

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

BE IT REMEMBERED that on the 3rd day of June 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:

Katherine Ragston Ward, 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 Katherine Ragston Ward called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M. and Mayor Pro-Tem Lonnie Garfield gave the invocation.

2. Pledge of Allegiance.

The Pledge of Allegiance was given.

3. Public Comments.

Nora Thomas stated to council the frustrations and problems she has been having with the Building Department. She spoke about the liability insurance, the permitting, demolition permit, and the wrong size culverts. She believes she should not have to eat the loss of the culverts.

4. Presentation, consideration, and action on Professional Services Agreement/AIA B212 with STOA for the Master Plan.

EDC Director Mr. Baustista stated to council that the Master Plan was submitted back in January 2024 it was approved by the EDC Board as well. Olson & Olson reviewed the contract and all the variables that were asked of STOA have been added to the contract. STOA representative Ramon Patino spoke to council and stated that there are four phases. Phase one is data gathering for the City of Hempstead. The Master Plan covers the seven acres in the downtown area- city hall, post office, police station and municipal court. Councilmember Nora Hodges asked if this was the same as the Resilient Grant the city went out for. City Secretary Sabrina Alvarez stated no. She also inquired about any additional fees or services. EDC Director Ramiro Bautista stated any additional fees or services would have to come back to the board for approval.

Councilmember Mildred Jefferson asked how far is phase one from completion? STOA representative Ramon Patino stated seventy five percent. Councilmember Mildred Jefferson also asked how far down Highway 290 does this plan include. EDC Director Ramiro Bautista stated it does not include Highway 290.

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

5. Presentation, consideration, and action from Ebony Cooksey with Nextlink for a Digital Empowerment Center at the Hempstead Recreation Center.

EDC Director Ramiro Bautista stated to council this will be a proposal between Nextlink with the City of Hempstead along with Prairie View A & M University for digital literacy throughout the community, bilingual education as well. Ebony Cooksey the marketing representative and governmental affairs coordinator with Nextlink stated to council that she was excited to see the computer lab at the Recreation Center and is willing to bring essential education to the citizens. Councilmember Cindy Pearce asked if the funding with Microsoft was secured. Ms. Ebony Cooksey stated yes, and they are in the process of securing more funding through various sources. Councilmember Nora Hodges asked what would the project cost to the city? Ms. Ebony Cooksey stated there would be no cost to the city; she will have a budget to incorporate all costs with Microsoft Airband. Mayor Pro-Tem Lonnie Garfield asked how the program would help the school district. Ms. Ebony Cooksey stated it would be an incentive for the students. Councilmember Cindy Pearce asked will the agreement include the devices, and will this also help our Spanish speaking citizens? Ms. Ebony Cooksey said yes.

Mayor Pro-Tem Lonnie Garfield made a motion for Nextlink to submit a memorandum of understanding to the city. Councilmember Mildred Jefferson seconded the motion and carried unanimously.

6. Consideration and action on amending the Travel and Expense Reimbursement Policy for the City of Hempstead to include elected and appointed officials.

Councilmember Mildred Jefferson made a motion to approve the Travel and Reimbursement Policy for the City of Hempstead. Councilmember Nora Hodges seconded the motion and carried unanimously.

7. A Resolution of City Council of the City of Hempstead, Texas amending Resolution No. 23-112, which approved the City of Hempstead General Budget for the 2023-2024 Fiscal Year for the purpose of revising specific line-item expenditures therein; and making other provisions related to the subject.

Councilmember Mildred Jefferson made a motion to approve the Resolution. Councilmember Lonnie Garfield seconded the motion and carried unanimously.

8. Consideration and action on a Resolution of the City Council of the City of Hempstead authorizing for administrator and on-line administrator Visa Business Card Account with Prosperity Bank and changing the email address for the Control Account.

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

9. A. Councilmembers Reports- Nora Hodges-Memorial Day Parade & Program sponsored by Hempstead Civic Association held on Memorial Day. A big Thank You to the Civic Association for a good program to honor the veterans. She was disappointed in the parade because it was very short. Juneteenth Community Celebration sponsored by Greater St. Peter Baptist Church planned for June 19, 2024, 11:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M. at the Hempstead City Park. She does have flyers if anyone wants one for the Juneteenth Program.

Lonnie Garfield-Comment on Hurricane Season. He stated that he spoke to the Superintendent of the school, and they are glad to work with the city to provide shelter to our citizens during hurricane season.

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). Council may act in Open Session on any item listed for Executive Session.

Specifically, Council will convene in Executive Session pursuant to Section 551.072 of the Government Code to deliberate Real Property.

City Council opened Executive Session at 6:54 P.M.

Executive Session ended at 7:11 P.M.

No action in Executive Session

10. Adjourn City Council Meeting.

Mayor pro-Tem Lonnie Garfield made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:12 P.M.
Councilmember Mildred Jefferson seconded the motion and carried unanimously.

PASSED AND APPROVED this the 17th day of June, A.D., 2024.

APPROVED:

/s/: Katherine Ragston Ward, Mayor

ATTEST:

/s/: Sabrina Alvarez, City Secretary