



City Clerk

