The City of Liberty
City Council

Special Called Meeting

~ Minutes ~

1829 Sam Houston
Liberty, TX 77575
www.cityofliberty.org

Dianne Tidwell
City Secretary
(936) 336-3684

Monday, March 23, 2020 | **12:00 PM** | **City Hall Conference Room**

I. CALL TO ORDER

THIS MEETING WAS HELD BY VIDEO CONFERENCE DUE TO THE COVID-19 DISEASE.

Present by Video Conference: Council Members Huddleston, Beasley, Simonson, Arnold, Smith and Thornton.

Present in the Conference Room: Mayor Carl Pickett, City Manager Tom Warner, City Attys. Chris Jarmon and Naomi Herrington, Dianne Tidwell, City Secretary, Public Works Director Damon Jones, City Attorney Brandon Davis, and Adm. Asst. April Gilliland.

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Carl Pickett	Mayor	Present	
Diane Huddleston	Mayor ProTem	Present	
Dennis Beasley	Council Member	Present	12:50 PM
Libby Simonson	Council Member	Present	
David Arnold	Council Member	Present	
Chipper Smith	Council Member	Present	
Neal Thornton	Council Member	Present	
Tom Warner	City Manager	Present	
Naomi Herrington	Asst. City Manager	Present	
Dianne Tidwell	City Secretary	Present	
Brandon Davis	City Attorney	Present	

II. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF GUESTS AND VISITORS / PUBLIC COMMENT

Public Comment is reserved for members of the public who would like to address the City Council regarding agenda and non-agenda items. Please be aware that, under Texas Law, the Council may not deliberate or take any action during Citizen's comments for items not on the agenda. In some situations, City Staff may be able to respond to the public comment with a factual statement or clarification. The City Council may have the item placed on a future agenda for action or refer the item to Management and Staff for study or conclusion.

Mayor Pickett welcomed guests and visitors, opening the floor for public comment to those individuals wishing to address the Council. There were no comments.

III. REGULAR AGENDA

A. Regular Session

1. Ordinance 2020-11

Consider adoption of an Ordinance amending and modifying the Disaster Declaration, ordered by the Mayor on March 16, 2020.

COMMENTS - Current Meeting:

Mayor Pickett read the caption of the Ordinance into the record as follows:

"AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LIBERTY, TEXAS, EXTENDING THE DECLARATION OF DISASTER ISSUED BY MAYORAL PROCLAMATION IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19."

On March 16, 2020, Mayor Pickett issued a Declaration of Disaster for the City of Liberty as a result of the Coronavirus Disease. This Declaration is good for a period of seven (7) days, but may not be continued without the consent of the governing body.

With concern regarding the continuing spread of the COVID-19 Disease, a motion was made to adopt the Ordinance extending the Disaster Declaration until rescinded by the City Council.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Liberty Co.Exec.Order-March 20 (PDF)

RESULT:	**ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]**
MOVER:	Libby Simonson, Council Member
SECONDER:	Diane Driggers, Mayor ProTem
AYES:	Pickett, Driggers, Simonson, Arnold, Smith, Thornton
ABSENT:	Dennis Beasley

2. Resolution 2020-4

Consider a Resolution approving a City of Liberty Pandemic Event Leave Policy, as a result of the COVID-19 Disease.

COMMENTS - Current Meeting:

With the recent outbreak of the Coronavirus Disease, this policy is implemented to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace. The policy outlines provisions for employees regarding compensation, accounting for absences, and other related issues in order to provide a safe and healthy workplace for all employees.

A motion was made to approve the Pandemic Leave Policy, as presented.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Pandemic Leave Policy (DOCX)

RESULT:	**APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]**
MOVER:	Libby Simonson, Council Member
SECONDER:	Neal Thornton, Council Member
AYES:	Pickett, Driggers, Simonson, Arnold, Smith, Thornton
ABSENT:	Dennis Beasley

3. Resolution 2020-5

Consider a Resolution approving a City of Liberty Policy on Telecommuting, as a result of the COVID-19 Disease.

COMMENTS - Current Meeting:

This policy relates to the recent outbreak of the Coronavirus Disease and reducing the spread of COVID-19. The policy allows telecommuting as a short-term alternative work arrangement for employees, under certain circumstances. This option is available to an employee if it is deemed they are unable to work from the City's facilities and can perform the necessary functions of their job from an offsite location.

A motion was made to approve the City's Telecommuting Policy, as presented.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Telecommuting Policy (DOCX)

RESULT:	**APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]**
MOVER:	Diane Driggers, Mayor ProTem
SECONDER:	Chipper Smith, Council Member
AYES:	Pickett, Driggers, Simonson, Arnold, Smith, Thornton
ABSENT:	Dennis Beasley

4. Work Session (ID # 4735)

Discussion of numerous issues related to the COVID-19 Disease.

COMMENTS - Current Meeting:

A work session was held regarding the COVID-19 Disease and various related issues. Discussed were closure of those City facilities which are not currently closed (Parks and Golf Course), waiver of late fees, utility disconnections, current mutual aid agreement with the City of Dayton and possible postponement of the May 2, 2020 Elections.

ATTACHMENTS:

- County Notice-No May Election (PDF)

5. Resolution 2020-6

Consider a Resolution approving action taken, as a result of the COVID-19 Disease, as discussed in the Work Session.

COMMENTS - Current Meeting:

A motion was made to approve the Resolution waiving late fees and disconnection of City utility services for the duration of the local State of Disaster.

RESULT:	**APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]**
MOVER:	Libby Simonson, Council Member
SECONDER:	David Arnold, Council Member
AYES:	Pickett, Simonson, Arnold, Smith, Thornton
ABSENT:	Diane Driggers, Dennis Beasley

6. Ordinance 2020-12

CONSIDER ADOPTION OF AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LIBERTY, TEXAS, POSTPONING THE CITY'S GENERAL ELECTION TO NOVEMBER 3, 2020, PREVIOUSLY ORDERED FOR THE 2ND DAY OF MAY, 2020, FOR THE PURPOSE OF ELECTING A MAYOR AND THREE COUNCIL MEMBERS TO THE LIBERTY CITY COUNCIL; AUTHORIZING A JOINT ELECTION AGREEMENT WITH THE LIBERTY INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT AND AN ELECTION SERVICES CONTRACT BY AND BETWEEN THE CITY OF LIBERTY AND THE LIBERTY COUNTY ELECTIONS ADMINISTRATOR; PROVIDING FOR EARLY VOTING; PROVIDING FOR TWO TWELVE-HOUR DAYS OF EARLY VOTING; PROVIDING FOR PUBLICATION AND NOTICE OF ELECTION; ESTABLISHING OTHER PROCEDURES FOR CONDUCT OF THE ELECTION; PROVIDING A SEVERABILITY CLAUSE; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE; AND DISPENSING WITH THE REQUIREMENT OF SECTION 3.10 OF THE HOME RULE CHARTER THAT THIS ORDINANCE BE READ ON TWO SEPARATE DAYS.

COMMENTS - Current Meeting:

Mayor Pickett read the caption of the Ordinance into the record as follows:

"AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LIBERTY, TEXAS, POSTPONING THE CITY'S GENERAL ELECTION TO NOVEMBER 3, 2020, PREVIOUSLY ORDERED FOR THE 2ND DAY OF MAY, 2020, FOR THE PURPOSE OF ELECTING A MAYOR AND THREE COUNCIL MEMBERS TO THE LIBERTY CITY COUNCIL; AUTHORIZING A JOINT ELECTION AGREEMENT WITH THE LIBERTY INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT AND AN ELECTION SERVICES CONTRACT BY AND BETWEEN THE CITY OF LIBERTY AND THE LIBERTY COUNTY ELECTIONS ADMINISTRATOR; PROVIDING FOR EARLY VOTING; PROVIDING FOR TWO TWELVE-HOUR DAYS OF EARLY VOTING; PROVIDING FOR PUBLICATION AND NOTICE OF ELECTION; ESTABLISHING OTHER PROCEDURES FOR CONDUCT OF THE ELECTION; PROVIDING A SEVERABILITY CLAUSE; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE; AND DISPENSING WITH THE REQUIREMENT OF SECTION 3.10 OF THE HOME RULE CHARTER THAT THIS ORDINANCE BE READ ON TWO SEPARATE DAYS."

Due to the COVID-19 Disease, Gov. Greg Abbott authorized all political subdivisions holding general or special elections on May 2, 2020 to postpone their election(s) to the November 3, 2020 uniform election date. Postponement of the General Election preserves all candidate filings and does not have the effect of reopening candidate filings in November. The individuals who currently hold office that are scheduled to be on the May ballot will continue to exercise the duties of office until new officers take the oath of office, following the November election. The City's primary concern is for the health and safety of the voters, election workers and election officials.

A motion was made to adopt the Ordinance postponing the City's General Election for Officers to November 3, 2020.

RESULT:	**ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]**
MOVER:	Libby Simonson, Council Member
SECONDER:	Neal Thornton, Council Member
AYES:	Pickett, Driggers, Beasley, Simonson, Arnold, Smith, Thornton

7. Ordinance 2020-13

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LIBERTY, TEXAS, POSTPONING THE CITY'S SPECIAL ELECTION TO NOVEMBER 3, 2020, PREVIOUSLY ORDERED FOR THE 2ND DAY OF MAY, 2020, FOR THE PURPOSE OF VOTER CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSITIONS AMENDING THE HOME RULE CHARTER; AUTHORIZING A JOINT ELECTION AGREEMENT WITH THE LIBERTY INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT AND AN ELECTION SERVICES CONTRACT BY AND BETWEEN THE CITY OF LIBERTY AND THE LIBERTY COUNTY ELECTIONS ADMINISTRATOR; PROVIDING FOR EARLY VOTING; PROVIDING FOR TWO TWELVE-HOUR DAYS OF EARLY VOTING; PROVIDING FOR PUBLICATION AND NOTICE OF ELECTION; ESTABLISHING OTHER PROCEDURES FOR CONDUCT OF THE ELECTION; PROVIDING A SEVERABILITY CLAUSE; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE; AND DISPENSING WITH THE REQUIREMENT OF SECTION 3.10 OF THE HOME RULE CHARTER THAT THIS ORDINANCE BE READ ON TWO SEPARATE DAYS

COMMENTS - Current Meeting:

Mayor Pickett read the caption of the Ordinance into the record as follows:

"AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LIBERTY, TEXAS, POSTPONING THE CITY'S SPECIAL ELECTION TO NOVEMBER 3, 2020, PREVIOUSLY ORDERED FOR THE 2ND DAY OF MAY, 2020, FOR THE PURPOSE OF VOTER CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSITIONS AMENDING THE HOME RULE CHARTER; AUTHORIZING A JOINT ELECTION AGREEMENT WITH THE LIBERTY INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT AND AN ELECTION SERVICES CONTRACT BY AND BETWEEN THE CITY OF LIBERTY AND THE LIBERTY COUNTY ELECTIONS ADMINISTRATOR; PROVIDING FOR EARLY VOTING; PROVIDING FOR TWO TWELVE-HOUR DAYS OF EARLY VOTING; PROVIDING FOR PUBLICATION AND NOTICE OF ELECTION; ESTABLISHING OTHER PROCEDURES FOR CONDUCT OF THE ELECTION; PROVIDING A SEVERABILITY CLAUSE; PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE; AND DISPENSING WITH THE REQUIREMENT OF SECTION 3.10 OF THE HOME RULE CHARTER THAT THIS ORDINANCE BE READ ON TWO SEPARATE DAYS."

Gov. Abbott's authorization to postpone a municipal election to the uniform election date of November 3, 2020 also applies to Special Elections. The City previously ordered a Special Election for proposed amendments to the Home Rule Charter for May 2, 2020. The primary concern for postponement is for the health and safety of the voters, election workers and election officials.

A motion was made to adopt the Ordinance postponing the City's Special Election for proposed amendments to the Home Rule Charter to November 3, 2020.

RESULT:	**ADOPTED [UNANIMOUS]**
MOVER:	Neal Thornton, Council Member
SECONDER:	Dennis Beasley, Council Member
AYES:	Pickett, Driggers, Beasley, Simonson, Arnold, Smith, Thornton

IV. ADJOURNMENT

Motion To: Adjourn

COMMENTS - Current Meeting:

There being no further business before the Council, Mayor Pickett adjourned the meeting at 1:06 p.m.

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Carl Pickett, Mayor

ATTEST:

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Dianne Tidwell, City Secretary