

**CITY OF LAREDO
EMERGENCY CITY COUNCIL MEETING
M2022-E-01
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
1110 HOUSTON STREET
LAREDO, TEXAS 78040
February 22, 2022
6:00 P.M.**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Saenz called the meeting to order.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The pledge of allegiance was led by Mayor Saenz.

III. MOMENT OF SILENCE

Mayor Saenz called for a moment of silence.

IV. ROLL CALL

In attendance:

Rudy Gonzalez Jr.	District I
Vidal Rodriguez	Mayor Pro Tempore
Mercurio "Merc" Martinez, III	District III
Alberto Torres Jr.	District IV
Ruben Gutierrez Jr.	District V
Dr. Marte Martinez	District VI
Vanessa Perez	District VII
Alyssa Cigarroa	District VIII
Jose A. Valdez Jr.	City Secretary
Samuel K. Selman	Interim City Manager
Rosario Cabello	Deputy City Manager
Kristina L. Hale	Assistant City Manager
Riazul Mia	Assistant City Manager
Sylvia B. Firth	Interim City Attorney

Late: Cm. Torres arrived at 6:21 p.m.

Citizen comments

V. EXECUTIVE SESSION

VI. GENERAL COUNCIL DISCUSSIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

A. Request by Mayor Pete Saenz

1. Discussion and action on City of Laredo Declaration of Local Disaster, imposition of water use restrictions and boil water notice issued in accordance with Section 418.108 of the Texas Government Code.

Mayor Saenz explained that the City of Laredo had to go into a water boil notice city wide. He stated that the City of Laredo has requested the State of Texas for emergency resources. Sylvia B. Firth presented the declaration of local disaster that was put together by the legal department, including the water restrictions that the city put in place. The restrictions are asking for citizens to refrain using water for non-essential purposes including but not limited to watering lawn, irrigation, irrigation equipment, washing vehicles, car wash facilities, washing pavements, adding water to swimming pools or spas, conducting foundation watering, and operating ornamental fountains or ponds. If approved by council, the order will take effect for seven consecutive days.

Cm. Dr. Martinez inquired if the restrictions would be implemented city wide. Sylvia firth stated that the restrictions would be apply to the entire City of Laredo. Cm. Dr. Martinez requested clarification on why the entire city has to follow the restriction order if the north Laredo lines are no longer connected to the south Laredo lines, therefore having the north side under restrictions would not help at all. Arturo Garcia Utilities director stated that the city is working on re opening a line that would feed water from the north side to the south side of Laredo. Cm. Dr. Martinez expressed his concern on why the city has been misguiding its citizens into believing that by following the water restrictions city wide it would help the south side of Laredo when it is not true. Cm. Martinez agreed with Cm. Dr. Martinez. Cm. Perez stated that it is only fair for the entire city to follow the restriction notice.

Mayor Saenz stated that even though the north side of Laredo is not being effected, we all have to come together as a city. Cm. Torres inquired on what precautionary methods were implied by the utilities departments to prevent this issue. Citizen spoke on the importance to inspect and monitor the water lines to prevent further water issues. Noraida Negron read into record the following citizen comments: A Rosas commented that the city should ask Washington for funds to alleviate the expenses that the water issue has and will be creating. Maria Menchaca commented that water is a human right, and that the city should focus on repairing any water issues instead of spending money on non-essential projects. Cristina Alarcon commented that the city should focus on repairing and preventing any further water issues. Liliana Cisneros inquired on what will the city do to ensure incidents like this never occur again. Juan Vera commented that the city should demand and impose a water break so the water tanks can fill up and water can be restored. Jesus Torres commented that it would be

nice to have some tanker trucks take water from the north side to the south side to alleviate essential necessities in south Laredo. Tania Benavidez commented and is urging council to repair the issue and restore water to the citizens of Laredo. Rosa Chavez comment that 359 area needs their own water tank. Maritza Molina commented that two cases of water are not enough, that the city needs to request help from the state. Jonathan Alaniz commented that repairs should have been completed before to avoid and prevent this type of issues. Rosa Meesta inquired if the citizens will have any discounts on their water bill. Benito Camela inquired on when water will be restored. Victor Gomez commented and expressed his outrage pertaining the water issue that the city of Laredo is facing. Mary Lou Garza commented that the city needs to put a stop to multi sports arenas, as well as to stop spending money on city council's dinner, and it is time to start fixing our water system. Linda Leal commented that the city needs to start distributing water to constituents at their homes. Also, for the misappropriation of funds to be investigated. Cm. Dr. Martinez stated that there was no misappropriation of funds by the city of Laredo.

Motion to adopt the Declaration of Local Disaster as written and presented for seven days to include a three-day grace period, while having code enforcement educate the citizens of the declaration that is in place.

Moved: Mayor Saenz

Second: Cm. Cigarroa

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Motion carries.

2. Discussion with possible action on providing potable water to city areas that have been without water for the last 3-4 days; status of current repairs to 36" transmission water line situation; status of water boil notice issued on Friday, February 18, 2022; immediate-temporary and permanent remedies to restore water to the Lyon Street Reservoir Tanks for water distribution and overall water restoration to all currently affected areas; current status of a temporary and a permanent plan of action, including obtaining resources from outside public and private sources; and any other matters incident thereto.

Arturo Garcia gave a status update on the current water line repairs. Cm. Gonzalez stated that the city is trying their best to fix the water lines issue and he inquired if the city has had communication with the school districts to ensure they are aware of the situation that the city is facing. Mr. Selman stated that he has been in contact with both superintendents, and that their decision is in their hands. Guillermo Heard Fire Chief stated that he has been in constant communication with both districts as well as with the Laredo College. Mr. Heard also stated that they have been in contact with the vulnerable population with the assistance of 311 and public works to ensure water is being delivered to the affected vulnerable population.

Mr. Selman stated that 311 had been receiving calls from concerned citizens with the interpretation of the water being shut down. Mayor Saenz denied the allegations of the water

being shut down. Mr. Selman re assured the constituents that the water will not be shut down. MPT Rodriguez requested the city to inform the constituents on all distribution sites, and to focus on alleviating the areas that have no water at all as well as all dialysis centers where water is essential for all of their functions. Guillermo Heard stated that they have been coordinating with Webb County to ensure all dialysis centers are receiving water.

Motion to allow Interim City Manager to reimburse any entities that have contributed to the emergency.

Moved: Cm. Dr. Martinez

Second: Cm. Martinez

For: 5

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

NP: Cm. Gonzalez, Cm. Torres, Cm. Gutierrez

Motion carries.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn the emergency meeting and reconvene as the regular city council meeting at 7:31 p.m.

Moved: Cm. Dr. Martinez

Second: Cm. Martinez

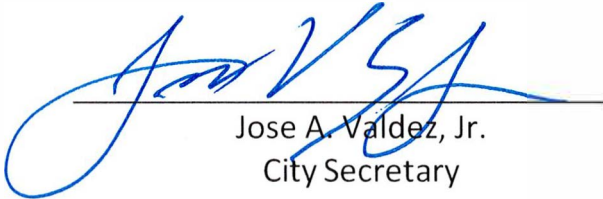
For: 7

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

NP: Cm. Gonzales

Motion carries.



Jose A. Valdez, Jr.
City Secretary