Minutes of Regular Meeting held September 8, 2008

Regular meeting with the following present: Mayor Mark Bowen; Aldermen Jerry Stone, Ward Sanders, Rudy Hernandez, Sam Cortez; City Secretary Josie Campa; Director of Public Works James McGrath; Police Chief Richard Priest; City Attorney Tom Cate.

Visitors: Philip Ruiz, Craig Bell, Beau Perry, Christopher Bowen, Robert Duane Rawlings, Daniel Rawlings, Michelle Hons, Tim Noonan, Olga and Richard Sharer, Leslie Mikolajczyk, Julio Inocencio, Sam Parks, Bubba Light, Bobbie Lassiter, Matt Dear.

APPROVE MINUTES AND APPROVE PAYMENT OF BILLS
Alderman Hernandez made the motion that Council approve the minutes of the regular meeting held August 8th; the special meeting held August 18th and the budget workshops held August 18th and 25th, and payment of the bills as presented. Seconded by Alderman Stone. Passed unanimously.

HEAR FROM CITIZENS
Richard Sharer told Council that the city needs a web site. The Mayor informed Mr. Sharer that the city has budgeted for creation of a city web site and Alderman Sanders is already looking at web sites from other cities.

CONSIDER PROJECT FOR NEXT GRANT CYCLE AND ADOPTING OF RESOLUTION
Philip Ruiz presented a project scenario for the next grant cycle for 2009-2010. Mr. Ruiz explained the projects the state prefers to see from entities for this funding. Mr. Ruiz also explained the point system. Mr. Ruiz told Council that the engineers have looked at several projects the city could apply for in this grant cycle. Mr. Ruiz said that the drainage project on Wisdom Road would probably benefit 60% of the people with low-moderate incomes, which is also another requirement for grant funding. Mr. Ruiz said that if the city chooses to go for the drainage project instead of water or sewer improvements, the city will start the grant process with a 5-point liability. Mr. Ruiz told Council the proposed drainage project for Wisdom Road is estimated to cost $375,000.00 which means the city would to put in $125,000.00 as matching funds for this grant application. After discussion, concerning this proposed grant project, Alderman Stone made the motion that Council go with the drainage project for Wisdom Road and the city use a match of $125,000.00. Seconded by Alderman Cortez. Discussion. Passed unanimously.

CONSIDER ADOPTION OF RESOLUTION TO ATASCOSA COUNTY APPRAISAL DISTRICT’S BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Michelle Hons, Atascosa County Chief Appraiser and Leslie Mikolajczyk told Council they were present to answer any questions the Council has concerning the appraisal district's proposed budget and salaries. The Chief Appraiser gave Council members copies of city’s pro rata share and salary studies. Director Leslie Mikolajczyk told Council that he feels the Chief Appraiser has done a great job and that the salary committee used the salary survey to determine the Chief Appraiser’s salary. After the Chief Appraiser and Mr. Mikolajczyk answered some questions.
CONSIDER ADOPTION OF RESOLUTION TO ATASCOSA COUNTY APPRAISAL DISTRICT’S BOARD OF DIRECTORS
from the Council, Alderman Hernandez made the motion that Council not adopt the resolution rejecting the Appraisal District’s budget. Seconded by Alderman Sanders. Passed unanimously.

CONSIDER REQUEST FROM ELIZABETH VELA FOR PERMISSION FOR A CONCESSION TRAILER AT JOHN LOTT MUNICIPAL PARK
This item was scratched since Elizabeth Vela was not present.

CONSIDER REQUEST FOR VARIANCE ON SIZE OF BACK YARD FOR CHURCH TO BE LOCATED AT 18320 FM 2790 N.-ROBERT DUANE RAWLINGS
Robert Duane Rawlings, member of Church of Christ, to be built on FM 2790 North, asked Council to consider granting the church a variance on the back yard requirements. Mr. Rawlings said that because of the location of septic lateral lines they are not able to have a 30 foot back yard and that they need more room for parking in the front. Mayor Bowen told Council that the property is not being used for a residence. After more discussion, Alderman Hernandez made the motion that Council grant this variance as requested by Mr. Rawlings. Seconded by Alderman Stone. Passed unanimously.

CONSIDER ADOPTION OF LIBRARY BUDGET FOR 2008-2009 FISCAL YEAR

CONSIDER RATIFYING PROPERTY TAX LEVY INCREASE REFLECTED IN THE 2008-2009 BUDGET
City Secretary Josie Campa told Council members that if the tax levy in the proposed budget has increased over the previous year, the Council has to ratify this increase prior to adopting the budget. Alderman Hernandez made the motion that Council ratify the tax levy increase in the proposed city budget for 2008-2009. Seconded by Alderman Cortez. Passed unanimously.

CONSIDER ADOPTION OF 2008-2009 FISCAL YEAR BUDGET
Mayor Bowen read the total revenues and expenditures for each of the city departments. Alderman Hernandez made the motion that Council adopt the proposed budget for 2008-2009 fiscal year. Seconded by Alderman Stone. Passed unanimously.

CONSIDER ADOPTION OF 2008 TAX RATE
Alderman Hernandez made the motion that Council adopt the proposed tax rate of $ .3075 per $100.00 valuation. Seconded by Alderman Cortez. Passed unanimously.

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF DEPOSITORY CONTRACT WITH LYTLE STATE BANK
Alderman Stone made the motion to approve the depository contract with Lytle State Bank this year, and look at other banks next year. Seconded by Alderman Sanders. Passed unanimously.

CONSIDER RENEWAL OF PARKING LOT LEASE AGREEMENT WITH BRANDI SIFUENTES-LONE STAR HAIR SALON
Chief Priest told Council that increased parking at City Hall is a concern if the City renews the parking lot lease with the Lone Star Salon. Council discussed the need to look at a six month lease. After more discussion, Alderman Hernandez made the motion that Council not renew the lease with the Lone Star Salon, but that as long as parking is available, they can continue to use parking lot. Seconded by Alderman Cortez. Passed unanimously.

CONSIDER RENEWAL OF CONTRACT WITH SIMON PENA FOR GAS SYSTEM CONSULTING SERVICE
After discussion, Alderman Sanders made the motion that Council renew the contract with Simon Pena. Seconded by Alderman Stone. Passed unanimously.

CONSIDER REINSTATING DEPOSITS FOR COMMUNITY CENTER RENTAL FOR TAX PAYERS
City Secretary Josie Campa told Council about some of the problems that have arisen since the center deposit for taxpayers was rescinded by Council. After discussion, Alderman Hernandez made the motion that Council reinstate the center deposit immediately. Seconded by Alderman Stone. Discussion. Passed unanimously.

Council took a short break at 7:50 p.m., and reconvened at 8:04 p.m.
CONSIDER INCREASING GAS SURCHARGE DUE TO INCREASING GAS PRICES
City Secretary Josie Campa told Council that the gas price had increased another $1.15 per MCF. After discussion, Alderman Hernandez made the motion that Council pass through the $1.15 per MCF gas increase to the customers. Seconded by Alderman Stone. Discussion on not blanketing the gas increases. Motion passed unanimously.

CONSIDER CERTIFICATE AND EDUCATION PAY FOR POLICE OFFICERS
Police Chief Richard Priest presented an incentive pay plan for the department that compensates officers for education and certificates. After discussion, Alderman Stone made the motion that Council approve this plan as presented. Seconded by Alderman Sanders. Passed unanimously.

CONSIDER INITIAL POLICY AND WORKERS COMPENSATION INSURANCE FOR CIVILIAN AUXILIARY
Police Chief Richard Priest explained the policy for a "Civilian Auxiliary". The Chief told Council that workers’ comp would cost about $100.00 per year for 2000 hours for outside volunteers. The Chief answered questions about his plan for a civilian auxiliary. City Attorney Tom Cate told Council he has not fully reviewed the Chief’s policy for this plan. Alderman Hernandez made the motion that Council approve the Chief’s policy, as presented and the workers’ comp fee for these volunteers. Seconded by Alderman Sanders. Passed unanimously.

CONSIDER HIRING OFFICE EMPLOYEE
City Secretary Josie Campa told Council that she had a lady apply for the vacant position that has been a court clerk at Devine and has training and certificates. She recommended Council hire Monica Soto at $10.00 per our due to her experience with the Municipal Court. Alderman Hernandez made the motion that Council hire Monica Soto at $10.00 per hour. Seconded by Alderman Sanders. Passed unanimously.

CONSIDER SALARIES FOR CITY EMPLOYEES
Alderman Hernandez told Council he feels the city needs standardized guidelines for salaries for city employees. During discussion, Alderman Hernandez suggested that a committee look at wages and incentives for each department. After more discussion, Mayor Bowen appointed Alderman Rudy Hernandez and Sam Cortez to the salary review committee and said he would get two other people to work on this committee. After more discussion, Alderman Stone made the motion that Council accept the salary increases incorporated in the adopted 2008-2009 budget. Seconded by Alderman Cortez. Passed unanimously.

DISCUSSION AND/OR ACTION ON CITY’S TOURISM PROMOTION EVENTS AND ADVERTISING FOR ORGANIZATIONS TO HANDLE CHRISTMAS LIGHTING
Alderman Hernandez told Council that he feels the city shouldn’t be decorating all the city businesses and residences on Main Street. He said he feels there should be more involvement from citizens, business owners and organizations. Council discussed getting the Chamber involved to oversee the business getting decorated for the holidays and offering them $2,500.00 for this job. After more discussion, Alderman Cortez made the motion that Council approve a presentation being made to the Chamber of Commerce on the decorating for Christmas holiday. Seconded by Alderman Sanders. Passed unanimously.

CONSIDER FIVE YEAR PLAN FOR CITY
Council discussed the need for a long range plan for the City. Alderman Hernandez made the motion that Council hold a 5-year plan workshop within the next sixty (60) days. Seconded by Alderman Stone. Passed unanimously.

CONSIDER ALLOWING PAYMENT OF INCOMING BILLS FROM THIS FISCAL YEAR’S BUDGET
Alderman Hernandez made the motion that Council allow payment of incoming bills from this year’s budget. Seconded by Alderman Sanders. Passed unanimously.

DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS’ REPORT
Director of Public Works James McGrath reported on the following:
1-156 work orders completed;
2-1 water main break fixed;
3-5 water service line breaks fixed;
4-1 water meter installed;
5-3 gas leaks fixed;
6-changed out a water meter;
7-fixed 2 sewer stoppages;
8-water storage tank work completed;
9-Chip has done mowing, tree trimming and animal control; and
10-Railroad Commission will be here next week to conduct gas system inspection.
Alderman Hernandez asked about the valve for N. Prairie Street. Director James McGrath said the valve would be installed after the gas system inspection.
Minutes of Regular Meeting held September 8, 2008 (cont.)

POLICE CHIEF'S REPORT
Police Chief Richard Priest reviewed his written report with Council.

Council discussed the problems with traffic at the school areas during start and close of schools.

CITY SECRETARY'S REPORT
City Secretary Josie Campa reviewed her written report with Council. She told Council that committees for the kennels and website will be on the agenda next month.

MAYOR'S REPORT
Mayor Bowen reminded Council about the Freedom Walk on Saturday. The Mayor told Council that there are a lot of things to work on in the next fiscal year such as the website.

The Mayor said TxDOT will advise us when public hearing will be held for exit ramp project.

The Mayor told Council he was told someone would be out to discuss a new motel with us.

Meeting adjourned at 10:03 p.m.

Mayor Bowen  Josie Campa
Mayor             City Secretary