

Flatonia City Council
Regular Meeting Minutes
January 14, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.

Present:

Mayor	Travis Seale
Mayor Pro Tem	Joanye Eversole
Councilmembers	Ginny Sears Allen Kocian Josh Homan Donna Cockrell
City Manager	Sonya Bishop
City Secretary	Jacqueline Ott
Fire Chief	Chris Swenning ABSENT
Utility Director	Jack Pavlas
Utility Supervisor	Steve Cobler
Police Chief	Lee Dick
Police Sergeant	Trey Tunis

Opening Agenda

<i>Call to Order</i>	Mayor Pro Tem Eversole called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.
<i>Invocation & Pledge</i>	Councilman Kocian led the invocation and pledges.
<i>Citizen Participation</i>	none

Presentations

- P1.** Mike Patton and Jeff Bednarz with Camp Lucky Productions presented a proposal for an advertising commercial for the City of Flatonia. They are offering their directing and producing services at no charge and submitted a bid of \$45,278 for filming. Hotel Occupancy Funds may be used to fund this project. Councilwoman Sears stated the Flatonia Economic Development Corporation will fund the advertising of the film upon completion.
- P2.** Darrell Gordon with Flatonia Youth Sports and Events presented a proposal for an LCRA Community Development Partnership Program grant. The organization will apply for the grant and, if awarded, will work with LCRA to improve the soccer fields at 7 Acre Park. Mr. Gordon needs the City's approval since the soccer fields are the City's property. The organization would like to install lighting, bleachers, benches, storage, concessions, and a water fountain.
- P3.** Victor Rodriguez presented his code violation case to the Council. He received a code violation for occupying a recreational vehicle outside a manufactured home park for more than 72 hours. He explained that he had a family situation arise from which he had no other affordable option for housing. He stated he is working to construct a tiny home on his business lot on 7th Street so that he may reside there within the city ordinances. He asked the Council to allow him six months to gather his finances and complete construction. City Manager Bishop informed the Council that this item will be on the deliberation agenda in February. She will grant a 30-day extension until the Council can vote on the matter.

Staff Reports

Fire Chief

Fire Chief Swenning was absent from the meeting.

Police Chief

Police Chief Dick reported on the newly hired officer. He is going through the police academy at Wharton County Junior College. He also asked the Council to review the racial profiling report as required by state law.

Utility Director

Utility Supervisor Cobler reported on the new water/wastewater apprenticeship program. He and City Secretary Ott worked with the Texas Rural Water Association and the local Workforce Solutions office to enroll two utility crew members and apply for scholarships to cover the cost of the program. At the end of the program, both crew members will receive a Wastewater D license and a Water C license.

Code Enforcement

The Council stated they appreciated the new spreadsheet that Code Official Hernandez added to her report.

City Manager

City Manager Bishop reported she resolved a sales tax issue with a new business. Mayor Seale asked Utility Supervisor Cobler about road construction. He responded with no changes. Councilman Homan asked about Well #13, and Utility Director Pavlas responded the well is included in an upcoming grant. Mayor Seale asked Police Chief Dick about the equipment failure. He responded there was a failure of the server that holds all video recordings. He is working with the Attorney General to recover information. City Manager Bishop has already approved the purchase of an upgraded server.

Miscellaneous

Councilman Homan and Councilwoman Sears reported on the Comprehensive Plan Review Committee. Councilman Homan has attended the regular meetings for Planning and Zoning and Economic Development, and plans to attend the upcoming Parks meeting. He is hopeful to reach the May deadline.

Consent Agenda

C1.

Councilwoman Sears moved to approve the meeting minutes from December 10, 2024. Mayor Pro Tem Eversole seconded the motion. None opposed. Motion carried unanimously.

C2.

Mayor Pro Tem Eversole moved to approve the financial reports from December 2024. Councilman Homan asked about the Texas Rural Water Association membership charge. Utility Supervisor Cobler answered that the association provides training and other opportunities for the water and wastewater crew. Councilwoman Sears seconded the motion. City Manager Bishop advised the Council that they will see the final activity for a waterline grant. Councilman Homan asked Police Chief Dick about the repair charge for a vehicle and advised it may be time to auction off the three Ford Explorers to avoid the extra expenses. Councilwoman Sears seconded the motion. None opposed. The motion carried unanimously.

C3.

Councilwoman Sears moved to approve the Hotel Occupancy Tax reports for Quarter 4 2024. Mayor Pro Tem Eversole seconded the motion. None opposed. Motion carried unanimously.

Discussion Agenda

D1.

Chad Emmel with BEFCO Engineering spoke to the Council about the sludge removal project timeline. He said Utility Director Pavlas has a testing regimen to complete over the next two months. The project will go through the bid process in March. We should select a contractor in April. The council will vote on the item in May. Construction will run from July through September, and the project will close in October. The current budget is \$458,000, which will allow the removal of 550 tons of sludge. Mayor Seale thought the budget was more and advised City Manager Bishop to review the minutes from the budget meetings to confirm.

Deliberation Agenda

DA1.1.2025.1

Regarding using HOT funds to pay for the proposed advertising commercial, Mayor Pro Tem Eversole expressed concern about potentially alienating certain businesses during the filming of the commercial. Councilman Homan is curious about how to measure the success of this project. Councilwoman Sears and Mayor Seale both stated the sales tax should reflect any rise in local consumerism and that the commercial will last far longer than any other form of advertising. Mayor Pro Tem Eversole moved to approve using HOT funds to pay for a City of Flatonia advertising commercial. Councilwoman Sears seconded the motion. None opposed. Motion carried unanimously.

DA1.1.2025.2

Councilwoman Sears moved to approve allowing Flatonia Youth Sports and Events to apply for an LCRA grant to improve the soccer fields at 7 Acre Park. Councilman Kocian seconded the motion. Councilman Homan questioned the proposed improvements and how they may alienate other groups who regularly use the park for other activities. Mayor Seale recommended adjusting the motion to "I move to approve allowing Flatonia Youth Sports and Events to apply for an LCRA grant to improve the soccer fields at 7 Acre Park pending project identification and review by the city manager." Councilwoman Sears amended her motion to include Mayor Seale's proposed change and added "..., utility director, and mayor." Councilman Kocian seconded the motion. Councilwoman Cockrell reminded Mayor Seale that the original motion must be withdrawn prior to accepting the amended motion. Councilwoman Sears withdrew her original motion. The second motion was accepted. None opposed. Motion carried unanimously.

DA1.1.2025.3

Councilman Homas moved to approve awarding the bid for grant administration for the FEMA Hazard Mitigation Assistance Grant Project. Mayor Pro Tem Eversole seconded the motion. None opposed. Motion carried unanimously.

DA1.1.2025.4

Councilwoman Sears moved to approve awarding the bid for engineering for the FEMA Hazard Mitigation Assistance Grant Project. Mayor Pro Tem Eversole seconded the motion. None opposed. Motion carried unanimously.

DA1.1.2025.5

City Manager Bishop explained that certain employees' excessive vacation time accrual was due to a lack of staff. The council questioned the previous extensions and argued that the personnel policy should have been followed all along. They argued this is a management issue and things must change to avoid this situation in the future. Councilwoman Cockrell suggested a buyback option. However, Mayor Pro Tem Eversole pointed out the budget couldn't handle the extra strain. Mayor Seale recommended that management stick to the hard deadline. Mayor Pro Tem moved to approve an extension of the use-by date for accrued vacation hours to September 30, 2025, with a report to the

Council in three months and again in six months. Councilwoman Sears seconded the motion. Councilwoman Cockrell opposed. Motion carried.

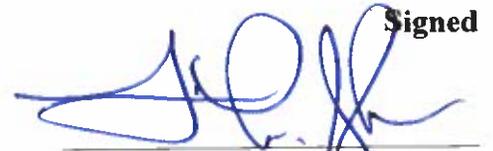
DA1.1.2025.6

City Manager Bishop explained that while researching the code violation for Mr. Rodriguez, it was discovered that the manufactured home park ordinance allowed for recreational vehicles (RVs). Due to the temporary nature of the vehicle, she would like to amend the ordinance to remove this option. Councilwoman Sears moved to approve Ordinance 2025.1.1, an ordinance amending Article 3.06 Manufactured Homes and Mobile Homes of the City of Flatonia Code of Ordinances. Mayor Pro Tem Eversole seconded the motion. Councilman Homan questioned the grandfather clause and how this ordinance would affect those citizens who currently reside in an RV and choose to upgrade. The moving structures ordinance will help the staff to monitor this potential situation. Councilwoman Cockrell opposed. Motion carried.

Adjournment

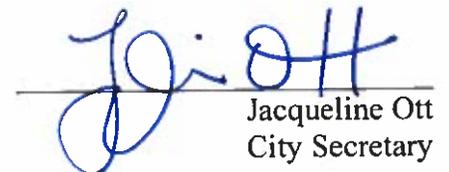
Councilman Kocian motioned to end the meeting. Mayor Pro Tem Eversole seconded the motion. None opposed. Motion carried unanimously. Mayor Seale adjourned the meeting at 9:08 p.m.

Signed



Travis Seale
Mayor

Attest



Jacqueline Ott
City Secretary