A regular meeting of the Groves City Council was held on October 13, 2025, in the Groves City Council Chamber with Mayor Chris Borne, Mayor Pro Tem Pete Konidis, Councilmember Mark McAdams, and Councilmember Rae Shauna Gay in attendance. Councilmember Brandon Holmes was not present. Mayor Borne called the meeting to order and welcomed the attendees and news media. A representative from VFW Post 4820 then led the prayer and pledge of allegiance.

Mayor Borne asked for reports, and City Manager Kevin Carruth stated that last week was a very busy week for the community and staff. There was National Night Out, which we believed was the best turnout we have had for this event. Staff did an excellent job pulling everything together, and it turned really, really well. The Pecan Festival was last weekend, and we haven't heard an official count in terms of people or how well the vendors did, but by the looks of it, it went very well. There were no further reports.

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

DELIBERATE AND ACT TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 22, 2025, CITY COUNCIL MEETING: Mayor Pro Tem Konidis made a motion to deliberate and act to approve the minutes of the September 22, 2025, City Council Meeting, and Councilmember McAdams seconded. There was no discussion, and the motion passed unanimously.

DELIBERATE AND ACT ON THE NOMINATION OF BERT LAMSON TO THE JEFFERSON COUNTY APPRAISAL DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS: Councilmember McAdams made a motion to deliberate and act on the nomination of Bert Lamson to the Jefferson County Appraisal District Board of Directors, and Mayor Pro Tem Konidis seconded. Mayor Borne asked Mr. Lamson if he would like to do that, and Mr. Lamson stated he would. Mr. Lamson then noted that this would be his second go-around, but that the first time he was employed by the Port Arthur School District, which disqualified him from filling the position. He is now retired. Mayor Pro Tem Konidis and Councilmember McAdams both stated that they think Mr. Lamson would be a great asset. City Clerk Clarissa Thibodeaux asked City Attorney Brandon P. Monk if we needed to add the resolution number to the motion, and Mr. Monk stated we do. Councilmember McAdams amended his previous motion to add resolution 2025-10, and Mayor Pro Tem Konidis seconded. There were no further questions, and the motion passed unanimously.

DELIBERATE AND ACT ON RESOLUTION 2025-09, AUTHORIZING THE SUBMITTAL OF A PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICE – HOMELAND SECURITY GRANT PROGRAM FY 2026 GRANT TO PURCHASE AN UNMANNED AIRCRAFT

SYSTEM AND DESIGNATING THE CITY MARSHAL AS THE AUTHORIZED OFFICER: Councilmember Gay made a motion to deliberate and act on Resolution 2025-09, and Mayor Pro Tem Konidis seconded. City Marshal Christopher Robin thanked the Council for allowing him to present another grant opportunity. Over the last year and a half, we have implemented many of these resolutions. The resolution is required for us to fully submit this application to the State and be considered in their grant process. With the Public Safety Office – Homeland Security Grant, we are seeking $66,716.30 of the funds they are making available to the State to obtain this Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS). This grant has no local match and will be fully funded through the Homeland Security Grant Program. The funding would provide the drone, warranty, services, and training, and would also offer licenses to a number of our officers to seek that training to fly it under FAA compliance. Licensing is necessary to fly these appropriately in a law enforcement capacity. Councilmember McAdams asked whether this funding includes software updates, and Marshal Robin stated that it absolutely does for the length of a year; any software updates would be provided. Marshal Robin then said that if anything additional is needed beyond what is provided in the base model, they would petition the Council for it. Mayor Pro Tem Konidis asked the Marshal to explain to the public what the drone could do. Marshal Robin stated that this particular grant is a border crisis response enhancement, so anything that could be articulated as a result of the border crisis in general, such as drug activity, etc. Marshal Robin stated that, although it has a primary purpose of responding to border-crisis situations, it can also be used for secondary purposes, such as natural disasters, public events, large crowds, and even infrastructure. There were no further questions, and the motion passed unanimously.

DELIBERATE AND ACT TO AWARD AN AGREEMENT FOR AUDITING SERVICES AND AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO NEGOTIATE AND EXECUTE ALL NECESSARY DOCUMENTS: Councilmember Gay made a motion to deliberate and act to award an agreement for auditing services and authorizing the City Manager to negotiate and execute all necessary documents. Councilmember McAdams seconded. Finance Director Lamar Ozley addressed the Council, stating that the current city auditor, Wathen, DeShong, & Juncker's, contract has expired, so we had to go out for an RFP for new auditing services, which the Council authorized on May 12, 2025. After the RFP went out, an audit review committee was formed for the three firms that submitted bids. The review committee, which consisted of the Finance Director, Mayor, and City Manager, met on October 1st, and the results are presented in the memo. The three firms that responded to the RFP were Wathen, DeShong, & Juncker, BrooksWatson & Co., and Mitchell T. Fontenote, CPA. Inc. The review committee then went through the grading process outlined in the RFP. The results were very close, but BrooksWatson & Co. is the committee's recommendation. This company has provided services to the City before and did a great job. Mayor Borne stated that he sat in on the committee and that it was very close, but BrooksWatson came out ahead. They are very significant in size and capabilities. Mr. Ozley stated that this would be a 3-year term with two one-year options. Councilmember McAdams asked what set BrooksWatson ahead of the others, and Mr. Ozley stated that it was the size of their firm and the number of local governments they serve. Mayor Borne added that their peer reviews were very recent and extensive. There were no further questions. Councilmember Gay amended her previous motion to use BrooksWatson for auditing services and authorizing the City Manager to negotiate and execute all necessary documents. Councilmember McAdams seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

DELIBERATE ON AMENDING DEFINITIONS, REQUIREMENTS, PENALTIES, AND ENFORCEMENT IN CODE OF ORDINANCES CHAPTER 21, ARTICLE III, GAME ROOMS AND GAMING MACHINES: Mayor Pro Tem Konidis made a motion to deliberate on amending definitions, requirements, penalties, and enforcement in Code of Ordinances Chapter 21, Article III, Game Rooms and Gaming Machines. Councilmember Gay seconded. City Attorney Brandon P. Monk stated that during the workshop, it was discussed that there would be at least two potential ordinances: one a complete ban on gambling devices and amusement redemption machines, and the other a ban on 8-liners. Mr. Monk stated that there was also some discussion about the fuzzy animal exception and the values associated with that. Mr. Monk also stated that the statute provides specific values. Hence, he thinks that is an area where the City may have to juggle the question of whether, if the state regulates it, the City can go further or do something different than what the state has said. Mr. Monk stated that a few options are outlined in the City Manager's memo. Mayor Borne asked whether we could restrict where they can open or how many machines they can have. Mr. Monk then stated that we have the option of the city choosing to place them in a specific zone or to limit the number of machines allowed. Mr. Monk then noted that the Council would contend with the fact that there was a case that said that the 8-liners were unconstitutional. It's a Fort Worth case, it's not in our district, but then they asked the Texas Supreme Court to look at it, and the Texas Supreme Court said, " No, we are not going to look at it". The trend towards 8-liners is to call them gambling devices and to call them unconstitutional. Mayor Borne asked if we could restrict game rooms from being within so many feet of a residential neighborhood, and Mr. Monk stated that he would caution against making a specific distance restriction from a neighborhood in your City. Counties can do that, but I don't really think we can.

Mayor Borne then asked how it would work if they said we could eliminate all chance and put in all skill-based machines, and Mr. Monk stated that he believes the way we are wording our proposed definitions will include any amount of chance that will be restricted. Mayor Borne then asked whether anything was happening that might help us make these decisions, and Mr. Monk stated that every year during the legislative session, there is talk about whether it's possible to fix the fuzzy animal exception, but it hasn't happened. Mr. Monk then stated that he thinks the State will have to act now that we have a case finding a constitutional issue, and then you have State Statutes that conflict with that. He can't see how the legislature's going to go very long without doing that, but that's the difficult problem that this Council is faced with, which is you're trying to balance a sort of constitutional ban and the interpretation of that. Meanwhile, the State statute is authorizing, and those are in conflict. Mayor Pro Tem Konidis asked when the moratorium ends, and Mayor Borne stated that it ends on November 18, 2025. Mayor Borne then indicated that he feels he doesn't have enough information or support to say, get rid of them altogether, or even let's keep them but do something else. Mayor Borne then stated that he would love to know the demographics of those using these machines, whether they are our citizens or not. Mayor Borne also indicated that he does not want to go beyond what the law allows, and that's where the gray line lies. Mr. Monk noted that Fort Worth took a shot and made many changes, some of which stood up, but they had to litigate three different cases, which took over 10 years to get to that. Mr. Monk stated that, as far as surveying data, he would put that in the category of other additional regulations. Councilmember McAdams asked whether the other cities around us that have already placed bans are banning just 8-liners or everything, and Mr. Monk stated that they are banning just 8-liners.

Mayor Borne asked where we stand on the moratorium. If we decide to extend it, do we need to scrap the current one and start a whole new one? Mr. Monk recommended doing a whole new one. Mr. Carruth asked whether there is an ultimate shelf life for the moratoriums, such as a maximum length of time, and Mr. Monk stated that it is okay and that you could do it for longer than six months at a time. Mayor Borne asked Mr. Monk whether he sees any legal issues with preventing new applications and allowing our current game rooms to continue operating until we make a final decision. Mr. Monk stated that he does not. Mayor Borne asked again whether it would be possible to find out the demographics of the people playing the machines—not names or anything, just the cities they live in. Mr. Monk stated that he could write something up for the next meeting. Mr. Carruth asked Marshal Robin if he knows of any driver's license readers that would lend themselves to what the Mayor is talking about, and he stated he does not off the top of his head. Mayor

Borne asked if any decisions had to be made today, and Mr. Carruth stated that this is not an action item. Mr. Carruth noted that we have two more meetings before the current moratorium runs out. Mayor Pro Tem Konidis noted that he would like to see the moratorium extended so we can have more time to verify everything. Mr. Carruth asked Mayor Borne whether he would like the next meeting to have an action item or a discussion, and the Mayor stated he would like an action item. There was no further discussion. This was not an action item.

DELIBERATE AND ACT ON THE OCTOBER 13, 2025, INVOICE LIST: Councilmember Gay made a motion to deliberate and act on the October 13, 2025, invoice list. Mayor Pro Tem Konidis seconded.

INVOICES: City Manager Kevin Carruth presented invoices for payment totaling $679,105.07 as follows:

1.	Allco, Inc	Payment #1 for WWTP repairs and improvements- ARPA Grant Monies.	$437,022.80
2.	Blue Iron Technologies	Annual software subscriptions.	$13,834.05
3.	Brenntag Southwest, INC	Sodium Hydroxide.	$6,774.02
4.	City of Port Arthur	Garbage and trash disposal August 2025.	$18,705.00
5.	EGSW	Micro-solve 55-gallon drum.	$6,550.00
6.	Hach Company	Hach annual service partnership.	$6,482.00
7.	Hach Company	Portable analyzer.	$7,612.00
8.	Heil of Texas	Dump arm for garbage truck.	$7,001.80
9.	Lower Neches Valley Authority	Raw water purchased for August 2025.	$27,600.00
10.	Lower Neches Valley Authority	Raw water purchased for September 2025.	$25,875.00

11. Lowe's Home Center	Tools for Water Plant, mini split AC for lift stations, office/lab and polymer room.	$5,974.02
12. Moody Bros., Inc	Annual preventative maintenance.	$5,892.00
13. Moody Bros., Inc	SO2 room overhaul.	$36,500.00
14. NewGen Strategies & Solutions	Invoice #2 for rate study update.	$9,500.00
15. PVS DX, INC	Chlorine for Water Plant.	$6,861.60
16. PVS DX, INC	CL2 and SO2 for Wastewater Plant.	$11,511.60
17. Republic Services, Inc	August container services.	$10,340.4[illegible]
18. Siemens Industry, Inc.	Alarm system repair of 4 faulty detectors and 1 pull station.	$5,219.66
19. United Communications Inc.	4 new Kenwood Viking VP8000 portable radios.	$13,292.00
20. Wex Bank	Fuel services for September 2025.	$16,557.07

Mayor Borne then asked for questions. Mayor Borne asked whether the dump arm for the garbage truck is for one of the newer trucks or an older truck, and Public Works Director Troy Foxworth stated it is for an older truck. Mayor Borne asked what the SO2 room overhaul consists of, and Mr. Foxworth noted that it is a budgeted item required by State Law. There were no further questions, and the motion passed unanimously.

CITY COUNCIL WILL HOLD AN EXECUTIVE SESSION PURSUANT TO THE PROVISIONS OF CHAPTER 551 OF THE TEXAS GOVERNMENT CODE, IN ACCORDANCE WITH AUTHORITY CONTAINED IN:

A. SECTION 551.071 (1) (A) – CONSULTATION WITH ATTORNEY WHEN THE GOVERNMENTAL BODY SEEKS THE ADVICE OF ITS ATTORNEY ABOUT PENDING OR CONTEMPLATED LITIGATION.
B. SECTION 551.072 – DELIBERATION REGARDING REAL PROPERTY.
C. RECONVENE INTO OPEN SESSION.

Council entered into Executive Session at 5:44 p.m.

Council reconvened into Open Session at 5:53 p.m.

DELIBERATE AND ACT TO SELL PART OF LOT 6 BLOCK 3 EAST PORT ARTHUR ADDITION, AKA JCAD PROPERTY ID 30457, AND AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO NEGOTIATE AND EXECUTE ALL NECESSARY DOCUMENTS: Mayor Pro Tem Konidis made a motion to deliberate and act to sell part of Lot 6 Block 3 East Port Arthur Addition, AKA JCAD Property ID 30457, and authorizing the City Manager to negotiate and execute all necessary documents. Councilmember McAdams seconded. Mayor Borne stated that, to clarify, this property was gifted to the City at no cost years ago. It is on the corner of 32nd and East Parkway and has no redeeming value whatsoever. The property cannot be built on due to TXDOT setback restrictions. A gentleman built a house next door to it, and it would make a nice side yard for him. This will get the property back on the tax roll, which is a win for the City. There was no further discussion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Borne asked for Council comments. Mayor Pro Tem Konidis commended the Police and Fire Departments for a great job during National Night Out, as well as the City personnel who helped with the Pecan Festival. Councilmember McAdams and Gay agreed with Councilmember Konidis. Mayor Borne stated the Chamber of Commerce did an amazing job with the Pecan Festival. There were no further comments.

There was no further business, and the meeting was adjourned at 5:58 p.m.

Mayor

ATTEST:

City Clerk