

CITY OF NATALIA

2078 State Hwy. 132 N. • P.O. Box 270 • Natalia, TX 78059-0270
(830) 663-2926 • Metro (830) 665-2206 • Fax (830) 663-3806

REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS 2078 STATE HWY 132 NORTH, NATALIA, TEXAS 18 MARCH 2024 at 7:00 P.M.

MINUTES

ROLL CALL: Mayor Tommy Ortiz – Present
Alderman Mike Fernandez – Present
Alderwoman Ruby Vera – Present
Mayor Pro-Tem Sam Smith – Present
Alderman Darin Frazier - Present
Alderman Selica Vera – Present

1. CALL TO ORDER:

Mayor Ortiz called the regular city council meeting to order at 7:08 pm; followed by the Pledge of Allegiance by Mayor Ortiz.

2. CITIZENS TO BE HEARD:

There were no citizens to be heard.

3. CITY COUNCIL COMMENTS:

Alderwoman S. Vera thanked the city staff and Nikki for keeping up with things in the city and keeping the city council informed. Alderman Frazier asked Art if work was being done in front of the bank and if it could be cleaned up before the Bluebonnet parade. Art responded that there was a fire hydrant leaking and it would be cleaned up before the parade. Alderman Frazier thanked the staff and agreed with Alderman Fernandez about having the downtown area prepared for the Bluebonnet parade and eclipse events coming. Alderwoman R. Vera thanked all the staff for their continued hard work around the city. Mayor Ortiz also thanked the city staff and reminded everyone about the upcoming events to be happening and asked that residents be patient as we have limited staff. Mayor Ortiz reminded everyone the MDD will be having an easter egg hunt on March 23rd at 2pm. Nichole Bermea asked the Devine News reporter to please include information about the event in the paper. Alderwoman R. Vera gave specifics and asked if any of the city council would be willing to donate money from their own pockets for golden easter eggs. City council members agreed they would donate.

4. CONSENT AGENDA:

All of the following items are considered to be routine by the City Council, there will be no separate discussion on these items and will be enacted with one motion; unless removed by any Council Member to discuss and consider separately by making such request prior to a motion and vote.

- a) Approval of the Minutes: 22 January 2024 Regular Meeting
- b) Approval of the Financial Activity Report: February 2024
- c) Approval of the Utility Department Activity Report: February 2024
- d) Approval of the Municipal Court Activity Report: February 2024
- e) Approval of the Police Department/Code Enforcement Activity Report: February 2024

Action: Alderman Fernandez made the motion approving the consent agenda, and Alderman Smith seconded the motion. Vote: 5-0; motion carried

5. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:

- a) City Administrator/Secretary Nichole Bermea reported that bulk pickup will be on April 15th. The demolition of the HOME program homes started today, and construction will follow. Nichole had a zoom meeting with Congressman Gonzales, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, which includes the FY24 Ag spending bill has been signed off on and just waiting for President Biden to sign off. Nichole reminded everyone to have patience because it takes approximately 8-10 months for funding to come. We will be receiving further information on the next steps in the future weeks. Nichole reported that Rise broadband has agreed to give the little league property and the library free internet service. Alderman Frazier stated he didn't realize the library had to pay for internet service. Amy explained the payment is made from the donations collected. They will be contacting Nichole to set up the installation in the next week. The repairs have been made to the concession stand. The board has a shade cover being constructed over the softball field home side bleachers and a concrete slab. Medina electric donated replacement lights for the baseball field. The new scoreboards have been installed. The existing electrical wiring to the old scoreboards was on one breaker and the amps are not sufficient for the new scoreboards. New upgraded wiring must be installed and two new breakers, one for each scoreboard. The work is due to be completed this week and will be done prior to opening day. Opening day is Saturday March 23, the city council is invited to breakfast at 8:15 with opening ceremonies following at 9am. Nichole reported the TML audit has been completed. Nichole plans to have the city attorney do a review of several ordinances as many laws have changed and affect ordinances. Nichole reported the hot water heater, and the air conditioner blower motor went out. The air conditioner has been repaired and the hot water will be repaired as soon as possible. The mayor went throughout the city and made a list of signs that need to be installed or replaced. Nichole stated we have several in the shop and the others will be ordered. The crosswalk signs are at city hall but with manpower down and the Rise broadband incidents our utility workers have been unable to install. Nichole has a candidate coming in tomorrow to interview for a seasonal position since we are down a utility worker due to medical reasons. Louie has been working with the fire marshal on the condemned properties that were previously started. Nichole gave a brief update on the eclipse plan for the city and Amy gave an update on the Bluebonnet parade and festival. Alderman Fernandez reminded everyone to please donate soda for the festival.
- b) Utility Director – Art Smith gave an update on the Rise broadband construction. He plans to request that they stop on any major work for the next few weeks until after the eclipse so that we can prepare the city for the Bluebonnet and eclipse events.
- c) Mayor – Mayor Ortiz thanked city staff and spoke of the upcoming events in the city and requested that anyone that is willing to come and help is welcome.

DISCUSSION/CONSIDERATION OF ACTION ITEMS:

6. Discussion/Consider Action on a resolution of the City of Natalia, Texas finding that AEP Texas Inc.'s application to amend its distribution cost recovery factors to increase distribution rates within the city should be denied; authorizing participation with the cities served by AEP Texas; authorizing hiring of legal counsel; finding that the city's reasonable rate case expenses shall be reimbursed by the company; finding that the meeting at which this resolution is passed is open to the public as required by law; requiring notice of this resolution to the company and legal counsel. Alderman Fernandez made a motion to adopt a resolution 24-01, authorizing participation with the cities served by AEP Texas; authorizing hiring of legal counsel; finding that the city's reasonable rate case expenses shall be reimbursed by the company; finding that the meeting at which this resolution is passed is open to the public as required by law; requiring notice of this resolution to the company and legal counsel. Alderwoman R. Vera seconded the motion. Motion carried; 5-0.
7. Discuss/Consider action of a Resolution; The City of Natalia Go Medina membership for the 23-24 Fiscal Year. Alderwoman R. Vera made a motion to adopt resolution 24-02 committing the city of Natalia to become a member of the Go Medina County Economic Development and designating representation. Alderman Frazier seconded the motion. Alderman Frazier asked what the city gets out of the membership. He stated this question has been asked by multiple council members in the past. He also

asked how much the membership fee is and how it is calculated. Alderwoman R. Vera stated that the membership gives the mayor a seat on the board giving voting rights on behalf of our city. It also keeps us informed of incoming economic development opportunities. Alderwoman R. Vera stated that the Natalia MDD is a member for a lessor fee however that does not give the city a vote on anything. Nichole Bermea stated that the fee is based on city population at \$1.00 per resident, \$1,640. Alderman Fernandez stated that growth is coming. It is in Lytle now and it is headed our way. Alderwoman R. Vera stated that while that may be true Natalia has very little open land in the city limits, we do have land in our ETJ to welcome economic development. Mayor Ortiz stated he had a motion and a second after discussion he called for a vote. Motion failed; 4-1.

8. Discuss/Consider acceptance of the Natalia Police Department 2022 Racial Profiling Report. Alderwoman R. Vera made a motion to accept the 2023 Racial Profiling Report. Alderman Smith seconded the motion. Motion carried; 5-0.
9. Discuss/Consider acceptance of Interlocal agreement between the City of Natalia and Medina County Emergency Services District #4 regarding construction and operation of a 24-hour EMS station. Nichole Bermea explained that the city attorney has presented a revised interlocal agreement with the revisions highlighted in section III, Fee Determinable Required, 3.1 revised and 3.2, 3.3 added. Nichole stated they are requesting water, sewer and waste disposal at no charge and while the water and sewer is fair the property will no longer be owned by the city, and we cannot provide garbage services at no charge. Alderwoman R. Vera made a motion to accept the Interlocal agreement with MCESD #4 to construct a 24-hour EMS station with the revision of the waste disposal at no charge removed from the agreement. Alderman Frazier seconded the motion. Motion carried; 5-0.
10. Discuss/Consider Interlocal Cooperation Contract between DPS and the Natalia Municipal Court. Nichole Bermea explained this is an updated contract due to legislative changes. This is for the Omni/Failure to appear program. Alderwoman R. Vera made a motion to accept the Interlocal cooperation contract between DPS and the Natalia municipal court. Alderman Smith seconded the motion. Motion carried; 5-0.
11. Discuss/Consider Texas Rebuild/E3 update and a Professional Services Agreement between the City of Natalia and Texas Rebuild/E3. Larry Jones from Texas Rebuild presented preliminary study information on the scope of work needed city wide to include the WWTP, water storage tower and standpipe and the ballpark lift station. Larry explained they need to bring in professional services to give a more accurate assessment of some areas of the scope of work. This professional services agreement will cover these services. Nichole Bermea stressed the need for accurate assessment, especially with the WWTP and water storage tanks. These areas need repairs to avoid future issues. Alderman Frazier stated that some of the areas could be completed by local contractors and do not need to be included in this. Nichole Bermea explained that this is just an assessment of the needs and costs to repair/replace. The city will be able to select individual or multiple project areas to address. Alderwoman R. Vera made a motion to enter into a professional services agreement with Texas Rebuild/E3. Alderwoman S. Vera seconded the motion. Motion carried; 5-0.
12. Discuss/Consider authorizing city administrator to engage in an agreement with auditor. Nichole Bermea explained that the city needs to hire an auditor as soon as possible. The quotes that have come in are expensive and much higher than what we have paid in the past years. The city auditor retired suddenly and is no longer in practice. Alderman Smith made a motion to authorize the city administrator to engage in an agreement with an auditor for up to \$40,000 to include the Natalia Municipal Development Districts portion of the audit. Alderwoman S. Vera seconded the motion. Motion carried; 5-0.
13. Discuss/Consider daily rental of ballpark facilities and fields and setting rental fees (Tabled item from 1/2024). Alderman Fernandez stated that he feels the City of Pearsall has the best and clear-cut rental agreement and fees. Alderman Smith asked if the rental agreements were all city-maintained facilities. Nichole explained that Devine and Natalia are maintained by the school districts. Alderman Fernandez

stated that this item is irrelevant right now because the Little League has the contract for the fields until the season is over. Alderman Frazier agreed. Nichole stated that was correct and if the city council wanted to hold off at this time it was their decision. Alderwoman R. Vera made a motion to table item #13 until a later date. Alderman Fernandez seconded the motion. Motion carried; 5-0.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: - No closed session – No action.

14. The city council will meet in closed session pursuant to Government Code Section 551.072, real property, to deliberate the value and location of real property in relation to public safety.
 - b) §551.072; Real Property:


REGULAR SESSION:

15. The City Council shall reconvene into Regular Session, and if necessary, may act on items discussed in Executive Session:
 - a. §551.072; Real Property: MCESD #4 construction and operation of a 24-hour EMS station

ADJOURNMENT Alderwoman R. Vera made a motion to adjourn at 8:23 pm. Alderman Fernandez seconded the motion. Motion carried; 5-0.

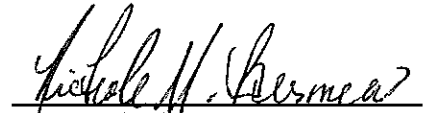
Passed and Approved this 15th day of April, 2024.

Approval:



Tommy Ortiz, Mayor /or/
Sam Smith, Mayor Pro-Tem

Attest:



Nichole M. Bermea
Interim City Administrator/Secretary

