

AARON ROCCAFORTE <i>Council Member, Place 1</i>	DAVID RUTLEDGE <i>Mayor</i> 	PATTY COLLINS <i>Council Member, Place 4</i>
GINA MANNINO <i>Council Member, Place 2</i>		TERRI GAUTHIER <i>Mayor Pro-Tem/Council Member, Place 5</i>
BRYANT CHAMPAGNE <i>Council Member, Place 3</i>		SHERBY DIXON <i>Council Member, Place 6</i>

CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
CITY OF BRIDGE CITY
December 3, 2024

The City Council of Bridge City met in a meeting on Tuesday, December 3, 2024, at the City Hall of Bridge City, 260 Rachal, Bridge City, Texas.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor David Rutledge called the City Council meeting to order at 6:00 a.m.

CITY COUNCIL PRESENT:

Mayor David Rutledge
Mayor Pro-Tem Terri Gauthier
Council Member Aaron Roccaforte
Council Member Gina Mannino
Council Member Patty Collins
Council Member Sherby Dixon

ABSENT: Council Member Bryant Champagne

CITY STAFF PRESENT:

City Attorney Paul Fukuda
City Secretary Jeanie McDowell
Director of Finance/Interim City Manager Katrina Jones
Director of Public Works Mike Lund
Utility Superintendent Mike Die
Municipal Deputy Court Clerk Tammi Fisette
Assistant Chief Robert Bergeron
Municipal Judge Bill Dixon
Associate Municipal Judge Ida Schossow
Financial Assistant Heather Noland

2. INVOCATION

The invocation was given by Council Member Sherby Dixon.

3. PLEDGE TO THE UNITED STATES FLAG AND THE STATE OF TEXAS FLAG

Mayor Rutledge led in the pledge of allegiance to the United States flag and to the State of Texas flag. At the conclusion of the pledges, Mayor Rutledge thanked everyone for coming to the meeting.

4. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Council Member Roccaforte made a motion to approve the agenda excluding Item 9b, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Gauthier.

With no changes, discussion, or alterations, Mayor Rutledge called for a vote.

MOTION CARRIED.

Ayes: Mayor Rutledge, Mayor Pro-Tem Gauthier, and Council Members Roccaforte, Mannino, Collins, and Dixon.

Noes: None.

Absent: Council Member Bryant Champagne.

5. CITIZEN COMMENTS

Lathan Gould,
Texas Division of Emergency Management
Liaison Officer for Orange County, Texas

He said he knew some of the Council and he apologized for not attending the meetings, but his job has kept him very busy. He said he was here to assist and facilitate and if they needed any resources, he was their first line of contact. He said some of the Council may know Chief Rowell, which was his direct supervisor, but if they needed anything they would be there to assist not there to take over. He said if anyone wanted business cards after the meeting, he had them. He said he just wanted to introduce his self, and he thanked the City Council for their time.

6. REPORTS & COMMENTS FROM:

(a) City Manager's Report

Katrina Jones made the following report:

1. Christmas in the Park – Friday, December 6, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. at the Community Center. She said she hoped everyone would come out and there would be a lot of vendors. She said the committee was wrapping things up. The committee would be meeting that night at the park and again tomorrow morning to finalize everything. She said to spread the word and come out and enjoy the festivities.
2. She introduced Heather Noland as the new Financial Assistant and she said she brought a lot of Incode experience, utility billing, payroll, and court. She said she brought a wealth of information, and she was really excited to have her here, especially as the audit was starting to wind up.

(b) City Council

Mayor Pro-Tem Terri Gauthier said everyone involved had been working very hard for this weekend and it looked like we would have good weather for the event. She asked if anyone seen it on Facebook to please share the post.

(c) City Staff

Mike Lund, Director of Public Works

He said he knew some of the Council had noticed the trash had not been picked up this week really well, because the regular driver was on vacation and the driver was new to the route. Republic Services sent out another truck to help finish picking up garbage and catching the route up, so they could resume the regular route. He also said he spoke with TXDot regarding the holes on Texas Avenue and they assured Mr. Lund they would look into it and get him a time schedule when the holes would be repaired. He said he was trying to get it fixed before the bridge project.

(d) Mayor David Rutledge report:

1. Welcomed Ms. Noland to the City and was glad to have her on the City's team and looked forward to working with her.
2. Announced Christmas in the Park would be Friday, December 6th and the parade on Saturday, December 7th.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

7. ADJOURN TO CLOSED EXECUTIVE SESSION

CITY COUNCIL TO GO INTO CLOSED EXECUTIVE SESSION PURSUANT TO THE PROVISION OF CHAPTER 551 OF THE TEXAS GOVERNMENT CODE FOR THE FOLLOWING SECTION:

- (a) Section 551.074. Personnel Matters – to deliberate the appointment, employment, evaluation, and duties of the City Manager including discussing interview results and possible selection of a candidate**

Mayor Rutledge asked the audience to please leave the council chambers while Council went into Closed Executive Session. He opened the executive session at 6:09 p.m. to deliberate the appointment, employment, evaluation, and duties of the City Manager including discussing interview results and possible selection of a candidate.

8. RECONVENE INTO OPEN SESSION

- (a) City Council will reconvene into open session for possible discussion and/or possible action regarding Item 7(a) above.**

Mayor Pro-Tem Gauthier made a motion to enter into an employment contract with Bart Bartkowiak as City Manager, seconded by Council Member Collins.

With no further discussion, Mayor Rutledge called for a vote.

MOTION CARRIED.

Ayes: Mayor Rutledge, Mayor Pro-Tem Gauthier, and Council Members Roccaforte, Mannino, Collins, and Dixon.

Noes: None.

Absent: Council Member Bryant Champagne.

9. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION & POSSIBLE ACTION

(a) *Consideration and possible action to approve the November 19, 2024 City Council Regular Meeting minutes*

Council Member Roccaforte made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 19, 2024 City Council Regular Meeting, seconded by Council Member Collins.

With no changes, discussion, or alterations, Mayor Rutledge called for a vote.

MOTION CARRIED.

Ayes: Mayor Rutledge, Mayor Pro-Tem Gauthier, and Council Members Roccaforte, Mannino, Collins, and Dixon.

Noes: None.

Absent: Council Member Bryant Champagne.

(b) *Consideration and possible action to certify the 2024 City of Bridge City Current Tax Roll and 2024 Delinquent Tax Roll as submitted by Octavia Guzman, Orange County Tax Assessor-Collector*

This item was removed from the agenda.

(c) *Consideration and possible action to approve 2025 Bond Counsel Engagement of Germer PLLC*

Council Member Roccaforte made a motion to approve 2025 Bond Counsel Engagement of Germer PLLC, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Gauthier.

With no further discussion, Mayor Rutledge called for a vote.

MOTION CARRIED.

Ayes: Mayor Rutledge, Mayor Pro-Tem Gauthier, and Council Members Roccaforte, Mannino, Collins, and Dixon.

Noes: None.

Absent: Council Member Bryant Champagne.

(a) Consideration and possible action on potential rescheduling/cancellation of the December 17, 2024 City Council Meeting

Council Member Collins made a motion to cancel the December 17, 2024 City Council Meeting, seconded by Council Member Dixon.

MOTION CARRIED.

Ayes: Mayor Rutledge, Mayor Pro-Tem Gauthier, and Council Members Roccaforte, Mannino, Collins, and Dixon.

Noes: None.

Absent: Council Member Bryant Champagne.

WORKSHOP

10. WORKSHOP SESSION – DISCUSSION ONLY

(a) Discussion of the local option liquor election

Mayor Rutledge said after citizens asked if the City would look into what it would take to get this done, he said staff began researching it. He said what little he had read and seen on it, it was pretty much citizen and businesses driven. He said the whole purpose behind this if the City were to pursue it would remain economic development. He said there were businesses that wasn't interested in coming to Bridge City because the City did not have this option.

Mr. Fukuda said the Council had a packet from the Secretary of State in short version said the City would have to have an election on it and it would have to be in a regular election. The next regular election would be in May which would be the earliest election. He said the packet says the City would have to have at least ten citizens to sign a petition requesting that they receive a petition that was authorized by the Secretary of State from the City's City Secretary. He said the City Secretary would run everything and they would have to publish it in the newspaper, and it was all in their packet and he highlighted to indicate the timeline that needed to happen. He said he knew it said ten residents or citizens, but it would be a good idea for those people to get more than that just to make sure everyone qualifies. He said by some technicality one person out of ten does not qualify, that would not be ten so they should probably double that to be safe. He said then a petition would be given out by Ms. McDowell. He said they could not use any other sheets they would all have to be original. He said they would go get other additional petitions in order to have this placed on the ballot. He said it shows what specifically has to be on the ballot. He said they would return that to the City Secretary and then she would be coordinating with and he already talked to the local elections administrator to make sure they get the number of petitions, which would be 35% of the actual voters in the last gubernatorial election.

Mayor Rutledge asked 35%.

Mr. Fukuda said 35% of that number of voters in that last election.

Mayor Rutledge said if 800 voted then 35% of that number.

Mr. Fukuda said correct and it is not who registered or who was available, it was who actually voted in that last election. He said the election administrator would assist in all of that also. He said again the petition should be to a volume that the 35 was not a close call and that would make it easier for all the addresses and so forth. He said then it would be placed on the ballot and would need to be very specific on what they were voting for and then they would vote to have, mixed drinks is what he thought they were looking at, and that would cover everything under beer, wine, and everything. He said it was basically any location that was authorized by law to sell that which includes all the restaurants, bars, and all the establishments that had authorization by law to do it would not be prohibited because we do not have this yet in our area.

Mayor Rutledge said it was his understanding that it had to be a citizen of Bridge City. He said no person could sign a petition or initiate a petition that was not a citizen of the City of Bridge City, is that correct.

Mr. Fukuda said it had to a resident.

Mayor Rutledge asked would it be incumbent upon us to make sure they were residents.

Council Member Collins asked who certified those signatures.

Mr. Fukuda said the City Secretary and again she would get help from the Election Administrator.

Mayor Rutledge said the ten people who initiated the petition the City would check them first.

Council Member Mannino said those folks who have contacted the City that were interested in this that wasn't here at the meeting would need to contact the City Secretary to get this ball rolling.

Mayor Rutledge asked at what point would the City need to approve anything on this.

Mr. Fukuda said once the City had enough petition members then we would call an election.

Ms. Jones asked Mr. Fukuda to be clear the 35% was not just the registered voters it was those that actually voted in the last election.

Mr. Fukuda said in the last gubernatorial election.

Council Member Mannino said if 1200 citizens voted that would be 420 signatures that the City would need to have.

Ms. McDowell said to order a local option liquor election would be the 78th day before the election which would be February 14, 2025.

Mayor Rutledge said if they wanted it in this election...

Council Member Mannino said they would need to get busy.

Mr. Fukuda said they would have 60 days when the petition was authorized to get those signatures. He said there was a window.

Council Member Mannino said if the citizens get all their signatures now then we could hold it until November.

Council Member Mannino asked if we could hold the petition until November.

Mr. Fukuda said yes.

Council Member Mannino thanked everyone for their work on this workshop.

Mayor Rutledge said if anyone asked, please refer them to the City Secretary.

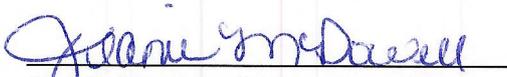
Council Member Mannino said just for general public, she thought part of the issue was the proprietors who sell alcohol would have to fill out paperwork and it was not online. She said it was a notebook, because the Texas Alcohol Board would not put it online anymore because there were so few people who do it like the City does it. She said it was very cumbersome for our business owners to fill out the waiver. She said it was something that takes them a lot of time and effort, so this would benefit those folks that were already filling out a special application. She said that was why some of our businesses were interested in easing their workload.

11. ADJOURN

Mayor Rutledge adjourned the meeting at 7:10 p.m.


David Rutledge, Mayor

ATTEST:


Jeanie McDowell, City Secretary

