

RENARD U. JOHNSON
MAYOR

DIONNE MACK
CITY MANAGER



CITY COUNCIL
ALEJANDRA CHÁVEZ, DISTRICT 1
JOSH ACEVEDO, DISTRICT 2
DEANNA MALDONADO-ROCHA, DISTRICT 3
CYNTHIA BOYAR TREJO, DISTRICT 4
IVAN NIÑO, DISTRICT 5
ART FIERRO, DISTRICT 6
LILY LIMÓN, DISTRICT 7
CHRIS CANALES, DISTRICT 8

MINUTES FOR REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

July 21, 2026
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL AND VIRTUALLY
9:00 AM

9:00 A.M. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Glen Cove Elementary School at the Invitation of City Representative Deanna Maldonado-Rocha.

Santiago Pedroza
Natalie Pedroza

MAYOR'S PROCLAMATIONS

Desert ADAPT - 36th Anniversary of Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Restoring and Beautifying Smeltertown Day

Life Saving Actions at Armijo Aquatic Center

VIVA! El Paso

10:00 AM ROLL CALL

The City Council of the City of El Paso met at the above time and date. The meeting was called to order at 10:07 a.m. Mayor Renard U. Johnson was present and presiding, and the following Council Members answered roll call: Alejandra Chávez, Josh Acevedo, Deanna Maldonado-Rocha, Cynthia Boyar Trejo, Ivan Niño, Art Fierro, Lily Limón, and Chris Canales.

INVOCATION BY RETIRED BATTALION CHIEF AND CHAPLAIN KEVIN MENDE

PUBLIC COMMENT ON CONSENT AGENDA AND REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS

The following members of the public commented on agenda items, as denoted:

1. Mr. Pierre Andre Euzarraga – Item 6
2. Ms. Liliana Mireles – Item 20
3. Ms. Lisa Turner – Items 20, 24, and 29
4. Mr. Ron Comeau – Item 24

CALL TO THE PUBLIC (CITY-RELATED NON-AGENDA ITEMS):

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The following members of the public commented:

1. Ms. Elizabeth Crawford
2. Mr. George G. Atkins
3. Mr. Anyelo Nije Martinez
4. Ms. Emily Sowder
5. Ms. Claudia Contreras Siller
6. Mr. Ron Comeau
7. Ms. Chelsea Boyd
8. Ms. Victoria Quiniola
9. Mr. Pierre Andre Euzarraga
10. Mr. Cornelius Brown
11. Ms. Patricia Osmond
12. Ms. Sherry Medellin
13. Ms. Lisa Turner

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NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

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*Motion made by Mayor Pro Tempore Chávez, seconded by Representative Fierro, and unanimously carried to **APPROVE, AS REVISED**, all matters listed under the Consent Agenda unless otherwise noted. (Items approved, postponed, or deleted pursuant to the vote on the Consent Agenda will be shown with an asterisk {*}).)

AYES: Representatives Chávez, Acevedo, Maldonado-Rocha, Niño, Fierro, Limón, and Canales

NAYS: None

NOT PRESENT FOR THE VOTE: Representative Boyar Trejo

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1. *Motion made, seconded, and unanimously carried to **APPROVE** the Minutes of the Regular City Council Meeting of July 7, 2026, the Work Session of July 6, 2026, and the Special Meetings of May 27 and May 28, 2026.

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CONSENT AGENDA – REQUEST TO EXCUSE ABSENT CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS:

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

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CONSENT AGENDA – RESOLUTIONS:

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3. ***R E S O L U T I O N**

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF EL PASO:

That the City Council hereby authorizes the City Manager, or designee, to sign an Advance Funding Agreement between the City of El Paso and the State of Texas, acting by and through the Texas Department of Transportation for the project generally described as New Haven Dr Crossing (DOT#741228V) to upgrade from passive railroad warning devices to active railroad warning devices and install new signs, pavement markings, approach transitions and other item. The City agrees to maintain pavement markings and advance warning signs under its jurisdiction as well as trim and maintain trees and vegetation under its jurisdiction along the roadway approaches.

Ms. Patricia Osmond, citizen, commented.

4.

***R E S O L U T I O N**

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF EL PASO:

That the City Council hereby authorizes the City Manager, or designee, to sign an Advance Funding Agreement between the City of El Paso and the State of Texas, acting by and through the Texas Department of Transportation for the project generally described as Olive Ave. Crossing (DOT#741059K) to upgrade from passive railroad warning devices to active railroad warning devices and install new signs, pavement markings, approach transitions and other item. The City agrees to maintain pavement markings and advance warning signs under its jurisdiction as well as trim and maintain trees and vegetation under its jurisdiction along the roadway approaches.

5.

***R E S O L U T I O N**

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF EL PASO:

That the Mayor be authorized to sign an Interlocal Agreement between the City of El Paso and City of Socorro, Texas, for a term of one year and will automatically renew for a term of one year, each year for the provision of public health, code enforcement and environmental services by the City of El Paso to City of Socorro, for which City of Socorro shall pay to the City of El Paso an annual amount of THREE HUNDRED SIXTY-SIX THOUSAND EIGHTEENDOLLARS AND NO/100 (\$366,018.00)

CONSENT AGENDA – BOARD APPOINTMENTS:

6. *Motion made, seconded, and unanimously approved to **APPOINT** Ron Comeau to the Animal Shelter Advisory Committee by Mayor Renard U. Johnson.

CONSENT AGENDA – APPLICATIONS FOR TAX REFUNDS:

7.

***R E S O L U T I O N**

WHEREAS, pursuant to Section 31.11 (c) of the Texas Code an application for a refund must be made within three (3) years after the date of the payment or the taxpayer waives the right to the refund; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Section 31.11 (c-1) the governing body of the taxing unit may extend the deadline for a single period not to exceed two years on a showing of good cause by the taxpayer; and

WHEREAS, taxpayer, PATRICIA MOSES ("Taxpayer") has applied for a refund with the tax assessor for their 2022 property taxes that were overpaid on APRIL 03, 2023 in the amount of \$39.20 (THIRTY NINE DOLLARS AND 20/100 CENTS) for all taxing entities; and

WHEREAS, City Council may extend the deadline for the Taxpayer's application for the overpayment of the 2022 taxes for a period not to exceed two years on a showing of good cause by the taxpayer; and

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

THAT THE City finds that PATRICIA MOSES showed a good cause to extend the deadline to apply for a refund of the overpayment of the 2022 taxes and the tax refund in the amount of \$39.20 (THIRTY NINE DOLLARS AND 20/100 CENTS) is approved.

***R E S O L U T I O N**

WHEREAS, pursuant to Section 31.11 (c) of the Texas Code an application for a refund must be made within three (3) years after the date of the payment or the taxpayer waives the right to the refund; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Section 31.11 (c-1) the governing body of the taxing unit may extend the deadline for a single period not to exceed two years on a showing of good cause by the taxpayer; and

WHEREAS, taxpayer, PATRICIA MOSES ("Taxpayer") has applied for a refund with the tax assessor for their 2022 property taxes that were overpaid on APRIL 03, 2023 in the amount of \$107.89 (ONE HUNDRED AND SEVEN DOLLARS AND 89/100 CENTS) for all taxing entities; and

WHEREAS, City Council may extend the deadline for the Taxpayer's application for the overpayment of the 2022 taxes for a period not to exceed two years on a showing of good cause by the taxpayer; and

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

THAT THE City finds that PATRICIA MOSES showed a good cause to extend the deadline to apply for a refund of the overpayment of the 2022 taxes and the tax refund in the amount of \$107.89 (ONE HUNDRED AND SEVEN DOLLARS AND 89/100 CENTS)_is approved.

CONSENT AGENDA – NOTICE FOR NOTATION:

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8. *Motion made, seconded, and unanimously carried to **NOTE** the P-Card Transactions for the period of May 21, 2026 to June 20, 2026 Special Projects, and Discretionary fund expenditures for Mayor, City Council Representatives, City Attorney's Office, City Manager's Office and staff.

Ms. Patricia Osmond, citizen, commented.

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9. *Motion made, seconded, and unanimously carried to **NOTE** the annual report for the Sun Metro Citizens Advisory Committee for the previous twelve months as required by the Bylaws for City Boards and Commissions.

CONSENT AGENDA - NOTICE OF CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS:

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10. *Motion made, seconded, and unanimously carried to **NOTE** pursuant to Section 2.92.080 of the City Code, receipt of campaign contributions by Matthew Guzman, candidate for District 8, in the amounts of Amber Vourazeris \$500.00, Anna Kerr \$500.00, Gabriel Villaronga \$500.00, David Fong \$500.00, Angelica Rodriguez \$500.00, Dan Kasuga \$500.00, Monique

Poessiger \$500.00, Scarlett Mercer \$500.00, Eva Burns \$500.00, Marian Chiechi \$1,000.00, and Ankur Patel \$1,000.00

11. *Motion made, seconded, and unanimously carried to **NOTE** pursuant to Section 2.92.080 of the City Code, receipt of campaign contributions by Representative Alejandra Chávez in the amounts of \$1,000.00 from Randall J Bowling, \$750.00 from Joseph Moody Campaign, and \$2,000.00 from Ruben Chavez.

12. *Motion made, seconded, and unanimously carried to **NOTE** pursuant to Section 2.92.080 of the City Code, receipt of campaign contributions by Representative Art Fierro in the amounts of \$1,000 from Randall J. Bowling, \$1,000 from Robert Bowling, \$500 from Suzanne Dipp, \$750 from Howard Enlow, \$1,000 from Edward Escudero, \$200 from David Flores, \$750 from Rachel Harracksingh, \$2,500 from Ted Houghton, \$2,500 from the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Political Action Committee (PAC) Voluntary Fund, \$1,000 from Ben L. Ivey, \$500 from Jonathan Barela, \$2,000 from Stanley Jobe, \$500 from Linebarger Goggan Blair & Sampson, \$500 Francisco Martinez, \$750 from Joseph Moody, \$500 from Ricardo Mora, \$100 from Phillip Ollis, \$200 from Jose Padilla, \$1,500 from Raymond Palacios, \$2,000 from J.K. Robinson, \$1,000 from Douglas Schwartz, \$500 from Stewart Shiloff, \$100 from Ivonne Tapia, \$1,000 from Kelly Tomblin, and \$250 from Guillermo Valenzuela.

Ms. Patricia Osmond, citizen, commented.

CONSENT AGENDA – BIDS:

13. *Motion made, seconded, and unanimously carried to **AWARD** Solicitation 2026-0193 Small Engine Repairs to the following suppliers: 1) Rio Seco Ag, LLC and 2) Pedro C Villalobos dba Dyer Cycle for an initial term of three (3) years for an estimated amount of \$120,000.00. The award also includes a two (2) year option for an estimated amount of \$80,000.00. The total contract time is for five (5) years for a total estimated amount of \$200,000.00.

Department:	Streets and Maintenance
Award to Supplier 1:	Rio Seco Ag, LLC
City & State:	Clint, TX
Item(s):	Group 1
Initial Term:	3 Years
Option Terms:	2 Years
Total Contract Time:	5 Years

Award to Supplier 2:	Pedro C. Villalobos dba Dyer Cycle
City & State:	El Paso, TX
Item(s):	Group 2
Initial Term:	3 Years
Option Terms:	2 Years
Total Contract Time:	5 Years

Total Annual Estimated Award:	\$40,000.00
Total Initial Term Estimated Award:	\$120,000.00
Total Option Term Estimated Award:	\$80,000.00
Total Estimated Award:	\$200,000.00
Account(s)	532-1000-532030-32120-P3210 (Streets and Maintenance) 451-1000-532040-51295-P5120

Funding Source(s): (Parks and Recreation)
General Fund
District(s): All

This was a Low Bid Procurement for a replacement contract.

The Purchasing & Strategic Sourcing and Streets & Maintenance departments recommend award as indicated to 1) Rio Seco Ag, LLC and 2) Pedro C Villalobos dba Dyer Cycle the lowest responsive and responsible bidders.

It is requested that the City Manager be authorized to establish the funding sources and make any necessary budget transfers and execute any and all documents necessary for execution of this award.

In accordance with this award, the City Manager or designee is authorized to exercise future options if needed.

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14. *Motion made, seconded, and unanimously carried to **AWARD** Solicitation 2026-0321 Glass Pulverizer to Andela Tool & Machine Inc. dba Andela Products for a term of one (1) year for an estimated amount of \$202,123.00.

Department: Environmental Services
Award to: Andela Tool & Machine Inc. dba Andela Products
City & State: Richfield Springs, NY
Item(s): All
Term: 1 Year
Option Term: N/A
Total Contract Time: 1 Year
Term Estimated Award: \$202,123.00
Option Term Estimated Award: N/A
Total Estimated Award \$202,123.00
Account(s) 334 -3150 - 34100 -580290 - P3410 - PESD00260
Funding Source(s): ESD Operating Fund
District(s): All

This was a Low Bid Procurement for a new contract.

The Purchasing & Strategic Sourcing and Environmental Services departments recommend award as indicated to Andela Tool & Machine Inc. dba Andela Products the lowest responsive and responsible bidder.

It is requested that the City Manager be authorized to establish the funding sources and make any necessary budget transfers and execute any and all documents necessary for execution of this award.

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REGULAR AGENDA – FIRST READING OF ORDINANCES:

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Motion made by Representative Limón, seconded by Representative Acevedo, and unanimously carried that the following Ordinance, having been introduced pursuant to Section 3.9 of the El Paso City Charter, be **ADVERTISED** for public hearing:

AYES: Representatives Chávez, Acevedo, Maldonado-Rocha, Boyar Trejo, Niño, Fierro, Limón, and Canales

NAYS: None

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15. An Ordinance authorizing the conveyance of real property owned by the City of El Paso to Carlos Silveyra Padilla, for the purchase price of \$80,300.00; such real property legally described as Lots 1 and 2, Block 25, Parkdale Addition Unit Four, an addition to the City of El Paso, El Paso County, Texas, according to the plat thereof recorded in Volume 26, Page 14, Real Property Records of El Paso County, Texas.
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PUBLIC HEARING WILL BE HELD ON AUGUST 4, 2026

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REGULAR AGENDA – PUBLIC HEARINGS AND SECOND READING OF ORDINANCES:

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16. **ORDINANCE 019894**

The City Clerk read an Ordinance entitled: **AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CONVEYANCE OF REAL PROPERTY OWNED BY THE CITY OF EL PASO TO FLOR MARIA CHACON, FOR THE PURCHASE PRICE OF \$49,000.00; SUCH REAL PROPERTY LEGALLY DESCRIBED AS PORTION OF LOTS 18 AND 19, BLOCK 6, ALAMEDA ACRES, CITY OF EL PASO, EL PASO COUNTY, TEXAS.**

Ms. Mary Lou Espinoza, Capital Assets Manager, presented a PowerPoint presentation (copy on file in the City Clerk's Office).

Motion duly made by Representative Acevedo, seconded by Representative Limón, and carried that the Ordinance be **ADOPTED**.

Whereupon the Mayor ordered that a vote be taken on the passage and adoption of the Ordinance which when so done resulted as follows:

AYES: Representatives Chávez, Acevedo, Maldonado-Rocha, Boyar Trejo, Niño, Fierro, Limón, and Canales

NAYS: None

Whereupon the Mayor ordered that, the vote having been cast in favor of the Ordinance, the same be and the same is hereby **ADOPTED**.

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17. **ORDINANCE 019895**

The City Clerk read an Ordinance entitled: **AN ORDINANCE GRANTING SPECIAL PERMIT NO. PZST25-00020, TO ALLOW FOR A GOVERNMENTAL USE, BUILDING ON THE PROPERTY DESCRIBED AS A PORTION OF THE BLOCK LABELED "CITY SCHOOL/PARK," ALSO KNOWN AS "UNNUMBERED" BLOCK, CIELO VISTA PARK SUBDIVISION, 7024 CIELO VISTA DRIVE, CITY OF EL PASO, EL PASO COUNTY, TEXAS, PURSUANT TO SECTION 20.04.260 OF THE EL PASO CITY CODE. THE PENALTY IS AS PROVIDED FOR IN CHAPTER 20.24 OF THE EL PASO CITY CODE.**

Mr. Luis Zamora, Chief Planner and Zoning Administrator, presented a PowerPoint presentation (copy on file in the City Clerk's Office).

Representative Maldonado-Rocha commented.

Motion duly made by Representative Maldonado-Rocha, seconded by Representative Chávez, and carried that the Ordinance be **ADOPTED**.

Whereupon the Mayor ordered that a vote be taken on the passage and adoption of the Ordinance which when so done resulted as follows:

AYES: Representatives Chávez, Acevedo, Maldonado-Rocha, Boyar Trejo, Niño, Fierro, Limón, and Canales

NAYS: None

Whereupon the Mayor ordered that, the vote having been cast in favor of the Ordinance, the same be and the same is hereby **ADOPTED**.

18.

ORDINANCE 019896

The City Clerk read an Ordinance entitled: **AN ORDINANCE GRANTING A SPECIAL PRIVILEGE LICENSE TO WILEY CONDOMINIUM ASSOCIATION TO PERMIT THE EXISTING AERIAL ENCROACHMENT OF A PERPENDICULAR SIGN AND THREE (3) EXHAUST FANS, AND THE SURFACE ENCROACHMENT OF THREE (3) BACKFLOW WATER PREVENTERS, ALL WITHIN A PORTION OF CITY RIGHT-OF-WAY AT 1125 TEXAS AVENUE, EL PASO, TEXAS: SETTING THE LICENSE TERM FOR FIVE (5) YEARS WITH ONE (1) RENEWABLE FIVE (5) YEAR TERM.**

Ms. Armida Martinez, Lead Planner, presented a PowerPoint presentation (copy on file in the City Clerk's Office).

Representatives Chávez and Canales commented.

Mr. Kevin Smith, Planning and Inspections Interim Director, commented.

Motion duly made by Representative Canales, seconded by Representative Fierro, and carried that the Ordinance be **ADOPTED**.

Whereupon the Mayor ordered that a vote be taken on the passage and adoption of the Ordinance which when so done resulted as follows:

AYES: Representatives Chávez, Acevedo, Maldonado-Rocha, Boyar Trejo, Niño, Fierro, Limón, and Canales

NAYS: None

Whereupon the Mayor ordered that, the vote having been cast in favor of the Ordinance, the same be and the same is hereby **ADOPTED**.

19.

ORDINANCE 019897

The City Clerk read an Ordinance entitled: **AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO EXECUTE A QUITCLAIM (TAX RESALE) DEED CONVEYING ALL RIGHT, TITLE AND INTEREST TO MIGUEL GALLO, TO THE FOLLOWING AND DESCRIBED PARCEL: 4.0 ACRES OUT OF TRACT 5-A NKA TRACT 5-Z, BLOCK 11 LOWER VALLEY SURVEYS, BEING MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED AS PARCEL B IN VOLUME 470, PAGE 1306, DEED RECORDS OF EL PASO COUNTY, TEXAS. IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 34.05 (H) OF THE TAX CODE.**

Motion duly made by Mayor Pro Tempore Chávez, seconded by Representative Fierro, and carried that the Ordinance be **ADOPTED**.

Whereupon the Mayor ordered that a vote be taken on the passage and adoption of the Ordinance which when so done resulted as follows:

AYES: Representatives Chávez, Maldonado-Rocha, Boyar Trejo, Niño, Fierro, Limón, and Canales

NAYS: None

NOT PRESENT FOR THE VOTE: Representative Acevedo

Whereupon the Mayor ordered that, the vote having been cast in favor of the Ordinance, the same be and the same is hereby **ADOPTED**.

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REGULAR AGENDA – MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL:
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20. Motion made by Representative Canales, seconded by Representative Limón, and unanimously carried to **DIRECT** the City Attorney, in collaboration with the City Manager as necessary, to prepare and present for City Council consideration an ordinance and accompanying resolution requiring that any virtual currency kiosk (commonly known as a cryptocurrency ATM) operated, maintained, or placed within the City of El Paso include clear, conspicuous physical and interactive digital disclosures identifying common consumer fraud risks, confirming user intent, and explicitly stating that the transaction is private and not affiliated with or endorsed by any government entity, law enforcement agency, or public utility provider. The proposed ordinance and resolution shall, at a minimum, include the following parameters:
- 1) Require that both the physical signage and interactive digital screens include language stating substantially the following in bold, high-contrast text: “WARNING: FRAUD ALERT. Transactions made at this kiosk are instant and completely irreversible. Government agencies (such as the IRS, FBI, or Social Security Administration), law enforcement, and utility companies (such as El Paso Water or El Paso Electric) will NEVER instruct you to deposit cash or transfer cryptocurrency to clear an arrest warrant, pay back taxes, or prevent service disconnection. If you are currently on the phone with someone telling you to use this machine, HANG UP IMMEDIATELY. You are likely being scammed.”
 - 2) Require that the physical disclosure:
 - (a) Be printed on a placard no smaller than 8.5 by 11 inches;
 - (b) Be constructed of durable, tamper-resistant material or placed in a durable, tamper-resistant frame;
 - (c) Be permanently and securely affixed directly to the front face of the kiosk chassis or positioned prominently at eye level immediately adjacent to the terminal; and
 - (d) Utilize a contrasting color scheme (such as black text on a bright yellow or white background) with a font size no smaller than 24-point for headings and 16-point for body text to ensure maximum legibility.
 - 3) Require that the kiosk’s digital user interface deploy a localized, geofenced software block that triggers automatically whenever a user attempts a transaction within El Paso city limits. The interface must:
 - (a) Display the full fraud disclosure warning screen prior to allowing a user to scan a wallet QR code, enter an address, or insert any fiat currency;

- (b) Feature a mandatory, un-skippable 15-second countdown timer during which the "Continue," "Accept," or "I Agree" buttons remain entirely grayed out and unclickable; and
 - (c) Require affirmative user interaction via a checkbox confirming that the user owns the destination wallet, is not acting under duress, and has read the fraud warning.
- 4) Require that all disclosures appear concurrently in both English and Spanish with equal clarity, size, and prominence. The ordinance shall include a Spanish-language version of the disclosure as guidance, such as: "ADVERTENCIA: ALERTA DE FRAUDE. Las transacciones realizadas en este quiosco son instantáneas y completamente irreversibles. Las agencias gubernamentales, la policía y las empresas de servicios públicos NUNCA le indicarán que deposite efectivo o transfiera criptomonedas. Si está hablando por teléfono con alguien que le dice que use esta máquina, CUELGUE INMEDIATAMENTE. Es probable que lo estén estafando."

The ordinance shall further require that when a kiosk's software interface offers transactions in any language other than English or Spanish, the fraud disclosure screen must also automatically display in that chosen language via a correct, clear, and accurate translation.

- 5) Establish that a person or entity commits a violation if they operate a non-compliant virtual currency kiosk, or if they own, lease, or manage a brick-and-mortar retail property (such as a convenience store, gas station, or smoke shop) that hosts a non-compliant kiosk on their premises. This dual-liability structure ensures that local property hosts share a legal obligation to verify that the machines on their floors remain compliant.
- 6) Establish a structured, graduated enforcement mechanism focused on swift consumer protection compliance, utilizing Code Enforcement and the El Paso Police Department:
- (a) An initial written notice of non-compliance specifying the precise deficiency (e.g., missing sign, broken digital timer) with a strict 48-hour window to cure the violation;
 - (b) Civil and administrative penalties of up to \$500 per day for subsequent or uncured violations, calculated per machine, per day; and
 - (c) Class C misdemeanor enforcement only in cases of repeated, willful non-compliance following the expiration of the cure window, or where an operator intentionally alters the required text to minimize or obscure the fraud warnings.
- 7) Explicitly clarify that the ordinance applies strictly to the physical manner of business operation, public safety disclosures, and consumer protection signage within the City's inherent police powers. The ordinance shall not attempt to license, prohibit, tax, or restrict the underlying electronic financial transmission or virtual currency exchange mechanism, thereby preserving the state's sole regulatory jurisdiction under the Texas Money Services Act and preventing state preemption challenges.
- 8) Include in the ordinance's recitals thorough findings detailing:
- (a) The rapid local surge in cryptocurrency ATM financial fraud, elder financial abuse, and telephone imposter scams within El Paso;
 - (b) The irreversible nature of virtual currency transactions which strips local victims of traditional banking fraud recourse;
 - (c) The City's compelling interest in deploying immediate, highly visible physical and digital interventions at the exact point of the financial transaction to alert vulnerable residents before life savings are lost; and
 - (d) The legal framework confirming the City's use of local police powers to regulate consumer transparency without impeding state-regulated banking operations.

Mayor Johnson and Representative Canales commented.

The following members of the public commented:

- Ms. Lili Mireles
- Ms. Lisa Turner

Representative Canales requested that the following articles by Ayden Runnels, published in *The Texas Tribune* on July 8, 2026, be included as attachments to the minutes:

- **What to know as cryptocurrency scams rise in Texas**

- **Crypto kiosks were used to scam \$56 million from Texans last year. Lawmakers are calling for regulation**

AYES: Representatives Chávez, Acevedo, Maldonado-Rocha, Boyar Trejo, Niño, Fierro, Limón, and Canales

NAYS: None

21.

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the Representative of District 8 desires to use discretionary funds for celebrating the heritage and culture of one of the oldest neighborhoods in El Paso's history.

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF EL PASO:

THAT City Council declares the expenditure of District 8 discretionary funds, in an amount not to exceed \$10,000.00 for costs related to stage rental, audio/visual equipment, entertainment, hiring of off-duty law enforcement officers or private security officers, barrier rental for vehicle pedestrian control, permitting fees, and/or portable restroom rental related to the holding of the Segundo Barrio Community Block Party by the Southside Neighborhood Association, which serves the municipal purpose of fostering community pride, encouraging civic engagement, and celebrating the heritage and culture of one of the oldest neighborhoods in El Paso's history.

THAT the City Manager, or designee, be authorized to effectuate any budget transfers and execute any contracts and/or related documents necessary to ensure that the funds are properly expended for the municipal purpose.

THAT the City Manager, or designee, be authorized to return any unspent funds related to this project to the District 8 Discretionary Fund Account, with all such funds to be returned no later than December 31, 2026.

Mayor Johnson and Representative Canales commented.

Motion made by Representative Canales, seconded by Representative Limón and unanimously carried to **APPROVE** the Resolution.

AYES: Representatives Chávez, Acevedo, Maldonado-Rocha, Boyar Trejo, Niño, Fierro, Limón, and Canales

NAYS: None

22.

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, arts, culture, and creative expression serve a municipal purpose of improving the quality of life of the residents; and

WHEREAS, fostering community spirit and increasing visitors to downtown serve a municipal purpose; and

WHEREAS, the Plaza Classic Film Festival brings in visitors to downtown El Paso, fosters and promotes arts, culture and creative expressions and helps build community spirit, and

WHEREAS, the distribution of \$1,800.00 of District 8 discretionary funds will aid in the hosting costs associated with the Plaza Classic Film Festival's Filmmakers Brunch, and serves the municipal purpose of increased tourism to El Paso and encouraging artistic expression through film.

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF EL PASO:

THAT City Council approves the expenditure of District 8 discretionary funds, in an amount not to exceed \$1,800.00 for costs associated with hosting the Plaza Classic Film Festival Filmmakers' Brunch.

THAT the City Manager, or designee, be authorized to effectuate any budget transfers up until August 31, 2026, and execute any contracts and/or related documents necessary to ensure that the funds are properly expended for the municipal purpose, and at that time, return any remaining unused funds for this expenditure to each participating City Representative's discretionary fund account without further Council action.

Mayor Johnson and Representatives Limón and Canales commented.

Motion made by Representative Canales, seconded by Representative Limón and unanimously carried to **APPROVE** the Resolution.

AYES: Representatives Chávez, Acevedo, Maldonado-Rocha, Boyar Trejo, Niño, Fierro, Limón, and Canales

NAYS: None

23.

R E S O L U T I O N

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF EL PASO:

That the City Council of the City of El Paso declares that the expenditure of District 8 discretionary funds, in an amount not to exceed \$2,000.00 to purchase furniture for Fire Station 22 which serves the municipal purpose of supporting public safety and investing in public safety equipment and property that will directly benefit Fire Station 22.

Further, that the City Manager, or designee, be authorized to effectuate any budget transfers and execute any contracts and/or related documents necessary to ensure that the funds are properly expended for the municipal purpose.

Mayor Johnson and Representative Canales commented.

Motion made by Representative Canales, seconded by Representative Limón and unanimously carried to **APPROVE** the Resolution.

AYES: Representatives Chávez, Acevedo, Maldonado-Rocha, Boyar Trejo, Niño, Fierro, Limón, and Canales

NAYS: None

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- 24. ITEM:** Discussion and action to prohibit the use of city and personal cell phones and personal electronic devices on the dais during work sessions and council meetings.

*Motion made, seconded, and unanimously carried to **MOVE** the item to the front of the Regular Agenda.

Mayor Johnson and Representatives Limón and Canales commented.

Ms. Patricia Osmond, citizen, commented.

NO FURTHER ACTION was taken on this item.

REGULAR AGENDA – OTHER BIDS, CONTRACTS, PROCUREMENTS:

- 25.** Motion made by Representative Limón, seconded by Representative Canales, and unanimously carried to **AWARD** Solicitation 2026-0085 Security Guard Services - Parks Utilities to TriCorps Security, Inc. for a term of three (3) year(s) for an estimated amount of \$1,958,130.00.

Department:	Parks and Recreation
Award to:	TriCorps Security, Inc.
City & State:	Oklahoma City, OK
Item(s):	All
Term:	3 Years
Option Term:	N/A
Total Contract Time:	3 Years
Annual Estimated Award:	\$652,710.00
Term Estimated Award:	\$1,958,130.00
Option Term Estimated Award:	N/A
Total Estimated Award	\$1,958,130.00
Account(s)	451 - 51230 - 522120 - 1000 - P5106 451 - 51260 - 522120 - 1000 - P5111 451 - 51270 - 522120 - 1000 - P5113 451 - 51295 - 522120 - 1000 - P5116
Funding Source(s):	General Fund
District(s):	All

This was a Best Value Bid Procurement for a replacement contract.

The Purchasing & Strategic Sourcing and Parks and Recreation departments recommend award as indicated to TriCorps Security, Inc., the highest ranked bidder based on the evaluation factors established in the evaluation criteria for this procurement.

It is requested that the City Manager be authorized to establish the funding sources and make any necessary budget transfers and execute any and all documents necessary for execution of this award.

AYES: Representatives Chávez, Acevedo, Maldonado-Rocha, Boyar Trejo, Niño, Fierro, Limón, and Canales

NAYS: None

-
26. Motion made by Representative Limón, seconded by Representative Fierro, and carried to **AWARD** Solicitation 2026-0323 2026 High Density Mineral Bond to Andale Construction, Inc. for a total estimated amount of \$1,556,203.00.

Department:	Streets and Maintenance
Award to:	Andale Construction, Inc.
City & State:	Wichita, KS
Item(s):	Base Bid I
Contract Term:	720 Workweek Days
Base Bid I:	\$1,556,203.00
Total Estimated Award:	\$1,556,203.00
Account(s):	532-4825-29110-580270-PCP23RESBOND05 532-4825-29110-580270-TBA
Funding Source(s):	Community Progress Bond - Residential Resurfacing
District(s):	All

This was a Low Bid Procurement - Construction Contract.

The Purchasing & Strategic Sourcing and Streets and Maintenance Departments recommend award as indicated to Andale Construction, Inc., the lowest responsive and responsible bidder.

It is requested that the City Manager be authorized to establish the funding sources and make any necessary budget transfers and execute any and all documents necessary for execution of this award.

Work under this unit price contract is only an estimated value and will be ordered, performed, invoiced, and paid by measured quantity. The actual cost of this contract may be higher or lower than the total estimated value and will be the sum total of unit prices at the end of the contract term.

As a part of this award, upon the review of the City Attorney, the City Engineer may without further authorization from City Council approve contract changes which are necessary for proper execution of the work and carrying out the intent of the project, which are in accordance with applicable law, do not make changes to the prices and are within the appropriate budget.

Mayor Johnson and Representatives Niño, Fierro, and Limón commented.

The following City staff members commented:

- Mr. Derek Russell, Lead Procurement and Contract Analyst
- Mr. Randy Garcia, Streets and Maintenance Director
- Ms. Dionne Mack, City Manager

AYES: Representatives Chávez, Acevedo, Maldonado-Rocha, Boyar Trejo, Niño, Fierro, and Canales

NAYS: Representative Limón

27. Motion made by Representative Boyar Trejo seconded by Representative Fierro, and unanimously carried to **AUTHORIZE** the Director of Purchasing & Strategic Sourcing to issue Purchase Order(s) for Solicitation 2026-0237 Caterpillar Proprietary Parts and Service to Wagner Equipment Co. the sole source and authorized distributor of the Caterpillar proprietary parts and service for a term of three (3) years for an estimated amount of \$5,250,000.00. Supplier will be required to provide an updated sole source letter and affidavit each year.

Department:	Streets & Maintenance
Award to:	Wagner Equipment Co.
City & State:	Aurora, CO
Item(s):	Caterpillar Proprietary Parts and Service
Term:	3 Years
Option Term:	N/A
Total Contract Time:	3 Years
Annual Estimated Award:	\$1,750,000.00
Term Estimated Award:	\$5,250,000.00
Option Term Estimated Award:	N/A
Total Estimated Award	\$5,250,000.00
Account(s)	532-3600-531210-37020-P3701 (Parts) 532-3600-531250-37020-P3701 (Services)
Funding Source(s):	Internal Service Fund
District(s):	All

Purchasing & Strategic Sourcing and Streets and Maintenance Departments recommend a non-competitive award under Local Government General Exemption: Section 252.022 - (7) a procurement of items that are available from only one source, including: (D) captive replacement parts or components for equipment;

It is requested that the City Manager be authorized to establish the funding sources and make any necessary budget transfers and execute any and all documents necessary for execution of this award.

Mr. Randy Garcia, Streets and Maintenance Director, presented a PowerPoint presentation (copy on file in the City Clerk's Office).

AYES: Representatives Chávez, Acevedo, Maldonado-Rocha, Boyar Trejo, Niño, Fierro, Limón, and Canales
NAYS: None

-
28. Motion made by Representative Boyar Trejo, seconded by Representative Limón, and unanimously carried to **AWARD** Solicitation 2026-0329 Traffic Management Center Phase IV & V to Econolite Systems Inc. for a total estimated amount of \$5,471,129.26.

Department:	Capital Improvement
Award to:	Econolite Systems Inc.
City & State:	Anaheim, CA
Item(s):	Base Bid I, II
Contract Term:	234 Working Days
Base Bid I:	\$2,483,864.96
Base Bid II:	\$2,987,264.30
Total Estimated Award:	\$5,471,129.26
Account(s):	190-4950-38170-580270-CSJ-0924-06-569-GT9025TMC5

190-4950-38170-580270-CSJ-0924-06-568-GT9025TMC4
190-4450-38280-580270-CSJ-0924-06-568
190-4450-38280-580270-CSJ-0924-06-569
Funding Source(s): Texas Department of Transportation Congestion Mitigation and
Air Quality Improvement Program State Infrastructure Bank
Loan
District(s): 1, 2, 4, and 8

This was a Low Bid Procurement - Construction Contract.

The Purchasing & Strategic Sourcing and Capital Improvement Departments recommend award as indicated to Econolite Systems Inc., the lowest responsive and responsible bidder.

It is requested that the City Manager be authorized to establish the funding sources and make any necessary budget transfers and execute any and all documents necessary for execution of this award.

Work under this unit price contract is only an estimated value and will be ordered, performed, invoiced, and paid by measured quantity. The actual cost of this contract may be higher or lower than the total estimated value and will be the sum total of unit prices at the end of the contract term.

As a part of this award, upon the review of the City Attorney, the City Engineer may without further authorization from City Council approve contract changes which are necessary for proper execution of the work and carrying out the intent of the project, which are in accordance with applicable law, do not make changes to the prices and are within the appropriate budget.

Mr. Derek Russell, Lead Procurement and Contract Analyst, commented.

AYES: Representatives Chávez, Acevedo, Maldonado-Rocha, Boyar Trejo, Niño, Fierro, Limón, and Canales

NAYS: None

REGULAR AGENDA – OTHER BUSINESS:

29.

R E S O L U T I O N

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF EL PASO:

That the City Manager be authorized to sign a Chapter 380 Economic Development Program Agreement ("Agreement") by and between **CITY OF EL PASO** ("City") and **ELEUTERIA SANDRA HERING** ("Applicant") in support of an infill development project located at *903 Park St., El Paso, Texas 79901* ("Project"). The Agreement requires the Applicant to make a minimum investment of \$270,000.00 in the Project, and in consideration, the City shall provide economic incentives not to exceed \$15,988.24 in the form of a Real Property Tax Rebate, a Construction Materials Sales Tax Rebate, and a Building Construction Fee Rebate.

Ms. Jessica Torres, Business Services Coordinator, presented a PowerPoint presentation (copy on file in the City Clerk's Office).

Representatives Chávez, Boyar Trejo, and Canales commented.

Ms. Dionne Mack, City Manager, commented.

Motion made by Representative Canales, seconded by Representative Limón, and unanimously carried to **APPROVE** the Resolution.

AYES: Representatives Chávez, Acevedo, Maldonado-Rocha, Boyar Trejo, Niño, Fierro, Limón, and Canales

NAYS: None

-
30. *Motion made, seconded, and unanimously carried to **DELETE** the item on discussion, consideration, and action to approve a Resolution pursuant to Texas Government Code, Section 2206.053, authorizing the use of eminent domain to condemn the property described below, comprised of 3.095 acres, and owned by Transmountain 54, LLC, in order to acquire the property in fee simple for use in the Resler Drive extension project, which is part of the 2022 Community Progress Bond: A portion of Tract 1-A, Nellie D Mundy Survey 243, Abstract 10037, City of El Paso, El Paso County, Texas.

-
31. Motion made by Representative Canales, seconded by Representative Limón, and unanimously carried to **AWARD** Task Order 8V-1 under the Job Order Contracting and Facilities Construction Contract #2022-0678, for Fire Station #03 Renovation to Veliz Company, LLC dba Veliz Construction for a total estimated award of \$2,765,753.92.

Mr. Javier Acosta, Capital Improvement Director, presented a PowerPoint presentation (copy on file in the City Clerk's Office).

Representatives Limón and Canales commented.

AYES: Representatives Chávez, Acevedo, Maldonado-Rocha, Boyar Trejo, Niño, Fierro, Limón, and Canales

NAYS: None

Motion made by Representative Limón, seconded by Representative Canales, and unanimously carried to **ADJOURN** this meeting at 12:21 p.m.

AYES: Representatives Chávez, Acevedo, Maldonado-Rocha, Boyar Trejo, Niño, Fierro, Limón, and Canales

NAYS: None

APPROVED AS TO CONTENT:

Laura D. Prine, City Clerk

ATTACHMENTS

**STATE GOVERNMENT**

Crypto kiosks were used to scam \$56 million from Texans last year. Lawmakers are calling for regulation.

Fraudsters are increasingly using the ATM-like machines for fast access to money that's difficult to trace.

BY **AYDEN RUNNELS**

REPUBLISH

JULY 8, 2026, 5:00 A.M. CENTRAL



A Bitcoin ATM stands next to another ATM inside an Austin convenience store on July 7, 2026. Aiden Gonzalez/The Texas Tribune



 Listen to this article

Crypto kiosks were used to scam \$56 million from Texans last year.
Lawmakers are calling for regulation.

About 13 Minutes

1x



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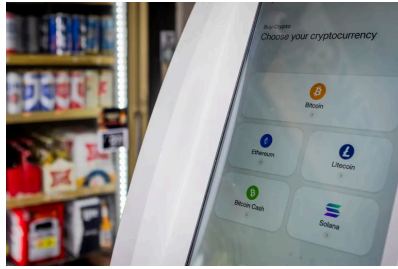
Maria was standing in front of a cryptocurrency ATM, \$5,000 in hand and a moment away from being scammed.

Fabricated court documents, supposedly sent by text from the Travis County Sheriff's Office, threatened the 72-year-old with arrest if she didn't feed the money into the "crypto kiosk" at a grocery store. A voice on her cellphone, claiming to be an officer, calmly coached her through the process of posting bail for failing to appear for a jury summons and contempt of court.

Seeing the machine, however, snapped her out of the fog created by the persuasive fake officer.

"I was a wreck the whole time. I was very nervous, very tense," the Austin woman said. "And then when I walk in, I said, 'You're telling me it's this yellow thing?' and he says yeah. [But] that's a Bitcoin machine. I'm not putting any money there."

That last-minute realization made Maria more fortunate than almost 1,200 other Texans who lost a combined **\$56.8 million** last year through similar kiosks, almost double the amount taken from victims in the second-highest state, Florida.



RELATED STORY

What to know as cryptocurrency scams rise in Texas

JULY 8, 2026

Scams using the kiosks have increased rapidly in the United States over the past two years, according to [the FBI](#), prompting other states to restrict or ban the machines. Texas regulators currently have no oversight over the kiosks, a gap that fraudsters regularly exploit, public safety advocates say.

The Texas Tribune spoke with a dozen people who were victims or near victims of kiosk fraud, including one who lost almost \$100,000 and another swindled out of \$63,000. The victims asked not to be named, saying they feared being targeted again. All said they felt shame or humiliation, symptoms that experts say reduces the likelihood that crimes are reported, likely making the steadily increasing rates of kiosk-aided fraud an undercount.

Victims described elaborate schemes involving phone numbers that appeared to belong to police departments, state agencies or their banks, sometimes providing real names, titles and badge numbers.

In some cases, fraudsters knew personal details — such as Maria’s recent move — and provided realistic court documents with fake case numbers and the full name and home address of victims.

In every case, the scammers’ goal was to direct victims to withdraw cash from their banks and head to a cryptocurrency kiosk to feed the money into a slot. The cash is converted into cryptocurrency that is whisked away into unidentifiable crypto accounts.

“[Cryptocurrency] kiosks serve no useful purpose, and no rational person would choose to use them, except for the purpose of hiding illicit funds,” Adam Colby, executive director of the Texas Financial Crimes Intelligence Center, said during testimony before a Texas House committee in May.

An estimated 4,000 kiosks have been installed in convenience stores, gas stations and other businesses across Texas. Nobody knows the exact number, but the ATM-like machines are described by law enforcement as a key tool for scammers who particularly target elderly Texans, though adults of all ages have been swindled.

These crypto ATMs have streamlined the speed of scams while making it almost impossible for local law enforcement to track and retrieve stolen money.

“It just didn’t seem like there was really any sort of hope that there would be any form of accountability for these things,” said a North Texas man who lost \$5,000 after being threatened by someone impersonating the Tarrant County Sheriff’s Office.

Cutting out the middleman

Crypto kiosks let users deposit cash to purchase certain cryptocurrencies and designate a “wallet” to receive the digital assets.

Cryptocurrency is increasingly preferred by scammers because it is not subject to the same banking laws as traditional currency — especially in how it can be transferred internationally, where most scammers are based, according to law enforcement.

“Crypto is a wonderful, amazing, horrible, terrible invention, right? Obviously, the advantage of crypto is you can move money much faster without supervision,” said Michael Levine, chief

felony prosecutor for the Cyber and Financial Crimes Division of the Harris County district attorney's office.

Fraudsters usually send or text a QR code that can be scanned into a kiosk, sending the purchased cryptocurrency to a particular wallet, similar to making a bank deposit.

Once received, the crypto is often distributed to dozens of additional wallets and mixed with legitimate funds, making tracing difficult even for financial crime experts. The FCIC estimates there is only a 36- to 48-hour window to recover the stolen money, which rarely occurs.

None of the victims who spoke to the Tribune had the stolen money returned. When they reported the crime, they said, officers had a similar message: Don't get your hopes up.

Absent traditional means of restitution, some police have taken more direct approaches. In McLennan County, police seized a kiosk after a 82-year-old woman was scammed out of \$15,000 in 2023. The kiosk operator, Bitcoin Depot, sued the county over the seizure and agreed to a settlement stipulating that they were not involved in the fraud. The money was returned to the woman.

Last summer, a sheriff's deputy from Jasper County with a search warrant sawed open a Bitcoin Depot kiosk with a power tool after a family lost \$25,000 to a scam. The company threatened to sue the county, but ultimately filed for bankruptcy in May.

The county's sheriff, Chuck Havard, declined to talk about the incident or whether the victims retrieved their money because the criminal investigation is ongoing, but said he thinks legislators should increase the punishment for anyone caught participating in these scams.

“I just think that, you know, these scammers, if we can catch them, I think the consequences should be very, very severe,” Havard said. “I know a lot of legislators are talking to their constituents, because trust me, they’re getting scammed all the time.”

“Texas is behind other states on this”

Only California has more crypto kiosks than Texas, according to available data, and the Tyler-based Financial Crimes Intelligence Center estimates that roughly 70% of the people using them are over age 60.

State Rep. [Mitch Little](#), R-Lewisville, was already acquainted with the kiosks before he attended a House committee hearing about them in May. A family member fell victim to a kiosk-aided crypto scam, but Little said he was more alarmed when an FCIC official testified the machines were mostly used for scams.

“They suggested that they needed to be banned, and to have law enforcement come out that stridently about it was a little bit surprising,” Little told the Tribune. “I think it seems to suggest that there are way fewer legitimate uses of these devices than you would expect.”

Texas House and Senate committees have held recent hearings about the kiosks under directives that frame the issue differently. To prepare for action when the Legislature meets in 2027, House Speaker Dustin Burrows [wants](#) to examine solutions to elder fraud stemming from “emerging technologies,” while Lt. Gov Dan Patrick [asked senators](#) to look into ways to regulate kiosks amid the broader crypto landscape.

In late June, a handful of East Texas lawmakers from both chambers met with the FCIC to discuss how to tackle regulating the machines, including Rep. [Cole Hefner](#), R-Mount Pleasant. Hefner said he or another representative will seek to ban the kiosks next session.

“From the law enforcement experts in the room, I don’t see any reason to be regulating them,” Hefner said. “Based on their testimony, based on their experience, [kiosks] serve no other purpose but money laundering or scamming folks, and we just need to get rid of them.”

Thirty states have passed laws regulating the kiosks, including four in the past four months that banned the machines.

In 2025, separate bills directing the Texas Department of Banking to regulate the kiosks passed the state House and Senate but were not approved by both chambers.

Andrea Earl, associate state director for AARP, called it a missed opportunity.

“The state of Texas is behind other states on this, and then really lost momentum last session,” Earl said.

Without state regulations, cities have limited options to help potential fraud victims. The San Antonio City Council passed an ordinance in June requiring warning signs on every machine detailing the risks of fraud, an option the El Paso City Council discussed Tuesday. Other cities and counties have begun warning residents about the spike in kiosk fraud as well.

“I don’t know how far they can go without legislation giving them authority to go all the way, but there’s probably some things locals could be doing as far as informing and educating the public and letting them know that this stuff is going on,” Hefner said.

In Texas, a state that has championed crypto and encouraged its use in private business and government affairs, regulating even a small but growing financial sector could meet resistance.

“Texas, as a predominantly Republican, conservative state, generally lets the market solve its own problems, and I’m very sensitive to that,” Little said. “I don’t think we should just step in and ban things because we don’t like them or we’re worried about them or they’re a novelty ... but it’s pretty obvious we have a problem.”

Before the Legislature meets in January, Little said he wants to hear from kiosk operators on rates of fraud, how many machines they operate and what guardrails are in place for consumers — information he hopes they’ll provide willingly.

“It should set off a few alarm bells”

Kiosk operators say their machines are often used for legitimate transactions, but they have been met with tighter regulations in other states as scams have increased.

Bitcoin Depot, the nation’s largest crypto kiosk operator, filed for bankruptcy in May citing “increasing litigation and regulatory enforcement.” It shut down its network of kiosks, including roughly 900 in Texas, which a court filing described as the company’s “highest concentration of active kiosks.”

Several victims the Tribune spoke with said scammers directed them to Bitcoin Depot machines. One faux court document sent to Maria included a falsified signature from the sheriff and a picture of a company kiosk, describing it as a “designated” machine for the county.

A public relations representative for Bitcoin Depot referred the Tribune to a May press release that announced the company’s bankruptcy and said it was intended to wind down operations and “facilitate a sale of its assets.” Bankruptcy proceedings are underway for the Georgia-based company in a Texas federal bankruptcy court.

An investigation by the Iowa attorney general's office found that 98% of transactions through Bitcoin Depot's kiosks in the state were scams, prompting the agency to sue the company and another, CoinFlip.

CoinFlip's director of government affairs, John Turk, told a Texas Senate committee in June that the company supported robust consumer protections from the state. Some operators like CoinFlip run their own hotlines for customers and have posted warnings on their machines, which are not required in Texas but are in other states.

"We appreciate the Legislature's willingness to engage with responsible operators and focus on practical safeguards," Turk testified. "For 2027, we would encourage Texas to continue that work with a clear, uniform framework for cryptocurrency kiosks."

In an email to the Tribune, a CoinFlip spokesperson said the company takes consumer protection seriously.

"As evidenced by our strong public support of legislation in states across the country, we strongly believe in commonsense rules and clear disclosures, and want everyone in the industry to be held to the same high standards we meet voluntarily," the spokesperson wrote.

All the victims and near-victims the Tribune spoke with had never heard of the kiosks before they were targeted despite frequenting some of the stores where they operate.

Such was the case for a Katy-area resident who found his mother at a rural gas station feeding roughly \$63,000 into a kiosk. At the direction of a scammer, she had cut contact with her family, prompting her son to call police who helped find his mother.

The son said he was frustrated by a lack of guardrails for the machines, including daily transaction limits, that could keep scammers from collecting large sums of money all at once.

“I think it should set off a few alarm bells if someone’s shoveling tens of thousands of dollars into one of these machines at a Valero station in Gonzales, Texas. I mean, that’s just kind of weird,” he said.

Disclosure: AARP and Valero have been financial supporters of The Texas Tribune, a nonprofit, nonpartisan news organization that is funded in part by donations from members, foundations and corporate sponsors. Financial supporters play no role in The Texas Tribune’s journalism. Find a complete [list of them here](#).

**STATE GOVERNMENT**

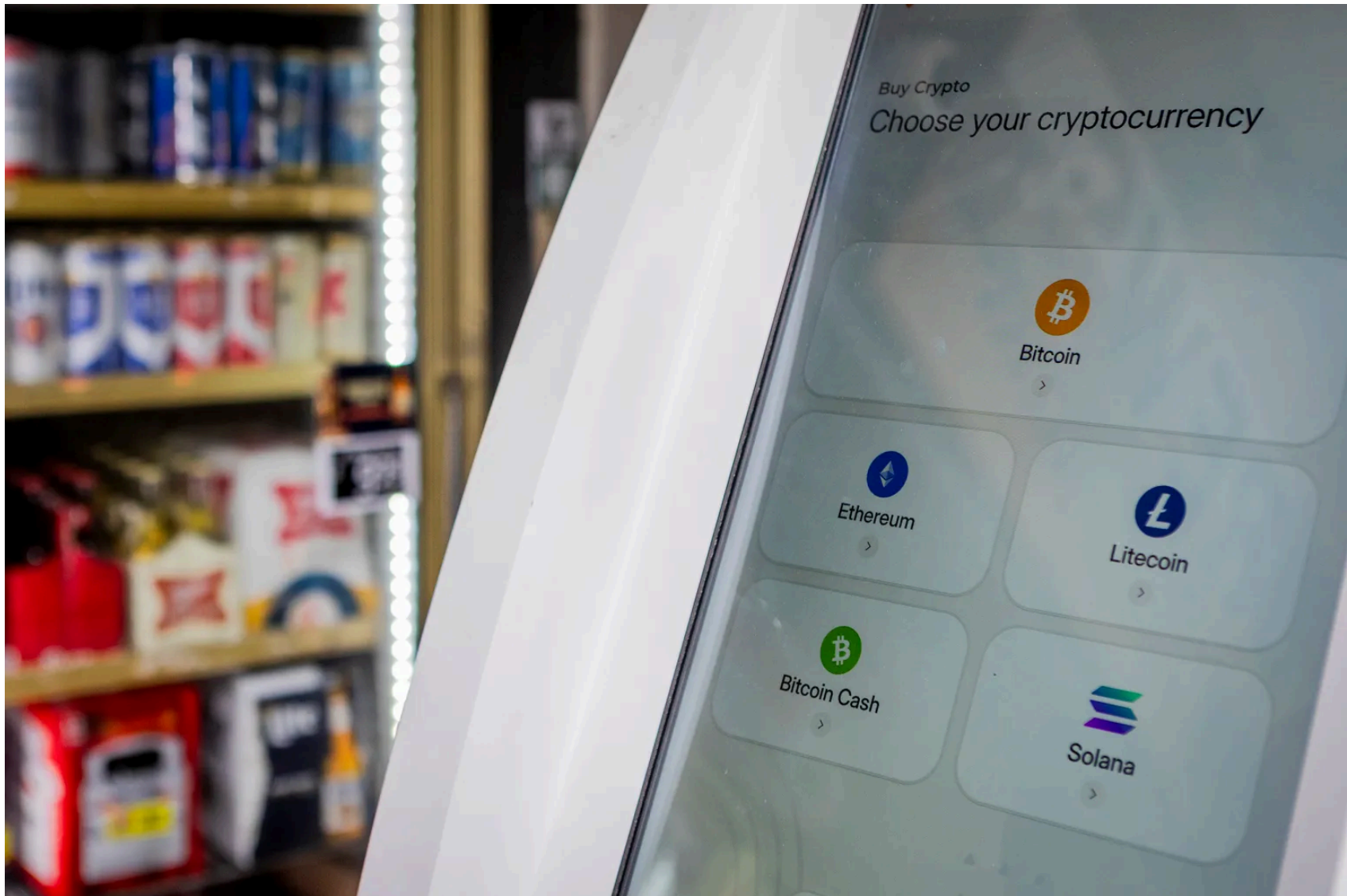
What to know as cryptocurrency scams rise in Texas

From investment fraud to sophisticated schemes involving hard-to-trace digital currency, Texans lost more than \$1 billion to crypto scams in 2025.

BY **AYDEN RUNNELS**

REPUBLISH

JULY 8, 2026, 5:00 A.M. CENTRAL



A cryptocurrency kiosk inside a convenience store on Airport Boulevard in Austin on July 7, 2026. Aiden Gonzalez/The Texas Tribune



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What to know as cryptocurrency scams rise in Texas

About 6 Minutes

1x



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Texans lost more than \$1 billion to scams involving cryptocurrency in 2025, according to the FBI, second only to California in the amount siphoned away by fraudsters.

Scams using crypto often involve fraudulent investment opportunities, but criminals are increasingly turning to the digital currency as a fast payoff that is difficult for law enforcement to track.



RELATED STORY

Crypto kiosks were used to scam \$56 million from Texans last year. Lawmakers are calling for regulation.

JULY 8, 2026

With cryptocurrency scams on the rise, here's what to look for and what to do if targeted by scammers.

What are the most common cryptocurrency scams in Texas?

Scams generally fall into two categories, said Michael Levine, chief felony prosecutor for the Cyber and Financial Crimes Division of the Harris County district attorney's office.

The most common are investment schemes where victims buy fraudulent cryptocurrencies or use crypto to invest in fake businesses.

Even legitimate-looking websites can be a front for a fraudulent operation, Levine said, which is why it's important to vet sites by seeing if the company has been written about in reputable publications or approved by certain banks.

"The software in these things is wonderful, it looks just like an Ameritrade or E-Trade," Levine said. "It looks just like a legitimate trading platform to the victim, and because it's all fake, it looks like they're making a lot of money."

The best way to ensure your money is safely invested in cryptocurrency is to use verified, known exchanges. Be sure to do research beforehand or ask your banking institution for guidance.

Another common technique — known as romance scams or "pig butchering," playing on the image of fattening a hog for slaughter — entices would-be victims through flattery and kindness. Once a relationship is established, the victim is directed to invest through a website or app, or directly asked for money through cryptocurrency.

Scammers are also impersonating law enforcement or state agencies, sometimes providing names of real people who work at the departments they are impersonating. Common tactics

include telling victims they missed jury duty and now owe fines, or that someone falsified their signature on a legal document.

To bolster the illusion, scammers can “spoof” phone numbers, allowing them to call victims from numbers of reputable sources like a sheriff’s department or city clerk. The easiest way to determine whether you’re speaking to someone from the agency is to simply hang up and call back, or visit in person.

Texas has also seen a spike in cryptocurrency kiosk scams, ATM-like machines that convert cash to digital currency. Scammers impersonating bank employees or law enforcement direct people to pay bail money or transfer “vulnerable” account funds into these machines, which then send crypto directly to the scammer.

No bank or government agency, including a court, police department or licensing board, will ask for cryptocurrency or request payment through a crypto kiosk. If asked to do so, contact your local authorities.

How can I tell if I’m being scammed?

Whether receiving a phone call from someone claiming to be with law enforcement or a text message about a quick investment opportunity, watch out for:

- Strangers offering business opportunities over social media or text.
- Phone numbers that don’t match the official contact info of an agency or business.
- Conversations directed to a third-party app like WhatsApp or Telegram.
- Being discouraged from sharing your situation or the conversation with others, sometimes under threat of financial or legal consequences.
- Being sent official looking legal documents by text message.

- Being provided a callback number that doesn't match the original caller's number.

What if I'm scammed or know someone who was swindled?

After ensuring those involved in a scam are safe, immediately contact your banking institution and local law enforcement to file a police report. Be sure to keep all records, documents and messages involved in the scam.

You should also submit complaints and reports to the [FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center](#), also known as IC3, and the [Texas attorney general's office](#). IC3 gathers data and complaints to help track scammers, and the attorney general can take action against businesses that falsely advertise services.

Because cryptocurrency is able to move so quickly once deposited into a digital wallet, most law enforcement agencies have roughly 36 to 48 hours to secure stolen funds. Most victims do not recover stolen money — but officials stress that reporting the scam is still important.

Scamming victims often feel shame or guilt about being tricked — a side effect that can deter reporting and hurt victims long after the fraud. Yet being victimized by fraud is not uncommon: one in four U.S. adults have been scammed in their lifetime, according to a 2025 [Gallup poll](#), and one in 10 report being scammed more than once.

“There's a saying in the [scam] world that no one is unscammable, you just haven't tried the right script yet,” Levine said. “Please don't feel like you must be a fool if you fall for one of these scams.”

Who is most at risk for cryptocurrency scams?

Those 60 or older are the most frequently targeted for cryptocurrency scams and who lose the most money, according to [FBI data](#), but anyone is susceptible to scams. Those over 60 lost more than \$396 million in 2025 in Texas.

For those with family members who are older or less technologically savvy, it can be helpful to walk them through how to identify spam texts or calls and ask them to inform you whenever strangers ask for money.

How is Texas responding to crypto scams?

Texas has a Financial Crimes Intelligence Center based in Smith County that helps law enforcement statewide investigate financial crimes, including cryptocurrency scams. The Texas State Securities Board also investigates fraudulent cryptocurrency activity.

Before the start of the next legislative session in January, state lawmakers are holding committee hearings on a list of issues designated by Lt. Gov. [Dan Patrick](#) in the Senate and House Speaker Dustin Burrows. Those topics include reducing elder fraud and regulating cryptocurrency and associated technologies, including crypto kiosks.