

REGULAR CALLED CITY COMMISSION MEETING

MINUTES

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 19, 2025 – 5:00 P.M.  
KENNETH T. NUNN COUNCIL ROOM – CITY HALL

A Regular Called Meeting of the City Commission was held on Wednesday, MARCH 19, 2025, at 5:00 P.M. in the Kenneth T. Nunn Council Room in City Hall, Texas City, Texas. A quorum having been met, the meeting was called to order at 5:01 p.m. by Mayor Dedrick D. Johnson.

1. ROLL CALL

Present: Dedrick D. Johnson, Mayor  
Thelma Bowie, Commissioner At-Large, Mayor Pro Tem  
Abel Garza, Jr. , Commissioner At-Large  
DeAndre' Knoxson, Commissioner District 1  
Keith Love, Commissioner District 2  
Chris Sharp, Commissioner District 3  
Jami Clark, Commissioner District 4

2. INVOCATION

Led by David Buckley, Jr., Pastor of Sanford's Temple Church of God in Trust.

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Led by DeAndre' Knoxson, Commissioner District 1.

4. PROCLAMATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

a. Service Awards

Richard Valdivia	Police	03/31/2005	20 years
Johnny SanMiguel	Sanitation	03/24/2005	20 years
Neal Ferguson	Public Works	03/06/2000	25 years
Charles Brooks	Parks & Recreation	03/20/1995	30 years

5. REPORTS

a. Annual Bayou Golf Course Report (Golf Course)

Michael Skiba, Head Golf Professional, gave a PowerPoint presentation.

6. PUBLIC COMMENTS

The following members of the public requested to address the City Commission:  
Councilperson of La Marque Joseph Lowry, Jose Boix, Brian Goetschius, Barbara White,  
William Etheredge, Irene Fattig, Cheryl Loewen, and Jon Branson.

Mayor Johnson made a Point of Information during Public Comments, after William Etheredge, stating: tonight, we are not voting on whether to issue bonds or Certificates of Obligation for this project. We're simply voting on a notice of intent to publish, indicating that these are our plans moving forward. Tonight's vote will determine whether we will post the required Notice of Intent (NOI) to inform the public of our intention. The steps Mr. Ethridge mentioned come much later in the process. We can't go out for bids or start communicating with potential architects for this project unless we first inform the public of our intentions.

7. CONSENT AGENDA

Dedrick D. Johnson, Mayor, withdrew Consent Agenda item 7f.

Commissioner District 4, Jami Clark, made a motion to approve Consent Agenda items 7b, c, d, and e. The motion was seconded by Commission District 2, Keith Love.

- a. Approve City Commission Minutes for March 5, 2025 meeting. (City Secretary)

Abel Garza, Jr., Commissioner At-Large, pulled this consent agenda item because he was concerned about the posting of the March 5, 2025, meeting minutes.

Rhomari Leigh, City Secretary, explained that the 72-hour posting notice applies only to the posting of the Agenda, not to any of the agenda items. The Commissioners have the opportunity to review the minutes during the meeting, if they did not have a chance to view them beforehand.

Motion by Commissioner District 3 Chris Sharp, Seconded by Commissioner District 1 DeAndre' Knoxson

**Vote: 7 - 0 CARRIED**

- b. Approve City Commission Minutes for the December 18, 2024 Meeting (City Secretary)

**Vote: 7 - 0 CARRIED**

- c. Consider and take action on Resolution No. 2025-030, approving the annual Galveston County Mosquito Control Program to service Texas City, Texas. (City Secretary)

**Vote: 7 - 0 CARRIED**

- d. Consider and take action on Resolution No. 2025-001, appointment of alternate member to the Zoning Commission. (City Secretary)

**Vote: 7 - 0 CARRIED**

- e. Consider and take action on Resolution No. 2025-002, authorizing the City of Texas City to execute a General and No Litigation Certificate and stating our non-objection to such from the Southeast Texas Housing Finance Corporation (SETH) for Piedmont Apartments- Baytown (\$30,000,000) located in Baytown, Texas. (Legal)

**Vote: 7 - 0 CARRIED**

- f. Consider and take Resolution No. 2025-003, authorizing a payment for the City's annual ERP System subscription- Munis. (Finance)

No action was taken; the Consent Agenda item was withdrawn.

## 8. REGULAR ITEMS

- a. Consider and take action on Resolution No. 2025-004, authorizing the Publication of Notice of Intention to Issue City of Texas City, Texas Certificates of Obligation, Series 2025. (Finance)

No action was taken; the Regular Agenda item was withdrawn.

- b. Consider and take action on Resolution No. 2025-031, authorizing an agreement with Alfa Laval Inc. (Public Works)

Corbin Ballast, Utilities Director, recommends the approval to enter into an agreement with Alfa Laval Inc. of Houston, TX, to rebuild the Klampress Belt-Press at the Waste Water Treatment Plant.

Motion by Commissioner At-Large, Mayor Pro Tem Thelma Bowie, Seconded by Commissioner District 1 DeAndre' Knoxson

**Vote: 7 - 0 CARRIED**

- c. Consideration of and action on Resolution No. 2025-032, authorizing a Publication of Notice of Intention To Issue Certificates Of Obligation, Series 2025. (Finance)

Cynthia Rushing, Chief Financial Officer, gave a PowerPoint presentation recommending the approval of stating the City's intent to issue Certificates of Obligation on March 20, 2025, and authorizing the publication of a notice in the Galveston Daily News.

Kristen Blomquist, from Masterson Advisors, LLC, also gave a PowerPoint presentation.

Abel Garza, Jr., Commissioner At-Large, asked about the "all-in" true interest cost of 4.5, but a different number was mentioned earlier in the presentation, maybe 5.8, and questioned if we did a bond election, it would be 410 of 1% less. Kristen of Masterson Advisors, LLC, stated that the 5.75 or 5.8 was the annual debt service, and she highlighted the commission on the slide where this information was displayed. Kristen also clarified that this is a property tax-backed bond, and regardless of whether it's voted on or issued as a CO (Certificate of Obligation), it would carry the exact same rating.

DeAndre' Knoxson, Commissioner District 1, posed the question, if this item is not approved today, what would be the next steps, and a question from the last Community Communications meeting, such as how this would affect our tax rate if this is not approved, as well as how that would affect this community with its rapid growth. Cynthia Rushing, Chief Financial Officer, stated that if we do not approve the notice of intent, the next

step would be that we would not have a municipal complex, which would effectively kill the project. We would go back to the drawing boards. If not approved, the tax rate could decrease, but that does not mean the cost of MO (maintenance and operation) would decline. The impact would be that you would pay less in taxes but also receive fewer services. This program aims to provide services in response to the city's growth. If we are unable to keep up with the growth by funding these capital projects, then it will have an impact on the services.

Abel Garza, Jr., Commissioner At-Large, asked if we could find another avenue to obtain the funds, such as a general bond obligation. Cynthia Rushing, Chief Financial Officer, stated that two financial vehicles or instruments can be used: a CO (Certificate of Obligation), which is the item we will be seeking. The other is a General Obligation, which is essentially a bond; one requires voter approval, while the other does not. Both would carry the same rate, but the difference is that the advantage of a CO is expediency and lower cost. There would be no need for a referendum or an election, and the associated costs would be avoided. The most cost-efficient and expedient route is the CO.

Keith Love, Commissioner of District 2, inquired about how the example cities (Sugar Land and Navasota) funded their new municipal buildings, as presented in the PowerPoint. He also questioned if it is possible to, instead of having all these renovations made at once, is it possible to take the smaller amounts and more minor renovations and have them completed by the CO Bond, and then have the more significant amount, which is the City Hall Complex have to go to a vote. Cynthia Rushing, Chief Financial Officer, stated that she was unclear about how the other cities funded their buildings. Cynthia continued by saying that anything is possible. The question is, what are we trying to achieve? My recommendation is that we proceed with approving the notice of intent for the issuance of CO bonds.

Thelma Bowie, Commissioner At-Large, Mayor Pro Tem, offered clarification as a sitting board of director member of the Gulf Coast Transit District. Our Emergency Management building is housed within their complex. They have asked us to move, and we have pushed back because we have nowhere to go. Cynthia Rushing, Chief Financial Officer, stated that one item we have not honed in on with this new build is the cost savings associated with this capital program. As we continue to stay in the buildings that need repair and need renovation. We are spending lots of money as well as renting.

Jami Clark, Commissioner, District 4, clarified that the \$95 million was the estimated maximum, based on no new growth. The way we're growing right now, we're aware that we have some potential for tremendous things to come, but this is still based on no new growth. Cynthia Rushing, Chief Financial Officer, stated that it is correct that no new growth was factored into the ceiling amount provided to us by our financial advisors.

Chris Sharp, Commissioner District 3, asked if we disapprove this today, are you saying we would not go to the bond election that is not on the table? Cynthia Rushing, Chief Financial Officer, stated No, that is not what I am saying.

Dedrick D. Johnson, Mayor, also stated no, she is presenting the two different options. The Mayor continued by saying he was excited because we find ourselves at a very privileged point here in Texas City. To manage our growth without increasing our tax rate and still provide all these necessities. The City Hall is not just a desire, it is a necessity. We are already at the point where the projected growth in our city necessitates a fifth fire station. We found ourselves in a vulnerable position before we constructed Fire Station #4. We had thousands of residents who were without fire and EMS protection, and the city deemed us in a good position to unadvisably, but paid approximately \$14-15 million in cash to protect those individuals. As we continue to grow in areas where we've determined a need for a fifth fire station, it's prudent for us to proceed this time and learn from our challenges last time,

thereby establishing that fire station and EMS support. At no increase in tax rate to the citizens. We are presented with an excellent opportunity here, thanks to the work of our finance department and the consultation of our financial advisors, who have analyzed these numbers for us and are now presenting this situation. We will at least proceed with today's vote of notice of intent.

Keith Love, Commissioner of District 2, inquired if there was any exigency to any of these renovations. If we do not do this, will it disrupt operations at the library, city hall, and the fire station? Dedrick D. Johnson, Mayor, stated that he could address the library issues. It's a roof repair; we have millions of dollars' worth of investments inside the library, such as library materials, electronics, computers, and historical documents. The last thing we need is for a storm to come through and compromise all of those times. In the coldest months, we didn't have heat, and in the warmest months, we didn't have air. The citizens of Texas City deserve better, and we can afford better.

Abel Garza, Jr., Commissioner At-Large, stated after the motion that this has been an ongoing issue since January, and many citizens are present, giving them the right to be heard. By circumventing the people and not allowing them to have their input on this, it's as if we're taking away their right to vote. We need to consider people's rights and their right to participate in the voting process.

Dedrick D. Johnson, Mayor, stated that he agrees they need to have input. As you noticed in Miss Rushing's presentation, there are three opportunities (March 26, April 17, and May 21) for public input. They are not mandatory parts of the Certificate of Obligation, but we have included them because we believe citizens' voices need to be heard. He also expressed his hope that the citizens would come out to let their voices be heard. Let's not take what you see at this City Commission meeting in this one small hour as a reflection of how the entire city feels. Yes, citizens will have three opportunities for public input. As it relates to the vote, we are not infringing on anyone's right to vote. Certificates of Obligations do not require a vote, and the citizens did not vote on the last five that we had.

Motion by Commissioner District 1 DeAndre' Knoxson, Seconded by Commissioner At-Large, Mayor Pro Tem Thelma Bowie (Abel Garza, Jr., Commissioner At-Large, Keith Love, Commissioner District 2, and Chris Sharp, Commissioner District 3 voted in opposition to this item)

**Vote: 4 - 3 CARRIED**

9. EXECUTIVE (CLOSED) SESSION

Break into Executive Session at 6:27 p.m.

- a. Convene for Executive (Closed) Session pursuant to the Texas Open Meetings Act, Chapter 551, Texas Government Code to discuss the following:

§551.087. Deliberation Regarding Economic Development Negotiations: (1)

10. RECONVENE FROM EXECUTIVE (CLOSED) SESSION

Reconvene into the meeting at 6:54 p.m.

- a. Discussion and possible action deriving from Executive Session.

No action taken.

## 11. COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

DeAndre' Knoxson, Commissioner District 1, congratulated the people who earned a service award, thanked Ms. Rushing for her informative presentation, and thanked the commission for approving to move forward with this resolution.

Keith Love, Commissioner, District 2, provided an explanation of his vote on Regular Item 8c. He acknowledged that the city needs new facilities. The way he voted has more to do with how it was done versus how it should have been done. Keith expressed that he has a different opinion on how things should be accomplished, but he supports the city workers.

Thelma Bowie, Commissioner At-Large, Mayor Pro Tem, spoke about the progress of her joint effort with Commissioner Knoxson, Texas New Mexico Power Company, and the Communications Department on the rollout of the streetlight initiative.

Abel Garza, Jr., Commissioner At-Large, had no comment.

Chris Sharp, Commissioner District 3, provided an explanation of his vote on Regular Item 8c. Commissioner Sharp stated it is obvious that we're growing. We discussed civic pride and explored ways to foster it, so that people can feel a sense of belonging and participation. That being said, we do have a need for a new building, and we also require improved facilities for our staff. I think we could approach this differently.

Jami Clark, Commissioner District 4, stated that, as everybody knows, this was just the vote tonight to initiate the process, and the actual vote will take place later in May. This will give us time to explain to our citizens why this is needed. Give them the opportunity to share their thoughts and questions and receive the correct answers. I know for a fact that there is a lot of misinformation, and most of it, in my opinion, originates from social media. I have never seen such public hatred and negative comments about us. I have been serving this city for over 40 years, and I have never experienced anything like this. I know the people in my district elected me, and I appreciate that greatly. I know they have elected me to make the right choices for them, and I feel like I am doing that. I appreciate them contacting me, and I am listening to them. We need to provide them with the correct information. The growth we are experiencing is amazing, and I am very proud.

## 12. MAYOR'S COMMENTS

Dedrick D. Johnson, Mayor, began by thanking everyone who came to speak and offered their perspective, regardless of its nature. We appreciate your interest in participating in the civic and governmental process. It is your right to be heard, and that is a right that we do not take for granted. Both residents and staff will be affected by this proposed Municipal Complex and all its associated projects, as they will significantly impact the services we provide to the public. We strive for top-notch service and quality. That starts by taking care of the people who actually do the work on a day-to-day basis. You don't attract people who will work for 25–30 years if you don't take care of your staff. We pride ourselves in the City of Texas City for always taking care of our staff members, so they can better take care of the residents and be great stewards of taxpayers' dollars. It is crucial that we recognize the city for the position we are in. I am looking forward to the public meetings we have scheduled, where the public can continue to voice their opinions and have their concerns addressed. That is our job: to listen to you as citizens and then address those concerns.

The Mayor's Initiative, Movement is Medicine, 2025 health initiative, on March 27th, we will have a recreational day at our Lowry Fitness Center at 6 p.m.

We are developing a website that will house all the information related to the Certificate of Obligation and the projects. This will make the actual and factual information associated with this project accessible to the public.

13. ADJOURNMENT

Having no further business, Commissioner At-Large, Abel Garza, Jr., made a MOTION to ADJOURN at 7:05 p.m.; the motion was SECONDED by Commissioner At Large, Mayor Pro Tem Thelma Bowie. All present voted AYE. MOTION CARRIED.

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DEDRICK D. JOHNSON, MAYOR

ATTEST:

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Rhomari Leigh, City Secretary

Date Approved: