

**STATE OF TEXAS  
COUNTY OF WALLER  
CITY OF HEMPSTEAD**

**BE IT REMEMBERED** that on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of April 2024, A.D., 2024 at 6:00 P.M. the City Council met in a Regular Meeting at the Hempstead City Hall, 1125 Austin Street, Hempstead, Texas, there being present, to-wit:

Erica Gillum, Mayor  
Lonnie Garfield, Mayor Pro-Tem  
Cindy Pearce, Councilmember  
Mildred Jefferson, Councilmember  
Nora Hodges, Councilmember  
Karon E. Neal, Councilmember

Charles Williams, City Attorney  
Sabrina Alvarez, City Secretary

**1. Call to order and invocation.**

Mayor Erica Gillum called the meeting to order at 6:01 P.M. and Pastor Bill Montgomery gave the invocation.

**2. Pledge of Allegiance.**

The Pledge of Allegiance was given.

**3. Public Comments.**

Jessica Holloman is the owner of the commercial property that is on the agenda for the zoning amendment request. The tattoo studio is a very high-end business with clientele only by appointments. He is a very talented individual and customers fly from all over the world to get tattoos from him. The city will be losing sales tax and utility money as well.

Dormic Smith is the assistant pastor for a local church and stated to council that he helps with a small utility assistance program for the citizens of Hempstead. He asked that the church and city work together to help those in crisis. He would like to get the information before the disconnect and late fees are applied.

Kinberly Hargrave stated to council she has been receiving the city's credit statements by way of Public Information Requests and she is appalled by some of the charges. She stated for the Zydeco Festival money could go to something that is needed, like street signs and lights. It is a waste of citizens' money, and the spending has got to stop.

Hamidah Wolfe spoke and stated to council not to vote for the school bond. She asked the question why some citizens got culverts installed and some did not. She also stated when the mailboxes were taken down that it delayed the mail causing homeowners to get late fees and other charges

on bills. She stated the city needed a free recreation center for the kids, who can't afford to pay fees.

#### **4. Discussion from Sid Chipman with the House of Help regarding homelessness and utilities.**

Sid Chipman with the House of Help stated that she wanted to thank the Streets and Grounds Department for fixing the potholes on the street by House of Help. She stated to council that they are a 501C nonprofit organization, they help citizens with paying their utilities, and would like to have the late fees and reconnect fees waived. She asked council to put it in a policy. She also talked about homelessness. She stated to council that there is a need for a building to house the homeless. The produce truck has fed over two hundred families and the number keeps increasing. She also stated all the churches need to combine their efforts together to help the community.

#### **5. Discussion and action from Nora Thomas on two homes located at 516 6<sup>th</sup> Street.**

Nora Thomas stated that she has two homes on one lot, in December of last year she submitted plans and in the process no paperwork was given to her from the building department. The contractor had tried to move the home because part of one home encroached into the neighbor's property. In the process of moving the home it collapsed. Building Inspector Frank Rodriguez stated they did a stop work order when the house collapsed. Attorney Charles Williams stated that per our Ordinance two houses on one lot violates our zoning, it is considered nonconforming once it's no longer there (due to the collapse). Councilmember Nora Hodges asked if it's possible to amend the Ordinance for non-conforming structures to be grandfathered, especially since this situation was no fault of the owner? Attorney Charles Williams stated that's when spot zoning is considered and that is not allowed in our zoning ordinance. Mayor Pro-Tem Lonnie Garfield stated the city has laws and rules by which we must abide.

#### **6. Consideration and action on minutes of March 18, 2024 & April 1, 2024, meetings.**

Mayor Pro-Tem Lonnie Garfield made a motion to approve the minutes. Councilmember Mildred Jefferson seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

#### **7. Public Hearing**

**A. Zoning Matrix Amendment allowing for tattoo studios in the following manner:  
"P" Use Permitted by Right in the following districts: CBD Central Business District.**

#### **Public Hearing opened at 7:31 P.M.**

Crystal Krivacka stated that it's a struggle to lease all the vacant property in the downtown area. Hempstead Economic Development Director Dr. Ramiro Bautista stated to council that the city had a predevelopment meeting, and the prior administration told the client that it was allowed in the Central Business District. When he went to get permits and put utilities on the building the

building inspector told him it could not be done because it was not in our zoning matrix, so that left a bad taste in their mouths. Dave Burkey stated we need more businesses in the downtown area. Jimmy Economu stated a business is a business, there is a tattoo studio in downtown Brenham. Councilmember Nora Hodges asked if it could be specified as a special use permit. Building Inspector Frank Rodriguez stated that this will be the same process as the helicopter pad that was approved months ago.

**Public Hearing closed at 7:50 P.M.**

**B. Consideration and action on an Ordinance of the City Council of the City of Hempstead amending Article 10, Section 10.01 of the Exhibit 9B, in the City of Hempstead, Texas zoning ordinance to add a definition of “Tattoo Studios”; amending Article 3, Section 3.13, the land use matrix, to allow tattoo studios in the following manner “P” Use Permitted By Right in the following zoning districts: CBD Central Business District; and making other provisions related to the subject.**

Councilmember Nora Hodges made a motion to approve the Ordinance. Councilmember Mildred Jefferson seconded the motion and carried unanimously.

**8. Public Hearing**

**A. The Hempstead City Council will hear public comments on a Project to sell approximately 14.9 acres of HEDC owned land for the purpose of economic development.**

**Public Hearing opened at 7:54 P.M.**

Jimmy Economu was against the sale of the property.

**Public Hearing closed at 7:59 P.M.**

**9. Consideration and action on Resolution of the City Council of the City of Hempstead approving as a project of the Hempstead Economic Development Corporation Type B, the Hempstead Gazebo Park Project 2024 for the installation of benches and vintage light poles at Hempstead Gazebo Park. (Second Reading)**

Councilmember Mildred Jefferson made a motion to approve the Resolution. Councilmember Karon Neal seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

**10. Consideration and action on a Resolution from the City Council of the City of Hempstead determining the time and place of the meetings of City Council of the City of Hempstead, Texas; making findings and containing other provisions related to the subject.**

Councilmember Nora Hodges made a motion to approve the Resolution for now. Councilmember Mildred Jefferson seconded the motion and carried unanimously.

**11. Consideration and action on Proclamation of April as Fair Housing Month.**

Councilmember Mildred Jefferson made a motion to approve the Proclamation. Councilmember Nora Hodges seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

**12. Consideration and action in Section 9 of the City of Hempstead Employee Guide adding Subsection A Vacancies and Announcements.**

Councilmember Nora Hodges made a motion to approve the addition of Subsection A Vacancies and Announcements. Councilmember Mildred Jefferson seconded the motion and carried unanimously.

**13. Consideration and action from Municipal Court to upgrade copier.**

Councilmember Nora Hodges made a motion to approve the copier for Municipal Court. Councilmember Mildred Jefferson seconded the motion and carried unanimously.

**14. Consideration and action of an Ordinance of the City Council of the City of Hempstead amending Ordinance No. 23-112 which will amend the City Budget for the 2023-2024 Fiscal year and authorizing amended revenues and expenditures as therein provided. (*Police Department Roof in the amount of \$1,700.00 quote from Keith Overby Roofing*)**

Councilmember Nora Hodges made a motion to approve the Ordinance. Councilmember Mildred Jefferson seconded the motion and carried unanimously.

**15. Consideration and action of an Ordinance of the City Council of the City of Hempstead amending Ordinance No. 23-112 which will amend the City Budget for the 2023-2024 Fiscal year and authorizing amended revenues and expenditures as therein provided. (*Zydeco Festival in the amount of \$3,500.00 to be held on June 1, 2024*)**

Mayor Pro-Tem Lonnie Garfield made a motion to approve the Ordinance. Councilmember Karon Neal seconded the motion. **AYES's-** Councilmember Mildred Jefferson, Councilmember Karon Neal, Mayor Pro-Tem Lonnie Garfield. **NO's-** Councilmember Nora Hodges, Councilmember Cindy Pearce. Motion carried.

## **16. Consideration and action on payment of current bills.**

Councilmember Nora Hodges made a motion to approve the bills. Mayor Pro-Tem Lonnie Garfield seconded the motion. **AYES's-** Councilmember Mildred Jefferson, Councilmember Karon Neal, Councilmember Nora Hodges, Mayor Pro-Tem Lonnie Garfield. **NO's-** Councilmember Cindy Pearce. Motion carried.

## **22. Presentations.**

### **A Mayor's Reports-**

- 1. Sales Tax- Sales Tax up 181.40% for the month of April 2024.-The City had a huge amount deposited due to pipeline being shipped to the RCR facility from March.**
- 2. Railroad Commission of Texas Docket No. 084625 & Docket No. 084377- both were approved by the Railroad Commission.**
- 3. Employee of the Month(April)- Lilian Ruiz-Very professional and helpful.**
- 4. Department of the Month (April)- Building Department-Thanks Frank Rodriguez for all his hard work, sticking to the rules.**
- 5. Returned Suburban for the Police Department to receive another officer vehicle.**

### **B. Department Head Reports-**

- 1. City Secretary- gave update on Master Drainage Grant and Resilient Communities Grant, plus the ADA restroom in the bay area will be completed by next week.**
- 2. Utility Billing Department -update on billing cycle, cutoffs, failed arrangements, 62 Service Orders generated, 18 Disconnected, 14 accounts activated.**
- 3. Municipal Court Department -issued warrants, monthly reports, upcoming court seminars, worked on docket, had dangerous dog hearings.**
- 4. Economic Development Department-woman's history month recognized the ladies at city hall with breakfast, money market account, added additional revenue saving on mowing, and utility bill.**
- 5. Police Department- Open House Thursday, April 18, 2024**
- 6. Technology Department-Revize website for city, activate city warehouse to intertwine all city buildings together, updating computers and servers, sound system for rec for townhall meetings.**
- 7. Public Works Director -update on Blumberg Rd Station, Drainage Grant Status, Urban Road Lift Station, 2-mile Bid update on progress.**
- 8. Street/Grounds Department-cleaning curbs and gutter, street signs update and update on supplies used on patching and cutouts.**
- 9. Parks & Recreation Department -after school programs, partnering with Family Ties, parties at recreation center. Rental of baseball fields, little league games, daily duties at park**
- 10. Building/Code Enforcement Department -update on citations, permits**

issued, plans reviewed.

11. Electrical Department – running new services to new homes, setting new transformers, service poles, comcast hook ups, run line to Mustang cat.

12. Water/Wastewater Department -staying ahead of leaks

13. Gas Department Report – gas leaks.

**B. Councilmembers Reports-**

1. Mildred Jefferson-I was fortunate enough to attend the ARCIT, seminar in Grandbury, TX on April 4-5, 2024. It was extremely informative and educational. I am grateful I was able to attend and gain information to share with our city officials.

2. Nora Hodges-Reminder that the “Meet the candidate’s public forum” will be held on Saturday, April 20<sup>th</sup> from 10:00 A.M. to 12:00 P.M., with breakfast served at 9:30 A.M. There will be Q & A sessions following open comments from each candidate. Sponsors are PMBC, Frazier’s, and Granny’s HSM. No Candidate is endorsed.

3. Lonnie Garfield- Report on the use of Hempstead ISD Facility. Superintendent said the city can use their facilities at any time.

**CLOSED SESSION**

The City Council of the City of Hempstead reserves the right to adjourn into executive session at any time during the course of this meeting to discuss any of the matters listed below authorized by Texas Government Code, Sections 551.071 (Consultation with Attorney), 551.072 (Deliberations about Real Property), 551.073 (Deliberations about Gifts and Donations), 551.074 (Personnel Matters), 551.076 (Deliberations about Security Devices), 551.087 (Economic Development), and 551.086 (Certain Public Power Utilities: Competitive Matters).

Specifically, City Council will meet in executive session pursuant to Texas Government Code Section 551.071 Consultation with Attorney regarding the following:

**18. Consideration and action on the approval of the compensation of the City of Hempstead Economic Development Executive Director.**

**19. Consideration and action of an Ordinance of the City Council of the City of Hempstead amending Ordinance No. 23-112 which will amend the City Budget for the 2023-2024 Fiscal year and authorizing amended revenues and expenditures as therein provided.(EDC Director Salary & Vehicle Allowance)**

**20. Consideration and action on two homes located on 516 6<sup>th</sup> Street.**

**21. Discussion of the Charter Amendment process to change to Manager-Council, and the election process for future elections.**

City Council opened at 8:26 P.M.

Executive Session ended at 9:06 P.M.

No action in Executive Session

## **OPEN SESSION**

Council may act in Open Session on items listed:

### **18. Consideration and action on the approval of the compensation of the City of Hempstead Economic Development Executive Director.**

Mayor Pro-Tem Lonnie Garfield made a motion to deny compensation for the Hempstead Economic Development Director. Councilmember Nora Hodges seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

### **19. Consideration and action of an Ordinance of the City Council of the City of Hempstead amending Ordinance No. 23-112 which will amend the City Budget for the 2023-2024 Fiscal year and authorizing amended revenues and expenditures as therein provided.(EDC Director Salary & Vehicle Allowance).**

Mayor Pro-tem Lonnie Garfield made a motion to table the Ordinance. Councilmember Mildred Jefferson seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

### **20. Consideration and action on two homes located on 516 6<sup>th</sup> Street.**

Mayor Pro-Tem Lonnie Garfield made a motion to deny the request from the homeowner to build two homes on one lot and refund the building permit cost back to the homeowner.

### **21. Discussion of the Charter Amendment process to change to Manager-Council, and the election process for future elections.**

No action taken; this was just discussion item.

### **25. Adjourn City Council Meeting.**

Mayor Pro-Tem Lonnie Garfield made a motion to end the meeting at 9:15 P.M Councilmember Mildred Jefferson seconded the motion and carried unanimously.

**PASSED AND APPROVED** this the 20<sup>th</sup> day of May, A.D., 2024.

**APPROVED:**

**/s/: Katherine Ragston Ward, Mayor**

**ATTEST:**

**/s/: Sabrina Alvarez, City Secretary**