

OSCAR LEESER
MAYOR

TOMMY GONZALEZ
CITY MANAGER



CITY COUNCIL
PETER SVARZBEIN, DISTRICT 1
ALEXSANDRA ANNELLO, DISTRICT 2
CASSANDRA HERNANDEZ, DISTRICT 3
JOE MOLINAR, DISTRICT 4
ISABEL SALCIDO, DISTRICT 5
CLAUDIA L. RODRIGUEZ, DISTRICT 6
HENRY RIVERA, DISTRICT 7
CISSY LIZARRAGA, DISTRICT 8

CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION MINUTES
September 27, 2021
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL AND VIRTUALLY
9:05 AM

.....
The City Council of the City Council met at the above place and date. Meeting was called to order at 9:22 a.m. Mayor Oscar Leeser was present and presiding and the following Council Members answered roll call: Peter Svarzbein, Joe Molinar, Isabel Salcido, Claudia Rodriguez, Henry Rivera and Cissy Lizarraga. Alexsandra Annello attended via videoconference. Late arrival: Cassandra Hernandez at 9:28 a.m. Early departure: Mayor Leeser at 1:20 p.m.
.....

AGENDA

.....
1. Presentation and discussion by the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Cross-Functional Team providing information on key activities, efforts and processes.

1. Overview (Tommy Gonzalez)

Mr. Tommy Gonzalez, City Manager, provided an update on the current status of the pandemic by stating that 75% of individuals were now fully vaccinated with 88% have received a first dose indicating that the City continues to lead the state and the nation in vaccination rates. He explained that the number of new cases have plateaued and the hospitalization rate among those cases is at 10%. Mr. Gonzalez also stated that the City is offering Pfizer booster vaccines to senior citizens and qualified individuals by appointment adding that the booster helps strengthen the immune system and prevents serious disease among those at a higher risk.

2. City Attorney Overview (Karla Nieman)

a) Greg Abbott, in his official capacity as Governor of Texas, v. City of El Paso

Ms. Karla Nieman, City Attorney, provided an update on the lawsuit involving the City's mask mandate and said the temporary injunction issued by Judge Morales was still in place meaning the mandate remained in effect.

3. Team Lead Report:

a) Health Focus (Hector Ocaranza, M.D.)

b) Data Analysis (David Coronado)

Dr. Hector Ocaranza, Public Health Authority, provided a briefing on the number of current COVID-19 cases and said the number of hospitalizations were on the decline noting that

the majority of related hospitalizations were unvaccinated individuals. He explained that the vaccination was extremely effective against hospitalizations and death and added that the results from Moderna and Johnson & Johnson booster trails were still pending.

Mr. David Coronado, Managing Director for International Bridges and Economic Development, provided a briefing on the City's economic status by stating the City was experiencing continuous progress due to gains in construction and education employment opportunities. He added that consumer spending was steady and said the peso would begin to recover once travel restrictions were lifted. As far as manufacturing activity and trade, Mr. Coronado explained that it was doing well despite the short supply of inputs.

4. City Manager Wrap-up (Tommy Gonzalez)

Mr. Tommy Gonzalez, City Manager, ended the presentation by reiterating the current vaccination rates and thanked members of the City Council for making the hard decisions needed to help our community recover from the pandemic. He encouraged everyone to continue social distancing and wearing face coverings as a safeguard against the virus.

Representatives Svarzbein, Molinar, and Rodriguez commented.

NO ACTION was taken on this item.

2. **Annual presentation to the City Council on progress by the Stormwater Utility and planned projects on the Stormwater Masterplan.**

Mr. Alan Shubert, El Paso Water Vice President – Engineering, Operations and Technical Services presented a PowerPoint presentation (copy on file in the City Clerk's Office). The presentation also contained an update on the 2021 Monsoon Season.

Representatives Svarzbein, Annelo, Hernandez, Molinar, Salcido, Rodriguez, Rivera, and Lizarraga commented.

Mr. John E. Balliew, EP Water President and CEO, responded to questions posed by Members of the City Council.

NO ACTION was taken on this item.

3. **Presentation and discussion by El Paso Water regarding the utility's efforts to repair the Frontera Wastewater Force Main, which is located in the Upper Valley area and was damaged during recent storms, and the steps that they have taken to protect the public while the work is ongoing.**

Mr. John E. Balliew, EP Water President and CEO, presented a PowerPoint presentation (copy on file in the City Clerk's Office).

Representatives Svarzbein, Hernandez, and Lizarraga commented.

NO ACTION was taken on this item.

The meeting was RECESSED at 11:33 a.m. and RECONVENED AT 12:05 P.M.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion made by Representative Hernandez, seconded by Representative Salcido, and unanimously carried that the City Council retire into **EXECUTIVE SESSION** at 12:57 p.m. pursuant to Section 3.5A of the El Paso City Charter and the Texas Government Code, Sections 551.071 - 551.089 to discuss the following:

Section 551.071 CONSULTATION WITH ATTORNEY
Section 551.072 DELIBERATION REGARDING REAL PROPERTY
Section 551.087 DELIBERATION REGARDING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT NEGOTIATIONS

AYES: Representatives Svarzbein, Annello, Hernandez, Molinar, Salcido, Rodriguez, Rivera, and Lizarraga

NAYS: None

Motion made by Representative Hernandez, seconded by Representative Rodriguez, and unanimously carried to **ADJOURN** the Executive Session at 3:40 p.m. and **RECONVENE** the meeting of the City Council.

AYES: Representatives Svarzbein, Annello, Hernandez, Molinar, Salcido, Rodriguez, Rivera, and Lizarraga

NAYS: None

EX1. Claim of Eduardo Holguin Sr., Adzari Ordonez and Sivowim Ware, Matter No. 21-1026-11678 (551.071)

Motion made by Mayor Pro Tempore Svarzbein, seconded by Representative Rivera, and carried that the City Attorney's Office, in consultation with the City Manager, be authorized to deny the claim of Holguin, Eduardo Sr., Adzari Ordonez, and Siyowin Ware against the City of El Paso, in Matter Number 21-1026-11678, in its entirety.

AYES: Representatives Svarzbein, Annello, Hernandez, Molinar, Salcido, Rodriguez, Rivera, and Lizarraga

NAYS: None

EX2. Update on Special Permit No. PZST21-00008. Matter No. 21-1007-2723 (551.071)

The El Paso City Council ("Council") denied the application for PZST21-00008 on August 31, 2021.

Motion made by Mayor Pro Tempore Svarzbein, seconded by Representative Rodriguez, and carried to grant broad authority to the City Attorney and City Manager to work with the applicant on a mutually beneficial resolution going forward.

This authorizes the City Attorney and City Manager to retain any necessary consultants in connection with this matter and to amend the ordinance to facilitate the placement of these facilities to provide cell phone service while preserving the health, safety and welfare of the City of El Paso.

AYES: Representatives Svarzbein, Annello, Hernandez, Molinar, Salcido, Rodriguez,

Rivera, and Lizarraga
NAYS: None

EX3. Update on Application of El Paso Electric Company to Change Rates, Public Utility Commission of Texas Docket No. 52195, Matter No. 21-1008-174 (551.071)

NO ACTION was taken on this item.

EX4. Discussion regarding the purchase, lease, exchange of real property located in central El Paso, Texas. Matter No. 21-1004-1257 (551.072)

NO ACTION was taken on this item.

ADJOURN

Motion made by Mayor Pro Tempore Svarzbein, seconded by Representative Rivera and unanimously carried to **ADJOURN** the meeting at 3:43 p.m.

AYES: Representatives Svarzbein, Anello, Hernandez, Molinar, Salcido, Rodriguez, Rivera, and Lizarraga

NAYS: None

APPROVED AS TO CONTENT:

Laura D. Prine, City Clerk