

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**  
**August 30, 2021**  
**9:05 AM**

**Due to the temporary suspension of specified provisions of Open Meetings laws due to the COVID-19 emergency this meeting was conducted via telephonic and videoconference formats.**

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The City Council of the City Council met on the above time and date via videoconference. Meeting was called to order at 9:28 a.m. Mayor Oscar Leeser was present and presiding and the following Council Members answered roll call: Peter Svarzbein, Alexsandra Annello, Cassandra Hernandez, Joe Molinar, Isabel Salcido, Claudia Rodriguez, Henry Rivera and Cissy Lizarraga. Henry Rivera requested to be excused. Early Departure: Joe Molinar at 1:00 p.m. on August 30, 2021. All members were present when the meeting reconvened on August 31, 2021 at 2:05 p.m.

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**AGENDA**

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**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, introduced the item and said the City was still experiencing a rise in positive COVID-19 cases indicating an 85% increase from last month. He stated that hospitalizations were also on the rise impacting total capacity at hospitals and explained that the majority of new COVID cases and hospitalizations were attributed to unvaccinated individuals. Mr. Gonzalez added that the state and nation's new COVID-19 cases were well above El Paso's rates. He Gonzalez went over vaccination rates and noted that El Paso is ahead of New Mexico's vaccination rates. He urged the community to get vaccinated and adhere to the face mask mandate in order to mitigate the spread of the COVID-19 infection.

**2. Team Lead Report:**

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

Dr. Hector Ocaranza, Public Health Authority, reiterated Mr. Gonzalez's points regarding new COVID-19 cases and recommended safety protocols such as hand washing and use of face coverings. He also provided statistical information related to new cases, hospitalizations by age, and new rates among school age children. Dr. Ocaranza stressed the importance of wearing face coverings as they help reduce the spread of

COVID-19 and other respiratory infections. Dr. Ocaranza explained the importance of vaccinations for children age 12 and older and said more information regarding a vaccination booster for eligible individuals would be forthcoming.

**b) Data Analysis (David Coronado)**

Mr. David Coronado, International Bridges Director, reported on statistical data related to the County's unemployment rate, international bridge crossings, and community mobility reports. Overall he said the rates indicate the community is getting closer to pre-pandemic levels with a decrease in unemployment rates and an increase in bridge crossings due to the start of the new school year. Mr. Coronado also said that the economy was continuing to recover.

**c) Operations Focus (Araceli Guerra)**

Ms. Araceli Guerra, Managing Director of Human Resources, provided an update on a return to work plan set to begin on September 13<sup>th</sup> for 58% of the workforce that has been telecommuting since the Stay at Home Directive was issued. The plan includes a hybrid work schedule with individuals reporting to the office one day a week for the next 60 days before rolling out the next phase with the City's Core hours from Monday through Thursday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

**3. City Manager Wrap Up**

Mr. Tommy Gonzalez, City Manager, closed out the presentation by providing information on the vaccination booster and said the City's drive through facility was administering a third dose to immunocompromised individuals. He said 84% of the El Paso population had received a first vaccination dose while 73% was fully vaccinated indicating the City was well above the state and the nation's vaccination rates with only 61% of individuals at a first dose and 57% fully vaccinated.

Representatives Svarzbein, Hernandez, and Lizarraga commented and posed questions related to the presentation.

The following City staff members participated in the discussion:

1. Ms. Laura Cruz-Acosta, Strategic Communications Director
2. Mr. Philip Etiwe, Planning and Inspections Department Director

**NO ACTION** was taken on this item.

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2.

**RESOLUTION**

**THAT** the El Paso City Council hereby approves the list of projects on Exhibit "A" attached hereto, totaling \$42,850,000.00, which establishes: 1) the "Comprehensive International Bridges Capital Improvement Program" as the approved list of International Bridges Capital Improvement Program projects for FY 2022 through FY 2026; and 2) the use of the identified funding sources. Further, the El Paso City Council hereby authorizes the City Manager to make all necessary budget transfers prior to the execution of the projects.

City of El Paso - Funded Projects	Total Budget Allocation		
	Total	P3	Rider
ITS at Ysleta and BOTA (Rider 44 - Off-System)	\$ 18,000,000	\$ -	\$ 18,000,000
ITS at Ysleta and BOTA (Rider 44 - On-System)	\$ 14,000,000	\$ -	\$ 14,000,000
Ysleta toll booth improvements (add'l lane, lane assignments)	\$ 650,000	\$ 650,000	\$ -
Stanton Street Traffic Study	\$ 500,000	\$ 500,000	\$ -
E-Fast Pass traffic only lane at Stanton	\$ 500,000	\$ 500,000	\$ -
Paso del Norte bridge toll collection system upgrades	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 1,000,000	\$ -
ITS at Stanton	\$ 1,800,000	\$ 1,800,000	\$ -
Ysleta Preliminary Engineering Report	\$ 650,000	\$ 650,000	\$ -
Redesign pedestrian waiting/pick-up area at Ysleta	\$ 750,000	\$ 750,000	\$ -
Pedestrian improvements at Ysleta	\$ 750,000	\$ 750,000	\$ -
General bridge facilities operations and maintenance	\$ 1,500,000	\$ 1,500,000	\$ -
Pavement markings, striping and lane dividers	\$ 540,000	\$ 540,000	\$ -
Stanton E-Fast Pass Office	\$ 400,000	\$ 400,000	\$ -
International Bridges Crossborder Survey Project	\$ 560,000	\$ 560,000	\$ -
Improve ADA accessibility	\$ 1,250,000	\$ 1,250,000	\$ -

Total	P3	Rider
\$ 42,850,000	\$ 10,850,000	\$ 32,000,000

Mayor Leeser and Representatives Svarzbein and Molinar commented.

Motion made by Mayor Pro Tempore Svarzbein, seconded by Representative Lizarraga, and unanimously carried to **APPROVE** the Resolution.

AYES: Representatives Svarzbein, Annelo, Hernandez, Molinar, Salcido, Rodriguez, and Lizarraga

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Representative Rivera

3. **A RESOLUTION NOMINATING CHARTER COMMUNICATIONS, INC.  
AS A TEXAS STATE ENTERPRISE ZONE PROJECT**

**WHEREAS**, the City Council of the City of El Paso (“City”) has previously passed Ordinance No. 017116 on May 26, 2009, electing to participate in the Texas Enterprise Zone Program; and

**WHEREAS**, the local incentives offered under this Resolution are the same on this date as were outlined in Ordinance No. 017116; and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to Chapter 2303, Subchapter F of the Texas Enterprise Zone Act, Texas Government Code (“Act”), Charter Communications, Inc. has applied to the City for designation as an enterprise zone project; and

**WHEREAS**, the Office of the Governor Economic Development and Tourism (“EDC”) through the Economic Development Bank (“Bank”) will consider Charter Communications, Inc. as an enterprise project pursuant to a nomination and an application made by the City; and

**WHEREAS**, the City desires to pursue the creation of the proper economic and social environment in order to induce the investment of private resources in productive business enterprises located in the city and to provide employment to residents of enterprise zones and to other economically disadvantaged individuals; and

**WHEREAS**, the City finds that Charter Communications, Inc. meets the criteria for designation as an enterprise project under Chapter 2303, Subchapter F of the Act on the following grounds:

1. Charter Communications, Inc. is a "qualified business" under Section 2303.402 of the Act since it will be engaged in the active conduct of a trade or business at a qualified business site located outside an enterprise zone and at least thirty-five percent (35%) of the business' new employees will be residents of an enterprise zone, economically disadvantaged individuals, or veterans; and
2. There has been and will continue to be a high level of cooperation between public, private, and neighborhood entities within the area; and
3. The designation of Charter Communications, Inc. as an enterprise project will contribute significantly to the achievement of the plans of the City for development and revitalization of the area.

**WHEREAS**, the City finds that Charter Communications. meets the criteria for tax relief and other incentives adopted by the City and nominates Charter Communications, Inc. for enterprise project status on the grounds that it will be located at the qualified business site, will create a higher level of employment, economic activity and stability; and

**WHEREAS**, the City finds that it is in the best interest of the City to nominate Charter Communications, Inc. as an enterprise project pursuant to the Act.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF EL PASO:**

1. That Charter Communications, Inc. is a "qualified business" as defined in Section 2303.402 of the Act, and the Charter Communications, Inc. Capital Improvement project meets the criteria for designation as an enterprise project, as set forth in Section 2303, Subchapter F of the Act;
2. That the enterprise zone project shall take effect on the date of designation of the enterprise project by the agency and terminate five years after date of designation; and
3. That the Director of Economic Development or her designee be authorized to sign any and all documents required by EDC to complete the nomination process.

Motion made by Mayor Pro Tempore Svarzbein, seconded by Representative Lizarraga, and unanimously carried to **APPROVE** the Resolution.

AYES: Representatives Svarzbein, Annelo, Hernandez, Molinar, Salcido, Rodriguez, and Lizarraga

NAYS: None  
ABSENT: Representative Rivera

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**4. Presentation by the El Paso Electric Company of the completed Renewable Generation Study, as required by Ordinance No. 019022, including the renewable generation commitments, opportunities, and goals identified by the Study.**

Ms. Elizabeth Triggs, Strategic Partnerships Officer, introduced the item and representatives from El Paso Electric.

The following representatives from El Paso Electric Company presented a PowerPoint presentation (copy on file in the City Clerk's Office) and/or responded to questions posed by Members of the City Council.

1. Mr. Manuel Gomez, Resource Planning Supervisor
2. Mr. James Schichtl, Vice President of Regulatory and Governmental Affairs
3. Mr. David Hawkins, Vice President of Strategy and Sustain

Mayor Leeser and Representatives Svarzbein, Annello, Hernandez, Molinar, Salcido, and Lizarraga commented.

**NO ACTION** was taken on this item.

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**5. Discussion with the Veterans and Military Affairs Cross Functional Team to update Council on the status of Veteran and Military programs, policies, and initiatives that directly affect the El Paso Veteran and Military community.**

The following Cross Functional Team members presented a PowerPoint presentation (copy on file in the City Clerk's Office).

1. Mr. Paul Albright, Chief Military Affairs Officer
2. Ms. Cecilia Mungaray, Human Resources Departmental Manager
3. Mr. Kelly Kotlik, Economic Development Program Administrator
4. Ms. Nicole Ferrini, Chief Resiliency Officer
5. Ms. Laura Cruz-Acosta, Strategic Communications Director

Mr. Tommy Gonzalez, City Manager, commented.

Representatives Annello and Rodriguez commented.

**NO ACTION** was taken on this item.

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The meeting was **RECESSED** on **Monday, August 30, 2021** at 2:14 p.m.

The meeting was **RECONVENED** on **Tuesday, August 31, 2021** at 2:05 p.m.

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**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Motion made by Representative Annello, seconded by Representative Rivera, and unanimously carried that the City Council retire into **EXECUTIVE SESSION** at 2:08 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 Rivera, seconded by Representative Annello, and unanimously carried to **ADJOURN** the Executive Session at 3:49 p.m. and **RECONVENE** the meeting of the City Council.

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

NAYS: None

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**EX1. City of El Paso v. Gregg Abbott (COVID-19 Mask Mandate) Trial Court -- Matter No. 21-1001-305, Cause No. 2021DCV2805; Appellate Court - Matter No. 21-1001-205.001, 8th Court of Appeals Cause No. 08-20-00226. (551.071)**

**NO ACTION** was taken on this item.

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**EX2. Joanna Cangialosi et al v. City of El Paso. Matter No. 18-1026-9235, Cause No. 2018DCV0797 (551.071)**

Motion made by Mayor Pro Tempore Svarzbein, seconded by Representative Hernandez and carried that the City Attorney be **GRANTED** settlement authority to resolve the case entitled, *Joanna Cangialosi, Individually, as Next of Friend of C.C., Minor Child, Surviving Daughter and Heir to the Estate of Annette Martinez; Jose Aguilar; Raymond Aguilar; Fidel Aguilar; Eric Aguilar, Individually and as Surviving Sons and Heirs to the Estate of Annette Martinez v. City of El Paso*; 171st District Court; 2018DCV0797.

In addition to negotiating a settlement agreement, the City Attorney is authorized to sign all necessary documents to effectuate this authority under Matter No. 18-1026-9235.

AYES: Representatives Svarzbein, Annello, Hernandez, Salcido, and Lizarraga

NAYS: Molinar, Rodriguez, Rivera

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**EX3. EPWU, Texas v. New Mexico, Original No. 141. (551.071)**

**NO ACTION** was taken on this item.

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**EX4. Update on Application of El Paso Electric Company for Approval of Advanced Metering System (AMS) Public Utility Commission of Texas Docket No. 52040. Matter No. 21-1192-001 (551.071)**

**NO ACTION** was taken on this item.

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**EX5. 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.

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**EX6. Discussion regarding the value and purchase/sale of real property located in the west side of the City of El Paso, Texas. Matter No. 21-1008-165 (551.071) (551.072)**

**NO ACTION** was taken on this item.

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**EX7. Economic Incentives for a Manufacturing Company to be located in the City of El Paso. Matter No. 21-1007-2740 (551.071)(551.072)(551.087)**

**NO ACTION** was taken on this item.

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**ADJOURN**

Motion made by Representative Molinar, seconded by Representative Hernandez and unanimously carried to **ADJOURN** the meeting at 3:51 p.m. on **Tuesday, August 31, 2021**.

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

NAYS: None

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APPROVED AS TO CONTENT:

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Laura D. Prine, City Clerk