



The City of Liberty City Council

Regular Meeting

~ Minutes ~

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

April Gilliland
City Secretary
936-336-3684

Tuesday, March 11, 2025

6:00 PM

City Council Chambers

I. CALL TO ORDER

This meeting was called to order on March 11, 2025, in the City Council Chambers, 1829 Sam Houston Street, Liberty, Texas at 6:00 p.m. by Mayor John Hebert.

Attendee Name	Present	Absent	Late	Arrived
Mayor John Hebert, Jr.	X			
Mayor Pro Tem Libby Simonson	X			
Council Member Dennis Beasley	X			
Council Member Tommy Brents	X			
Council Member Ed Seymour	X			
Council Member Ross Ward	X			
Council Member Debbie Dugger	X			

II. INVOCATION

The invocation was given by Council Member Debbie Dugger.

III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge to the American Flag and to the Texas Flag was led by Mayor John Hebert.

IV. 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 Hebert welcomed guests and visitors, opening the floor for public comment to those individuals wishing to address the Council. Mrs. Jackie Hartel Smith requested to speak to the Council regarding the lighting in the theater located in the Geraldine D. Humphreys Cultural Center used by the Valley Players.

V. PRESENTATIONS / REPORTS

- A. City Manager's Report – City Manager Bryan Kendrick – Topics include – McGuire Road Project, Park Master Plan, Recloser Installation, Street Rehabilitation Program, Water Line Leaks and Electrical Projects.

City Manager Bryan Kendrick reported on the following updates:

- McGuire Road Project
- Park Master Plan
- Recloser Installation
- Street Rehabilitation Program
- Water Leaks
- Electrical Projects

B. Finance Report – Assistant City Manager/CFO Naomi Herrington

Assistant City Manager / CFO Naomi Herrington reported on the City's financials as of January 31, 2025.

C. Department Reports

Monthly reports are submitted by departments and are attached to the agenda for the council to review and to comment on or ask questions that they may have.

D. Sam Rayburn Municipal Power Agency – Mayor Hebert

Mayor Hebert, Board Member of the Sam Rayburn Municipal Power Agency, stated that the next meeting for SRMPA will be held on Tuesday, March 18, 2025, in Livingston.

E. Mayor, Council and Staff Comments

Mayor Hebert welcomed City Manager Bryan Kendrick to Liberty, and Council Member Simonson shared details about Tom Warner's retirement party.

VI. CONSENT AGENDA

All consent items listed are routine by the City Council and will be enacted by one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these matters unless a Council Member so requests, and if such a request is made, the item will be removed from the Consent Agenda and considered in a normal sequence on the agenda.

A motion was made by Council Member Brents to approve all items on the consent agenda and seconded by Council Member Simonson. The motion passed 7 to 0 with all present voting yes.

A. Minutes Approval

1. February 11, 2025
2. February 25, 2025

B. A RESOLUTION BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LIBERTY, TEXAS, A HOME RULE MUNICIPALITY EXISTING UNDER THE LAWS OF THE STATE OF TEXAS, APPROVING PARTICIPATION IN NATIONAL LIBRARY WEEK BY OFFERING A FINE FORGIVENESS WEEK FROM APRIL 7 – APRIL 12, 2025.

VII. REGULAR AGENDA

A. Regular Session

1. **AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LIBERTY, TEXAS APPROVING AMENDMENTS TO THE CITY OF LIBERTY'S FISCAL YEAR 2024 – 2025 BUDGET.**

Occasionally, situations arise where it is in the city's best interest to approve the use of departmental funds for voluntary settlements, waivers, or releases signed by individuals who

may have potential legal claims against the city. The City Manager is requesting Council approval to authorize the review and approval of these expenditures and settlements/waivers/releases for cases where the total amount does not exceed \$10,000. If approved, an amendment will be made to the City of Liberty's Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Budget as outlined here.

A motion was made by Council Member Ward to adopt the Ordinance approving amendments to the City of Liberty's Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Annual Budget and seconded by Council Member Dugger. The motion passed 7 to 0 with all present voting yes.

2. ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF LIBERTY, TEXAS, SUSPENDING THE RATES PROPOSED BY CENTERPOINT ENERGY RESOURCES CORP., d/b/a CENTERPOINT ENERGY ENTEX AND CENTERPOINT ENERGY TEXAS GAS COMPANY'S GAS RELIABILITY INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM FILING MADE WITH THE CITY ON OR ABOUT FEBRUARY 18, 2025; FINDING THAT THE MEETING COMPLIES WITH THE OPEN MEETINGS ACT; MAKING OTHER FINDINGS AND PROVISIONS RELATED TO THE SUBJECT, AND DECLARING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

On February 18, 2025, CenterPoint Energy Resources Corp., d/b/a CenterPoint Energy Entex and CenterPoint Energy Texas Gas ("CenterPoint" or "Company") filed a Gas Reliability Infrastructure Program ("GRIP") adjustment factor with each of the communities in the Beaumont/East Texas Division of the Company. The Company is authorized to make annual GRIP rate change requests pursuant to Texas law passed in 2003, Gas Utility Regulatory Act, Tex. Util. Code § 104.301 ("GRIP Statute") also see Section 7.7101 of the Railroad Commission of Texas ("Commission") Gas Services Division Rules. The GRIP Statute authorizes gas utility companies to request annual rate increases associated with year-to-year changes in incremental investment. The changes in investment are not subject to reasonable review in the GRIP filing. Instead, all amounts collected under a GRIP filing are considered interim rates subject to review and refund in the Company's next base rate proceeding.

The GRIP Statute provides that the proposed GRIP rate surcharge will become effective 60 days from the date of the Company's filing or April 19, 2025, unless suspended by the Cities. Cities may suspend the GRIP rate increase for an additional 45 days beyond the Company's proposed effective date of April 19, 2025, while reviewing the GRIP application. This Rate Ordinance will suspend the GRIP rate effective date until June 3, 2025. If the city wishes to suspend the proposed rates, action must be taken by passing the Rate Ordinance prior to April 19, 2025. Otherwise, the Company's requested rates will go into effect on April 19, 2025. The review process of a GRIP filing is generally a ministerial review, limited to ensuring that the GRIP filing complies with the GRIP Statute. During the suspension period, any issues related to whether the GRIP filing complies with the GRIP filing rules can be reviewed, so cities may make a final decision on this GRIP proposal.

A motion was made by Council Member Simonson to adopt the Ordinance suspending the rate proposed by CenterPoint Energy Resources and seconded by Council Member Brents. The motion passed 7 to 0 with all present voting yes.

3. A RESOLUTION BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LIBERTY, TEXAS, A HOME RULE MUNICIPALITY EXISTING UNDER THE LAWS OF THE STATE OF TEXAS, APPOINTING CITY MANAGER BRYAN KENDRICK TO SERVE AS THE GENERAL MANAGER OF THE LIBERTY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION.

The General Manager shall be the Chief Administrative Officer of the Liberty Community Development Corporation (LCDC) and be in general charge of the properties and affairs of the Corporation. The Bylaws state that the General Manager shall be an employee of the City. In the past, the City Manager served as General Manager of the Corporation.

A motion was made by Council Member Brents to approve the resolution appointing City Manager Bryan Kendrick to serve as the General Manager of the Liberty Community Development Corporation and seconded by Council Member Seymour. The motion passed 7 to 0 with all present voting yes.

4. A RESOLUTION BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LIBERTY, TEXAS, A HOME RULE MUNICIPALITY EXISTING UNDER THE LAWS OF THE STATE OF TEXAS, APPROVING AN AGREEMENT WITH BLUE GROUP INTERNATIONAL, LLC.

The Trinity River Authority (Authority) of Texas has been working with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), the Port of Liberty Commissioners, the Chambers-Liberty Counties Navigation District, the City of Liberty, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Liberty County to develop a long-range vision plan for the Port of Liberty. As the Authority is close to finalizing the Port of Liberty Vision Plan, the City of Liberty would like to engage Blue Group, an independent contractor, to represent the City in discussions and negotiations concerning the development of the Port of Liberty, including, but not limited to, discussions and negotiations with the aforementioned entities.

A motion was made by Council Member Simonson to approve the resolution approving an agreement with Blue Group International, LLC and seconded by Council Member Seymour. The motion passed 7 to 0 with all present voting yes.

B. Work Session

1. Fire Department Presentation

Fire Chief Brian Hurst presented the following information to the Council on the needs for additional personnel for the department:

- Daily Staffing requirements
- EMS/Fire Billing
- EMS Transfers for 2024
- Fire/EMS Response
- Critical Staffing
- Summary of Part-Time Staffing not met in 2024
- Daily Personnel Count for 2024
- Personnel Needed
- Planning on how to get additional personnel

C. Executive Session

At 6:48 p.m., Mayor Hebert closed the open meeting and opened the Executive Session as authorized by Title 5, Chapter 551 of the Texas Government Code.

- 1. Texas Government Code §551.071 - Private Consultation with Attorney**
Discussion with attorney regarding contemplated/pending litigation and/or regarding matters protected by attorney/client privilege.
- 2. Texas Government Code §551.072 - Deliberation Regarding Real Property**

Discussion regarding real property.

3. Texas Government Code §551.074 - Personnel Matters.

To deliberate the appointment, employment, evaluation, reassignment, duties, discipline, or dismissal of a public officer or employee.

4. Texas Government Code §551.087 - Deliberation Regarding Economic Development Negotiations.

Discussion regarding economic development negotiations.

D. Reconvene into Regular Session

At 7:41 p.m., Mayor Hebert closed the Executive Session and reconvened the open meeting.

1. Consider and take possible action on legal matters discussed in the executive session.

A motion was made by Council Member Simonson to authorize the City Manager, Bryan Kendrick, to negotiate and sell the surplus bridge at the Golf Course and seconded by Council Member Brents. The motion passed 7 to 0 with all present voting yes.

2. Consider and take action on real estate matters discussed in the executive session.

No action was taken.

3. Consider and take possible action on personnel matters discussed in the executive session.

No action was taken.

4. Consider and take possible action on economic development matters discussed in the executive session.

No action was taken.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

A. Motion To: Adjourn

With no further business to discuss, Mayor Hebert adjourned the meeting at 7:42 p.m.

John Hebert, Jr., Mayor

ATTEST:

April Gilliland, City Secretary