

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**  
**June 7, 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 9:40 a.m. Mayor Pro Tempore Svarzbein was present and presiding and the following Council Members answered roll call: Alexsandra Annello, Cassandra Hernandez, Joe Molinar, Isabel Salcido, Claudia Rodriguez, Henry Rivera and Cissy Lizarraga. Mayor Oscar Leeser arrived at 10:35 a.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 highlighted vaccination efforts across the City. He said the City is on track to be the first urban city to reach herd immunity as our community is leading the nation. The City's vaccination rate for people age 12 and over who have received a first dose is at 71%. Mr. Gonzalez explained that the City continues to partner with entities and businesses to set up pop-up vaccination sites across the community to include sites at the Bridge of the Americas port of entry.

**2. City Attorney Overview (Karla Nieman)**

- a) State Disaster Declarations**
- b) City Attorney's Office COVID-19 Support**
- c) Legal Monitoring**
- d) Courts Update**

Ms. Karla Nieman, City Attorney, provided an update on the State Disaster Declaration which was recently renewed and explained that face masks are still required at Court locations. She stated that her office has been assisting with training Code Enforcement and Fire personnel regarding the effect of GA-36 along with providing guidance on the use of American Rescue Plan funds. Ms. Nieman provided statistics related to court trials for COVID-19 citations set in all five Municipal Courts.

### **3. CFT Operations (Chief Mario D'Agostino)**

Fire Chief Mario D'Agostino provided information related to vaccination rates and ongoing efforts to distribute vaccines across the City. He explained that pop-up vaccination sites would be scheduled based on demand and stated that mobile integrated health teams had surpassed the national distribution goal by providing 2,400 vaccinations.

#### **4. Team Lead Reports:**

- 1. Health Focus (Hector Ocaranza, M.D.)**
- 2. Vaccination Update (Angela Mora)**
- 3. Data Analysis (David Coronado)**
- 4. Community Vulnerabilities and Human Services (Nicole Ferrini)**

Dr. Hector Ocaranza, Public Health Authority, provided an update on the current pandemic situation and explained that a downward trend continues in all three of the pandemic's main indicators. He stated that the 7-day average in new cases is below 5 and the hospitalization rate has been under 100 during the last two weeks. Dr. Ocaranza expressed his appreciation for citizens who have been immunized.

Ms. Angela Mora, Public Health Director, shared information related to the upcoming Parent Awareness and Information on COVID-19 Vaccine Campaign. The campaign will be targeted at parents who have concerns over the vaccine for children over 2 years of age. The City is collaborating with UT Houston to train local educators and the presentations will be available to the public through various outlets.

Mr. David Coronado, International Bridges Director, provided statistical information related to the number of northbound vehicle crossings, airport passengers, unemployment rates, and manufacturing activity. He explained that a surge in crossings would occur if travel restrictions are lifted later this month and said that overall the economy is beginning to recover.

Ms. Nicole Ferrini, Community and Human Development Director, provided an overview of rental and utility payment assistance available for El Paso families as a result of the Consolidated Appropriations Act and outlined a 6 step plan aimed at protecting the homeless community.

### **5. City Manager Wrap Up (Tommy Gonzalez)**

Mr. Tommy Gonzalez, City Manager, closed the presentation by expressing his gratitude for all vaccination efforts across the community leading to high vaccination rates. Over 71% of the City's population has received a first dose while over 50% is fully vaccinated.

Mayor Leeser and Representatives Svarzbein, Annelo, Hernandez, Molinar, Rodriguez, and Rivera commented.

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

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**2. Presentation and discussion of the 2021 Strategic Plan of the Youth Advisory Board.**

Mr. Tommy Gonzalez, City Manager, introduced the item and said the initiative was launched in 2018 in collaboration with all area school districts in order to engage high school students with the City's strategic budget process. As a result, a Youth Advisory Board was created and students from various schools were nominated to serve on the Board.

Ms. Nicole Cote, Office of Management and Budget Director, in conjunction with the following Board members and students presented a PowerPoint presentation (copy on file in the City Clerk's Office):

1. Jesus Perez, Board Chairman, District 6
2. Kayla Saucedo, Board Member, District 5
3. Liliana Velarde, Board Member, District 7
4. Amaris Ramos, Board Member, Mayor's Office
5. Amber Borjon, Board Member, District 4
6. Joaquin Martinez, student, Lincoln Middle School
7. Andrea Duarte, student

Mayor Leeser thanked the students for the presentation.

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

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**3. Presentation and discussion providing an update on key innovation initiatives focused on youth programming through human centered design.**

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

1. Ms. Julie Baldwin-Munoz, Learning and Innovation Director
2. Mr. Roman Sanchez, Chief Innovation Officer

The presentation illustrated that the City is among fourteen nationwide cities participating in the Innovation Training Program which is aimed at connecting the youth in the community by supporting programs that will enhance their learning and allow them to explore their interests.

Mr. Tommy Gonzalez, City Manager, thanked staff for reaching out to the City's youth and Ms. Nicole Cote, Office of Management and Budget Director, thanked school principals and teachers for their collaboration.

Mayor Leeser and Representatives Anello, Hernandez, Rodriguez, and Rivera commented.

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

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**4. Presentation of the Regional Renewable Energy Advisory Council's (RREAC) Strategic Plan.**

Ms. Nicole Ferrini, Chief Resilience Officer, in conjunction with the following RREAC Board members presented a PowerPoint presentation (copy on file in the City Clerk's Office):

1. Mr. Miguel Fraga, Chair
2. Mr. Joshua Simmons, Vice Chair

The presentation outlined the Board's strategic vision for urban energy highlighting benefits to the City and the community.

Mr. Tommy Gonzalez, City Manager, commented and said the City would seek federal funds to support energy saving initiatives.

Mayor Leeser and Representatives Svarzbein, Hernandez, and Molinar commented.

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

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**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Motion made by Representative Rivera, seconded by Representative Salcido, and unanimously carried that the City Council retire into **EXECUTIVE SESSION** at 1:23 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 551.074 PERSONNEL MATTERS

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

NAYS: None

Motion made by Representative Rivera, seconded by Representative Annelo, and unanimously carried to **ADJOURN** the Executive Session at 3:50 p.m. and **RECONVENE** the meeting of the City Council at which time a motion was made.

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

NAYS: None

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**EX1.** Claudia Reyes v. City of El Paso (20-1036-3350) (551.071)

Motion made by Mayor Pro Tempore Svarzbein, seconded by Representative Rivera and carried that the City Attorney, be authorized settlement authority to resolve this case entitled *Reyes, Claudia v. City of El Paso*; pending in the 171st Judicial District Court under Cause No. 2020DCV0623. The City Attorney is authorized to negotiate a settlement agreement and sign all necessary documents to effectuate this authority under Matter No. 20-1036-3350 as recommended by the City Attorney.

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

NAYS: Representative Rodriguez

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**EX2.** Annual performance evaluation for City Attorney (551.074)

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

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**EX3.** Annual performance evaluation for City Manager (551.074)

**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 3:52 p.m.

AYES: Representatives Svarzbein, Annelo, 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