

**CITY OF LAREDO
SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING
M2022-SC-02
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
1110 HOUSTON STREET
LAREDO, TEXAS 78040
January 24, 2022
1:30 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:

Pete Saenz	Mayor
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
Rosario Cabello	Deputy City Manager
Kristina L. Hale	Assistant City Manager
Valeria E. Reyes	Assistant City Attorney

Citizen comments

V. PUBLIC HEARINGS

Motion to bring up Item 4

Moved: Cm. Dr. Martinez

Second: Cm. Ruben Gutierrez

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Motion Carries.

Motion to open public hearing 1.

Moved: Cm. Alberto Torres, Jr.

Second: Cm. Rudy Gonzalez, Jr.

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Motion Carries.

- 1. Public Hearing and Introduction of an Ordinance** approving and adopting the Redistricting Plan of the City of Laredo; providing for the redistricting of the eight (8) City Council Districts within the City of Laredo; and providing for publication and effective date.

The Redistricting Committee, voted to recommend approval of Redistricting Plan D Final, and Staff recommends approval.

Orlando Navarro Planning and Zoning director gave a presentation to the City of Laredo population; he mentioned that every ten years the City is required to do a redistricting while following all rules and regulations as required by Federal, State and Charter. He explained that as part of the process each City Council member appoints two members per district to create a Redistricting Commission. The Mayor also selects the chair and vice chair to the commission as per City Charter. He also explained that the purpose of the commission is to represent equal representation of each district. He mentioned that the committee has met twice. On December 8, 2021 to draft plans B and C, created by the consultant and modified plan C to create Draft Plan C- modified. The second time on December 28, 2021 to modify draft plan C- modified to create draft plan D final. The committee voted to recommend approval of draft redistricting Plan D final.

Cm. Rudy Gonzalez, Jr. asked to go over his district. He stated that the way his district was redistricted looked very different and odd to him. Citizen Vish Viswanath addressed city council to express his concern stating that the redistricting committee had done a good job with the exception of the redistricting of District I and District II. He believes that the way those two districts had be redistricted was to gain political advantage to win an election, and to benefit one of the candidates. He stated that in was wrong of them to do that.

Cm. Vanessa Perez stated that since her district was almost perfect, she didn't understand why the committee had to make modifications to the district. Cm. Alberto Torres, Jr. expressed his concern regarding his district losing population as opposed to gaining population when his district needs growth. He also asked to regain back the Zacate Creek east

area, San Luis Rey area, and the recreation center area (413, 363). He is asking to leave his district intact and to give him whatever else, City Council would want him to gain. Cm. Vanessa Perez requested to get 308 back to District VII.

Motion to close public hearing and introduce as amended on the next City Council meeting.

Moved: Cm. Vanessa Perez

Second: Cm. Ruben Gutierrez, Jr.

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

NP:

Motion carries.

VI. CONSENT AGENDA

ENGINEERING: STAFF SOURCE RAMON E. CHAVEZ, CITY ENGINEER

2. Consideration for approval of the selection and negotiation of a contract with the top ranked consultant for Request for Qualifications (RFQ) FY22-ENG-10 Binational River Park which includes production of architectural renderings, illustrations and other related information necessary for Phase 1 of the Binational River Park design. This consists of an ecological restoration project that includes, but is not limited to an integrated green belt along the Rio Grande-Rio Bravo River Vega between Laredo, Texas, USA and Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas, Mexico spanning approximately 6.3 river miles (10.1 river kilometers) that will drive economic revitalization including public art, culture, as well as attracting tourism on both sides and transforming it into a unique international landmark with global reach for this hemisphere. The Binational working group recommends the selection of Overland Partners, Inc., San Antonio, TX. There is no financial impact at this time.

Citizen Gerry Schwebel addressed City Council in regards to the Binational River Park. He spoke on the beauty and importance of the Rio Grande. He is requesting the city to work in conjunction with the city of Nuevo Laredo along with Ambassador Salazar and Ambassador Moctezuma to create a Binational Park. Trisha Cortez gave thanks to City Council and the Mayor and asked for the project to be approved.

Ramon Chavez Engineering Director stated that his department received five proposals for the Binational Park project.

Motion to approve.

Moved: Cm. Alberto Torres, Jr.

Second: Cm. Ruben Gutierrez, Jr.

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Np:

Motion Carries.

PARKS & RECREATION: STAFF SOURCE JUAN J. GOMEZ, JR., PARKS & RECREATION DIRECTOR

3. **2022-R-020** Authorizing the City Manager to submit an application for the 2022 Texas Parks & Wildlife Department (TPWD) Texas Recreational Trails Program grant to create and renovate existing trails, as well as to provide, promote and support outdoor recreation, conservation, and environmental education to the community, and execute all relevant documents as determined by TPWD. Grant has no local match.

Cm. Dr. Marte Martinez spoke on the importance to have bike trails in the community, and to expand Shiloh bike trails. Citizen Fernando Baldazo addressed City Council on the importance to have bike trails, parks and green spaces for the community. He is also requesting help from the City of Laredo to rescue some of the bike trails that the city already has.

Cm. Mercurio Martinez III would like to further discuss improvements that can be made to the bike trails within the city.

Motion to approve.

Moved: Cm. Alberto Torres, Jr.

Second: Cm. Ruben Gutierrez, Jr.

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Np:

Motion carries.

END OF CONSENT AGENDA

VII. STAFF REPORTS

4. Presentation, discussion and possible action on the Redistricting Plan of the City of Laredo; providing for the redistricting of the eight (8) City Council Districts within the City of Laredo; and any matters incident thereto.

The Redistricting Committee, voted to recommend **approval** of Redistricting Plan D Final, and staff recommends **approval**.

Refer to Public Hearing number 1.

5. Appointment by the City Council of an Acting City Manager in accordance with section 3.04 of the Laredo City Charter, with possible action.

Motion approve City Manager Robert A. Eads resignation.

Moved: Mayor Pete Saenz

Second: Cm. Ruben Gutierrez, Jr.

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Np:

Motion carries.

Mayor Pete Saenz explained his concern and the importance to obtain an Interim City Manager as soon as possible. He also stated that Deputy City Manager Rosario Cabello would like to remain as the Deputy City Manager, at this time she declines to take the role as the Interim City Manager due to health issues.

Zaida Gonzalez, interim human resources director advised city council that deputy city manager Rosario Cabello, herself and Mayor Pete Saenz had gone over some options on what needed to be done regarding the need to hire someone to replace former City Manager Robert Eads. She also stated that she had made some calls to different companies that provide services in the search of retired or former City Managers. She mentioned that one of the companies she had contacted was Strategic Government Resources. She spoke to Wendo Medford, the President for interim services and consulting. He expressed that they have a list with about 500 ex city managers, and he was able to place 150 interim executives. She also mentioned that she spoke to another company Sliven Management, the company that was previously used to head hunt prior city manager and they are willing to take on the task. She also advised Council that Mr. Samuel Keith Selman, a previous candidate for the City Manager position had reached out to deputy city manager Rosario Cabello and offered to help and take on the role if city council would agree.

Mayor Pete Saenz explained that Mr. Selman would be able to take on the position as soon as Wednesday if council would approve.

Council member Alyssa Cigarroa mentioned that she believes Mr. Selman would be a great asset to the City of Laredo. She would like to move the motion to appoint him if he is willing take on the position that quick, she also agreed that he is well qualified and has the experience needed to take on the duties of a city manager.

Council member Ruben Gutierrez asked if he would be willing to take the position as City manager or only as Interim city manager.

Zaida Gonzalez mention that she has asked Mr. Selman and he had agreed to take the position only as an Interim City manager. He mentioned that since he was already retired, he would like to take on the position only as an interim city manager for the time needed by the City of Laredo.

Mayor Pete Saenz called to the question for all that are in favor to say I.

Deputy city manager Rosario Cabello asked that if prior to voting on the motion they would discuss and set on a salary for Mr. Selman.

Council Member Alberto Torres, Jr. mentioned that they should agree on a salary before passing the motion.

Council Member Alyssa Cigarroa asked city council members to support the motion to hire Mr. Selman as Interim city manager since it is a matter of public interest.

Mayor Pro Tempore Vidal Rodriguez asked to approve the motion only on an Interim basis, therefore it will allow new and incoming office holders to pick and choose a new city manager for the future.

Council member Alberto Torres, Jr. agreed with Mayor Pro Tempore Vidal Rodriguez, that the best thing to do is to let the new office holders to choose a new city manager. He also agreed that it is in the best interest of the city of Laredo to hire Mr. Selman as the Interim city manager for the next ten to twelve months.

Mayor and council would like to go on a short recess to contact Mr. Selman to make a job offer.

Motion to go on a short recess of five minutes.

Moved: Cm. Dr. Martinez

Second: Cm. Martinez III

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Np:

Motion Carries.

Mayor Pete Saenz calls back the meeting on open session. Deputy city manager Rosario Cabello stated that Human Resources Zaida Gonzalez, herself, and two more council members contacted Mr. Selman to make the job offer. She stated that Mr. Selman agreed to take the job offer with the condition to be hired as a consultant services, with a salary of two hundred and seventy thousand dollars a year with a monthly allowance of fifteen hundred dollars per month for incidentals and a minimum of six months guaranteed. Council member Alberto Torres, Jr. would like to make an amendment to offer Mr. Selman ten months guaranteed, and to accept his terms as explained by Rosario Cabello. Council member Mercurio Martinez III would like to amend the job offer to a six-month period. Council does not agree on Council member Mercurio Martinez III amendment.

Motion to appoint Mr. Keith Selman if he is willing to come in so quickly. He's well qualified, he has the experience needed and not mention he has been vetted by the city and the search committee that was put into place prior. To accept his terms regarding his salary and monthly expenses as presented by Ms. Cabello with a 10 month guarantee.

Moved: Cm. Alyssa Cigarroa
Second: Cm. Dr. Marte Martinez
For: 8 Against: 0
Np:

Abstain: 0

Motion Carries.

6. Discussion with possible action on the selection of the next City Attorney and/or to include retaining separate independent counsel to assist the Mayor and City Council and/or City Management Team on reviewing and evaluating all pending operational and legal matters, and all other matters incident thereto.

Motion to table and bring back to next meeting.

Moved: Cm. Alberto Torres, Jr.
Second: Cm. Dr. Marte Martinez
For: 8 Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Motion carries.

VIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

GENERAL COUNCIL DISCUSSIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

7. Request by Council Member Vanessa J. Perez

1. Discussion with possible action regarding the hiring of an independent, credentialed, and qualified auditor to determine whether the City of Laredo has been properly and legally procuring contracts as per the Texas Procurement Act (and/or other related local, state, and federal statutes) and to establish best practices to avoid actual or potential violations of the aforementioned acts and statutes, and any other matters incident thereto. **(Co-sponsored by Council Member Alyssa Cigarroa)**

Motion to table.

Moved: Cm. Vanessa Perez
Second: Cm. Alberto Torres, Jr.
For: 8 Against: 0
NP:

Abstain: 0

Motion carries.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to Adjourn at 2:10 p.m.

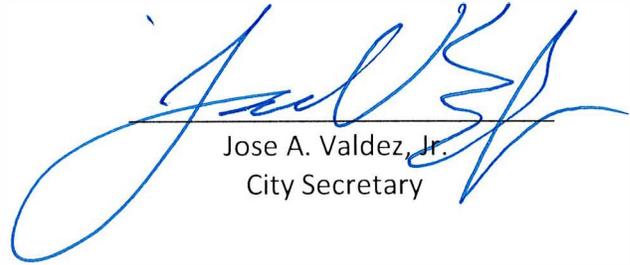
Moved: Cm. Martinez

Second: Cm. Alberto Torres, Jr.

For: 8 Against: 0

Abstain: 0

Motion carries.



Jose A. Valdez, Jr.
City Secretary