

**YOLANDA FORD**  
Mayor

**VASHAUNDR A EDWARDS**  
Councilmember at Large Position No. 1

**CHRIS PRESTON**  
Mayor Pro Tem  
Councilmember at Large Position No. 2



**CHERYL STERLING**  
Councilmember District A  
**JEFFREY L. BONEY**  
Councilmember District B  
**ANTHONY G. MAROULIS**  
Councilmember District C  
**FLOYD EMERY**  
Councilmember District D

## CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

The City Council of the City of Missouri City, Texas, met in special session on **Monday, September 21, 2020**, at the City Hall, Council Chamber, 1522 Texas Parkway, Missouri City, Texas, 77489, at **5:35 p.m.** to consider the following.

*Due to the COVID 19 Disaster and the Center for Disease Control's recommendation regarding social distancing measures, the Mayor, City Council, City Staff members, and members of the public were not physically present during this meeting. The meeting was made possible through the cloud-based video conferencing platform Zoom.*

### 1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Ford called the meeting to order at 5:38 p.m.

Those also present: Mayor Pro Tem Preston, Councilmembers Edwards, Sterling, Boney, Maroulis, and Emery; City Manager Jones, City Attorney Iyamu, City Secretary Jackson, Assistant City Manager Atkinson, Assistant City Manager Martel, Director of Communications Walker, Director of Human Resources and Organizational Development Russell, Fire Chief Campbell, Assistant Fire Chief Partida, and Emergency Management Coordinator Jewett. Also present: Spurgeon Robinson of MPACT Strategic Consulting, LLC.

### 2. DISCUSSION/POSSIBLE ACTION

- (a) Discussion and follow up on the CARES Act activities. *(Proposed presenter: Fire Chief Eugene Campbell)*

Fire Chief Campbell presented on the CARES Act activities. Spurgeon Robinson presented an overview on the timeline of events through December 30. Robinson spoke on the CARES Act project implementation support activities and technical assistance key activities as follows: Rental, Mortgage and Utility (RMU) assistance program, Small Business Program, Continuity of Operations (COOP), and QA/QC and Technical Assistance. Chief Campbell discussed businesses in the City that may qualify. Robinson further spoke on the Small Business Emergency Grant Assistance Program. Chief Campbell discussed the next steps and changes to be considered. He noted they would be ready to start accepting applications through the Rental, Mortgage and Utility assistance program on September 28, if approved. He added that they would start accepting applications for the Small Business Emergency Assistance Program on October 11, if approved. City Manager Jones stated they received feedback from both residents and business owners, which was why they presented this recommendation. He noted the program would act as a grant, not as a loan, and he stated they would be proposing a loan program to help businesses grow after they have been stable.

Mayor Ford stated the City received written public comments and requests to speak before City Council for agenda item 2a. City Secretary Jackson read the written comments before City Council.

**Bobby English**, 2021 FM 1092, wrote in favor of agenda items 2a and 2c.

**Melanie Allen**, 2435 Texas Parkway #M, wrote in favor of the proposal of grants and forgivable loans.

**Lora Mayes**, 2331 Alassio Isle Court, wrote in favor of forgivable loans.

**Sonya Adams**, 3506 Bahia Court, wrote in favor of the approval of needed funds.

**Valencia Bell**, 3022 Flintwood, wrote in favor of maintaining businesses on FM 2234.

**Cheryl Ball**, 2718 Green Meadow Court, wrote in favor of agenda items 2a and 2c.

**Wesleyne Greer**, 9119 Hwy 6 #230-144, wrote in favor of agenda items 2a and 2c.

**Ella Bilton**, 2543 Shadow Oaks Drive, wrote in favor of agenda items 2a and 2c.

**Myla Brigance**, 923 Turtle Creek Drive, wrote in favor of agenda items 2a and 2c.

**Bonita Billings**, 6202 Copin Lake Lane, wrote in favor of agenda items 2a and 2c.

**Tamie Campbell**, 1219 Kings Creek Trail, spoke in support of agenda items 2a and 2c.

**Darryl Austin**, 3434 FM 1092 #290, spoke in support of agenda items 2a and 2c.

**Dr. Ronald Events**, 3334 FM 1092 #430, spoke in support of small businesses in Missouri City.

**Hugh Tillman**, 9303 Highway 6 #100, spoke in support of agenda items 2a and 2c.

Councilmember Maroulis asked how they would communicate and how often would they communicate this information to the entire City. City Manager Jones stated they intended to market the program and provide a weekly status report to City Council and the community. Robinson stated the City would lead outreach efforts with the public and nonprofit providers that would then communicate the launch of the program.

Maroulis asked why the MPACT fees were so high. Robinson stated the fees were comparable to any other program of similar size and believed they were reasonable. Maroulis asked if they could collaborate with workforce solutions to hire local residents. Robinson stated they try to hire local and a number of team members were from the same county.

Pertaining to the outreach to the business community, Councilmember Boney asked what their needs were, were all businesses contacted, and how were they contacted. Chief Campbell stated the original survey was in collaboration with the Communication Department and held through the City's website and reader boards on Highway 6. Director of Communications Walker went into further detail regarding outreach to local businesses. Boney asked if the survey that went out was pertaining to a loan or grant; if those that responded wanted a loan versus a grant; or, were they responding to the grant question itself. Jones stated they were responding to the grant questions itself. Boney stated he was glad to hear more funds were allocated to small businesses.

Councilmember Emery inquired if the program was on the first come first serve basis; if people were aware of the program; and, if so, were they ready to go. He stated this needed to be communicated better as there were businesses just learning about this. Jones stated they were marketing it citywide using social media, the City's website, and billboards. Robinson stated business owners would all be able to access the website on the October 11 when the website goes live. He noted that during this timeframe, businesses would be canvassed. Walker stated they would do another push based on City Council's discussion tonight and would do another round of canvassing.

Councilmember Emery asked if there was a set amount that each applicant could receive or was it based on their lease or mortgage. Jones stated there was no cap on the amount as most small business pay from \$7,000-\$8,000 per month for lease. He added they hoped they would be able to work with the applicants to negotiate with their landlord for a bargained break.

Councilmember Sterling inquired on the amount of staff members working on this project. Robinson stated they had about four members. Sterling asked how soon applicants would be able to get the funds in their hands. Robinson stated it would take anywhere from 30-45 days, but it would be done before December 30.

Councilmember Edwards inquired if they had an FAQ that could be drafted up. Walker stated they did have an FAQ, and it would be updated based on City Council action tonight.

Councilmember Emery asked if the grant would be paid by the City directly to the property owner and if the City would be reimbursed by Fort Bend County. Robinson stated that was correct and that the County already set up a reimbursement model. Emery inquired if the reimbursed funds from the County would go back to the general fund, which were to be used to fund the program. Jones stated that was correct.

Councilmember Maroulis stated there was a sanitizing robot in the list of expenses and asked how they anticipate using that and if there was another option that could be used instead. Assistant City Manager Atkinson stated they would not be making a recommendation to fund that item and would come back in October with another option. Mayor Ford asked if City Council could be advised the average cost for facilities cleanup due to COVID. Atkinson stated they paid a total of \$7,000 for the months of June and July. Director of Public Works Kumar stated they were cleaning once a month and the average cost was of \$3,000 per month, since March 2020. Councilmember Sterling asked if the robot ran independently. Atkinson stated it did, but that they were no longer planning to do that.

Ford stated the initial discussion was in reference to forgivable loans and turned into giving grants to small businesses. Mayor Pro Tem Preston stated residents and local businesses were the backbone of the community and he was very excited they were able to do this program. Tammie Campbell asked if they could utilize church marquees to spread the word on the small business loans. Walker stated they have asked churches, HOAs, and property managers to put this information out there.

Mayor Ford asked that agenda item 2c be presented at this time. Without objection, staff presented on to agenda item 2c.

- (c) Discuss the proposed small business loan program.

City Manager Jones stated this item was separate from what they were doing with the CARES Act item. He stated this particular program would help business who were in trouble to some level of stability; and, to focus on the overall plan of the Texas Parkway and Cartwright corridors.

Rosa Rios Valdez with BCL, a statewide non-profit lender, presented a concept on the proposed small business loan program. Councilmember Boney inquired on the cost of their services for the City. Valdez stated the cost would include the designing of the program and the management of the loan fund. She added that on a per project basis, the cost would be 1.5% per project cost to the City. Valdez noted the cost would also depend on the complexity and features they ask for the program.

Boney stated he asked for the item to be discussed on the agenda because he wanted more clarity on the small business loan program. He asked how small business would be able to obtain a forgivable loan with no interest and which other cities they were working with that had the same program. Jones stated he was proposing part of this program in the budget as an overall strategy to redevelop the corridor of Cartwright Road and Texas Parkway. He noted it was separate and apart from small business grants which were part

of the CARES Act. Jones added this item was not part of small business assistance but instead this component had to be looked at as an overall effort to begin to redevelop the corridors and to begin to build wealth towards minority investors.

Councilmember Boney asked if it was no longer accurate that they were providing forgivable and grants to small business. Jones stated they moved from forgivable loans to provide an overall grant and this particular program was to help businesses grow their facilities.

Boney asked for clarification and if Jones was indicating the following:

- 1) that it was no longer accurate they were providing forgivable loans to small business but instead were providing grants through funding from CARES Act dollars;
- 2) they were seeking to use tax payer dollars to fund private development; and
- 3) they were looking to do CDC economic development on Texas Parkway and Cartwright Road.

Jones stated they initially talked about forgivable loans but after speaking with businesses, they realized it was not enough money. They moved to then propose grants instead. He added this was being proposed in context with redevelopment just as they do when TIRZ, PID or MUD funds were used to drive investment. Boney stated Jones mentioned this being comparative to TIRZ, PIDS, MUD's dollars for development. He noted for TIRZ, those dollars come from small businesses in the area for specific projects and development. Jones stated those were funded dollars used to leverage investment and to enhance redevelopment efforts.

Councilmember Boney stated the \$1.5 million dollars in the budget was direct tax payer dollars from the general fund that could potentially go to services for the citizens. Jones stated the proposal was to use some general fund dollars to encourage reinvestment and development for the minority businesses along Texas Parkway and Cartwright Road. Valdez noted these were not grant dollars but loans and those funds would be recaptured. Boney asked if they would be recapturing from small businesses or from private investments. Jones stated it would be from both.

Councilmember Sterling asked if this was what they were doing with new businesses coming along. Jones stated that was correct. Boney stated those funds come from the TIRZ. Jones stated some have come from TIRZ while others from tax abatements. Boney feels they could use funds for other items that serve the community as well. Jones stated he placed the item on the budget in order to move ahead and concurred more discussion should be had.

Councilmember Maroulis asked if this would help other business or just those on Texas Parkway. Jones stated they needed to first work on the corridor but Council would vote to define the guidelines. Councilmember Sterling stated it was time to do something for the corridors. Valdez stated \$1.5 million was not very much to invest into minority entrepreneurs and not many cites were doing that.

Councilmember Maroulis asked what the Finance Committee said about the small business program. Jones stated it was talked about at the committee level but noted this was just the initial discussion and they would like to obtain input from City Council and businesses.

Maroulis asked if a business received CARES Act funding would they also receive this loan. Jones stated yes. Maroulis stated he was concerned that if the item had not been placed on the agenda they would not have received this presentation as this was the first time he was hearing of this. He also expressed concern that this presentation was discussed with City Council right before budget adoption and he believed that not to be transparent. Jones stated he disagreed as it was spoken from the beginning of the budget discussion. Boney expressed concerns about the program and stated it was the first he heard of this, as well. He stated they have to be more transparent and communicative with residents as it was their tax dollars at work. Boney added he does not feel comfortable voting for something he does not know much about.

Councilmember Emery stated it seemed like the presentation was to acquire assets and certain items that should have been covered, such as inventory and payroll. He asked if the dollars through the CARES Act could be used as a loan or were they an automatic grant. Spurgeon Robinson stated it would depend on the structure, but it could be used as grant or a loan. Emery noted he was not suggesting they do anything other than a grant under the CARES Act. He asked if the funds could be used for inventory or payroll. Jones stated they could.

Mayor Ford thanked staff for putting this together and stated it was only the beginning. She said the community has asked to revitalize the corridors and Jones has made it clear this item was being set up in the budget. She thanked him as she believed in past years there was very little effort beyond tax abatements that had been done.

Ford stated the City received public comment request for agenda item 2c.

**Hugh Tillman**, 9303 Highway 6 #100, spoke in support of all financial opportunities.

Councilmember Maroulis stated they needed time to vet this, be transparent, and understand it. Councilmember Emery stated that when they put things in the budget it was because they have a definite plan on how to spend it. He was concerned they were putting funds in the budget for a program that was still in the formulation stage and it was a dangerous situation. Mayor Ford stated there was non-discretionary dollars put in the budget for them to use and anything that happens would still have to come before Council for approval. Councilmember Sterling stated they needed to put dollars into the city and target Texas Parkway.

At 7:54 p.m., City Council recessed the special meeting for the regular meeting.

At 10:24 p.m., City Council reconvened into the special meeting.

- (b) Discuss City authorization of private ambulance services. (*Proposed presenter: Fire Chief Eugene Campbell*)

Fire Chief Campbell discussed City authorization of private ambulance services and noted the department has seen an increasing amount of requests. Assistant Fire Chief Partida stated private ambulances were regulated by the Texas Department of State Health Services. In 2019, the city began receiving requests from private start-up ambulance services companies to operate within the city limits to provide non-emergency ambulance services to the citizens of Missouri City. Cities within Fort Bend County have taken a different approaches to reviewing, assessing fees and approving these requests.

Partida stated the City had several options for approving and providing oversight of private ambulances, such as follows:

- Recommendation 1: Discontinue approvals to limit over saturation of private ambulances operating in the city along with others that are not approved; or
- Recommendation 2: Continue to accept applications and approving requests to operate in the city; or
- Recommendation 3: Continue to accept applications and approving requests to operate in the city with an application assessment fee.

Mayor Ford asked if the ambulance services were used to transport a patient to their dialysis services. Campbell stated that was correct and they could be used for a number of non-emergency services. Ford asked if the patients chose a service or how would they know which ambulances serve the City. Campbell stated they do not know as their insurance or clinic may be recommending an ambulance.

Councilmember Maroulis suggested a fourth recommendation where they would limit to approve a certain amount of ambulances per year. Campbell stated if that was Council's wish they would follow that.

Mayor Ford asked if the City would be able to provide non-emergency services and bill for those services. Campbell stated they have never looked into it as they have a contract with Fort Bend County for emergency services. He noted it had not been part of the discussion. Campbell stated for them to provide non-emergency services they would have to look into also getting uniforms, transportation units, checking staffing levels and equipment cost.

Mayor Ford asked if they could provide the fee structures other cities had implemented. Partida went over City of Pearland fee schedule. Ford stated they should look at adding a fee schedule in order to process these applications. Councilmember Sterling, Edwards, Maroulis, and Boney agreed. Councilmember Emery agreed and asked the Fire Chief if he was on board with the fee schedule. Chief Campbell stated it would support staff hours and help with cost recovery. Assistant City Manager Atkinson suggested the Finance Department run a cost analysis. Mayor Pro Tem Preston said he was on board but wanted to make sure the fee was comparable to the city's size. City Manager Jones supports Fire Chief Campbell's request.

Mayor Ford asked the closed executive session be moved to the September 28 special City Council meeting.

There was no **CLOSED EXECUTIVE SESSION**.

(a) **Texas Government Code, Section 551.074** – Deliberations concerning the appointment, employment, evaluation, reassignment, duties, discipline or dismissal of a public officer or employee: the city attorney.

#### 4. **ADJOURN**

The special City Council meeting adjourned at 10:43 p.m.

Minutes PASSED AND APPROVED this the 5<sup>th</sup> day of October 2020.

---

Maria Jackson, City Secretary