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**Mayor**  
 Patricia Mitchell

**City Council**

**Place 1**  
 Jimmy Johnson

**Mayor Pro-Tem,  
 Place 2**  
 Michelle Tye

**Place 3**  
 Randall Loftis

**Place 4**  
 Kristi King

**Place 5**  
 Kasey Shumake

**City  
 Administrator**  
 Amanda DeGan

**City Attorney**  
 Carvan Adkins

**City Secretary**  
 Shaina Odom

**Fire Chief**  
 Scott Estes

**Police Chief**  
 Eric Debus

**Public Works  
 Director**  
 Jesus Dominguez

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE RHOME CITY COUNCIL**

**Meeting Date: Thursday, January 11, 2024**

**Regular Session: 6 p.m.**

**Meeting Location: Rhome Community Center, 261 North School Road, Rhome, TX 76078**

**LIVE Streaming: In an effort to be as accessible as possible, we *may* Live Stream the meeting using GoToMeeting from your computer or phone.**

**By Computer**

**By Phone**

GoToMeeting: Select Join: Select Meeting	Call 1 (571) 317-3116
Session ID: 571-317-3116	Access Code: 989-137-621
Access Code: <b>989-137-621</b>	Toll Free Option: 1 (866) 899-4679

**The Rhome City Council *may* conduct this meeting by videoconference call in accordance with Section 551.127 of the Texas Open Meetings Act. A quorum of the City Council will be physically present at the address listed above and the public may attend the meeting at the same location.**

**Regular Session: 6 p.m.**

**Call to Order and Establish a Quorum**

Invocation Mayor Patricia Mitchell

Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag

Pledge of Allegiance to the Texas Flag

*Honor the Texas Flag; I pledge allegiance to thee, Texas, One state under God, One and indivisible*

**Public Comments**

- 1. The Council is not permitted to take action or discuss any comments made to the Council at this time concerning an item not listed on the agenda. However, they may make a statement of fact regarding the item or policy. They may also ask that the item be placed on a future agenda or direct the City Administrator to contact the individual to address.*
- 2. Public Comments require the speaker to submit the sign-up form to the City Secretary prior to the meeting, are limited to 3 minutes, and the form must identify each subject the speaker plans to present.*
- 3. There will be no yielding of time to another person. Engaging in verbal attacks, or comments intended to insult or slander any individual shall be cause for removal from Council Chambers.*

JoAnn Wilson – Council action on water/sewer, roads, roads and the city administrator.

Lisa Wilson – senior building and funding for repairs, new social media page

Sam Eason – meeting procedures

## **Announcements from Mayor and Council Members**

- City Hall Closed January 15, 2024 for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- January 17, 2024 First Day to sign up for a Place on the Ballot

## **Consent Agenda**

*All items under this section are recommended for approval for the Consent Agenda. These items are of a routine nature and require only brief deliberation by Council. Council reserves the right to remove any item on the Consent Agenda for further deliberation.*

1. Approval of the Council Minutes from December 14, 2023
2. Resolution 2024-01 naming the official newspaper of the City of the 2024 calendar year  
Items #1 and #2 approved by Council under Consent Agenda. Council Member Tye made the motion to approve the two (2) items and Council Member Loftis seconded the motion.
3. Approval of Texas Municipal Retirement System Buyback Option  
Mayor Mitchell asked that this item be removed from consent and discussed separately. Administrator DeGan explained this was discussed in detail during the executive session meeting of her annual review. The buy back option allows an employee to pay back money they took out of the retirement system and the burden is on the employee to pay the funds. A motion was made by Council Member Tye to approve the buyback option and seconded by Council Member Lifts. Motion was approved unanimously.

## **Monthly Staff Reports and Board Minutes**

*All items under this section are for informational purposes only; no action will be taken by Council.*

1. Departments: Administration, Building & Development, Fire Rescue, Municipal Court, Police and Public Works (Department Heads).  
Administrator DeGan informed Council that the monthly Departmental report had been updated to reflect a more streamlined format and to allow it to be viewed as a single document or update rather than each separate department submitting information with different templates. No questions were asked regarding the report.

## **Regular Agenda**

**Discussion and any necessary action for the following:**

1. TXU Energy (**Mayor Mitchell**)
2. Spartan Energy Contract Reconsideration (**Mayor Mitchell**)  
Items #1, 2, and 11 were combined into one discussion. Mayor Mitchell stated she had contacted TXU for an updated quote on electrical service. Council Member Tye also obtained quotes for our rate. Discussion ensued with the representative from Spartan Energy about added or 'junk' charges that are included in billing documents. Mayor Mitchell asked Council to postpone the discussion on this issue until the City Attorney had a change to provide them with direction. Council Member Loftis made a motion to postpone this discussion until the Council meeting on the 25<sup>th</sup> of January, 2024. Council Member Tye seconded the motion. Passed unanimously.
3. Texas Water Development Board Financial Assistance Application Deadline (**Mayor Mitchell**)  
Mayor Mitchell stated that the deadline was approaching to apply for assistance through the TWDB for water projects. Administrator DeGan conveyed that we needed to be included in the state's water plan to apply for some of the larger project funding through TWDB and that we were in the process of talking with Upper Trinity Groundwater Conservation District in order to find out how to be included in the updated plan.

4. **ByWell Sign Damage (Mayor Mitchell)**

The damage to the sign was discussed by Council and Administrator DeGan provided before and after photos of the sign from October to now, with the cleanup. Mr. Dominguez, Public Works Director, also provided Council with an overview of the damage that remains and a general status of the other monument signs around Rhome. At Council direction, Staff will bring back quotes to repair the signs and gain direction on repairs.

5. **ByWell TxDOT Traffic Light @ Alliance and 114 (Mayor Mitchell)**

Mayor Mitchell discussed the light and stated she understood that the placement of the light was at TxDOT's discretion. Council Member King also spoke on the issue as she had asked about this several meetings ago and wondered what the timing was for installation. Chief Debus conveyed that TxDOT has looked at the area and we have reported all accidents/fatalities for this stretch of highway. Mayor Mitchell asked if we could draft a letter of support to TxDOT for the light to see if that would help move the project forward. Council Member King and Council Member Loftis asked that the letter be brought back at the meeting on the 25<sup>th</sup>. Administrator DeGan will bring the letter back for Council review at a subsequent meeting.

6. **Community Development Block Grant Status (Mayor Mitchell)**

Mayor Mitchell asked for a status update on the CDBG grant we received for the rehab of Well #6. Administrator DeGan provide information that the city's engineer is working with GrantWorks and TCEQ to submit the permit to redrill the well and then we would be publishing the proper notices in the paper. No action taken.

7. **TCEQ/USDA/Rural Development/Upper Trinity grants (Mayor Mitchell)**

Mayor Mitchell asked for a status update on grants. Council Member Loftis stated he thought this was the purpose of the discussion on the 19<sup>th</sup> of January – to review options and plan for capital projects. Council discussed the role of GrantWorks in the process and the submittal process from the standpoint of funding.

8. **Traffic Management (Mayor Mitchell)**

Mayor Mitchell discussed concerns of traffic movement along the service roads on the highways and the people who are using Main St. as an option to get around the issues of the congestion in Rhome. She also brought up the people who are making a u-turn in front of Dollar General and the folks exiting the highway and crossing on the grass. Discussion ensued with the Council about the use of officers to direct traffic. Council Member Shumake and Council Member Tye (both police officers) stated one (1) officer would not be enough to address the concerns. We would need to pay over-time for several officers to man those positions. Chief Debus also conveyed that in his experience from traffic enforcement when an officer is used to direct traffic this can create an expectation that he/she would be there to direct traffic every day. Currently, Rhome does not have enough officers for this level of assistance. Administrator DeGan discussed that this is also a policy question that Council should consider if direction is given to utilize officers for traffic. She also discussed the concerns of residents with the enforcement of Hwy 287 speeding/traffic issues. Traffic will be an on-going issue for Rhome due to our proximity to the Metroplex and our location in southern Wise County. Council Member King stated we should be mindful of the staffing issues when we consider the next budget season. No action taken.

9. **Community Center Electronic Equipment Malfunction/Backup (Mayor Mitchell)**

Mayor Mitchell asked a question about the malfunction of the recording system at the last meeting. Administrator DeGan stated she was unsure what the issue was; however, when staff went to load the meeting, it did not show a recording for the event. She discussed the State requirements for a municipality of our size and the need to update the ordinance for Rhome that states the city 'shall' digitally record the meetings. Unless we hire a third party to handle the recording system, we do not have any IT trained personnel on staff, and we may have a malfunction from time to time. Council discussed that they would prefer that the meetings be recorded and give direction to review the ordinance as written and have the city attorney review. Council also asked staff

to review other options for third party vendors to handle the recording and posting of the meetings. Council Member King made a motion to review Ordinance 2021-03 and remove the 'shall' requirement and add something that meets with the city attorney's approval. Council Member Tye seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

10. **May 4, 2024, Election Updates (Mayor Mitchell)**

Mayor Mitchell conveyed the dates for filing. Further discussion was had about the open positions – Mayor, Place 4 and Place 5 seats. No action taken.

11. **Electric Providers for the City (Mayor Pro-Tem Tye)**

See above.

12. **Posting of Election Signs (City Administrator)**

Administrator DeGan will bring this ordinance back to Council for an update. We currently have a limit on posting signs outside the 30 days preceding the election. We need to change the size of the sign to align with state law. No action taken.

13. **FY2022 Audit (City Administrator)**

Matt Davis from MWH Accounting services reviewed the audit report with Council. Mr. Davis discussed the positive report for Rhome. They began working on audit in August/September period once the audit workpapers were completed and sent to MWH. The city received an unmodified audit opinion, which is the best opinion you can receive from the audit process. There was one item he wanted to point out that the \$1M PMB payment to reserve capacity was the only issue they found that needed an adjustment. He stated that the consultant for the city and the staff did a great job putting everything together. Mr. Davis stated there was no expected fraud or misstatement of the city's position and everything appears appropriate. He updated Council that for this fiscal year, the city did have a statement of net position of \$5.8M for all funds, which is an increase of \$1.2M over the previous year. For 2022, revenues were greater than expenditures. Administrator DeGan discussed that we used the consultants to establish the separate funds that were audited, to clearly track the restricted funds, and other internal updates to align our systems which have put us in a good position for the future. Mayor Mitchell pointed out the adjustment needed for the PMB funds that were received during this year and that the auditors found this to be a material weakness. Council Member King brought up the portion of the report that outlined the steps staff had already taken to address the issue and Council Member Loftis discussed that the journal entry had already been made in the system. Mr. Davis stated this was an adjustment to be noted on their audit and that the city had received the funds but that it hadn't currently been used as of the FY 2022 year end. Council Member King stated that this was a very thorough audit and that it clearly took a lot of time for the MWH Group and staff and she thanked them for their work. She also asked that the following be included in the minutes from the MWH letter that Council received: "Difficulties in performing the audit – we encountered no significant difficulties in dealing with management in performing and completing our audit and we are pleased to report that no disagreements with management arose during the course of our audit." She thanked staff for the transparency and for working with auditors to finish this project. Report was received by Council and no action was needed.

14. **Police Department General Orders (Chief Debus)**

Mayor Mitchell stated she had asked that this be tabled at the last meeting in December. She hadn't had a chance to read the document and was not finished as of yet. Chief Debus stated this was an update to what existed when he was hired. He also referenced that these updates would align with recommendations of the best practices for police departments, which was made clear to him when he was hired that this was a priority of the hiring board. Chief Debus and his staff team worked on these general orders for over one (1) to review and

update and then it was sent to the attorney for review. Motion made by Council Member Tye to accept and seconded by Council Member Shumake. Approved unanimously.

15. **FY2023 Budget Amendments (City Administrator)**

Administrator DeGan went through the Power Point presentation regarding the projected numbers for the FY 2023 budget. She discussed the alignment of the funds and the definitions/use of each fund. She also discussed the changes/updates to the GL account codes and the descriptions of each line item. DeGan provided an update that the revenue from the contractual obligations was now shown in the budget from the City of Aurora and PMB for public safety services. Overall, the general fund received more funds in revenue than was budgeted by approximately \$267K for the year which equals 10%. Expenditures in General Fund were under budget by approximately \$181K or 9% than what was allocated in the budget document. Fire-EMS and Parks were balanced. The transfers out of General Fund to Fire-EMS was less than budgeted by 67% and the Parks Fund was overbudgeted by 33%. For the Utility Fund (Water/Wastewater) revenues exceeded expenditures by approximately \$41K. Motion was made by Council Member Tye to accept the amendments and seconded by Council Member Shumake. Approved unanimously.

16. **Organizational Update (City Administrator)**

Administrator DeGan stated she asked to postpone this as there was difficulty finishing the presentation due to the electricity outages of the day. Item was postponed.

17. **Liquor Laws inside City Limits (Council Member Tye)**

Council Member Tye asked for this item as we may want to consider allowing restaurants that currently exist, or for new restaurants, and what would be the process to pursue this option. Administrator DeGan stated we would need to consult the city attorney and could bring this back in the future.

18. **Parking on Street (Council Member Johnson)**

Council Member Johnson asked that Staff research parking restrictions for the community. Rhome currently has an ordinance that does not allow for parking on the street. Staff will work with the city attorney to review our options and put this on a future agenda.

19. **Administration of Senior Center (Council Member Loftis)**

Council Member Loftis asked that this item be moved to the meeting on January 19<sup>th</sup>.

20. **Waste Connections Annual Increase (City Administrator)**

Jeff Collins from Waste Connections spoke to Council about the requested increase in pricing for trash pick-up. The contract the city has with the vendor allows for a Consumer Price Index (CPI) annual adjustment. This year the CPI is 4.6%. Waste Connections also asked for an additional 1% increase, which would be .23 cents on each water bill. Discussion ensued on general trash pick-up and performance of Waste Connections relative to the requested increase in price for residents. Council Member Tye made a motion to approve the agreement with Waste Connections. Council Member King seconded the motion. Approved unanimously.

**Executive Session**

*Pursuant to the following designated section of the Texas Government Code, Annotated, Chapter 551 (Texas Open Meetings Act), the Council may convene into executive session to discuss the following:*

1. Section 551.071 Consultation with Attorney - pending or contemplated litigation, settlement offer or to seek advice from attorney.

2. Section 551.072 Deliberation regarding Real Property - purchase, exchange, lease, or value of real property if deliberation in an open meeting would have detrimental effect on position of the governmental body in negotiations with a third person.
3. Section 551.074 Personnel – discuss appointment, employment, evaluation, reassignment, duties, discipline or dismissal of a public officer or employee, or hear complaint or charge against officer or employee in executive session unless officer or employee requests a public hearing.
4. Section 551.087 – Deliberations regarding Economic Development Negotiations – to discuss or deliberate regarding commercial or financial information that the City has received from a business prospect that the City seeks to locate, stay, or expand in or near the City and with which the City is conducting economic development negotiations.
  - Prairie Point Development


**Regular Agenda (Resume)**

1. Action to be taken from Executive Session discussions

**Future Agenda Items**

*(Agenda items are due by 5 p.m. on the Wednesday of the week prior to the Council meeting)*

**Adjourn**



Patricia Mitchell,  
Mayor  
Michelle Tye,  
Mayor Pro-Tem

ATTEST:

  
Shaina Odom  
City Secretary

