

On this the 4th day of March, 2024 at 6:30 p.m., the City Commission of the City of Hereford, Texas, convened in a regular session in the Commission Chamber in City Hall, the meeting being open to the public and notice of said meeting having been given as prescribed by Chapter 551 of the Government Code, with the following members being present and in attendance, to-wit:

Cathy Bunch, Mayor
Rose Mary Barrett, Commissioner Place One
Angie Alonzo, Commissioner Place Two
Clint Savoini, Commissioner Place Three
Mark Collier, Commissioner Place Four
James Stow, Commissioner Place Five
Rocky Bhakta, Commissioner Place Six
Steve Bartels, City Manager
Suzanne Finch, City Secretary
Audie Sciumbato, City Attorney

Jim Steiert was in attendance from the media to witness the proceedings.

Also, in attendance were Dean Turney, Wade Hawkins, Robert Jones, Erin Hubbard, Chris Grotegut, Landon Swan, Margaret Del Toro, Johnny Brownlow, Carmen Nunez, Ramon Nunez, Nelson Kendall, and Reina R. Ruiz.

Mayor Bunch voiced the invocation and then asked Commissioner Savoini to lead the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States flag. She called the meeting to order and welcomed those in attendance.

REGULAR HEARINGS:

ITEM 1 – Public Comments.

Mayor Bunch reminded the audience of the 3-minute limit and also the rule that the public is not allowed to approach the dais and will be escorted out of the chamber after the meeting adjourns.

Margaret Del Toro spoke in favor of allowing alcohol in the Civic Center – beer and wine with a celebratory meal. She suggested setting rules that include requiring security to prevent people from getting out of hand.

Mona Hernandez stated she was dismissed from the Deaf Smith County Freshwater District February 13th, 2024. She expressed concerns two water samples had been taken on consecutive Fridays and the lab will not accept those on Fridays. She stated she has been monitoring the Texas Drinking Water Watch website and no sample was submitted for February. Ms. Hernandez stated City of Hereford licensed operators should leave the Deaf Smith County Freshwater District's water system alone.

Reina Ruiz stated she is not totally against alcohol at the Hereford Civic Center. She expressed concerns over security, deposits, multiple parties sharing common areas, and the facility becoming less “family-friendly” and more of an “event center.”

ITEM 2 – Consider approval of minutes for the February 5th, 2024 Regular meeting.

Commissioner Collier made the motion to approve the minutes as presented. Commissioner Savoini seconded the motion and it passed with the unanimous vote of the Commission.

ITEM 3 – Consider re-doing sidewalks and parking on the 500 Block of Main Street.

Commissioner Bhakta made the motion [as was discussed in the work session to share the cost 50/50 with First Baptist Church to re-do the sidewalks/parking]. Commissioner Savoini seconded the motion and it passed with the following vote Mayor Bunch – abstained; Commissioner Barrett – aye; Commissioner Alonzo – aye; Commissioner Savoini – aye; Commissioner Collier – abstained; Commissioner Stow – abstained; and Commissioner Bhakta – aye.

ITEM 4 – Hear report from Hereford Economic Development Corporation.

Dr. Chris Grotegut, President of the HEDC, gave the following report:

- Met February 7th, 2024 in a regular meeting
 - Approved Next Hotel, LLC incentive for an extended stay hotel
 - Set the framework for capital expenditures
 - 33% Emergency Relief
 - Split 40% Small Businesses
 - And 60% Large Businesses
- Cancelled regular meeting March 6th – the next meeting will be held March 12th

ITEM 5 – Consider approval of Hereford Economic Development Corporation’s financial incentive package for an extended stay hotel (Next Hotel, LLC).

Commissioner Savoini made the motion to approve the Hereford Economic Development Corporation’s financial incentive package for an extended stay hotel (Next Hotel, LLC). Commissioner Stow seconded the motion and it passed with the following vote of the Commission – Mayor Bunch – aye; Commissioner Barrett – aye; Commissioner Alonzo – aye; Commissioner Savoini – aye; Commissioner Collier – aye; Commissioner Stow – aye; and Commissioner Bhakta – abstained.

ITEM 6 - Consider approval of façade grant application approved by the Hereford Beautification Advisory Board at a regular meeting held February 6th, 2024. (Requested by Amy Adams / Element 26 Fitness Studio, LLC.)

Commissioner Stow made a motion to approve the façade grant approved by the Hereford Beautification Advisory Board for Amy Adams of Element 26 Fitness Studio, LLC.

Commissioner Bhakta seconded the motion and it passed with the unanimous vote of the Commission.

ITEM 7 - Discuss proposed rules for allowing alcohol at the Hereford Civic Center .

Mayor Bunch stated this item is for discussion only.

Hereford Civic Center Director Erin Hubbard expressed her concerns for the following:

- Increased chance of fights in the facility
- The need to allow only one event at a time
 - To prevent common areas from being shared
 - Bathroom
 - Hallways
 - Not as many customers can be served
 - Last year 694 rooms booked
 - More than one event going on at a time
- Noise level
- Property damages
- People leaving facility
 - Alcohol taken outside the facility
 - Increased trash in the parking lot
 - Liability
- Other things to consider
 - Requiring security
 - Increasing the amount of the deposit from \$250 to \$5000
 - More staff for the Civic Center
 - Currently able to handle with two people
 - Additional staff needed to monitor the facility
 - Zero tolerance for violation of rules with the following consequences
 - Event shut down
 - Deposit forfeited
 - No second chance

Commissioner Stow suggested designated police officers be used for security and the cost passed on to the consumer.

City Manager Bartels suggested getting additional information from other places that allow alcohol in their facilities and then putting together an ordinance and rules for the City Commission to look at their first meeting in April.

Reina Ruiz stated she works at the American Legion and noted they serve alcohol and some of the issues they deal with are: broken bottles in the parking lot and additional monitoring of the facility is required. She also expressed concerns the charge for paying police officers at an over-time rate to do security would be unfair to the person renting the Civic Center.

Margaret Del Toro spoke again in favor of alcohol as a part of small celebrations and against wild parties.

ITEM 8 - Discuss and consider Ordinance No. 03.04.24 closing a portion of Center Street.

Mayor Bunch read the caption and noted this is a platted street but it is not used.

**STREET CLOSURE ORDINANCE
ORDINANCE NO. 03.04.24**

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF HEREFORD, TEXAS, FINDING THAT THE PORTION OF CENTRE (SOMETIMES SPELLED CENTER) STREET LOCATED EAST OF THE EAST LINE OF FRONT STREET IN THE WOMBLE-DEATLEY SUBDIVISION OF THE CITY OF HEREFORD, TEXAS, WITHIN THE CITY OF HEREFORD, IS NOT NECESSARY FOR PUBLIC USE AS A THOROUGHFARE; PROVIDING FOR THE VACATION, ABANDONMENT AND CLOSURE OF THE STREET; AND RELEASING ANY AND ALL PUBLIC RIGHTS, TITLE AND INTEREST.

City Manager Bartels clarified this has nothing to do with the street with the same name on the west side of town; this area is located near Love's and has never been opened nor used; and, the property owner is requesting that it be closed.

Commissioner Savoini made a motion to approve the Ordinance No. 03.04.24. Commissioner Collier seconded the motion and it passed with the unanimous vote of the Commission.

ITEM 9 - Consider approval of Joint Election Agreement between the City of Hereford and Deaf Smith County for the May 4th, 2024 Election.

Commissioner Barrett made the motion to approve the Joint Election Agreement. Commissioner Alonzo seconded the motion and it passed with the unanimous vote of the Commission.

ITEM 10 - Consider approval of appointment of members to the Baseball/Softball Complex Advisory Board.

Mayor Bunch stated the new board would help with coordination and communication and would be comprised of people from the following organizations: two members would be from Deaf Smith County Kids, Inc., two people from Hereford Sports & Wellness, and three people representing the City of Hereford.

Commissioner Collier made the motion to approve the appointment of the following people to serve as board members on the new Baseball/Softball Complex Advisory Board: Clint Savoini, Anselmo Ramirez, Lucas Mendoza, Bennie Gonzales, Zach Maldonado, Luis Arias, and Adrian Alejandre. Commissioner Bhakta seconded the motion and it passed with the following vote: Mayor Bunch – aye; Commissioner Barrett – abstained; Commissioner Alonzo – aye; Commissioner Savoini – aye; Commissioner Collier – aye; Commissioner Stow – aye; and Commissioner Bhakta - aye.

ITEM 11 - Announcements and comments from mayor and city commissioners.

Commissioner Savoini thanked the audience for their attendance and for expressing their opinions. He also requested looking at a dog park and food trucks in conjunction with the new baseball/softball complex.

Commissioner Collier and Commissioner Alonzo had questions regarding comments made earlier in the public comments section and asked that Mona Hernandez's concerns be addressed.

City Manager Bartels stated one of the City of Hereford licensed operators has offered on his own time to assist temporarily until the Deaf Smith County Freshwater District can get an operator licensed. He noted the water was tested and came back good; he was shown the report by one of the Deaf Smith County Freshwater District board members that received the report – the results were not sent to the City of Hereford.

Commissioner Barrett stated potholes are on the list and thanked everyone for their support of the new baseball/softball complex. She also noted in regards to allowing alcohol at the Civic Center – she has no feelings either way – it is just under discussion to see what works best.

Commissioner Stow thanked everyone for being here and noted he would like an update on the Hereford Aquatic Center.

ITEM 12 - Announcements and comments from city staff.

City Manager Bartels stated this is a beginning point and we want to cover all the bases and he will continue to work with our civic center director and city attorney to come up with a proposed ordinance and a proposed set of rules regarding allowing alcohol at the Hereford Civic Center.

City Manager Bartels noted the Hereford Aquatic Center has been long and drawn out: shorted material to finish the inside and mis-ordered materials for the south end. He stated we are hoping to be open April 1st and are looking at offering something to the patrons, maybe a free month of swimming. City Manager Bartels stated the pool manager has a lot of returning guards. He also invited the Commission to go by there and do a walk through if the gates are open – staff should be available to give them a tour.

City Manager Bartels reported the Main Street bridge closure for repairs was postponed again – for a couple of weeks. He stated it will take a minimum of 90 days to do the project and if it goes over 120 days there will be negative impacts for the contractor.

A couple of members of the audience had additional questions and were advised to get with either a staff member or commissioner after the meeting adjourns.

There being no further business before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:09 p.m.