

**CITY OF VIDOR
VIDOR CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
February 22, 2024**

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mayor Songe
Councilmember Lee
Councilmember McGowan
Councilmember Thompson
Councilmember Weldon
Councilmember Herrera

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Councilmember Barker

Administrative Personnel: Robbie Hood, City Manager; Chris Leavins, City Attorney; Pebbles Eckhoff, Finance Director; Ed Martin, Police Lieutenant; Jerry Crumley, Code Enforcement Officer; and Vicki Watson, Interim City Secretary

A. OPENING, PRESENTATIONS, AND CITIZENS COMMENTS

A -1. Call to order and the establishment of a Quorum

A quorum was present, and the Regular Meeting of the Vidor City Council began at 7:00 p.m., Mayor Songe presiding.

A -2. Invocation and Pledge to the United States Flag and the State of Texas Flag

Chris Leavins, City Attorney, gave the Invocation and led the Pledge to the United States Flag and the State of Texas Flag.

A -3. Proclamation – Career & Technical Education Month

Mayor Songe proclaimed the month of February, 2024, as Career & Technical Education Month in the City of Vidor and encouraged citizens to become familiar with the services and benefits offered by the career and technical education programs in this community and to participate in them.

A -4. Citizen Comments

Cheylyn Butts, 1023 Church Street, addressed Council and recognized the other childcare directors, owners, and LIT students in the audience. Ms. Butts encouraged Council to support Proposition 2, which gives cities and counties authority to reduce property taxes for childcare centers serving low-income families. Ms. Butts reviewed the benefits of doing so which would help reduce childcare costs for families, support wage increases for the childcare educators, and expand childcare availability to working parents.

Britni McPayne discussed the issues daycares have had since 2020 and explained property taxes doubled, but their capacity did not. Mrs. McPayne stated childcare is a critical part of our infrastructure, but for too long, it has been undervalued and underappreciated. Mrs. McPayne explained the reduced tuition makes it difficult to retain and pay help to care for the children and stressed it is not just a job to them.

B. COUNCIL CONSENT AGENDA

B -1. Approval of Accounts Paid:

Paid Invoices:	General Fund –	\$224,946.18
	MCBSF –	\$245.84
	Hotel Occupancy –	\$10,365.62
	Proprietary Fund –	\$38,151.89
	Judicial Efficiency Fee	\$309.46
	Total:	\$274,018.99

B -2. Approval of Minutes: Regular Meeting – February 8, 2024

A motion to **approve the Consent Agenda** was made by Councilmember McGowan, seconded by Councilmember Thompson. The Council voted five (5) for and none (0) opposed. The motion carried.

C. COUNCIL REGULAR AGENDA

C -1. PUBLIC HEARING regarding the renewal of the designation and/or the designation of the establishment of five (5) residential reinvestment zones for the purpose of residential tax abatements, and providing interested persons the opportunity to be heard

Mayor Songe opened the **PUBLIC HEARING regarding the renewal of the designation and/or the designation of the establishment of five (5) residential reinvestment zones for the purpose of residential tax abatements, and providing interested persons the opportunity to be heard** at 7:13 p.m.

Chris Leavins, City Attorney, stated this is the residential tax abatement program the City has had for years. Mr. Leavins explained the City is currently divided into five (5) reinvestment zones, and every year we have to reestablish those same zones because they expire. Mr. Leavins stated there are no proposed changes. Jerry Crumley, Code Enforcement Officer, displayed the current map for Council and the audience.

Jerad Spencer, 1125 South Main, explained he is a real estate agent whose primary focus is our only town. Mr. Spencer stated in 2022, he did 92 transactions, and 87 of them had a Vidor address. Mr. Spencer stated out of all of the agents in Southeast Texas, he sells the most homes in this town, and by doing that, he also deals with the most new constructions. Mr. Spencer explained since Vidor has been offering tax abatements, only three of the new constructions he has dealt with were to current residents, the rest of the new constructions were to out-of-town buyers. Mr. Spencer stated the tax abatements represent a huge savings for the buyers, which in turn enables them to buy bigger homes, and down the road, these houses will bring in huge amounts in property taxes.

A brief discussion ensued.

There were no further questions or comments, and Mayor Songe closed the **PUBLIC HEARING regarding the renewal of the designation and/or the designation of the establishment of five (5) residential reinvestment zones for the purpose of residential tax abatements, and providing interested persons the opportunity to be heard** at 7:19 p.m.

C -2. PUBLIC HEARING to provide interested persons in the annexation of the property located at 17160 IH-10, Vidor, Texas, owned by Road Ranger, LLC, an opportunity to be heard

Mayor Songe opened the **PUBLIC HEARING to provide interested persons in the annexation of the property located at 17160 IH-10, Vidor, Texas, owned by Road Ranger, LLC, an opportunity to be heard** at 7:20 p.m.

Robbie Hood, City Manager, explained this is the property on the I-10 feeder at FM 1132 located in the City's ETJ (*extra-territorial jurisdiction*). Mr. Hood stated Road Ranger petitioned to be annexed into the city limits, but this requires a public hearing. Chris Leavins, City Attorney, stated a service agreement will be brought back to Council, and an Ordinance would actually annex them.

There were no further questions or comments, and Mayor Songe closed the **PUBLIC HEARING to provide interested persons in the annexation of the property located at 17160 IH-10, Vidor, Texas, owned by Road Ranger, LLC, an opportunity to be heard** at 7:22 p.m.

C -3. Discussion and possible action to approve a Resolution reappointing and/or appointing Andy Collins as a member of the Civil Service Commission (term to expire on 9/6/2026)

Robbie Hood, City Manager, explained he had reached out to Mr. Collins who said he will not be able to continue to serve in that capacity. No action was taken.

C -4. Discussion and possible action to approve a Resolution permitting the Orange County Mosquito Control to fly at low altitudes in territory under the City to abate mosquitos

A motion was made by Councilmember McGowan, seconded by Councilmember Thompson to **approve the Resolution**. The Council voted five (5) for and none (0) opposed. The motion carried.

C -5. Discussion and possible action to approve an Ordinance amending the Code of Ordinances by Amending Chapter 10 – Building Code, Article I. – Building Code, Section 10-12. – Contractor's Bond Requirements regarding required performance bond

Chris Leavins, City Attorney, explained our Code of Ordinances currently requires contractors to provide a bond to do contracting work in the City and listed the bond amounts for each type. Mr. Leavins stated the proposed changes are to Section A, which states bonds are obtained from the City, but the City does not issue bonds, and this is just cleaning up the language. Mr. Leavins explained the other proposed change is to Subsection C, which will require any contractor doing work for the City to obtain a surety or performance bond. Robbie Hood, City Manager, stated the Mayor discovered this was lacking in our Ordinance.

A motion was made by Councilmember Herrera, seconded by Councilmember Thompson, to **approve the Ordinance**. The Council voted five (5) for and none (0) opposed. The motion carried.

C -6. Discussion and possible action to authorize the City Manager to solicit RFQs for engineering services for daily operations

Robbie Hood, City Manager, asked Council for permission to seek RFQs (Request for Qualifications) for engineering services for the situations that come up daily. Mr. Hood explained the City currently uses Schaumburg & Polk. Mr. Hood stated we would seek RFQs now and come back with a contract at a later date.

A motion was made by Councilmember Herrera, seconded by Councilmember McGowan, to **authorize the City Manager to solicit RFQs for engineering services for daily operations.** The Council voted five (5) for and none (0) opposed. The motion carried.

C -7. Discussion and possible action to approve a Resolution appointing one or more members to the Zoning Board of Adjustments

Robbie Hood, City Manager, stated there are five applications in Council packets and explained he has talked to each of the applicants, several of whom were in the audience. The applicants in attendance were called up individually by the Mayor to address Council.

Michael Tuttle, 715 Concord, stated he has been in real estate since the 1970s. Mr. Tuttle explained he has been overseas for a number of years and recently moved to Vidor a year and a half ago.

Howard Smith, 125 Lexington, stated he has been a resident of Vidor for three years this coming September.

Wendy Glen, 1050 S. Ashland, stated she and her husband bought their house almost eleven years ago. Ms. Glen stated she has been attending Council meetings and feels this would be a great way to get involved.

A motion was made by Councilmember Weldon, seconded by Councilmember Thompson to **appoint all five (5) applicants to the Zoning Board of Adjustments.** The Council voted five (5) for and none (0) opposed. The motion carried.

Mayor Songe thanked the newly appointed members to the Board of Adjustments and stressed the importance of their positions.. Mr. Hood stated he will be in touch to set up a meeting to elect officers and thanked them for stepping up.

C -8. Discussion and possible action to approve a Resolution authorizing Pebbles Eckhoff, the City's Finance Director, access to the City's account(s) held at DuGood Credit Union

Pebbles Eckhoff, Finance Director, explained the Resolution Council originally passed was generic and not accepted by the financial institution.

A motion was made by Councilmember McGowan, seconded by Councilmember Thompson to **approve the Resolution.** The Council voted five (5) for and none (0) opposed. The motion carried.

C -9. Discussion and possible action regarding BarkFest 2024

C-10. Discussion and possible action setting a date for the Mayor's annual Main Street Cleanup

Mayor Songe read agenda items C-9 and C-10 and explained there was good attendance at the events last year and suggested holding the events in the month of April. Mayor Songe suggested April 20th for BarkFest and April 27th for the Main Street Cleanup and asked Council when they would be available. Councilmember Lee stated Earth Day is April 22, 2024, and the event could be tied in with that. A brief discussion ensued.

Councilmember McGowan made a motion to **hold BarkFest on April 20, 2024, and the Main Street Cleanup on April 27, 2024.** Councilmember Thompson seconded. The Council voted five (5) for and none (0) opposed. The motion carried.

C-11. Discussion and possible action to approve an Ordinance cancelling the May 4, 2024 General Election and declaring each unopposed Candidate elected to Office for Council Members Ward 2, 3, and 5

Discusión y posible acción para aprobar una Ordenanza que cancele las Elecciones Generales del 4 de mayo de 2024 y declare elegido a cada candidato sin oposición para el cargo de miembros del Consejo, distritos 2, 3 y 5

A motion was made by Councilmember McGowan, seconded by Councilmember Thompson, to **approve the Ordinance cancelling the May 4, 2024 General Election**. The Council voted five (5) for and none (0) opposed. The motion carried.

C-12. EXECUTIVE SESSION pursuant to Section 551.074 of the Texas Government Code – Personnel Matter; to deliberate the appointment of an Interim Associate Judge

Mayor Songe tabled this agenda item.

C-13. EXECUTIVE SESSION pursuant to Section 551.074 of the Texas Government Code – Personnel Matter; to deliberate the appointment of a City Secretary

Mayor Songe adjourned the Regular Meeting to go into **EXECUTIVE SESSION pursuant to Section 551.074 of the Texas Government Code – Personnel Matter; to deliberate the appointment of a City Secretary** at 7:36 p.m.

Mayor Songe reconvened the Regular Meeting at 9:36 p.m.

C-14. Consideration and possible action arising out of C-12 regarding the appointment of an Interim Associate Judge

No action was taken.

C-15. Consideration and possible action arising out of C-13 regarding the appointment of a City Secretary


A motion was made by Councilmember Thompson, seconded by Councilmember McGowan, to **appoint Rachel Duplechain as City Secretary with a hire date to be determined and for the budgeted salary amount**. The Council voted five (5) for and none (0) opposed. The motion carried.

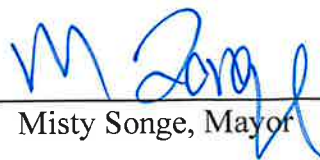
C-16. Consideration of Adjournment

A motion for **Consideration of Adjournment** was made by Councilmember McGowan, seconded by Councilmember Weldon. The Council voted unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 9:38 p.m.

These minutes were approved on March 14, 2024.

ATTEST:


Rachel Duplechain, City Secretary


Misty Songe, Mayor