

CITY OF NATALIA

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**REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING
CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS
2078 STATE HWY 132 NORTH, NATALIA, TEXAS 78059
20 MARCH 2023 at 7.00 P.M.**

MINUTES

ROLL CALL: Mayor Samuel Bluemel – Present
Alderman Mike Fernandez – Present
Alderman Tommy Ortiz – Present

Mayor Pro-Tem Sam Smith – Present
Alderman Darin Frazier - Present
Alderman Selica Vera – Present

1. CALL TO ORDER:

Mayor Bluemel called the regular city council meeting to order at 7:00 pm; followed by the Pledge of Allegiance lead by Alderman Vera and Invocation by Mayor Bluemel.

2. CITIZENS TO BE HEARD: No citizens to be heard.

3. CITY COUNCIL COMMENTS:

Alderdwoman Vera thanked everyone in their efforts for community clean up and the utility department for storm cleanup. Alderdwoman Vera stated that the dog issues appear to be getting better and we need to continue efforts towards the city's dog loose issue. Alderman Fernandez stated that the bulk and brush pickup went well and to keep an eye on the citizens still putting items out when they're not supposed too. Alderman Fernandez thank staff for painting the curbs in front of city hall and brought to attention that we still have a citizen parking an 18-wheeler on highway 132 and it needs to be addressed. Alderman Frazier thanked the employees for their hard work around the city and for installing new lights in the council chambers. Alderman Smith agreed with Alderman Frazier's comments. Alderman Ortiz also agreed and stated things are looking good around the city.

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: 21 February 2023 Regular Meeting
- b) Approval of the Financial Activity Report: February 2023
- c) Approval of the Utility Department Activity Report: February 2023
- d) Approval of the Municipal Court Activity Report: February 2023
- e) Approval of the Police Department/Code Enforcement Activity Report: February 2023

Action: Alderman Frazier made the motion approving the consent agenda, and Alderdwoman Vera seconded the motion. Motion carried; 5-0.

5. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:

a) City Administrator/Secretary – Nikki Bermea reported that two HOME program homes have been fully approved and two more in in final approval process. The Bluebonnet Festival committee is asking for donations of soda and water. The parade and festival will be held on Saturday March 25th. The quarterly bulk/brush has been completed and a roll off container is still available for residents to dump bulk/brush until full. The CPF request was submitted to Congressman Gonzales. New cones, barricades, utility trailer and safety equipment were purchased for the utility department.

b) NMDD – Ruby Vera reported that the NMDD Board met on March 6, 2023 in a Special called meeting and approved the paying off of the note on the NMDD property. The information was sent to Dan Martinez and Victor Quiroga to get the paperwork started. The NMDD will hold a meeting on March 23, 2023 at 6:30 pm. The final balance is \$88,387.71 and is to be paid on or before April 6, 2023. The second phase of the landscaping will begin after the Bluebonnet Festival by Grow More Landscaping. The NMDD Board would like to thank Alderman Ortiz for continuing to water the trees and landscaping that were planted last year. Ruby is on the committee to update the regional 5-year Economic Development Plan with AACOG. Ruby will be attending the meeting and will be asking the city council to appoint a committee member at the April 2023 meeting. The STRH care unit will be parked on the NMDD property every 3rd Tuesday of the month. Please let your friends and neighbors know so we can continue to offer these services to our community. Alderman Frazier asked if it is possible to advertise that STRH is in the city. He suggested placing a sign on the property. Ruby stated she will check into having a banner made.

c) Mayor – Mayor Bluemel thanked the city employees and the city council for their hard work.

DISCUSSION/CONSIDERATION OF ACTION ITEMS:

6. Discuss/Consider a Resolution suspending for 45 days the effective date proposed by West Texas Gas Company in its application filed on or about February 15, 2023, pursuant to section 104.301 of the Gas Utility Regulatory Act. Alderman Smith made a motion to adopt a resolution to suspend for 45 days the effective date proposed by West Texas Gas Company. Alderman Ortiz seconded the motion. Motion carried; 5-0.
7. Discuss/Consider adoption of a Proclamation, proclaiming April 2023 as National Child Abuse Prevention and Parental/Grandparent Alienation Month. Alderman Fernandez made a motion proclaiming April 2023 as National Child Abuse Prevention and Parental/Grandparent Alienation Month. Alderman Smith seconded the motion. Motion carried; 5-0.
8. Discuss/Consider an Ordinance Chapter 6 – Buildings and Construction to establish definitions and regulations pertaining to industrialized buildings and housing; Repealing all ordinances to the extent they are in conflict; Providing for severability; and Providing an effective date. Nikki explained that the city attorney has reviewed and approved the changes in the ordinance. Alderwoman Vera asked how this will affect the Planning and Zoning Ordinance. Nikki responded that the Planning and Zoning ordinance will also have to be amended at a later date after these changes are approved and codified. Alderman Smith made a motion to adopt the ordinance, Alderman Frazier seconded the motion. Motion carried; 5-0.
9. Discuss/Consider authorizing the Interim City Administrator to enter into a service agreement with Mustang Car Wash for the washing of city vehicles and equipment. Alderman Smith abstained from discussion and vote. Alderman Frazier stated he feels the vehicles and equipment should have a cleaning/maintenance schedule and record. He stated we have new equipment and the workers should not need to wash at their home or spend their personal money. Nikki reported that Angela Koehler sent an agreement. This will allow the utility and police department to utilize the Mustang Car Wash to maintain the equipment and vehicles. The days and times will be determined. Alderman Frazier made a

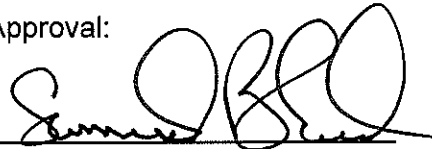
motion to authorize the Mayor and City Administrator to enter into an agreement with Mustang Car Wash, Alderman Fernandez seconded the motion. Motion carried; 4-0.

10. Discuss/Consider the need for a pay rate increase for the Natalia Police Officers. Interim City Administrator Nikki Bermea presented the council with a salary and benefits survey with 25 Texas cities with similar populations. Nikki reported that the city employees have a 1.5%-3% COLA increase only for the last 10 years, except for in October 2019 employees received a 3% COLA plus an additional \$.50 for office staff, \$1.50 for utility department and \$1.75 for police officers. The city's wages are very low compared to the surrounding cities and other cities of similar populations. We cannot compete to fill open positions with the wages currently offered. Alderman Fernandez had concerns with comparing by population due to the fact that some of the cities have a higher revenue. Alderman Smith asked if we raise wages for the current officers will we still be able to support the Chief positions wages should we fill that position and Nikki responded yes at this time we can. Nikki stated that have a few officers maintain our department and we don't want those officers getting burnt out. Alderman Smith asked where the wages need to be, and Nikki responded right around \$21.00 per hour. Alderman Frazier stated he has concerns about the school positions. Alderman Smith agreed and stated that we need to have good officers in those positions for the safety of the students. Alderman Frazier asked if this would be a wage increase for all officers and Nikki responded it would be an increase across the board for all officers. Alderwoman Vera stated that we need to remember we have several new businesses coming to the city and we need to be prepared. Alderman Frazier made a motion to raise police officer wages by \$3.35. Alderman Smith seconded the motion. Motion carried; 5-0.

11. Adjournment. Alderwoman Vera motioned to adjourn at 8:04 pm, and Alderman Fernandez seconded the motion. Motion carried; 5-0.

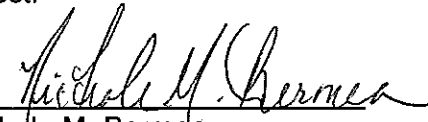
Passed and Approved this 17th day of April, 2023.

Approval:



Samuel Bluemel, Mayor /or/
Sam Smith, Mayor Pro-Tem

Attest:


Nichole M. Bermea
Interim City Administrator/Secretary