**STATE OF TEXAS**

**COUNTIES OF KAUFMAN AND HUNT**

**CITY OF POETRY, TEXAS**

**BE IT REMEMBERED THAT ON THIS DAY OF THE** 11th of November 2021 at 6:30 pm, the City Council of Poetry, Texas, held a workshop and special town hall meeting at 11214 FM 1565 Poetry, Texas, 75160 with the following present:

Mayor Tara Senkevech Councilmember Simeon White

Councilmember Tom Anderson Councilmember Terry Fowler

Councilmember Mike Jaffe Councilmember Brian Vinson

***Mayor called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.***

**PRAYER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Prayer and pledge led by **Pastor Jamie.**

**Mayor** explained the purpose of a workshop meeting and that no actions can be made during a workshop; it is for discussion only.

1. **Workshop**

1) **Discuss potential bonding insurance for each Town signatory.**

**Mayor** discussed why bonding is necessary and what it would protect and provide, including background checks and liability.

The council discussed different bonding insurance prices available through the Texas Municipal League and the American Association of Notaries; they noted that they are awaiting a firm quote from TML.

**Councilmember Jaffe** clarified if the $10,000 in insurance is for covering that amount in loss.

**Mayor** clarified that yes, she believes so.

**Councilmember Fowler** clarified that there are three signatories needed and two signatures required for each check and if these signatures would also cover verifying payments made on the city credit card.

**Mayor** explained checks and balances currently in place to avoid credit card manipulation.

**Councilmember White** said he would like to raise the insurance limit.

**Councilmember Jaffe** clarified that those who are not signatories do not need to be bonded.

The council is interested in knowing what different thresholds of bonding would protect.

**Councilmember Vinson** said that $71, about possible bonding through TAAON, would be a small price to pay in exchange for public confidence.

2) **Discuss meeting dates; Regular, Special, and Emergency.**

**Councilmember Fowler** wants to know what special meetings entail, because there is an existing ordinance that declares the date and purpose of a regular meeting, and an emergency meeting is self-explanatory.

**Councilmember Vinson** said he wants to ensure that special meetings are for a particular purpose and are not turned into regular workshop meetings.

**Mayor** explained that although today is a special meeting, she added on multiple workshop items because the lawyer does not have to be present for a workshop meeting, and this would help minimize legal costs.

**Councilmember Fowler** suggested that if there is a workshop meeting they do away with the regular monthly meeting. Between the town hall meetings and Planning and Zoning meetings, the committee of which he and Councilmember White are both members, there are a lot of meetings. It would be wise to minimize.

**Mayor** agreed that she wants to reduce the number of meetings.

**Councilmember Jaffe** said he likes the idea of having a workshop at the front of the regular meeting, but the monthly meeting should be kept special.

The council discussed how much notice should be given for a special meeting.

**Councilmember Jaffe** said a week’s notice would be good. Most of the council agreed.

**3) Discuss Public and council notifications.**

**Councilmember Fowler** shared that, after the recent meeting was canceled, he received a lot of texts and emails from the public with questions. He requested that, when something changes, such as the recent meeting cancellation, a notification be sent to the other council members and the public.

**Councilmember White** said he has been researching forums on which the council can publicly converse so that a meeting is not required every time they have to do discuss something.

The council discussed the website upgrades that would be required to add on a public chat forum and also to give each council member their own email.

**Mayor** said that if the public has a question for one or more council members that they may email the city secretary.

The council discussed adding a feature to the website that would notify subscribers when something has changed.

**4) Discuss staggering terms for Councilmembers, volunteers to step down, drawing lots and/or putting a measure on the ballot to extend terms.**

**Councilmember Anderson** said he thought they were going to draw lots to see who would have to step down.

**Mayor** said that is what they had discussed but she wanted to make sure that was still the consensus and that nobody wanted to step down.

Nobody said they wanted to step down.

**Mayor** said she would check and see if an ordinance is needed if they are going to draw lots.

**5) Discuss the Town’s first Christmas tree lighting.**

**Mayor** discussed different options of community Christmas tree lighting.

The council was in agreement that this effort should be organized and donated by citizens.

**Councilmember Vinson** suggested a community-led and organized Christmas committee.

***City secretary confirmed quorum at 7:24 pm.***

**Mayor** recognized veterans on the council and in the audience as well as Gold Star parents in attendance, thanking all for their sacrifice.

1. **Reports:**
2. ***Planning and Zoning Report***

**Chairwoman Katherine Hardwicke** gave a recap of the planning and zoning meeting held on November 10th and encouraged citizens to continue emailing her with their ideas and feedback.

1. ***Road Report***

**Citizen Kevin Senkevech** reported on recent potholes filled by volunteers. They filled over 140 potholes over 4 miles and he thanked all citizens who have helped.

1. ***Campground Community Cemetery, Inc. Board Meeting Report***

**Councilmember Vinson** said there is more to discuss so they will bring it up at the Tuesday meeting.

**c) Consent Agenda:** Items listed on the consent agenda allow the Council to approve all items together without discussion or individual motions.

Approval of minutes from the October 19th, 2021 Regular Town Council Meeting.

**Mayor made a motion to accept the minutes after the typo of the page numbers is fixed. Councilmember Jaffe seconded. Passed 5:0.**

**d) Regular Agenda**

**1) Discuss and consider an Ordinance of the Town Council of the Town of Poetry, Texas, canvassing and declaring the results of the November 2, 2021, Special Election held for the purpose of submitting to the qualified voters of the Town the Ballot Proposition of whether to adopt the levy of a sales and use tax for street maintenance at a rate of two percent (2%) to provide for maintenance and repair of municipal streets.**

**Mayor** discussed the election data as shown in the handout.

**Councilmember Anderson made a motion to declare the results valid. Councilmember White seconded. Passed 5:0.**

**2) Discuss and consider the Resolution of the Town of Poetry, Texas affirming support for and compliance with Texas Governor Greg Abbott’s Executive Order GA-40; providing for the incorporation of premises, and providing an Effective Date. [This order relates to prohibiting vaccine mandates.]**

**Mayor** discussed the mandate signed by Governor Greg Abbott earlier in the year and read pertinent points of the mandate such as protecting people under the threat of job loss. She said that the government should not have the right to force people to take anything.

**Councilmember Anderson** said he believes this decision lies with individual companies who may be considering their risk category. He does not believe in mandates on either side but understands that companies are controlled by factors outside of their control. He said we do not know if Abbott’s ordinance will stand in the Supreme Court, so this is a premature discussion. He took issue with a handout on vaccine deaths and injuries provided by the **Mayor**.

**Mayor** said that from what she has researched, vaccine deaths are underreported.

**Councilmember White** said that as a business owner, he prefers to give employees the freedom to choose.

**Councilmember Fowler** said that he isn’t sure if this resolution will help anyone but voting in the spirit of individual liberty is worthwhile.

**Mayor** said that this resolution may affect multiple citizens, as three people in Poetry have expressed that they may be fired from their jobs for not getting the vaccine.

**Mayor** called upon citizens who had signed up to speak.

**Citizen Evie Anderson,** who lives on county road 2434, said that she does not believe Poetry should exert its valuable time and resources to discuss state mandates and that this could set poor precedence going forward of talking about state mandates over which the town has no control.

**Citizen Kris Brown, of FM 986** said she appreciates the council. She said she supports our governor’s mandate and discussed how vaccine deaths and injuries are underreported.

**Citizen Tanya Pollock**, who lives on Four Post Road, thanked the council for taking the time to inform the citizens. She said that she believes this is her body, her choice.

**Councilmember Fowler** asked if this resolution would affect her job.

**Citizen Pollock** said that she is under threat of being fired and if the town passed this resolution, she would let her employer know.

**Citizen David Emard**, CR 2332, came forward to share about people he knows from his personal life who have suffered injury or difficulty after getting the vaccine.

***Mayor called a five-minute recess at 8:26 pm.***

***Mayor reconvened the meeting at 8:32 pm.***

**Councilmember Vinson made a motion to adopt the ordinance. Councilmember White seconded. Failed 3:2.**

**3) Discuss the Town Attorney attending regular meetings by video conference to minimize legal costs.**

**Mayor** explained that the lawyer has been doing pro-bono work and to be good stewards of the town’s money going forward, they could eliminate some drive time for the lawyer by having her opt-in via video or audio when they have the technological capability of doing so.

**Councilmember Jaffe made a motion to approve giving the legal council the option to participate in audio or video conference once we have the capabilities to do so. Councilmember White seconded. Passed 5:0.**

**4) Discuss Christmas Lights Contest, designating judges, who will also solicit for a few donated prizes and date to present awards.**

**Councilmember Jaffe made a motion to support the formation of a citizen group to support town efforts such as a Christmas committee. Councilmember Anderson seconded. Passed 5:0.**

Five citizens in the audience raised their hands in agreement of joining such a committee.

**j) General Public Comments: Comments are limited to three (3) minutes. If a translator is needed, the speaker may be granted up to four (4) minutes. Sign-up is required BEFORE the Meeting is called to order. Be aware that the Town Council can only respond with factual information. The Town Council may consider putting citizen concerns on a future agenda.**

**Citizen Ed Ballard** said he owns 10 acres in town but lives in Terrell. He thanked everyone on the council for their hard work and said that he hopes any ill words and will toward the **Mayor** are just a small minority.

***Mayor adjourned the meeting at 8:50 pm.***

Meeting notes submitted:

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Karoline Chapman, City Secretary