

THE LEVELLAND CITY COUNCIL MET IN A REGULAR MEETING ON MONDAY, THE 6<sup>th</sup> DAY OF JANUARY, 2025, AT LEVELLAND CITY HALL, R. O. DENNIS COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 1709 AVENUE H, WITH THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS PRESENT:

Breann Buxkemper	Honorable Mayor	Present
Michael Stueart	Mayor Pro Tem	Present
Bill Powell	Council Member	Present
Max Ledesma	Council Member	Absent
Jaime McCabe	Council Member	Present
Slater Elza	City Attorney	Absent
Courtney M. White	City Attorney	Present
James Fisher	City Manager	Present
José Cavazos	Assistant City Manager	Present
Andréa Corley	City Secretary	Present

The City Council meeting was called to order at 6:00pm by Mayor Buxkemper.

The Pledge was led by Mayor Breann Buxkemper.

The Invocation was led by Michael Moore, Bibles & Boots Cowboy Church  
Police Chief Erica O'Bryon recognized two citizens for their quick actions in a recent situation.

*Statements by Citizens:*

There were no statements by a citizens.

**FIRST ITEM OF BUSINESS:**

*Consider and take necessary action to approve the minutes of the December 16, 2024 regular meeting.*

Motion by Michael Stueart

Seconded by Jaime McCabe

To approve the minutes of the December 16, 2024, regular meeting.

Motion carried unanimously.

**SECOND ITEM OF BUSINESS:**

*Consider and take necessary action on Resolution No. 2025-01 to order and establish procedure for the May 3, 2025, City of Levelland Uniform General Election.*

The City of Levelland general election date will be Saturday, May 3, 2025.

Resolution No. 2025-01 calls for a General Election for the election for council members from District B and District D.

The resolution addresses the filing dates for the candidates, early voting, designated polling place, dates and times.

Motion by Bill Powell

Seconded by Jaime McCabe

To approve Resolution No. 2025-01 to order and establish procedure for the May 3, 2025, City of Levelland Uniform General Election.

Motion carried unanimously.

### **THIRD ITEM OF BUSINESS:**

*Consider and take necessary action on City of Levelland organizational changes.*

The city employees are the backbone of our organization and it is because of their efforts we can exceed the expectations of our community. It is also because of their efforts; we are the preferred community of the South Plains. As I have completed my first year, I have noticed areas that need tweaking and some areas that need changes.

The first area that needs to be reviewed is a Compensation Review of all of our positions. I have prepared an RFP to solicit information regarding our city positions. During the past year, we have filled some key positions with some outstanding professionals, but we had to pay them more than the previous employee. It is no secret that traditionally a new person will make more than the former incumbent, but I want to make sure we are taking care of our employees. It costs more than dollars when we lose employees and I would like to make sure we are not only competitive dollar wise, but benefit wise as well.

The second area that needs to be looked at are the positions and responsibilities of our employees. We have several employees that are the only ones in their department, and they perform critical tasks for the organization and community on a daily basis. We also have numerous employees who are eligible to retire within the next 5 years and it may take 3 – 5 to get new employees up to speed (much less the loss of institutional knowledge). We need to look at cross-training programs or hiring additional personnel to learn these functions and/or take some of the load off of their daily tasks. Separation of duties and responsibilities provides an invaluable opportunity for continuity of operations and instills integrity with accountability.

The third area of concern falls within the pay scale of the Levelland Police Department. It was discovered in late 2024 that the pay scale of the PD was limited in scope and that might be a factor in our recruitment and retention. LPD and HR worked together to address the challenge and created a pay scale that is fair, balanced and attractive for current/future employees. The impact of this adjustment is approximately \$130,000 to the budget, but it

will be absorbed in the FY 25 Annual Budget due to vacancies. It will be a factor in future budgets that we will begin addressing with Chief O'Bryon and Cynthia.

The fourth area of concern is within our Public Works Department. Currently Joe Cavazos, ACM, serves as the Public Works Director and Kevin Hurn serves as the Assistant Director of Public Works. The city will have two major projects underway in 2025, the new Wastewater Plant and the water meter replacement project. I will need Joe to serve in the capacity as Capital Projects Manager and Kevin to perform more as the Director in Public Works. To manage this change, I am proposing creating two (2) Superintendent positions, (Street, Sanitation and Shop and Water, Wastewater) and Crew Leaders underneath these Superintendents. This department has probably one of the most critical responsibilities within the city and they are often overlooked. The city needs to invest in the personnel within these departments to ensure that they have the required State Licenses needed for their job to protect our community, the infrastructure and resources.

The fifth area of concern is training. We have to provide the means for continuous improvement and professional development for the success of our community and organization. I am proposing to create an in-house training program called Levell-Up Levelland. This program will partner with Leadership Levelland, Texas Engineering Extension Service, South Plains College, LISD, Texas Water Utilities Association, TML Risk Pool, Texas Rural Water Association, Government Finance Officers Association, National Recreation Parks Association, TML Affiliates and other entities to provide educational opportunities for employees. I would like to target Fridays as our training days, but it will be determined by our partners. The training classes will help our employees with training required for licensing, understanding budgets, financial management, conflict management, social media, mental health, operational safety, first aid and others that may be beneficial.

Levelland has a lot going on and even more on the horizon. It will take all of us working together to help our community achieve our goals. Our employees are some of the best out there and I believe our investment in them, dollars and resources, will not only help them personally and professionally, but us as well.

Motion by Jaime McCabe

Seconded by Michael Stueart

To approve the City of Levelland organizational changes as presented.

Motion carried unanimously

#### **FOURTH ITEM OF BUSINESS:**

*Hold a public hearing regarding substandard structures located at:*

- *Subject Property: 116 Walnut, Levelland, TX 79336-Legal Description: SHANNON (LEV), BLOCK 19, LOT 2 E/80*
- *Subject Property: 1308 9th, Levelland, TX 79336-Legal Description: OT LEVELLAND, BLOCK 145, LOT 4*

- *Subject Property: 802 Railroad Ave, Levelland, TX 79336-Legal Description: OT LEVELLAND, BLOCK A, LOT 1-3*
- *Subject Property: 804 Ave C, Levelland, TX 79336-Legal Description: OT LEVELLAND, BLOCK 139, LOT 11*
- *Subject Property: 1309 2nd, Levelland, TX 79336-Legal Description: OT LEVELLAND, BLOCK 67, LOT 5 E/2 & LOT 6 E/2*
- *Subject Property: 1311 2nd, Levelland, TX 79336-Legal Description: OT LEVELLAND, BLOCK 67, LOT 5 W/2 & LOT 6 W/2*

Mayor Buxkemper opened the Public Hearing at 6:07pm.  
 Two citizens spoke during the hearing about two properties.  
 Mayor Buxkemper closed the Public Hearing at 6:48pm.

**FIFTH ITEM OF BUSINESS:**

*Consider and take necessary action and issue any necessary order to abate, repair, secure or demolish regarding substandard structure located at:*

- *Subject Property: 116 Walnut, Levelland, TX 79336-Legal Description: SHANNON (LEV), BLOCK 19, LOT 2 E/80*
- *Subject Property: 1308 9th, Levelland, TX 79336-Legal Description: OT LEVELLAND, BLOCK 145, LOT 4*
- *Subject Property: 802 Railroad Ave, Levelland, TX 79336-Legal Description: OT LEVELLAND, BLOCK A, LOT 1-3*
- *Subject Property: 804 Ave C, Levelland, TX 79336-Legal Description: OT LEVELLAND, BLOCK 139, LOT 11*
- *Subject Property: 1309 2nd, Levelland, TX 79336-Legal Description: OT LEVELLAND, BLOCK 67, LOT 5 E/2 & LOT 6 E/2*
- *Subject Property: 1311 2nd, Levelland, TX 79336-Legal Description: OT LEVELLAND, BLOCK 67, LOT 5 W/2 & LOT 6 W/2*

Motion by Jaime McCabe  
 Seconded by Bill Powell  
 To table action on Subject Property: 116 Walnut, Levelland, TX 79336-Legal Description: SHANNON (LEV), BLOCK 19, LOT 2 E/80 until the next meeting.  
 Motion carried unanimously

Motion by Michael Stueart  
 Seconded by Bill Powell  
 To order demolition of Subject Property: 1308 9th, Levelland, TX 79336-Legal Description: OT LEVELLAND, BLOCK 145, LOT 4  
 Motion carried unanimously

Motion by Bill Powell  
Seconded by Jaime McCabe  
To order demolition of Subject Property: 802 Railroad Ave, Levelland, TX 79336-Legal  
Description: OT LEVELLAND, BLOCK A, LOT 1-3  
Motion carried unanimously

Motion by Jaime McCabe  
Seconded by Michael Stueart  
To order demolition of Subject Property: 804 Ave C, Levelland, TX 79336-Legal  
Description: OT LEVELLAND, BLOCK 139, LOT 11  
Motion carried unanimously

Motion by Michael Stueart  
Seconded by Jaime McCabe  
To order demolition of Subject Property: 1309 2nd, Levelland, TX 79336-Legal Description:  
OT LEVELLAND, BLOCK 67, LOT 5 E/2 & LOT 6 E/2  
Motion carried unanimously

Motion by Michael Stueart  
Seconded by Jaime McCabe  
To order demolition of Subject Property: 1311 2nd, Levelland, TX 79336-Legal Description:  
OT LEVELLAND, BLOCK 67, LOT 5 W/2 & LOT 6 W/2  
Motion carried unanimously

## **SIXTH ITEM OF BUSINESS:**

*Consider and take necessary action on Ordinance 1087 on first reading granting to Atmos Energy the right, privilege and franchise to conduct within the City of Levelland, Texas, a gas company.*

The City's franchise agreement with Atmos Energy adopted a Franchise Agreement with Atmos Energy in April 2009 and it expired in April 2024. Atmos advised the city that it had expired in the Fall and a draft agreement has been prepared for your review and consideration of approval. City staff and legal have reviewed the draft Agreement proposed by Atmos and also other Agreements adopted by other municipalities.

The City Charter, Article XVIII Franchises, requires 3 readings of the proposed Agreement at regular meetings and that the proposed Agreement be no more than 25 years. The proposed Agreement is for 15 years.

City Manager James Fisher is communicating with Atmos on the Ordinance, and until they have weighed in any possible changes, Mr. Fisher recommends tabling this item.

Motion by Bill Powell  
Seconded by Michael Stueart  
To table this item until the next meeting.  
Motion carried unanimously

#### **SEVENTH ITEM OF BUSINESS:**

*Consider and take necessary action on a payment request from AMERESCO in the amount of \$283,040.58 for the water meter project pursuant to the contract approved between the City and AMERESCO in October 2024.*

The city has received payment application #1 from AMERSCO in the amount of \$283,040.58. This amount will be reimbursed to the city upon the issuance of Certificates of Obligation that the City Council will consider in February. Once the CO's are authorized, it will take 30 – 45 days for the city to receive the funds.

Motion by Jaime McCabe  
Seconded by Bill Powell  
To approve payment application # 1 from AMERESCO in the amount of \$283,040.58.  
Motion carried unanimously

#### **EIGHTH ITEM OF BUSINESS:**

*Consider and take necessary action to authorize the Mayor and/or City Manager to execute and sign the necessary documents for the 300-foot guyed tower and related amenities (studies, filing fees and permits, support facilities, security fencing, antennae, cables, related equipment and removal of old tower).*

The radio communication tower in the city park was significantly damaged during the storm on May 29, 2024. Attached is the inspection report detailing the disrepair condition of the tower. Also attached is the cost estimate to repair the tower, though they're not confident they can get the twist out of the tower. Even if they were able to fully repair the tower, it is still a 50-year-old structure that is overloaded (ice accumulation standard) with the current equipment loading and it does not have everything on it that we need. There is a FEMA project to recover the cost of the repairs, but the city would be able to take that reimbursement from FEMA and apply it towards building a new tower. We have added a mitigation addendum to the FEMA tower repair project which would allow for "enhancements" to be completed in the project to make it more resilient. Our plan for the project is to increase the tower face (width) from 18" to 43" and increase the wind load

strength. Loading increase will allow us to safely add antennas and increase communication capabilities for local public safety. (e.g. Increasing police department antenna height from 120ft to 319ft). These enhancements qualify this project for FEMA mitigation match up to the same amount as the damages sustained during the storm. The old tower will be torn down after the new tower is completed; this will be coordinated so we don't have any lapse in communications for public safety.

The city allocated \$250,000 in ARPA funding for this project in Resolution 2024-40 on December 16, 2024. This project is also through the cooperative purchasing program of BuyBoard so bids are not required.

The total cost breakdown is below:

\$297,000.00 New Tower Structure, Equipment and Removal of Old Tower Quote  
\$99,900.00 Repair Cost Estimate ( FEMA Reimbursed 80/20Match)  
-\$79,920.00 (FEMA) \$19,980 (City) (80/20 Match)  
-\$99,900.00 Mitigation Match (FEMA Mitigation Payout)  
+\$50,000.00 Environmental Impact Study, FAA/FCC Filing Fees & permits, Geotechnical (soil) Composition Study  
+\$25,000.00 Concrete Communications Building Purchase and Freight Estimate  
+\$12,000.00 Additional Antenna, coax cable and security fence around base of tower and guy anchor points

\$204,180.00 Grand total (Cost to City)

Motion by Michael Stueart

Seconded by Jaime McCabe

To authorize the Mayor and/or City Manager to execute and sign the necessary documents for the 300-foot guyed tower and related amenities (studies, filing fees and permits, support facilities, security fencing, antennae, cables, related equipment and removal of old tower). Motion carried unanimously

#### **NINTH ITEM OF BUSINESS:**

*Consider and take necessary action to authorize the City Manager to execute the necessary documents for the purchase of a 2025 Chevrolet Silverado 2500HD (CK20743) 4WD Crew Cab 159" Work Truck to replace the Emergency Management Truck damaged in the May 2024 Storm.*

The Emergency Management Truck was significantly damaged during the storm on May 29, 2024. TML IRP has totaled the vehicle and provided an insurance amount of approximately -\$20,683.90. The city has utilized The Interlocal Purchasing System (TIPS) Cooperative Contract to find a replacement vehicle. The cost is as follows:

- \$53,620.00 - Purchase Price

- - \$20,683.90— Insurance payout
- \$32,936.10 - Total less insurance
- + 6,000.00 - Upfitting including moving all transferable lights and equipment from old pickup to new. Grill guard and other equipment will have to be new because it won't fit on this pickup model.
- \$38,936.10 Grand Total

The cost will be shared between the County and the City at \$19,468.05 each.

Motion by Bill Powell

Seconded by Jaime McCabe

To authorize the City Manager to execute the necessary documents for the purchase of a 2025 Chevrolet Silverado 2500HD (CK20743) 4WD Crew Cab 159" Work Truck to replace the Emergency Management Truck damaged in the May 2024 Storm.

Motion carried unanimously

#### **TENTH ITEM OF BUSINESS:**

*Discussion on City board appointments.*

The City is fortunate to have numerous volunteers serve as Board and Committee Members. They serve a vital role in our community and are a great resource. City Council asked city staff to reach out to Board and Commission Members to see who is willing to continue to serve our community. Staff has reached out to the members and is anticipating answers no later than Wednesday, January 8<sup>th</sup>. Once we know who is willing to serve, we will notify you of the remaining seats to be filled.

We will also need to consider appointing a Centennial Committee to begin working on the city's 100 Year Celebration in 2026. This Committee will be tasked with creating a year-long celebration that will highlight our community's achievements and growth, as well as creating a new enhanced foundation to build the next 100 years of prosperity.

No Action Taken

#### **ELEVENTH ITEM OF BUSINESS:**

*Charter Review Committee update.*

The Charter Review Committee has met twice since the initial appointment in November. City Attorney Slater Elza has presided over the meetings and has given a great overview of the Charter. At the last meeting there was a good discussion regarding City Council members,

number of representatives, residency requirements, quorum, and general governance. There was also discussion regarding the reading of Ordinances and Franchise Agreements.

The next meeting of the Charter Review Committee is Wednesday, January 8<sup>th</sup>.

No Action Taken

**TWELFTH ITEM OF BUSINESS:**

*City Manager Report: Staff Updates, Project Updates, Staff/Citizen recognition, Items of Community Interest. No action will be taken.*

- Capt. McDonald and Police Officer Fortner received a Commendation in Community Relations from Chief O'Bryon for their assistance to Sundown Police Department with "Coco with our Heroes".
- City Council Candidate packets are available for pick-up, 3 have thus far.
- Charter Review Committee will meet Tuesday, January 14th at 6pm.
- City Holiday, Monday January 20th, MLK Day.
- City Council Meeting is Monday, January 20th at 6 pm.
- Levelland Listens is Friday, February 7th, location TBD. 3 guests, staff and Mayor/City Council Member at January meeting.

No Action Taken.

**THIRTEENTH ITEM OF BUSINESS:**

*Convene into executive session in accordance with Texas Government Code §551.074 to deliberate the appointment, employment, evaluation, duties, discipline, or dismissal of a public officer or employee: (City Manager)*

Mayor Buxkemper convened Council into Executive Session at 6:51pm.

Mayor Buxkemper returned Council to Open Session at 7:26pm.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:53pm

Respectfully Submitted,

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Andréa Corley, TRMC  
City Secretary

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Breann Buxkemper, Mayor