

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF
LUFKIN, TEXAS, HELD ON THE 5TH DAY OF AUGUST 2025.**

On the 5th day of August 2025, 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
Angela Hobbs-Spencer	Councilmember, Ward No. 1
Brent Watkins	Councilmember, Ward No. 3
Kim Ogden	Councilmember, Ward No. 4
Jimmy Ford	Councilmember, Ward No. 5
Adam Lowther	Councilmember, Ward No. 6
Kevin Gee	City Manager
Kristi C. Skillern	City Attorney
Brian Bray	Assistant City Manager
Aimee Cloutier	City Secretary
Janice Tidwell	Human Resources Manager
David Thomas	Police Chief
Buddy Cross	Assistant Police Chief
Jesse Moody	Fire Chief
Ryan Watson	Assistant Fire Chief
Jackie Zimmerman	Public Information Specialist Manager
Belinda Melancon	Finance Director
Chris Key	Engineering Services Director
Scott Rayburn	City Planner
Buddy Timme	Parks and Recreation Director
Tara Hendrix	Tourism & Marketing Director
Albert Duffield	Utilities Director
John Smith	Municipal Services Manager
Jerry McIlroy	IT Director
Julie Massey	Library Manager
Ryan Gulker	Ellen Trout Zoo Director
Morgan Williams	Animal Services Manager

being present when the following business was transacted.

INVOCATION – The meeting was opened with prayer by Captain Caven Phillips with the Salvation Army of Lufkin.

PUBLIC COMMENT - Mayor Mark Hicks opened the public comment period at 5:02 p.m. Ms. Guessippina Bonner spoke regarding Item No. 2 and expressed concern about the cancellation of scheduled City Council meetings. There being no further public comments, Mayor Hicks closed the public comment period.

PRESENTATIONS

Mayor Mark Hicks accepted the presentation of the Tree City USA Certification for the 35th year from Angelina Beautiful Clean and Zachary Ovalgone, District Forester with the Texas A&M Forest Service. Assistant Fire Chief Ryan Watson introduced Fire Chief Jesse Moody and the patient, Ms. Lori Bennett, who presented Fire Life Saving Awards to:

- Driver/Operator Jonathan Hammond
- Driver/Operator Blaine Byron
- Firefighter Andrew Knight
- Captain Brad Ehrlich

Assistant Fire Chief Watson also recognized the following members of the Lufkin Fire Department, who were unable to attend for separate lifesaving incidents:

- Firefighter Chayce Holcombe
- Firefighter Zacharias Weber
- Battalion Chief Jared Sowell

- Captain Jeff McReynolds
- Driver/Operator Markus Manning
- Firefighter Ivan Tapia
- Firefighter Clayton Faulk

Police Chief David Thomas and Mayor Mark Hicks presented Officer Christian Ibarra with the Meritorious Service Award and a Certificate of Recognition for his decisive action and swift response that resulted in saving a life.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. **MINUTES OF THE REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING OF JULY 15, 2025 - APPROVED.**
2. **RESOLUTION CANCELING THE REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETINGS SCHEDULED FOR SEPTEMBER 2, 2025, AND NOVEMBER 4, 2025– APPROVED.**
3. **RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE – APPROVED.**

Councilmember Robert Shankle moved to approve all items as presented. Councilmember Brent Watkins seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

BUSINESS AGENDA

4. **PUBLIC HEARING AND SECOND READING OF AN ORDINANCE GRANTING A SPECIAL USE PERMIT FOR “COMMERCIAL AMUSEMENT INDOORS” ON PROPERTY ADDRESSED AS 105 COTTON SQUARE, LUFKIN, TEXAS – APPROVED.**

Mayor Mark Hicks recused himself from discussion and voting on this item.

City Manager Kevin Gee presented the request for a Special Use Permit for “Commercial Amusement (Indoors)” at 105 Cotton Square. The applicant proposed a family-friendly arcade with 28 claw machines awarding prizes. Mr. Gee reviewed the property’s location and surrounding uses and noted the Planning & Zoning Commission had unanimously recommended approval. Staff recommended Council conduct a Public Hearing and approve the request on Second Reading.

Mayor Pro Tem Robert Shankle opened the Public Hearing at 5:16 p.m. There being no public comments, the Public Hearing was closed.

Councilmember Jimmy Ford moved to approve the Ordinance as presented. Councilmember Angela Hobbs-Spencer seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

5. **PUBLIC HEARING AND FIRST READING OF AN ORDINANCE GRANTING A ZONING CHANGE REQUEST TO “APARTMENT” FOR 615 N. RAGUET STREET, LUFKIN, TEXAS – APPROVED.**

City Manager Kevin Gee stated that Staff received a request to change the zoning at 615 North Raguet Street from “Residential Large” to “Apartment” to bring the existing multi-family use into zoning compliance. He reviewed the property’s location and surrounding uses and noted that Staff found the proposed change consistent with current area zoning and the “Neighborhood Commercial” and “Medium Density Residential” future land use classifications. The Planning & Zoning Commission unanimously recommended approval on July 28, 2025.

Staff recommended that Council conduct a Public Hearing and consider approval of the Ordinance.

Mayor Mark Hicks opened the Public Hearing at 5:18 p.m. There being no public comments, the Public Hearing was closed.

Councilmember Adam Lowther moved to approve the Ordinance as presented. Councilmember Robert Shankle seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

6. PUBLIC HEARING AND FIRST READING OF AN ORDINANCE GRANTING A ZONING CHANGE REQUEST TO “OFFICE” FOR 1313 WILDBRIAR DRIVE, LUFKIN, TEXAS – POSTPONED.

City Manager Kevin Gee stated that Staff received a request to change the zoning at 1313 Wildbriar Drive from “Residential Large” to “Office” for the development of office space. The property is currently vacant and is surrounded by a mix of residential and commercial uses. He reviewed the location and surrounding uses and noted that the Planning & Zoning Commission unanimously recommended approval at the July 28, 2025, meeting.

Staff recommended that Council conduct a Public Hearing and consider approval of the Ordinance.

Mayor Mark Hicks opened the Public Hearing at 5:19 p.m. Ms. Melodie Rose spoke, expressing concerns that building at this location could cause flooding and impact her and her neighbors. Mr. Tom Darmstadter II also voiced concerns about potential flooding. There being no further public comments, the Public Hearing was closed.

Councilmembers Jimmy Ford, Kim Ogden, Brent Watkins, and Angela Hobbs-Spencer asked questions regarding the floodplain, city-owned property in the area, and submission of a site plan. City Planner Scott Rayburn addressed the questions, and discussion ensued. Mayor Hicks asked Mike Parker about elevation requirements for the lot and whether flood insurance would be required. Councilmember Robert Shankle asked about potential flooding impacts if a structure were built. Councilmember Adam Lowther inquired if a site plan would specify slab and parking lot drainage requirements. City Planner Rayburn responded, and further discussion ensued.

Councilmember Robert Shankle moved to postpone the item until additional information, including a site plan prepared by an engineer, was received. Councilmember Jimmy Ford seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

7. PUBLIC HEARING AND FIRST READING OF AN ORDINANCE GRANTING A SPECIAL USE PERMIT FOR “INSTITUTIONS OF RELIGIOUS, EDUCATIONAL, OR PHILANTHROPIC NATURE” ON PROPERTY ADDRESSED AS 5104 AND 5204 SOUTH FIRST STREET, LUFKIN, TEXAS – APPROVED.

City Manager Kevin Gee stated that Staff received a request for a Special Use Permit to allow expansion of the Naranjo Museum of Natural History at 5104 and 5204 South First Street, within a Planned Unit Development. He highlighted the location of the property and surrounding uses and noted that Staff found the proposed Special Use Permit consistent with current area zoning, existing uses, and the “Corridor Commercial” future land use designation. The Planning & Zoning Commission unanimously recommended approval at the July 28, 2025, meeting.

Staff recommended that Council conduct a Public Hearing and consider approval of the Ordinance.

Mayor Mark Hicks opened the Public Hearing at 5:37 p.m. Mr. Tomas Gonzales spoke in favor of the item. There being no further public comments, the Public Hearing was closed.

Councilmember Jimmy Ford moved to approve the Ordinance as presented. Councilmember Adam Lowther seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

8. PUBLIC HEARING AND FIRST READING OF AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE ZONING ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF LUFKIN, TEXAS, BEING ORDINANCE NO. 3368, BY AMENDING ARTICLE XIX, “SCHEDULE OF PERMITTED USES” TO INCLUDE ELECTRONIC CIGARETTE AND VAPE SHOP RETAIL STORES; AND PROVIDING DEFINITIONS, REQUIREMENTS, AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE – APPROVED.

City Manager Kevin Gee stated that, like many cities across Texas, Lufkin had seen a notable increase in retail businesses selling electronic cigarettes and vaping products. He noted that no ordinance currently regulates these establishments. To help protect public health, particularly that of children and teens, it was determined that vape shops should be appropriately distanced from sensitive sites such as schools and churches to minimize potential adverse impacts on the community.

City Manager Gee explained that the proposed Ordinance would restrict new Electronic Cigarette and Vape Shop Retail Stores to Light and Heavy Manufacturing zoning districts and require approval of a

Special Use Permit. He provided additional details on the Ordinance and stated it was intended to address community concerns prudently while minimizing legal challenges. The request was recommended for approval by the Planning & Zoning Commission on July 28, 2025, by a vote of five (5) to one (1).

Staff recommended that Council conduct a Public Hearing and consider approval of the Ordinance. City Attorney Kristi Skillern provided additional context regarding the development of the Ordinance, shared a draft with changes, and explained the research and steps taken prior to presenting it to City Council.

Mayor Mark Hicks opened the Public Hearing at 5:47 p.m. Speaking in favor of the item were:

- Kendrick Butler
- Jakoya Grimes
- Lila Knapp
- Kara Phillips
- Stephanie Olford
- Nevaeh Maynard
- Melanie Patterson
- Roxie Parr-Barlow
- Braydon Nava
- Martha Hernandez
- Natalie Purvis
- Carson McDaniel
- Kimberly Abeldt
- Sharon Kruk
- Abby Bennett
- Cassidy Knapp
- Captain Jenifer Phillips
- Lori Bennett
- Kim Simmons
- Millye Darmstadter Hale
- Tom Darmstadter II

There being no further public comments, the Public Hearing was closed.

Councilmember Kim Ogden asked whether non-fixed or non-storefront vehicles could be included under the Ordinance. City Attorney Kristi Skillern addressed the question, and discussion ensued. Councilmember Jimmy Ford commended the young people who spoke in favor of the Ordinance. Councilmember Robert Shankle noted that while the Ordinance was a work in progress, it was a good start. Councilmember Brent Watkins referenced statistics on the increase of tips to Crime Stoppers regarding school vaping incidents. Councilmember Angela Hobbs-Spencer discussed vaping in school bathrooms. Mayor Hicks noted concern that the Ordinance would not affect stores where vape-related products accounted for less than 50 percent of annual sales. Councilmember Kim Ogden asked if the City could implement greater restrictions. Councilmember Adam Lowther inquired whether existing sites could expand in the future and about additional restrictions on stand-alone signs. Mayor Hicks asked whether distance restrictions for vape shops mirrored those for alcohol-selling locations. City Attorney Skillern addressed the questions, and further discussion ensued.

Councilmember Robert Shankle moved to approve the Ordinance as presented. Councilmember Brent Watkins seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

9. PRESENTATION, PUBLIC HEARING AND RESOLUTION APPROVING THE PARKS AND TRAILS MASTER PLAN – APPROVED.

City Manager Kevin Gee stated that in October 2024, the City of Lufkin contracted Kendig Keast Collaborative to develop a Parks and Trails Master Plan. Parks and Recreation Director Buddy Timme presented the plan.

Staff recommended that Council conduct a Public Hearing and consider approval of the Parks and Trails Master Plan.

Mayor Mark Hicks opened the Public Hearing at 7:10 p.m. Andrew Harbuck spoke, expressing concerns that parks in the community had been neglected for too long. There being no further public comments, the Public Hearing was closed.

Councilmember Robert Shankle moved to approve the Resolution and the Parks and Trails Master Plan as presented. Councilmember Angela Hobbs-Spencer seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

10. APPOINTMENT OF A COMMISSIONER TO THE CITY OF LUFKIN PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION – APPROVED.

City Manager Kevin Gee stated there was a vacancy on the Planning & Zoning Commission. Staff received two applications from Ms. Monica Peters Clark and Mr. Mike Hineman, and the applicant information had been provided to the Council for review.

Staff recommended that the City Council appoint an applicant to fill the vacancy.

Councilmember Robert Shankle moved to appoint Ms. Monica Peters Clark to the Planning & Zoning Commission. Councilmember Kim Ogden seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

11. ESTABLISH SEPTEMBER 9TH AND SEPTEMBER 16TH 2025, AS CITY COUNCIL MEETING DATES TO CONDUCT PUBLIC HEARINGS, ESTABLISH A TAX RATE, AND CONSIDER APPROVAL OF THE 2025-2026 FISCAL YEAR BUDGET FOR THE CITY OF LUFKIN – APPROVED.

City Manager Kevin Gee stated that, per State Law, the City Council must establish dates for publication and conducting of public hearings for the purpose of establishing a tax rate and approving the City of Lufkin 2025-2026 Fiscal Year Budget.

Staff recommended that the City Council establish September 9th and September 16th, 2025, as the City Council meeting dates for publication and conduct of these public hearings.

Councilmember Robert Shankle moved to approve the meeting dates as presented. Councilmember Kim Ogden seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

12. RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR THE CALLING AND ORDERING OF A SPECIAL ELECTION FOR A COUNCILMEMBER FOR WARD NO. 3 TO BE HELD ON NOVEMBER 4, 2025 – APPROVED.

City Manager Kevin Gee stated that, due to Councilmember Brent Watkins announcing his candidacy for Mayor in the May 2027 Election, he resigned his position as Councilmember for Ward No. 3. While the "resign-to-run" rule applied, Councilmember Watkins could continue to serve until his successor was elected and sworn in.

Staff recommended that City Council approve the Resolution providing for the calling of a Special Election on November 4, 2025, the Uniform Election Date, to fill the vacancy.

Councilmember Kim Ogden moved to approve the Resolution as presented. Councilmember Adam Lowther seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

13. RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH ANGELINA COUNTY FOR ELECTION SERVICES FOR THE NOVEMBER 4TH 2025, SPECIAL CALLED ELECTION –

City Kevin Gee stated that Staff recommended the City Council approve a Resolution authorizing the City Manager to enter into a contract with Angelina County for Election Services for the November 4, 2025, Special Called Election.

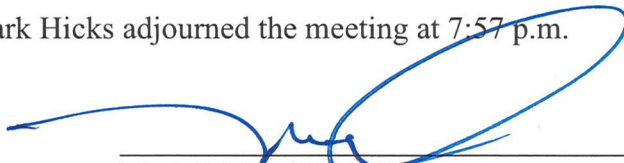
Councilmember Kim Ogden moved to approve the Resolution as presented. Councilmember Jimmy Ford seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mayor Hicks recessed the Regular Session at 7:18 p.m.

Mayor Hicks reconvened the Regular Session at 7:57 p.m.

There being no further business, Mayor Mark Hicks adjourned the meeting at 7:57 p.m.



Mark Hicks, Mayor

ATTEST:



Aimee Cloutier, City Secretary