

A regular meeting of the Groves City Council was held on December 23, 2024, in the Groves City Council Chamber with Mayor Chris Borne, Mayor Pro Tem Mark McAdams, Councilmember Paul Oliver, Councilmember Pete Konidis, and Councilmember Rhonda Dugas in attendance. Mayor Borne called the meeting to order and welcomed the attendees and news media. A representative from the local VFW then led the prayer and pledge of allegiance.

Mayor Borne called for reports, and City Manager Kevin Carruth wanted to remind anyone paying water bills online that the City uses third-party vendors. When the pay button is hit multiple times, it will charge customers for all of those times. Mr. Carruth then stated that the City can reverse those charges, but we can't reverse a charge until it hits the City's account. The City Manager also reminded everyone that their credit card and bank agreements all have clauses stating that deposits can take up to seven to ten days to post to the customer's account. Mr. Carruth then said that customers must call the City if they have multiple payments.

City Marshal Christopher Robin then gave a report regarding the 2024 Blue Santa Program that was held on December 17, 2024. This program was able to help 13 families and just under 50 children get gifts for Christmas. Marshal Robin then stated that these volunteers played a major role in this event Danceworks, PNG's Key Club, Criminal Justice Club, and National Honor Society. There were no further reports.

Mayor Borne then presented service awards for Councilmember Rhonda Dugas and Councilmember Paul Oliver.

Mayor Borne then called for citizen comments and Katherine White of 2321 Nottingham Lane asked Council to explain the increase in water bills. Mayor Borne informed Ms. White that during citizen comments there cannot be a back-and-forth discussion but the City Manager would be happy to speak to her one on one.

Council Member Rhonda Dugas of 6079 Smith Street left the dais and spoke from the podium as a citizen lodging numerous complaints and allegations against various members of the Council, Chamber of Commerce, and members of the audience.

There were no further citizen comments.

DELIBERATE AND ACT TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 2, 2024, CITY COUNCIL MEETING AND JOINT PUBLIC HEARING: Councilmember Konidis moved to approve the minutes of the December 2, 2024, City Council Meeting and Joint Public Hearing as written and Mayor Pro Tem McAdams seconded. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 2, 2024, PLANNING AND ZONING MEETING: Mayor Borne stated that all Councilmembers received a copy in their packets.

DELIBERATE AND ACT ON ORDINANCE 2024-35, CANVASSING BALLOTS FROM THE DECEMBER 14, 2024, RUNOFF ELECTION FOR WARDS 2 AND 4: Mayor Pro Tem McAdams made a motion to deliberate and act on Ordinance 2024-35, canvassing ballots from the December 14, 2024, Runoff Election for Wards 2 and 4. Councilmember Konidis seconded. Mayor Borne read the Ordinance aloud. There were no questions. The motion passed with Mayor Borne, Mayor Pro Tem McAdams, Councilmember Konidis, and Councilmember Oliver in favor of the motion. Councilmember Dugas voted against the motion.

ADMINISTER OATHS OF OFFICE TO NEWLY ELECTED COUNCILMEMBER FOR WARD 2 AND COUNCILMEMBER FOR WARD 4: City Clerk Clarissa Thibodeaux then administered Oaths of Office to Councilmember Ward 2 Brandon Holmes and Councilmember Ward 4 Rae Shauna Gay. Councilmember Holmes and Councilmember Gay then took their respective seats.

DELIBERATE AND ACT ON ELECTING A MAYOR PRO TEMPORE FOR THE UPCOMING YEAR: Mayor Borne made a motion to elect Councilmember Konidis from Ward 3 as the Mayor Pro Tempore for the upcoming year and Mayor Pro Tem McAdams seconded. Mayor Borne then explained that the Mayor Pro Tem is usually rotated between Wards, last year was Councilmember Ward 2 but he deferred back to Ward 1. The motion passed unanimously.

DELIBERATE AND ACT ON AN ORDINANCE 2024-33, AUTHORIZING A SPECIFIC USE PERMIT FOR GAMING MACHINES & GAME ROOMS AT 6850 25<sup>TH</sup> ST: Mayor Pro Tem Konidis made a motion to deliberate and act on an Ordinance 2024-33, authorizing a specific use permit for Gaming Machines & Game Rooms at 6850 25<sup>th</sup> St. and Councilmember Holmes seconded. Mayor Pro Tem Konidis asked if the issues from the last meeting were fixed and Building Official Don Pedraza stated they have been taken care of. Mayor Borne asked if there were any concerns from Planning and Zoning and there were none. There were no further questions and the motion passed unanimously.

DELIBERATE AND ACT ON APPROVAL OF ORDINANCE 2024-34, AMENDING CHAPTER 4 – ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES, SECTION 4-6 – AREAS WHERE SALE OF BEER AND WINE PERMITTED FOR CONSUMPTION ON PREMISES BY

INCLUDING THE METES AND BOUNDS OF 5600 39<sup>TH</sup> ST. FOR MILAGAGROS TEX MEX GRILL: Councilmember McAdams made a motion to deliberate and act on approval of Ordinance 2024-34 and Councilmember Gay seconded. Mayor Borne asked if they have applied for the City permit and City Manager Kevin Carruth stated they have not but this Ordinance would allow them to apply. Councilmember Holmes asked when they would be allowed to start serving alcohol and City Manager Kevin Carruth stated they are already serving. City Attorney Brandon P. Monk stated that the City authorizes specific locations by ordinance to be able to serve and there is also a permit issued by the state. Mr. Monk then stated that both of these permits must be obtained to be able to serve. City Manager Kevin Carruth then explained that the state will not step in for a business serving alcohol without a City permit until 180 days. There were no further questions and the motion passed unanimously.

HEAR AND DELIBERATE ON AN UPDATE TO THE EDWARD BYRNE MEMORIAL JUSTICE ASSISTANCE GRANT PROGRAM AND BODY-WORN CAMERA PROGRAM APPLICATIONS: Mayor Borne stated that this item is informational only so no motion is needed. City Marshal Robin then updated the Council on these two grant programs. Marshal Robin informed the Council that the State of Texas would fully fund these grants. Please see the accompanying memo for all updates. Councilmember Holmes asked Marshal Robin about the vehicle cameras if a vehicle is released to Enterprise and Marshal Robin stated that the camera components would be removed before turning the vehicle over. There were no further questions.

DELIBERATE AND ACT TO RATIFY THE CITY MANAGER'S EXECUTION OF A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH THE TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY TO COMPLY WITH THE TEXAS STATEWIDE INTERLOCAL CHANNEL PLAN: Mayor Pro Tem Konidis made a motion to deliberate and act to ratify the City Manager's execution of a Memorandum of Understanding with the Texas Department of Public Safety to comply with the Texas Statewide Interlocal Channel Plan and Councilmember McAdams seconded. City Manager Kevin Carruth stated that one of the requirements for the grants that Marshal Robin just discussed is to agree to follow the Texas Statewide Interlocal Channel Plan. City Manager Kevin Carruth also informed Council that because of the holidays and the deadline, we executed this agreement and now Council just needs to ratify what has already been done. There were no further questions and the motion passed unanimously.

DELIBERATE AND ACT ON ORDINANCE 2024-36, AMENDING CHAPTER 9 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> - EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES: Councilmember Holmes made a motion to deliberate and act on Ordinance 2024-36,

amending Chapter 9 ¾ - Emergency Medical Services of the Code of Ordinances. Councilmember Gay seconded. Chief Billeaud informed Council that back in January, a moratorium was placed on the EMS permits, giving the 3 Fire Chiefs a chance to revise our EMS ordinance. Chief Billeaud then explained that insurance required by the EMS service for damages for bodily injury or death for 1 person went from \$500,00 to \$1,000,000 and for 2 people went from \$800,000 to \$2,000,000. There was also verbiage changed to allow the fire department to use appropriate means of transportation in a significant delay under TX House Bill 624. Section 10 of Liquidated Damages was also updated for priority 1 call responses greater than 11 minutes there can be a fine of up to \$1,000. Priority 2 calls were also added; a response time of over 20 minutes can be fined up to \$750. Mayor Borne asked if the construction around this area is taken into consideration and if they are required to have a certain number of available units in Groves and Chief Billeaud stated that we do have an agreement with Acadian to dedicate one ambulance to the three mid-cities. Chief Billeaud also stated that we do have to take into consideration when patients want to go to Beaumont for treatment. Councilmember Konidis asked who is keeping the stats for the times and Chief Billeaud stated he gets the times from dispatch to make sure they match what Acadian has. Councilmember Holmes asked if we have ambulances within our fire department and Chief Billeaud stated none of the mid-cities have them within the fire department. Councilmember Konidis asked we have been able to establish a second company to back Acadian if they run late and Chief Billeaud stated that we cannot renew a permit until December 31<sup>st</sup> of this year and no one else has even asked. There were no further questions and the motion passed unanimously.

**DELIBERATE AND ACT ON RESOLUTION 2024-11, APPROVING THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE TEXAS ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR THE PROPOSED SETTLEMENT OF OPIOID CLAIMS AGAINST THE KROGER CORPORATION, AND AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO EXECUTE THE SUBDIVISION PARTICIPATION FORM:** Councilmember Konidis made a motion to deliberate and act on Resolution 2024-11, and Councilmember Gay seconded. City Manager Kevin Carruth reminded Council that a few years ago there was a big billion-dollar settlement opioid case and Texas decided to break it up between different retailers. This is the one from the Kroger Corporation. There were no further questions and the motion passed unanimously.

**INVOICES:** City Manager Kevin Carruth presented invoices for payment totaling \$181,689.43 as follows:

1. Brenntag Southwest Inc.	Brennfloc aid.	\$9,830.00
2. Chameleon Industries	Polymer for Water Plant.	\$34,200.00
3. Citibank	Purchasing card payment for all departments.	\$9,858.26
4. Core & Main L.P.	Register antennas.	\$35,280.00
5. Enterprise	Vehicle lease payment for 2 months.	\$15,298.09
6. Fuelman of Lafayette	Gas and diesel for November 2024.	\$13,733.42
7. Lower Neches Valley Authority	Raw water purchase for November 2024.	\$29,700.00
8. PVS DX, INC	Chlorine for Water Plant.	\$6,861.60
9. TCEQ	Water system fee.	\$17,485.65
10. Vulcan Construction Materials, LP	194 tons of base material for streets.	\$9,442.41


Councilmember McAdams made a motion to approve the December 23, 2024 invoice list totaling \$181,689.43 and Mayor Pro Tem Konidis seconded. Mayor Pro Tem Konidis asked about the register antennas and Mr. Carruth stated that those are needed for the handheld to be able to pick up the readings for the water meters. Assistant Public Works Director Glen Boudoin stated that was for 1,150 antennas. There were no further questions and the motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Borne asked for Council comments and all of the Council welcomed Councilmember Holmes and Gay. Mayor Pro Tem Konidis also wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Mayor Borne apologized to the citizens for the language that was used earlier and thanked everyone for voting to improve this

City. Councilmember Gay thanked everyone for putting their trust in her and Councilmember Holmes thanked everyone for the opportunity to serve the citizens. There was no further business and the meeting was adjourned at 6:03 p.m.

  
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Mayor

ATTEST:

  
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City Clerk



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## MEMORANDUM TO CITY COUNCIL

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To: Kevin Carruth, City Manager  
From: Christopher Robin, City Marshal  
Date: December 17th, 2024  
Re: An update on the grants approved in January 2024

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I am writing to update you on the two grant applications we submitted earlier this year. I initially brought the grant applications to the City Council on January 29th, 2024. Chief Deputy Phillips and I petitioned the state for two grants: one competitive state grant for body-worn cameras, and one through the regional planning commission for portable radios. I am pleased to report we have received confirmation that both grants are to be fully awarded.

I have included a portion of the documentation from the initial reports presented to the council as well as copies of the documentation utilized in justifying our position during the grant writing process. As you can see, the State will be fully funding our request for radios; \$28,137.10.

For the body-worn camera grant, only equipment directly related to the installation and use of body-worn cameras could be included in the application. Therefore approximately 58% of the total value of the Utility contract will be funded by the state. The 25% grant-required city match will pay for the rest of the body-worn camera-related equipment and service. We will pay the remainder of the invoice in four additional installments over the next four years, this being the payments for all in-car-related equipment. With that said, we are obtaining 100% of what was petitioned from the state, a total of \$110,917.54.

As a body-worn camera reminder, we received quotes from four (4) companies for an overhaul of our deteriorating in-car and body-worn camera hardware/software. We decided to go with Utility due to their equipment, service, software, and price. Their bid was the 3rd lowest out of the four and we included their 5-year service breakdown into the projected Capital Outlay numbers during the budget negotiation process with the city. We signed the contract with them last month and already have the equipment awaiting installation and training.

With the grants now secured, we must begin fulfilling our obligations in the grant process promptly. The sooner we proceed, the quicker we can secure reimbursement. Please note that the larger of these two grants, an invoice from Utility for the body-worn cameras, will be listed on today's meeting invoice. The second grant will be charged as soon as the associated products arrive. We will keep the council updated as we move forward with the next steps. Thank you for your continued support as we begin to implement these projects.

Best regards,

City Marshal Christopher Robin