Jean Birmingham Council Chambers, City Hall
401 South Alamo
Marshall, TX 75670
903-935-4421

Members
Amy Ware, District 4 - Mayor
Risa Jordan-Anderson, District 1
Leo Morris, District 2
Dathaniel Campbell, District 3
Reba Godfrey, District 5
Amanda Abraham, District 6
Micah Fenton, District 7

MINUTES
PLEASE SILENCE ALL DEVICES
REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING

April 24, 2025
6:00 PM

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Mayor Amy Ware called the Regular meeting to order in the Council Chambers, City Hall at 06:01 PM.

PRESENT:

Mayor and Council Members:
Mayor Amy Ware
Councilmember Leo Morris
Councilmember Reba Godfrey
Councilmember Amanda Abraham
Councilmember Micah Fenton
Councilmember Dathaniel Campbell
Councilmember Risa Jordan-Anderson

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF PRESENT:
Melissa Vossmer, City Manager
Cliff Carruth, Police Chief
Scott Rectenwald, City Attorney
David Rainwater, Fire Chief
Randy Pritchard, Support Services Director
Nikki Smith, City Secretary/Payroll Accountant
Reggie Cooper, Planning & Development Director
Marina Garcia-Heredia, Parks & Recreation Director
Anna Lane, Community & Neighborhood Servces Director
Alex Agnor, Economic Development & Strategic Initiatives Director

2. Invocation and Pledges

Mayor Ware

3. Citizen Comments

Texas Government Code, Sec. 551.007 requires that a governmental body must allow each member of the public who desires to address the body regarding an item on the agenda the opportunity to do so before or during the body's consideration of the item. The “Citizens Comments” portion of the meeting meets the requirements of this law and is the public’s opportunity to speak on any item on the agenda. Those who wish to speak are requested to fill out a public comment form and will have three (3) minutes to speak unless additional time has been requested.

There were no citizen comments.

4. Items to be Withdrawn From Consent Agenda

Item 5D was withdrawn from the Consent Agenda.

5. Consent Agenda

The items on the Consent Agenda require little or no deliberation by the Council. Approval of the Consent Agenda authorizes the City Manager or his designee to proceed with conclusion of each in accordance with staff recommendations, a copy of which is filed with the minutes of the meeting. A Councilmember may remove items from the Consent Agenda by making such request prior to a motion and vote on the Consent Agenda.

Councilmember Godfrey made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Councilmember Jordan-Anderson seconded the motion, which passed by a vote of 7:0.

A. Consider approval of the minutes from the April 10, 2025, Regular Council meeting. (City Secretary)

B. Consider approval of an agreement with Dr. Jeffrey McWilliams for Physician Director Services for the Emergency Medical Services System for a total annual cost of $18,000. (Fire)

C. Consider approval of an Interlocal Agreement with Harrison County for Animal Shelter Services. (Finance)

6. Consideration of Items Withdrawn From the Consent Agenda

D. Consider approval of the Harris County Interlocal Agreement - TxWarn Radio System. (Support Services)

Councilmember Abraham stated her reasons for withdrawing this item. Councilmember Abraham asked if the Agreement committed the City to any amount.

Randy Pritchard, Support Services Director, stated it was the standard agreement and any work done would be billed by invoice based on the fee schedule.

Councilmember Abraham asked for clarification regarding various areas in the agreement, such as quotes, charges for radios on a monthly basis, and paying Harris County based on the number of units used.

Scott Rectenwald, City Attorney, said he was in court and unable to review the questions and edits and would review them to better understand the financial implications.

Mayor Ware asked if the price was for set-up, and then we would know how much.

Councilmember Campbell asked if we have a fee schedule to provide for Harris County if both sides are providing services to each other.

Councilmember Godfrey made a motion to table considering approval of the Harris County Interlocal Agreement - TxWarn Radio System and to bring it back at a future meeting. Councilmember Abraham seconded the motion, which passed by a vote of 7:0.

7. Action Items for City Council Consideration

A. Consider approval of updates to the Marshall Public Library Circulation Policy to include a fine-free initiative on all library materials. (Community & Neighborhood Services)

Terri Nalls, Library Director, provided the mission and vision of the library. Terri Nalls stated the last time the circulation policy was updated was 2006, and it was in need of updating terminology and reviewing guest access to computers. Research has also been done on fine free libraries and found those libraries have higher return rates. Fines are not effective in having books returned on time, which is evident from research, and the library has 719 blocked accounts due to fines being owed.

Councilmember Campbell asked to offer the fine-free initiative on a trial basis to see if it would bring books and people back to the library. Councilmember Campbell also asked how the initiative would be advertised. The methods would be social media, newsletters and in-person communication.

Councilmember Abraham asked how much revenue the fines produced each year, which is about $2,500.

Councilmember Campbell suggested a report be presented to see how the initiative is going in 8 weeks, which Councilmember Abraham suggested being a longer period of six months.

Councilmember Godfrey made a motion to approve updates to the Marshall Public Library Circulation Policy to include a fine-free initiative on all library materials. Councilmember Jordan-Anderson seconded the motion, which passed by a vote of 7:0.

B. Consider approval and authorization for the Mayor to execute a Contract with Strategic Government Resources (SGR) for Interim Services in Support of the Finance Department in the Preparation of the FY26 Budget. (City Manager)

Melissa Vossmer, City Manager, asked the Council to approve the Mayor to authorize a contract with Strategic Government Resources (SGR) for a full-time Interim Budget Manager. The cost of this contract is $80 per hour, with SGR receiving 30% and Julie Richards, Interim Budget Manager, receiving 70%. Melissa Vossmer stated the work would be done predominantly online and if the contract was approved she could start in the middle of next week.

Councilmember Jordan-Anderson asked Melissa Vossmer to explain the process of hiring for this position, having the Mayor execute the contract, and why the Council was approving this contract if the City Manager would normally be the one hiring the Finance Director without Council approval.

Melissa Vossmer stated this process was different from hiring a full-time employee given that this is a contract.

It was discussed that this position is to assist the Finance Department due to staff shortages. This contract is for an Interim Budget Manager and the City is still advertising for a Finance Director.

Councilmember Abraham made a motion to approve, and authorized the Mayor to execute, a Contract with Strategic Government Resources (SGR) for Interim Services in Support of the Finance Department in the Preparation of the FY26 Budget. Councilmember Godfrey seconded the motion, which passed by a vote of 7:0.

C. Consider approval of updates to the Marshall City Council Travel Policy. (Councilmembers Jordan-Anderson, Morris, Godfrey/City Secretary)

Nikki Smith, City Secretary, presented a timeline of meetings held by the Travel Committee and provided a summary of changes made to the Council Travel Policy.

Mayor Ware asked for the language in the second paragraph of the General section to be amended to better reflect a Concilmember not using the conference and training funds between the timeframe of when the election is ordered and Election Day, unless the Councilmember seeking re-election does not draw an opponent once the filling deadline has ended.

Councilmember Abraham asked about funds not being utilized going to other council members instead of the General Fund, and why those funds wouldn't be redistributed to the council. Melissa Vossmer explained the funding for the conference and training budget would be discussed during the budget process, so Council could decide at that time whether to keep the amount the same, increase it or decrease it. Concilmember Abraham stated she understood and was comfortable leaving the language as it is presented.

Councilmember Campbell asked about the Exceptions section and requested the language be updated. The Council discussed what language they would like to include, and it was determined to update the section by providing examples of extraordinary circumstances and removing the language regarding the best interest of the City.

Councilmember Jordan-Anderson asked if the policy could be approved pending the changes, which other councilmembers and the City Secretary stated they would prefer to have the corrections made and then bring the policy back before the Council.

Councilmember Godfrey made a motion to table considering approval of updates to the Marshall City Council Travel Policy. Councilmember Abraham seconded the motion, which passed by a vote of 7:0.

D. Consider approval of a Change Order to PSI. (Support Services)

Randy Pritchard stated the original contract with PSI was approved on December 14, 2024, at a cost of $12,755,964 for work on the Convention Center roof and air conditions and the new water meter project. Change Order #1 was approved on October 24, 2024, at a cost of $121,762 for foundation repair and plumbing exploration. Randy Pritchard asked for approval of Change Order #2 at a cost of $69,871 to replace the 6" sprinkler pipe from the lower flange of the existing riser, installation of a double check backflow preventer, and replace the piping of the existing riser and deteriorated underground pipes outside the wall but not beyond the existing sidewalk.

Councilmember Abraham stated the amounts didn't quite add up to the total on the contract and asked for those numbers to be verified.

Councilmember Abraham made a motion to approve a Change Order to PSI in the amount of $69,871, with verification that the amount in the contract is correct. Councilmember Jordan-Anderson seconded the motion, which passed by a vote of 7:0.

8. Discussion and Reports for City Council Consideration and Direction

A. Presentation of the 2024 Marshall Public Library Annual Report submitted to the Texas State Library and Archives Commission. (Community & Neighborhood Services)

Terri Nalls provided information regarding the Library Annual Accreditation Report for 2024. This report included the mission and vision of the Library, 2024 statistics including items such as the service population of 63,384, patron visits totaling 65,881, and many other items required for accreditation. Terri Nalls also provided information regarding the various collections offered at the library, including books in print, ebooks, audiobooks, DVDs, databases and a Library of Things which includes items like 3 ukuleles and a seed library. The programs for 2024 include programs for kids, teens, and adults, with the teen and adult programs seeing an increase in attendance. The library has been accredited for 35 years.

Councilmember Jordan-Anderson asked how the staff went about gaining an increase in teen attendance. One of the new employees was tasked with increasing teen interest and that goal has been met.

Councilmember Campbell asked if the storytime program would be held again in the summer. The program will be held again, and the program calendar for the upcoming events is anticipated to be released May 27th.

B. Presentation by the Carver CPR Providing an Overview and Discussion of Potential Partnerships with USA Netball and the City of Marshall. (Councilman Morris and City Manager)

Melissa Vossmer introduced this item stating a letter was received to meet with representatives of USA Netball because they are looking for a home for netball. The City has not made a commitment at this time, but there is an interest to see what opportunities are available for a possible partnership for revitalization and economic development.

Dr. Henryett Lovely Porter, Founder and CEO of Carver Community Pathways to Revitalization, a 501C3 organization in Marshall, Texas, provided information regarding the goals of Carver CPR, including revitalization of communities within Harrison County, preserving the facility, providing healthy living resources, and possibly providing a home for USA Netball.

Dr. Porter spoke regarding partnering with the City to create a home for USA Netball, which would bring people in to stay in the local hotels, and eat at the restaurants. Dr. Porter stated bringing USA Netball would align with the Carver CPR slogan: "Where There's a Need, There's a Way!"

Councilmember Morris thanked Dr. Porter for bringing this item forward and providing some history of the game of Netball. Councilmember Morris stated he is excited about the opportunities this could bring.

Councilmember Godfrey asked how Dr. Porter became interested in the school in Karnack, which Dr. Porter explained she not only attended the school, but also was a teacher and principal there.

Councilmember Jordan-Anderson stated she appreciated the work done on the building, that it was like rebuilding history. She asked Dr. Porter to elaborate on Netball, which Dr. Porter did, stating it was like basketball without the accommodations such as dribbling and a backboard. Dr. Porter stated the players can only hold the ball for three seconds, which creates a lot of energy. Dr. Porter also stated that men and women participate in the sport in over 80 countries.

C. Discussion of the Need to Initiate a Charter Review and Provide Direction. (Councilwoman Godfrey & Councilman Morris)

Councilmember Godfrey stated she asked for this item to be on the agenda because Section 12.08 of the Charter states the Council shall, at intervals not to exceed five years, formally consider the need for revision(s) to the Charter.

Mayor Ware stated she was involved in the Charter revision process in 2020 and provided information regarding the framework of the revision and rewriting of the Charter. Mayor Ware also stated there are many pieces of legislation pending that will affect cities, and she feels it would be best to have a May election for any Charter revision instead of trying to hold an election in November. Waiting until May will also allow time to review the Charter for possible revisions, allow the budget process to be completed and to find out the results of the pending legislation.

Melissa Vossmer stated waiting until May would allow for time to review and get an idea of the impact of the changes, such as changing the fiscal year from January through December to October through September. This change would affect the audit, have an effect on Wonderland of Lights, cash flow, and carryovers.

Councilmember Godfrey stated she agreed with waiting until after the November election to see what the State says and then place the Charter revisions on the May 2026 ballot.

Councilmember Godfrey also asked for the typos to be corrected in the Charter per Section 12.09, and brought back to Council for approval.

9. Executive Session

Councilmember Godfrey made a motion to convene in Executive Session. Councilmember Jordan-Anderson seconded the motion, which passed by a vote of 7:0. The time was 8:00 PM.

A. An executive session pursuant to Texas Govt. Code Section 551.071 to consult with the City Attorney to seek advice on pending or contemplated litigation and on a matter in which the duty of the attorney to the governmental body under the Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct of the State Bar of Texas clearly conflicts with this chapter: Contracts for Park Improvements.

The Council reconvened from the Executive Session. The time was 9:10 PM.

10. Adjournment

Councilmember Godfrey made a motion to adjourn. Councilmember Campbell seconded the motion, which passed by a vote of 7:0.

APPROVED:

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Mayor of the City Council
of the City of Marshall, Texas

ATTEST:

____
City Secretary