

STATE OF TEXAS §
COUNTY OF CAMERON §
TOWN OF LAGUNA VISTA §

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING
OF THE LAGUNA VISTA TOWN COUNCIL**

DATE: April 9, 2024
TIME: 6:00 p.m.
PLACE: Town of Laguna Vista City Hall

MEMBERS PRESENT: Michael Carter, Mayor
Johvonne Howard, Mayor Pro-Tem
Bettina Tolin, Council Member place 3
Teresa Bryant, Council Member Place 5
Silke De Gobeo, Council Member Place 6

Alan T. Ozuna, Esq.
Rendie R. Gonzales, City Manager
Crystal Chapa, City Secretary
Anthony David, Chief of Police
Ricky Gonzalez, Police Commander
Steve Reyes, Police Sergeant
Karla De La Pena, City Clerk
Pura Mireles, Librarian
Liz Baldwin, Library Clerk

MEMBERS ABSENT: Dr. Christopher Romero, Council Member Place 1
Rolando Gonzalez, Council Member Place 4

ORDER OF BUSINESS

• **Call to Order**

Mayor Carter called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

• **Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance**

Invocation lead by Council Member Tolin.

• **Roll Call/Excused Absences-** Council Member Gonzalez and Romero

Motion was made by Mayor Carter to excuse Council Member Gonzalez and Romero.

Second was made by Council Member Bryant.

VOTE

Council Member Howard	Aye	Council Member De Gobeo	Aye
Council Member Tolin	Aye	Mayor Carter	Aye
Council Member Bryant	Aye		

Motion Carried

OPEN FORUM - At this time, audience is allowed 3 minutes per person to address the Council on any topic. There will be no discussion or formal action taken during this agenda item. The speaker must identify themselves before speaking. A Speaker Request Form must be presented to the City Secretary prior to the meeting.

Natalie Ruiz spoke to the council regarding last Thursday's edition in our local paper South Padre Island-Port Isabel Press on South Padre Island Family Wellness Clinic.

Tony David advised that he has been the Chief of Police in Laguna Vista for the past 10 years and has been attached to this community since 1986 when he was a young state trooper here. He took a moment to set the record straight on rumors and half-truths that are unfortunately being spread in our community as well as thank the past and current council members for always following the laws and regulations adding that unfortunately there are some people here that don't understand that or don't want to abide by that. Chief David then addressed some lies that came from Mr. Haydon regarding the posting on social media of manhandling that was nothing more than a brotherly pat on the back and another post on social media of an inappropriate relationship with the ex-mayor that he clarified is a disgusting falsehood. Chief David then continued to address some more lies that came from Mrs. Ruiz clarifying that he never laid a hand on her or touched her. Chief David then addressed Lies from Mr. Young and clarifying that it did not take 30 minutes for the ambulance or EMS to arrive at boomers as well as clarifying that the volunteers were never disbanded. Chief David stated that at a very young age of 17 he was sworn to uphold the constitution and has done so and continues to do so then advised that with freedom of speech comes a great responsibility to tell the truth.

NEW BUSINESS – Discussion, consideration, and possible action on each of the following items:

- **PROCLAMATION** – Proclamation of gratitude and appreciation for Council Member Gonzales and Council Member De Gobeo.

MINUTES – Consideration and possible action to approve the following minutes:

Council member Bryant asked if the typos had been corrected and Crystal answered yes.

- March 19, 2024 – Regular Meeting

Motion was made by Council Member Howard to approve the March 19, 2024 minutes.
Second was made by Council Member Bryant.

VOTE

Council Member Howard	Aye	Council Member De Gobeo	Aye
Council Member Tolin	Aye	Mayor Carter	Aye
Council Member Bryant	Aye		

Motion Carried

FINANCIAL REPORTS – Review of Monthly Financial Reports. (City Manager)

The Check Register, Bank Reconciliation, Income Statement, and Balance Sheets were provided to Council for review. Rendie advised that we are at the 6-month mark and are 97% collected on our property taxes and are on track for revenue. Rendie continued to advise that we are at 45% for expenses and a little bit under budget and are right on track.

Council Member De Gobeo asked about a charge for trash bags on the check register and Crystal advised that our Public Works director placed a bulk order from a new vendor.

RECYCLING SERVICES – Discussion, consideration, and possible action regarding recycling services (City Manager).

Rendie advised the council that our Republic Services is coming up for renewal and advised of the council that the recycling bin on Saturdays is filling up quickly and suggested having the requirement of providing proof of residency at drop off to help resolve the issue. Rendie advised that Mr. Carrillo is here to present the opportunities that we have when updating our contract.

Mr. Carrillo gave a brief history advising that they have been servicing Laguna Vista since 2003 and went over recycling opportunities.

Council Member De Gobeo asked if she understood correctly that Brownsville does not have a recycling facility yet and Mr. Carrillo answered that there are two independent recyclers, but Brownsville doesn't have a municipal recycling facility. Council member also advised that they were told that all the green garbage receptacles were to be replaced with blue ones and that has not been done yet and Mr. Carrillo advised that they have a national standard on that and will look into why it hasn't been completed.

Mayor Carter asked if they have any home pick up anywhere in the valley and Mr. Carrillo answered only on South Padre Island and that is a walk up service but it is very expensive and there are only 45 accounts. Council Member Howard stated that she remembers having this conversation several years ago and the Island was the only entity that had the curbside service but for our community it was a little expensive. Mr. Carrillo advised that the Island is paying a high rate, and it really depends on the number of pickups in the surrounding area. Council Member Howard asked in regard to the 45 accounts they have on South Padre Island how much is the bill, Mr. Carrillo advised that he can get that information. Council Member Howard advised that if we do propose something that we need to make sure it is well advertised because it is going to affect everyone. Mayor Carter advised that we could task Rendie with coming up with a program and sold plan to present.

Rendie advised that we are going to do some signage on recycling process.

Motion was made by Council Member Bryant to task the City Manager with a Recycling and proof of residency plan.

Second was made by Council Member De Gobeo.

VOTE

Council Member Howard	Aye	Council Member De Gobeo	Aye
Council Member Tolin	Aye	Mayor Carter	Aye
Council Member Bryant	Aye		

Motion Carried

TRAVEL REQUESTS – Consideration and possible action to approve and authorize travel for police chief Anthony David to attend Police Chief training (City Manager).

Rendie advised the council to table the request as a local training was located and travel won't be necessary.

DOG PARK – Consideration and possible action to discuss creation of Dog Park (City Manager & Council Member Howard).

Council Member Howard advised there is a strong push for something basic that would generate a facility that dog owners and their dogs can enjoy. Council Member Howard advised that she has had this idea to have a little dog park for quite some time and now with the movement of Yappy hour as well as Ms. Sally and Ms. King who have been putting some research base information to educate us all on what it would entail.

Ms. King, the spokesperson on the dog park committee with 8 members gave a brief presentation to the council on the vision, mission, need, and benefits of a dog park in Laguna Vista and asked for the council's consideration and guidance.

Council Member Howard advised that the committee has already researched areas within the community and has the information ready to present on the areas. Mayor Carter advised that the property across the street is used for overflow parking and work area and suggested the library area would be the most likely area.

Rendie spoke to the council on the temporary dog parks Brownsville has set up at low cost using horse gates and set up QR codes to see how many people use it. Council Member Howard would like a committee member to meet with Rendie and Mr. Ozuna to come up with what the temporary would look like and entail.

CITY MANAGER REPORT

Rendie gave an update on the grants, for ARPA we had a meeting 3 weeks ago but no new updates.

Rendie updated on the Valley Baptist Legacy Grant, advising we received notice that our letter of interest has been denied and advised that we will need to reapply and are just at a pause for the time being.

Rendie updated on the Texas Parks & Wildlife Grant advising she attended the initial pre-agreement site visit with the coordinator on April 3rd but otherwise no new developments at this time.

Rendie updated on the CDBG GLO Drainage Grant, advising that the first draw was submitted, and we are moving along with the project and nothing new to report.

Rendie advised the council that we approved the CDBG Resilient Grant Program at the last meeting and we are working with GrantWorks to get all the startup documents but otherwise nothing new to report other than the beginning stages of that.

Rendie updated on the USDA Grant opportunities advising that we don't fit the criteria of the one posted but are still working towards other ones for our library.

Rendie advised the council there are no new updates on the police grants.

Rendie advised that we have a full-time public works position open and a new EMT that comes to us from Willacy County EMS.

Rendie advised the new website is up and going, and advised we received complaints on the new look and format, and we are working with the website designers to improve the content and it will keep getting better.

Rendie advised on the Town marketing newsletter for March had a 61% open rate.

Rendie advised that the sample ballots for the election are available on the Cameron County website.

Rendie updated on the events and advised that the Easter event was a huge success and estimated that we gave out 350 lunches and our goal next year is increase it to 500 attendees and will market a little heavier. The Big Heros Fundraiser on April 27th that we host is coming up and we will have staff there to assist.

Rendie updated on the Department reports advising that the Police department had 486 traffic stops that resulted in 266 citations and 220 warnings. She further advised that our First Responder Organization that includes our paid EMT's and Fire Department Volunteers responded to 34 EMS calls and 2 fire calls for the month of March, and they conducted their training as well. Rendie further provided Port Isabel dispatch centers reporting software numbers for average response time of 3 minutes and 53 seconds for dispatch to arrival and 41 seconds for dispatch to in route. Rendie then updated on the library and advised the most popular event has been the nutrition class that had 21 attendees last month. Rendie advised that public works is still working on the drainage on Orange and they had 2 houses that were completely clogged. Lastly

Rendie updated advised that the court docket had 246 cases with 22 shows, building issued 12 permits and did 43 inspections, and we collected 1,807.42 for hot taxes paid in March.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Council Member Tolin to adjourn.

Second was made by Council Member Bryant.

VOTE

Council Member Howard	Aye	Council Member De Gobeo	Aye
Council Member Tolin	Aye	Mayor Carter	Aye
Council Member Bryant	Aye		

Motion Carried

Meeting Adjourned at 7:06 pm



Michael Carter, Mayor

Attest:



Crystal Chapa, City Secretary