

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF
LUFKIN, TEXAS HELD ON THE 20TH DAY OF JUNE, 2023.**

On the 20th day of June, 2023, the City Council of the City of Lufkin, Texas convened in a Regular Meeting in the Council Chambers of City Hall with the following members, thereof to wit:

Mark Hicks	Mayor
Robert Shankle	Mayor Pro Tem
Guessippina Bonner	Councilmember, Ward No. 1
Brent Watkins	Councilmember, Ward No. 3
Wes Suiter	Councilmember, Ward No. 4
Rocky Thigpen	Councilmember, Ward No. 5
Adam Lowther	Councilmember, Ward No. 6
Kevin Gee	City Manager
Kristi Skillern	City Attorney
Gerald Williamson	Assistant City Manager
Kara Andrepont	City Secretary
Adriana Thomasee	Human Resources
David Thomas	Police Chief
Ryan Watson	Assistant Fire Chief
Jessica Pebsworth	Communications Director
Belinda Melancon	Finance Director
Eddie Aguilar	Engineering Services Director
Scott Rayburn	Planning Director
Calvin Touns	Building Official
Buddy Timme	Parks and Recreation Director
Albert Duffield	Utilities Director

being present when the following business was transacted.

INVOCATION – The meeting was opened with prayer Assistant City Manager Gerald Williamson.

PUBLIC COMMENT – Mayor Mark Hicks opened the meeting for public comment on any posted agenda item at 5:01 p.m. Mr. Kenneth Thomas spoke regarding Item No. 10 on the agenda and requested an equitable share of the fields for football as opposed to baseball. Mr. Desmond Tolbert spoke regarding Item No. 10 on the agenda and asked if Council would be voting on the plans presented to the City previously and would football be a part of the Phase I plan. Mr. Chris Siple spoke regarding Item No. 10 on the agenda regarding the need for a presentable girls’ softball field and the revenue it would bring to the City. There being no one else who wished to speak; Mayor Hicks closed the public comment period.

Mayor Mark Hicks recognized those in attendance with the Lufkin Juneteenth Association.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. **MINUTES OF THE REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING OF JUNE 6TH, 2023 - APPROVED.**
2. **SECOND READING OF AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING AN AMENDMENT TO THE 2022 – 2023 OPERATING BUDGET (BUDGET AMENDMENT NO. 11) APPROPRIATING THE FUNDING FOR ARPA PROJECTS – APPROVED.**
3. **SECOND READING OF AN ORDINANCE GRANTING A FRANCHISE AGREEMENT TO CENTERPOINT ENERGY RESOURCES CORPORATION – APPROVED.**
4. **RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE INSTALLATION OF BUS STOP SHELTERS AND AUTHORIZING AN AGREEMENT WITH THE TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION REGARDING THE SAME - APPROVED.**

Councilmember Robert Shankle moved to approve all items on the Consent Agenda as presented. Councilmember Guessippina Bonner seconded the motion and a unanimous vote to approve was recorded.

BUSINESS AGENDA

5. SECOND READING OF AN ORDINANCE PROVIDING FOR A GENERAL RESIDENTIAL HOMESTEAD EXEMPTION FOR PRIMARY RESIDENCES OF ALL CITIZENS; AND PROVIDING FOR AN AD VALOREM TAX EXEMPTION FOR ALL PERSONS SIXTY-FIVE (65) YEARS OF AGE OR OLDER AND DISABLED PERSONS - APPROVED.

City Manager Kevin Gee stated Staff had determined that the provision of a residential homestead exemption and an ad valorem tax exemption for all disabled residents and those over the age of sixty-five (65) would be advantageous to our citizens. City Manager Gee furthered the annual residential homestead exemption was proposed at ten percent (10%) of the homestead's assessed value, with a minimum exemption of five thousand dollars (\$5,000), to all qualified homeowners subject to the City's property tax pursuant to the laws of the State regulating the assessment of ad valorem taxes. City Manager Gee stated the exemption would be in place for the 2023 tax roll and future rolls unless repealed by City Council. City Manager Gee furthered additionally, those residents who were disabled or over the age of sixty-five (65), would also be granted a twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000) exemption.

City Manager Gee concluded Staff recommended City Council approve the Second Reading of an Ordinance providing for the homestead exemption for all residents and the ad valorem tax exemption for elderly and disabled residents.

Councilmember Robert Shankle moved to approve the Ordinance as presented. Councilmember Wes Suiter seconded the motion and a unanimous vote to approve was recorded.

6. PUBLIC HEARING AND FIRST READING OF AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE ZONING ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF LUFKIN, TEXAS BY CHANGING THE ZONING TO "LOCAL BUSINESS" ON PROPERTY ADDRESSED AS 1404 WEST FRANK AVENUE – APPROVED.

City Manager Kevin Gee stated Dr. Mark Roberts had requested a zone change from "Neighborhood Retail" to "Local Business" for 1404 West Frank Avenue. City Manager Gee furthered the purpose of the zone change was to allow future development and enlargement of the existing building currently limited by the "Neighborhood Retail" classification. City Manager Gee explained the "Neighborhood Retail" classification limited the square footage of uses to 3,000 square feet and also had limits on hours of operation. City Manager Gee highlighted the location of the property and surrounding uses.

City Manager Gee concluded Staff recommended City Council conduct a Public Hearing and consider approval of the First Reading of an Ordinance changing the zoning to "Local Business" on property addressed as 1404 West Frank Avenue.

Mayor Mark Hicks opened the Public Hearing at 5:12 p.m. There being no one who wished to speak; Mayor Hicks closed the Public Hearing and requested comments from the City Council.

Councilmember Guessippina Bonner moved to approve the Ordinance as presented. Councilmember Robert Shankle seconded the motion and a unanimous vote to approve was recorded.

7. PUBLIC HEARING AND FIRST READING OF AN ORDINANCE ADOPTING THE 2023 NATIONAL ELECTRICAL CODE – APPROVED.

City Manager Kevin Gee stated the City was currently under the 2020 National Electrical Code (NEC). City Manager Gee furthered on September 1, 2023, the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation (TDLR) would adopt the 2023 NEC as the electrical code for the State of Texas and establish it as the minimum standard for all electrical work in Texas covered by the Act. City Manager Gee stated in order to be in compliance with the TDLR requirements, the City needed to adopt the 2023 NEC with the Ordinance taking effect on September 1, 2023.

City Manager Gee concluded Staff recommended City Council conduct a Public Hearing and approve the First Reading of an Ordinance adopting the 2023 National Electrical Code.

Mayor Mark Hicks opened the Public Hearing at 5:14 p.m. There being no one who wished to speak; Mayor Hicks closed the Public Hearing and requested comments from the City Council.

Councilmember Guessippina Bonner moved to approve the Ordinance as presented. Councilmember Adam Lowther seconded the motion and a unanimous vote to approve was recorded.

8. PUBLIC HEARING AND RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING APPLICATION FOR FUNDING THROUGH THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE FISCAL YEAR 2023 BULLETPROOF VEST PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM – APPROVED.

City Manager Kevin Gee stated the Lufkin Police Department was requesting approval for an application for funding for the Fiscal Year 2023 Bulletproof Vest Grant through the U.S. Department of Justice. City Manager Gee furthered if approved, the Department would submit an application for \$6,369.30 in grant funds for the purchase of new bullet resistant vests for Lufkin Police officers. City Manager Gee stated the grant required a fifty-percent (50%) match as well as a public comment period. City Manager Gee furthered funding for the required match was available in the patrol uniform account.

City Manager Gee concluded Staff recommended City Council conduct a Public Hearing and approve a Resolution authorizing submission of an application for funding through the U.S. Department of Justice, Bulletproof Vest Partnership Program.

Mayor Mark Hicks opened the Public Hearing at 5:16 p.m. There being no one who wished to speak; Mayor Hicks closed the Public Hearing and requested comments from the City Council.

Councilmember Wes Suiter moved to approve the Resolution as presented. Councilmember Rocky Thigpen seconded the motion and a unanimous vote to approve was recorded.

9. PUBLIC HEARING AND ISSUANCE OF CERTIFICATE(S) OF PUBLIC CONVENIENCE AND NECESSITY FOR EMERGENCY AND NON-EMERGENCY AMBULANCE SERVICE IN THE CITY OF LUFKIN – APPROVED.

City Manager Gee stated in June 2020, both Acadian Ambulance Service and Americare EMS were issued a three (3) year Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity in order that they may provide emergency and non-emergency service within the City. City Manager Gee furthered both companies had submitted applications for renewal and Fire Chief Jesse Moody had reviewed and recommended that both companies be approved for the same. City Manager Gee stated there was a demand for their services and this action would ensure that there was an adequate number of providers for routine ambulance service. City Manager Gee furthered approving the companies would ensure that response times and the level of service would be adequate to serve the needs of the citizens as well as the local hospitals and health care facilities.

City Manager Gee concluded Staff recommended City Council approve the issuance of Certificates of Public Convenience and Necessity for emergency and non-emergency ambulance service in the City of Lufkin to both Acadian Ambulance Service and Americare EMS.

Mayor Hicks opened the Public Hearing at 5:17 p.m. There being no one who wished to speak; Mayor Hicks closed the Public Hearing and requested comments from City Council.

Councilmember Robert Shankle moved to approve the issuance of Certificates as presented. Councilmember Wes Suiter seconded the motion and a unanimous vote to approve was recorded.

10. MORRIS FRANK PARK PHASE 1 PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS AND FIRST READING OF AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING AN AMENDMENT TO THE 2022-2023 OPERATING BUDGET (BUDGET AMENDMENT NO. 12) APPROPRIATING THE FUNDING – APPROVED.

City Manager Kevin Gee stated in March of 2023, Goodwin-Lasiter-Strong (GLS) had presented the Park Master Plan for Morris Frank Park. City Manager Gee furthered the overall cost estimate for the Park Master Plan was between \$23 and \$42 million dollars depending on options chosen. City Manager Gee highlighted some of the improvements that were evaluated and included in the report. City Manager Gee stated after reviewing the master plan and meeting with Staff the City had looked at options and met with contractors on site to see if a less expensive option was available that would still meet the needs identified in the study. City Manager Gee furthered the Phase I proposed renovations and improvements included major renovations to the baseball, softball and football facilities as well as the addition of a multi-purpose field, concessions, restrooms, a pavilion and other associated

appurtenances. City Manager Gee stated a breakdown of the improvements along with cost estimates had been provided to Council. City Manager Gee furthered the City planned to fund the improvements through multi-year general fund reserve payments and not incur debt for the cost.

City Manager Gee concluded Staff recommended City Council consider approval of the Phase I proposed plans and First Reading of an Ordinance authorizing Budget Amendment No. 12 appropriating the funding.

Councilmember Robert Shankle had questions regarding lighting for the proposed football field, bleachers for the fields, responsibility of striping for the fields, scoreboards and concessions. Councilmember Shankle also asked if there was a timeline for the project to begin. Councilmember Guessippina Bonner asked for a breakdown of how the presented plan deviated from the original plan. Councilmember Wes Suiter asked what the multi-purpose field would be used for and questioned the disparity in funding between baseball and other sports. Councilmember Adam Lowther asked if there was a way to modify the proposed football fields to be used as multipurpose fields by making use of different striping. Councilmember Brent Watkins asked for information on the expected life of the turf to be used on the fields and if there would be an increased maintenance cost for the grass on the football fields. Councilmember Shankle asked for an explanation as to why the proposed baseball fields were being increased from three (3) fields to five (5). Councilmember Lowther asked for more information regarding the turf cost and lifespan of the turf. Councilmember Bonner asked about the location and orientation of the football fields as well as the City covering the cost of the striping for the football fields. Councilmember Watkins asked how often the fields would need to be striped. Councilmember Rocky Thigpen asked if the current concession stand could be repurposed and used. Councilmember Bonner asked if there would be added parking. Councilmember Watkins asked if the additional parking would be done by City Staff. Councilmember Lowther asked for clarification regarding the installation of cul-de-sacs in the area to help control traffic. Councilmember Suiter asked if there was enough contingency in the plan for the addition of the bleachers and additional lighting for the concession area. Councilmember Lowther asked what the process and timeline looked like for any tweaks or modifications made to the plan. Councilmember Watkins asked if there would be any long-term debt for the project. City Manager Kevin Gee, Engineering Services Director, Eddie Aguilar and Parks and Recreation Director, Buddy Timme answered all questions and discussion ensued.

Councilmember Guessippina Bonner moved to approve the Phase I proposed improvements and Ordinance as presented. Councilmember Rocky Thigpen seconded the motion and a unanimous vote to approve was recorded.

11. FINANCIAL STATUS REPORT

City Manager Kevin Gee updated City Council on the financial status of the City. City Manager Gee offered to answer any questions. There were none.

There being no further business, Mayor Mark Hicks adjourned the meeting at 5:53 p.m.



ATTEST:


Kara Andrepont, City Secretary


Mark Hicks, Mayor