

**CITY OF LAREDO CITY COUNCIL
MEETING
M2019-S-02
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS 1110
HOUSTON STREET
LAREDO, TEXAS 78040
February 4, 2019
5:30 P.M.**

SUPPLEMENTAL MINUTES

I. APPOINTMENTS TO COMMISSIONS, BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

1. Appointment by Council Member Alberto Torres, Jr., of Anna Benavides-Galo to the City Manager Search Ad-Hoc Committee.

Motion to approve the nomination of Anna Benavides-Galo to the City Manager Search Ad-Hoc Committee.

Moved: Cm. Torres

Second: Cm. Gonzalez

For: 6

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Cm. Vielma and Cm. Altgelt were not present.

2. Appointment by Mayor Pro-Tempore Roberto Balli of Hector J. Garcia to the City Manager Search Ad-Hoc Committee.

Motion to approve the nomination of Hector J. Garcia to the City Manager Search Ad-Hoc Committee.

Moved: Cm. Torres

Second: Cm. Gonzalez

For: 6

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Cm. Vielma and Cm. Altgelt were not present.

3. Appointment by Council Member Vidal Rodriguez of Rafael Duenas, Sr. to the City Manager Search Ad-Hoc Committee.

Motion to approve the nomination of Rafael Duenas, Sr., to the City Manager Search Ad-Hoc Committee.

Moved: Cm. Torres

Second: Cm. Gonzalez

For: 6

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Cm. Vielma and Cm. Altgelt were not present.

4. Appointment by Council Member Vidal Rodriguez of Mely Paez to the Library Advisory Committee.

Motion to approve the nomination of Mely Paez to the Library Advisory Committee.

Moved: Cm. Torres
Second: Cm. Gonzalez
For: 6 Against: 0 Abstain: 0

Cm. Vielma and Cm. Altgelt were not present.

5. Appointment by Council Member Vidal Rodriguez of Omar Gonzalez to the Airport Advisory Board.

Motion to approve the nomination of Omar Gonzalez to the Airport Advisory Board.

Moved: Cm. Torres
Second: Cm. Gonzalez
For: 6 Against: 0 Abstain: 0

Cm. Vielma and Cm. Altgelt were not present.

6. Appointment by Council Member Mercurio Martinez, III of Vidal Cantu to the Ethics Commission.

Motion to approve the nomination of Vidal Cantu to the Ethics Commission.

Moved: Cm. Torres
Second: Cm. Gonzalez
For: 6 Against: 0 Abstain: 0

Cm. Vielma and Cm. Altgelt were not present.

7. Appointment by Council Member Mercurio Martinez, III of Elmo Lopez, Jr., to the City Manager Search Ad-Hoc Committee.

Motion to approve the nomination of Elmo Lopez, Jr., to the City Manager Search Ad-Hoc Committee.

Moved: Cm. Torres
Second: Cm. Gonzalez
For: 6 Against: 0 Abstain: 0

Cm. Vielma and Cm. Altgelt were not present.

II. RESOLUTIONS

1. 2019-R-16 Authorizing and approving a fee waiver and a Tax Abatement Agreement between the City of Laredo and Triple E Investment for a proposed project located at 319 E Travis St., Lot 1,2,3; Block 124; eastern division that consists of new construction, in accordance with authorized guidelines and criteria established for the Neighborhood Empowerment Zone (NEZ). This agreement will be for a ten (10) year period and will abate taxes on new improvements for the purpose of economic development. The project has an estimated capital investment total of \$600,000.00, estimated annual tax

abatement total of \$3,804.10 and estimated total fee waivers of \$5,890.00. Guidelines and criteria for the agreement are set forth in the attached agreement and information. (Replacing item #21 on the regular agenda A-2019-R-02)

Motion to adopt Resolution 2019-R-016.

Moved: Cm. Torres

Second: Cm. Altgelt

For: 8 Against: 0 Abstain: 0

III. MOTIONS

2. Motion to approve funding in an amount not to exceed \$50,000.00 for the hiring of a management consulting firm for a nation-wide search for a new City Manager.

Rosario Cabello, Interim Co-City Manager, clarified that staff seeks direction from Council on the qualifications of the position.

Cm. Torres asked that the posting provide a year for the candidate to get Manager's certification with the International City/County Manager Association. Kristina L. Hale, City Attorney, confirmed that since the certification is not required in the City Charter, adding this provision would not violate the Charter. However, she stipulated that the certification process takes longer than a year. Council may have additional requirements that are not in the Charter; the Charter dictates the minimum requirements. Certification should be preferred rather than required.

Cm. Altgelt suggested having the preference as a default, and if the first search shows that no candidates have the certification, then Council may add a provision of time to receive the certification.

Carol Thurkettle, Human Resources Officer, read Section 3.02 of the City Charter (Qualifications of the City Manager): "The City Manager shall be appointed on the basis of executive and administrative qualifications. He/she shall have a Bachelor's Degree and no less than seven years' experience in municipal government, five of which must be supervisory managerial experience. A Master's Degree in Public Administration is preferred. The City Manager need not be a resident of the City or State at the time of appointment, but must reside inside the City while in office." She clarified that these are the minimum qualifications for the City Manager.

Robert Eads, Interim Co-City Manager, recommended that Council submit suggestions for their desired requirements for the position for staff to build a model City Manager position. Cm. Torres noted that to do so would need to happen after the City hires the consulting firm to avoid getting ahead of itself. He suggested a workshop with the ad-hoc committee present.

Motion to approve.

Moved: Cm. Torres

Second: Cm. Altgelt

For: 8 Against: 0 Abstain: 0

IV. STAFF REPORTS

3. Staff Report on the use of police substations, with possible action.

Motion to table.

Moved: Cm. Torres

Second: Cm. Gonzalez

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

V. GENERAL COUNCIL DISCUSSIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

A. Request by Council Member Rudy Gonzalez, Jr.

1. Discussion with possible action to create a recruiter position to assist in filling vacancies for the City of Laredo; and any matters incident thereto. (Co-Sponsored by Council Member George Altgelt and Council Member Vidal Rodriguez)

Cm. Gonzalez asked the Interim Co-City Managers for their opinion on this issue.

Rosario Cabello, Interim Co-City Manager, voiced her support of this item because it would reduce the City's overtime expenses when staff members are compensating for position vacancies. This position will help in gathering a pool of qualified applicants and reviewing those applications. Robert Eads, Interim Co-City Manager, agreed with Mrs. Cabello and added that the deficiencies in manpower have been delaying the City's filling of vacancies.

Cm. Rodriguez reminded staff to inform Council of their needs so that they are not overwhelmed. Mr. Eads noted that the Human Resources Department is stretched thin as is.

Dr. Marte Martinez voiced his hesitance over hiring a full time position for a duty that can be done by the private sector, especially if the City is looking for 80 employees. The City will not be able to hire and train a new employee on the networks available to him or her for the purposes of recruitment. The City needs a professional recruitment, and that is going to be found with a company that has performed this work for a significant period of time. Creating a position to recruit for 80 positions is asinine and will take too long. He reminded Council that one employee will take time to fill these vacancies whereas if the City hired a firm, the staff would be able to quickly fill those positions.

Cm. Altgelt stated that he is not opposed to outsourcing this issue to a private firm.

Rosa Salinas, Acting Human Resources Director, noted that a recruiter position could be either full-time or part-time. She advised Council that there are currently many critical positions that need to be filled as soon as possible. The City might need to outsource some of those positions quickly or execute a combination of those options.

Carol Thurkettle, Human Resources Officer, reported that the Department has investigated recruitment companies largely as a result of the City Manager recruitment. Consulting companies typically fill positions in a time period of about 150 days. The average cost is \$15,000-\$30,000 per position. She noted that the Recruitment division is a four-member team who screens approximately 15,000 applications a year for the

entire City.

Mrs. Cabello voiced her opinion that the Human Resources Department is understaffed in the specific area of recruitment and needs assistance in that respect. There is a large volume of applications that they must review.

Mr. Eads clarified that the 80 vacancies are a mix of blue-collar and white-collar positions.

Dr. Martinez clarified that a consulting firm usually offers a discount if an organization is recruiting for multiple positions, so it is unlikely that the City will pay the same cost for each individual position.

Motion to grant management the flexibility to hire a Full Time Equivalent position/recruiter and/or a consultant to assist with the recruitment of vacant positions on an as-needed basis and require that the pool of applicants be selected from the private sector.

Moved: Cm. Altgelt

Second: Dr. Marte Martinez

For: 6

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Cm. Torre and Cm. Vielma were not present.

B. Request by Council Member Mercurio Martinez, III

1. Discussion and possible action to direct staff to hire a full time dedicated grant writer for the City of Laredo in order to assist and facilitate all City departments in searching for grants and the completion of application for State and Federal Grants; and any matters incident thereto. (Co-Sponsored by Council Member Rudy Gonzalez, Jr. and Council Member Vidal Rodriguez)

Cm. Mercurio Martinez explained that during the Austin legislative trip, it was evident that the City lacked a staff member dedicated to researching and pursuing grants for City project. He felt the need for a position so that each Department could access a grant writer.

Cm. Gonzalez asked how many grant writers are in the City total. Rosario Cabello, Interim Co-City Manager, confirmed that the City does not have one currently dedicated to that task. However, some Departments have staff members who assist in writing grants along with their other duties. Cm. Gonzalez agreed that the City experienced some issues for lack of this position and voiced his support of this item.

Mrs. Cabello agreed that this position would be very valuable to the City as many projects have missed out on opportunities to secure grant funding.

Cm. Vielma suggested placing this position in the Internal Auditor's office with the Compliance Officer so that the two officers may oversee the grants and contracts. Cm. Torres stated his opinion that a grant writer position is a great idea. However, he suggested that the City hire someone on a contract basis rather than as a salaried employee as is done in other cities.

Cm. Altgelt reiterated that the City's lack of a grant writer resonated clearly in Austin; staff realized that the City had missed numerous opportunities as a result of not having a grant writer pursuing grant funding full-time. He noted that the City could hire a full-time staff member with an incentivized salary like a base salary plus a commission.

Dr. Marte Martinez stated that the majority of work that needs to be done for legislative trips must take place during the off-year, so grants must be researched by a staff member going through the budget cycle along with the City in order to appropriate specific amounts of money. He agreed that the City would best utilize a full-time grant writer position.

Mrs. Cabello cautioned Council that if they place the grant writer under the Internal Auditor, City management will not be able to provide direction to that position. All direction would have to come from Council; she asked Council to keep that in mind when making a decision. If the position is placed under CDBG, then they would only be able to write grants for CDBG projects. She advised that Council place the position under the City Manager's Office.

Veronica Baeza, Internal Auditor, cautioned Council that placing any position under the Auditor's Office may present problems with self-auditing in the future. Staff wants to be able to audit anything without the appearance of bias.

Cm. Gonzalez asked if the Transit/EI Metro Department, which is separate from the City, would benefit from the City's grant writer. Robert Eads, Interim Co-City Manager, stated that while the grant writer could be available to that Department, it may present a challenge as the two entities are separate. However, staff could partner with the Department for any particular grant projects as is done now.

Motion to direct staff to hire a full-time dedicated grant writer for the City of Laredo under the City Manager's Office with a competitive, performance-based salary in order to assist and facilitate all City Departments in search of grant funding and the completion of applications for state and federal grants, as amended.

Moved: Cm. Mercurio Martinez

Second: Cm. Gonzalez

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

2. Discussion and possible action to amend Section 2-87.6 of the Code of Ordinances by excluding the position of City Manager from the City's pay administration policy as it relates to the automatic salary increase; and any matters incident thereto. (Co-Sponsored by Council Member Vidal Rodriguez)

Cm. Mercurio Martinez explained that when a City Manager retires and a new employee is hired or an employee is promoted from within, that employee automatically receives the same amount of salary as the previous City Manager. This is common amongst all employee positions, but the City Manager should be excluded from that practice. He stated that Council can discuss the City Manager's salary instead.

Dr. Marte Martinez voiced his concern because experience is important and should be taken into consideration across all departments. If an employee retires after 20 years of working in the same position, then the next employee with fewer years of experience does not have the same tenure to warrant the same salary as the new retiree. He

encouraged Council to consider this across the entire City.

Robert Eads, Interim Co-City Manager, clarified that the policy does not guarantee the salary. It guarantees the pay grade that is assigned to that position and its duties. Pay grades have a range of salaries, and the promoted employee will be paid within that range commensurate with their level of expertise. However, the City Manager is currently included in that group and must be excluded.

Rosa Salinas, Acting Human Resources Director, explained that the pay grades are tied with the compensation plan. All pay grades apply to regular employees with the exception of the City Manager, who is under contract. The City Manager's salary is set by Council.

Kristina L. Hale, City Attorney, clarified that Fire and Police are excluded from this section of the Code of Ordinances. .

Motion to approve effective immediately.

Moved: Cm. Mercurio Martinez

Second: Cm. Balli

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn.

Moved: Cm. Torres

Second: Cm. Balli

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstain: 0