

A regular meeting of the Groves City Council was held January 3, 2023 in the Groves City Council Chamber with Mayor Chris Borne, Councilmember Rob Vensel, Councilmember Rhonda Dugas and Councilmember Paul Oliver in attendance. Councilmember Mark McAdams was not in attendance. Mayor Borne called the meeting to order and welcomed the attendees and news media. A representative from the local VFW then led the prayer and pledge of allegiance.

APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 19, 2022 CITY COUNCIL MEETING AND DECEMBER 22, 2022 SPECIAL MEETING: Councilmember Vensel moved to approve the minutes of the December 19, 2022 City Council meeting and December 22, 2022 as written and Councilmember Oliver seconded. Mayor Borne asked for questions and there were none. Motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Borne asked for reports and City Manager D.E. Sosa stated that there were none. Mayor Borne then asked for citizen comments and there were none.

AUTHORIZE THE MAYOR TO SIGN THE SEPARATION AGREEMENT FOR THE CURRENT CITY MANAGER: Councilmember Rob Vensel made a motion to authorize the Mayor to sign the Separation Agreement for the current City Manager and Councilmember Oliver seconded. Councilmember Dugas asked if City Manager D.E. Sosa's Attorney Melody Carrier would be able to answer a couple of questions. Councilmember Dugas then asked Mrs. Carrier what she means on number eleven when it says they will not disparage the other Party hereto. Mrs. Carrier stated that she wanted to advise Council that she is not their Council. Mrs. Carrier then stated that number eleven is nothing different than what they are bound to by law anyways. Mrs. Carrier then explained by law you are not permitted to discuss personnel issues. She then stated basically this is saying that you will not disparage him and he will not disparage you and that this Separation Agreement between the City Manager and the City is amicable and that it has been reached by both parties. Councilmember Dugas then asked about paragraph number eight regarding the non-defamation provisions and does that go along with the disparagement. Councilmember Dugas then stated that she knows this covers name calling but does it cover how Council came to this decision because people are asking. Mrs. Carrier stated that the decision was made in Executive Session so you are bound by that. Councilmember Dugas then stated that she has been asked by people things like what did he do, how did you come to this decision and why did this happen. Mrs. Dugas then stated that her response to these questions is because of the Executive Session she is not able to discuss that. Mrs. Carrier stated that she thinks the response to that should be that this was a mutual agreement and it's not you have found that he has done anything and this is

something that is commonly done for persons of 20 years that leave a City or any kind of institution. Motion passed unanimously with Mayor Chris Borne, Councilmember Rob Vensel, Councilmember Paul Oliver and Councilmember Rhonda Dugas all for the item.

Mayor Borne and Mr. Sosa then both signed the Separation Agreement. Mr. Sosa then thanked everyone and then turned his seat over to Interim City Manager Lance Billeaud.

DISCUSS AND APPROVE HR TO BEGIN THE SEARCH PROCESS IN LOOKING FOR AN EXECUTIVE RECRUITMENT COMPANY TO ASSIST WITH FINDING A NEW CITY MANAGER: Councilmember Rhonda Dugas made a motion to discuss and approve HR to begin the search process in looking for an Executive Recruitment Company to assist with finding a new City Manager and Councilmember Oliver seconded. Stephanie Gaspard HR Director stated that she has called some other Cities that have recently used Executive Recruitment Companies and asked them for an idea of what kind of cost we would be looking at. Mrs. Gaspard stated that from what she has gathered that it will likely be anywhere from \$17,000 to \$30,000. Mrs. Gaspard then stated that should Council approve her to move forward then she would gather more information such as proposals. Mayor Borne then asked HR Director Stephanie Gaspard if she knows how long it would take for companies to get the proposals back to us and Mrs. Gaspard stated that she is hearing that it takes about a week. Motion passed unanimously.

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF A REQUEST FROM THE JEFFERSON COUNTY AMATEUR RADIO CLUB FOR THE USE OF LIONS PARK FROM 1 P.M. ON JANUARY 28, 2023 TO 1 P.M. ON JANUARY 29, 2023: Councilmember Rob Vensel made a motion to consider approval of a request from the Jefferson County Amateur Radio Club for the use of Lions Park from 1 p.m. on January 28, 2023 to 1 p.m. on January 29, 2023 and Councilmember Dugas seconded. Kirk Mahaney of 3848 Dunn in Groves stated that they will do the same as last year. There were no questions and motion passed unanimously.

AUTHORIZE SIGNATORIES FOR CITY DEPOSITORY: Councilmember Rob Vensel made a motion to authorize the Mayor, Mayor Pro Tem and City Manager to be signatories on all accounts held by the City Depository and Councilmember Oliver seconded. There were no questions and motion passed unanimously.

DISCUSS AND CONSIDER SUSPENDING GAME ROOM APPLICATIONS UNTIL THE UPDATED ORDINANCE IS APPROVED: Councilmember Rhonda Dugas made a motion to discuss and consider suspending game room applications until the updated Ordinance is approved and Councilmember Oliver seconded. Councilmember Dugas stated that this discussion will be on the Planning and Zoning agenda for January 9, 2023. There were no questions and motion passed unanimously.

DISCUSS AND TAKE-ACTION WITH THE PAYMENT OF ENGINEERING FEE FOR GLO STREET PROGRAM PHASE III TO BE PAID FROM CITY STREET FUNDS: Councilmember Rob Vensel made a motion to discuss and take-action with the payment of engineering fee for GLO Street Program Phase III to be paid from the City street funds and Councilmember Oliver seconded. Mayor Borne then stated that historically the Engineering is paid for out of the grant itself but it has been brought to our attention that it would be better to pay the \$50,000 ourselves instead of taking it out of the GLO Street Program funds. Mayor Borne then stated by doing it this way it will keep us from having to do the streets ourselves. Mayor Borne then asked Finance Director Lamar Ozley if we have enough money to do that and he responded we do in our street budget. There were no further questions. Motion passed unanimously.

INVOICES: Interim City Manager Lance Billeaud presented invoices for payment totaling \$268,498.20 as follows:

BYO Recreation, LLC	Playground equipment for Lions Park.	58,317.02
DXI Industries, INC.	CL2 and SO2 for Wastewater Plant.	9,031.20
Fuelman of Lafayette	Gas and Diesel charges for November 2022.	21,743.73
Hoist and Crane	New Jib Crane for Taft and Georgia Lift Stations and instillation. Repair for Georgia Lift Station Trolley.	165,000.00
Lawco	Drainage improvements on 25 th St.	7,550.00

Soutex Surveyors

Engineering Services for 2022-2023.
Pipe bursting Project. (25% complete).

6,856.25

Councilmember Rob Vensel moved to approve payment of the invoices totaling \$268,498.20 and Councilmember Dugas seconded. Councilmember Vensel asked Finance Director Lamar Ozley if the Lawco payment is the total price and Mr. Ozley stated that there will probably be more billing on that. Councilmember Dugas asked if the playground equipment for Lions Park is new equipment and Mr. Ozley stated that we were waiting on parts to come in and they are now in so this is the final payment for that line item. Mayor Borne then asked if the Hoist and Crane was an emergency job or was it planned and Public Works Director Troy Foxworth stated it was planned and budgeted for. Motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Borne asked for Councilmember comments. Interim City Manager Lance Billeaud wanted to thank the water plant employees for their excellent work during the freeze. Mr. Billeaud also wanted to thank the utility workers for helping turn water off at the residences and that all of the workers did a fantastic job and during the Christmas Holiday at that. There were no further comments.

Mayor Borne thanked everyone for their attendance and adjourned the meeting at 5:36 p.m.



Mayor Borne

ATTEST:



City Clerk