Official Minutes of Regular City Council Meeting

Of the City of Richland, Texas

Mayor Kenneth Guard called the meeting to order on October 12, 2023, at 6:00 PM in the Civic Center of Richland, Texas. Those in attendance were Chief Financial Officer Bruce Thomas, Council members Shirley Thomas, Jodie Farmer, Caren Smith and Jay Tidwell, Operations Director Sharon Settlemyer, Chief Hoffman. There were no (0) visitors present.

Kenneth Guard gave the invocation.

Comments from citizens: None.

There was discussion of the Minutes of the September 14, 2023, meeting. Jay Tidwell made a motion to accept the minutes. Jodie Farmer seconded the motion. Motion carried with a vote of 4 “ayes” and 0 “nays”.

There was discussion of the financial report for August 2023. Sharon explained to the Council that there have been a lot of checks written out of the General Fund and Tax Fund in October, so next month is not going to look good. Jay Tidwell made a motion to accept the report. Jodie Farmer seconded the motion. Motion carried with a vote of 4 “ayes” and 0 “nays”.

There was discussion of the police department/municipal court report. Jodie Farmer made a motion to accept the report. Jay Tidwell seconded the motion. Motion carried with a vote of 4 “ayes” and 0 “nays”.

Mayor Guard announced the council will go into Executive Session to discuss contracts at 6:08 p.m.

Mayor Guard called the regular meeting back to order at 6:11 p.m.

There was discussion of the executive session agenda items. Caren Smith made a motion to discontinue the contract with B&W and go on the County’s rotation for towing vehicles. Jodie Farmer seconded the motion. Motion carried with a vote of 4 “ayes” and 0 “nays”.

There was discussion of the purchase of Microsoft 365 licensing for Police Department email accounts, security features, storage, and applications. Chief Hoffman explained this is required by CJIS and needs to be done now due to audit. It will probably cost $20.00 a month per officer. Jodie Farmer made a motion to purchase the licensing. Caren Smith seconded the motion. Motion carried with a vote of 4 “ayes” and 0 “nays”.

There was discussion of the purchase of office equipment for the police department (for a total of $1,459.95): (1) Dell 7010SFF Desktop Computer - $1,139.97 and (2) Dell S2721HS 27” Monitor - $159.99/each. Chief Hoffman stated he had to purchase this equipment prior to council approval because the computer in the Chief’s office was out of date, and there needed to be two monitors for him to work efficiently. Jay Tidwell made a motion to purchase the equipment. Shirley Thomas seconded the motion. Motion carried with a vote of 4 “ayes” and 0 “nays”.

The discussion of the purchase of the following police equipment (for a total of $1,021.38): (1) Glock 45 MOS Handgun - $477.40, (1) Stream light TLR-1 HL (Weapon Flashlight) - $169.99, (1) Holosun 507C Green Dot Sight (Optic) - $373.99 was tabled.

There was discussion on authorizing the Chief of Police to create and maintain social media accounts for the Police Department. Chief Hoffman explained that the prior Interim Chief had deleted the Police Department Facebook page, and he had filed a letter with the DA’s office. Caren Smith made a motion to authorize the Chief to create and maintain social media accounts. Jay Tidwell seconded the motion. Motion carried with a vote of 4 “ayes” and 0 “nays”.

There was discussion of plans to provide an independent facility for the Police Department. Chief Hoffman explained that the CJIS audit had brought attention to the fact that the Department is not secure. Sharon stated that she had discussed moving the Fire Department to the garage where the police cars are and moving the police department to the fire department with the mayor. There will have to be renovations to the garage. Chief Hoffman stated the door between the Civic Center and the Fire Department would have to be removed, and this needs to be done quickly. She suggested that there be some bids done to figure out the best option for the city. There was no vote on this item.

There was discussion of renovations to the Patrol Room for the Police Department. Chief Hoffman stated he wants to run ethernet cable through the ceiling to remove any use of wi-fi for the police department. He is estimating five (5) sockets, a roll of ethernet cable and an eight (8) port switch would cost less than $300.00. Jay Tidwell made a motion to purchase these items. Caren Smith seconded the motion. Motion carried with a vote of 4 “ayes” and 0 “nays”.

There was discussion of renovations to existing storage rooms to provide a dedicated evidence storage room. Chief Hoffman stated the evidence safe in his office is full, and evidence is being stored in his office, which makes his whole office the evidence room. He is having to log anyone that comes in due to this. He would like to take over the City’s storage room and use part of the Ladies’ Club room to make an evidence room for the police department. Since there is discussion of moving the police department completely, this item was tabled.

There was discussion of allowing Police to use comp time in place of overtime pay. Chief Hoffman explained that this would be better for the city, so that overtime is not paid. Any hours that would have accrued overtime can be moved to comp time paid at the standard rate. Caren Smith stated she liked this idea. Caren Smith made a motion to allow comp time. Jay Tidwell seconded the motion. Motion carried with a vote of 4 “ayes” and 0 “nays”.

There was discussion of Texas Municipal Retirement System enrollment. Sharon stated that the Interim Chief had requested this information, and that it was finally provided. She stated she is suggesting to table this and look at it in January. Chief Hoffman stated he is not interested in the city participating. Caren Smith asked if it was for all employees. Sharon stated it was. Jay Tidwell asked what she thought. She stated she had been working for seventeen (17) years and would like to have something. Chief Hoffman stated it would something he could use as a hiring perk. This was tabled until January.

There was discussion of the Water Report. Jay Tidwell made a motion to accept the water report. Jodie Farmer seconded the motion. Motion carried with a vote of 4 “ayes” and 0 “nays”.

Things to place on next month’s agenda: Fire Department/Police Department move.

Meeting adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

Telephone vote on October 24, 2023. Chief Hoffman wants to increase starting salary to $23 per hour, with $25 at end of probation period of 6 months. Caren Smith made the motion; Jay Tidwell seconded. Motion passed with a vote of 4 “ayes” and 0 “nays”.

These minutes approved by the City Council of Richland, Texas on November 9, 2023.

 APPROVED:

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 Mayor Kenneth Guard

ATTEST:

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City Operations Director