

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING via teleconference – April 13, 2020

The City Council of the City of La Grange met in Regular Session on Monday, April 13, 2020, via teleconference with the following members present on the call: Mayor Janet Moerbe, Councilmember Bonnie Busch, Mayor Pro tem John J. Cernosek Councilmember Jan Dockery, Councilman John Eilert, Councilman Pat Janca, Councilman Ken Taylor, Councilmember Kathy Weishuhn, and Councilmember Violet Zbranek. Staff present: Chief of Police David Gilbreath, City Secretary Janet Bayer, and City Attorney Angela Beck joined in on the teleconference later in the meeting. City Manager Shawn Raborn was absent. Visitors that announced they were on the call: Stacey Norris, Ron Dishman, Andy Behlen, and Quenten Gonzalez.

Mayor Janet Moerbe called the meeting to order. Councilman Pat Janca gave the invocation.

CONSENT AGENDA

Discuss and or Consider approval of March minutes.

Discuss and or Consider a Resolution to suspend the proposed CenterPoint Energy Entex rate until June 18, 2020.

A **Motion** was made by Councilman Eilert, **Second** Councilmember Weishuhn to approve the Consent Agenda Items as presented. Motion carried 8-0.

REGULAR AGENDA

Discuss and or Consider approval of the final plat of the Hope Hill Subdivision being a 22.95 acre property owned by Samaritan's Purse located at 808 Horton Street. Council gave preliminary approval of the subdivision on February 25, 2019. The City of La Grange received the final plat signed by Charles Tait, R.P.L.S with BEFCO Engineering who developed the final plat for Samaritan's Purse, the owner of the Hope Hill Subdivision. The new subdivision is located within both the city limits and the ETJ of the City of La Grange and is governed by our subdivision ordinance. The development consists of 58 single-family residential lots, 1 multi-family lot and 2 common amenities. The plat is in conformance with the City of La Grange subdivision ordinance and is being submitted to council for final consideration. **Motion** Mayor Pro tem Cernosek, **Second** Councilmember Weishuhn to approve the final plat of the Hope Hill Subdivision owned by Samaritan's Purse located at 808 Horton Street. Motion carried 8-0.

Discuss and or Consider preliminary replat request at 333 W Northline Street owned by Ron Dishman and Don Dishman. A request was received from Ron Dishman and Don Dishman to subdivide the property into four (4) separate lots located at 333 W Northline Street. The first lot will be measuring approximately 95' wide x 192' deep, the second lot will be measuring 80' wide x 192' deep, the third lot currently has a single-family home on it with the dimensions of the lot being 110' wide x 192' deep, and the fourth lot will be 1-acre and being sold to the adjoining owner and continued to be used for hay production. The three (3) lots will be having driveways exiting on Hanacek Lane. All lots meet the minimum size requirements required by City of La Grange Ordinances. There were twenty (20) letters sent to property owners within a 200' radius of the address asking if the owners are in favor of or opposed to the subdivision request. There were nine (9) letters returned in favor of granting the request, two (2) letters that were opposed to granting this request, and nine (9) letters not returned. Councilmember Zbranek asked if we knew what the reasoning was for the two (2) letters that were opposed to granting this request? We did not have the opposition letters at the time of the meeting and were unable to give the reasons for opposition. It was stated we could produce those letters to review at a

later date. Councilmember Zbranek said it was not necessary. **Motion** Councilmember Zbranek, **Second** Councilman Janca to approve the preliminary replat request at 333 W Northline Street owned by Ron Dishman and Don Dishman. Motion carried 8-0.

Discuss and or Consider awarding bid for the Cedar Street Drainage Project in the amount of \$91,944.00 to the low bidder SBS Construction of La Grange. Staff recommended that the Cedar Street Draining Project be awarded to SBS Construction of La Grange in the amount of \$91,944.00. The project will be funded by budgeted Street Department Capital funds. A letter was included from Mr. Tim Sanders with BEFCO Engineering recommending SBS Construction. **Motion** Councilmember Zbranek, **Second** Councilmember Dockery to approve awarding the bid for the Cedar Street Drainage Project in the amount of \$91,944.00 to the low bidder SBS Construction of La Grange. Motion carried 8-0.

Discuss and or Consider awarding engineering services agreement to BEFCO Engineering for General Land Office (GLO) CDBG-MIT applications for 2015, 2016, and Harvey funding for flood mitigation projects and subsequent implementation of awarded projects. Staff recently issued a request for engineering services to assist in the preparation of General Land Office (GLO) CDBG-MIT applications for 2015, 2016, and Harvey funding for flood mitigation projects and subsequent design and implementation of awarded projects. Engineering proposals were submitted by BEFCO Engineering, Strand Engineers, TRC Engineers and FCM Engineers. An evaluation committee was formed to review the Engineering firms and was comprised of Frank Menefee, Andy Blaha and Shawn Raborn who independently reviewed and scored the proposals. The ranked result of the scoring process was BEFCO Engineering, Strand Engineers, TRC Engineers and FCM Engineers. The first three firms can all do the job requested. Staff recommended the selection of BEFCO Engineering as the project engineer. The City of La Grange has utilized the services of BEFCO in the past on Community Development applications and they are currently the engineer for the EDA sewer line grant project. **Motion** Mayor Pro tem Cernosek, **Second** Councilman Eilert to approve awarding engineering services agreement to BEFCO Engineering for General Land Office (GLO) CDBG-MIT applications for 2015, 2016, and Harvey funding for flood mitigation projects and subsequent implementation of awarded projects. Motion carried 8-0.

Discuss and or Consider authorization of modifications to Utility billing for the months of March, April, May and June. Staff is requesting council authorization to make a number of modifications to the City of La Grange's current utility billing services. Staff is proposing that we suspend utility disconnections for the months of March, April, May, June and waive associated fees as a result of the hardship imposed on the community by the COVID-19 virus. Staff is also proposing that we waive the 10% penalty for the payment of utility bills after the 15th day of the month. The customer will remain financially responsible for the services provided and staff will work to develop payment plans that work for all impacted. Staff is also proposing the funding of a utility assistance program that will supplement the existing Combined Community Action Program activities. The utility assistance program is a separate action item for council to consider. The cost to implement these utility billing changes is estimated to be \$20,000, over the next three (3) months. Staff will continue to monitor the utility issue and will bring back for council review if the need to expand the fee waivers for an additional period. **Motion** Councilmember Weishuhn, **Second** Councilmember Zbranek to authorize modification to Utility billing for the months of March, April, May and June. Motion carried 8-0.

Discuss and or Consider allocating additional funding to Combined Community Action for utility assistance programs. Staff is proposing that we allocate \$25,000 that we have budgeted for Social Services in the fiscal year 2019-2020 Budget to assist with the expansion of the Combined Community Action (CCA) Comprehensive Energy Assistance Program (CEAP). Staff will bring back in July for council consideration a budget amendment to back fill funding for the other social service agencies. CCA currently administers a Comprehensive Energy Assistance Program that assists La Grange Utility customers with utility assistance payments. Currently the CEAP assists customers who earn less than 150% of the 2020

Poverty Guidelines based on family size. In fiscal year 2019, CCA assisted approximately 50 total customers with utility bills totaling over \$43,000. CCA provides assistance for up to 12 months for only the electric portion of the bill. In discussing the program with CCA, we could modify our program to assist families who earn less than 200% of the poverty guidelines which would open the program up to additional customers and focus only on those customers directly impacted by COVID-19. In addition, we would limit the payment of only two (2) months of utility bills for those impacted by the current disaster. We are defining impacted to be unemployed or have experienced a significant reduction in hours as a result of the COVID-19 disaster. The additional funding will be used to assist our customers that have experienced financial strain due to unemployment as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. If approved by Council, we should have the program in operation later this month. Councilman Taylor asked what Social Services would then not get funded? Mayor Moerbe stated that funding would still be available for other Social Services but at a later date so that these allocated funds could be used immediately. **Motion** Councilman Janca, **Second** Councilmember Busch to allocate additional funding in the amount of \$25,000 to Combined Community Action (CCA) for utility assistance programs for those additional customers directly impacted by COVID-19. Motion carried 8-0.

Discuss and or Consider implementation of a Locals Love La Grange Challenge – Utility Rebate for Local Receipts. This program would provide a utility rebate to La Grange Utilities customers who support local businesses. La Grange Utilities customers would get a \$15 rebate/discount on their utility bill per \$25 spent at local businesses. The cap would be a \$45 rebate/discount for the month with \$75 spent at local businesses. It is proposed that we limit the total amount of rebates at \$50,000 and it would be funded by cost savings in Utility Department budgets. The program would provide a benefit to our local merchants and also to our utility customers. A local business is defined as a La Grange business within the City limits with less than 50 employees. If approved by Council, the program would begin this week (on or about April 15th) and run until the end of April but may be extended. This program is only for La Grange Utilities customers. Due to the starting timeline of this program, it was asked how it would be advertised? Customers would be informed via City of La Grange Facebook page, City of La Grange website, a Fayette County Record press release, and a radio announcement on KVLG/KBUK radio. Councilman Taylor had some questions relating to the \$50,000 from the Utility Department budget. Where are we taking the money from specifically– electric or water departments, etc.? What project(s) will then not get done? What items/equipment will not get purchased? Ms. Norris, Director of Community Development and Tourism, stated that per City Manager Raborn, nothing will be foregone. **Motion** Mayor Pro tem Cernosek, **Second** Councilman Eilert to implement the Locals Love La Grange Challenge – Utility Rebate for Local Receipts program. Motion carried 8-0.

Report on EDC Community Investment programs being developed and implemented due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The first of three programs that the City of La Grange's Economic Development Corporation (EDC) approved funding for was \$100,000 designated to an emergency forgivable microloan fund approved on Tuesday, April 7th. These loans will be underwritten, approved, and serviced by BCL of Texas. Locally-owned, independent businesses with fewer than 50 employees that have been ordered to change their services due to the coronavirus would be eligible. These forgivable loans would be up to \$2,500 for each business. Following the three (3) month payment deferment period, loan recipients would pay a monthly payment on the loan for three (3) months. After the initial six (6) months, the remainder of the loan would be forgiven. 15 local businesses have already applied and will get funding if they're approved by BCL of Texas and inside the City limits. The second of three programs are \$10,500 designated by La Grange EDC towards a Utilities Grant Fund to assist locally-owned independent restaurants within the City limits of La Grange with a grant of \$500 each to help cover the cost of utility bills. Twenty-one (21) locally-owned small business restaurants had been contacted and informed on filling out the paperwork for this loan. The third and final program is the Texas Restaurant Relief Fund in which La Grange EDC made a \$10,000 donation. The Texas Restaurant Association established this fund to provide restaurants that have been affected by COVID-19 a grant of up to \$5,000 to be able to continue operations and pay employees. The TRA is currently

raising funds to be able to supply the grants and have temporarily suspended new applications until additional funds are raised. Six (6) La Grange businesses were able to apply for the grant and four (4) La Grange businesses are waiting to apply once the suspension is lifted. To help raise additional funds for the Texas Restaurant Relief Fund, the City of La Grange's Office of Community Development is accepting donations from individuals and organizations for the fund. Donations will be credited to assist local La Grange restaurants. Staff is hoping that an additional \$10,000 will be raised through these efforts.

Chief of Police Update

Chief of Police David Gilbreath stated that there were 376 total calls during the month of March. The Department received 2 new patrol cars – these patrol cars are Hybrid's and get 24 miles per gallon. There is no maintenance difference in the upkeep of these cars. The "Shred-It" event that was scheduled for Saturday, April 18th, was postponed until a later date to be determined. Mayor Pro tem Cernosek asked Chief Gilbreath if there has been any issue with businesses not adhering to the Governor's orders in relation to COVID-19? There was some confusion in the beginning, but everyone has been in compliance and there have been no issues.

City Manager Update

Sales tax collections are down 9% for the year. It is predicted the City of La Grange could be down as much as 35% sales tax in the next couple of months. Water and electric usage are both down slightly for the year. Councilman Eilert asked the Mayor whether we might need to meet to amend the budget if the next few months get worse in relation to COVID-19 on the economy? Mayor Moerbe stated she did not think a special meeting was needed. The City of La Grange has been fiscally conservative and financially we are in good shape. It was asked whether active Utilities and City projects will go on as planned? It was stated that allocated monies are still coming in for 2015, 2016, and Harvey relief, so many current projects are ok to continue. Councilman Taylor asked whether Assistant City Manager Menefee was on the teleconference call? He was not asked to be on the conference call but it was suggested he should be in attendance when City Manager Raborn is not able to attend City Council meetings.

At 6:52 PM a **Motion** was made by Councilman Janca, with a **Second** by Councilmember Weishuhn that the teleconference meeting be adjourned. Motion carried.

Janet Bayer, City Secretary
These Minutes Approved by City Council on:

Janet Moerbe, Mayor

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING via teleconference – April 27, 2020

The City Council of the City of La Grange met in Regular Session on Monday, April 27, 2020, via teleconference with the following members present on the call: Mayor Janet Moerbe, Councilmember Bonnie Busch, Mayor Pro tem John J. Cernosek, Councilmember Jan Dockery, Councilman John Eilert, Councilman Pat Janca, Councilman Ken Taylor, Councilmember Kathy Weishuhn, and Councilmember Violet Zbranek. Staff present: City Manager Shawn Raborn, Chief of Police David Gilbreath, and City

Secretary Janet Bayer. Visitors that announced they were on the call: Stacey Norris, Brett Wolff, Greg Trlicek, Ginger Friemel, Andy Behlen, and Tom Hudson.

Mayor Janet Moerbe called the meeting to order. Councilmember Jan Dockery gave the invocation.

REGULAR AGENDA

Presentation of City of La Grange Annual Audit Report. Mr. Greg Trlicek, auditor for the City of La Grange, presented the results of the 2018-2019 annual audit report. We are currently in the third year of a three-year agreement for audit services with Mr. Trlicek. The City of La Grange received an unmodified or unqualified report which is the best report that can be received out of 4 possible results. It is often referred to as a clean opinion. During the audit, they did not identify any deficiencies in internal control that they consider to be material weaknesses. Mr. Trlicek reported that the City of La Grange is in good financial standing.

Discuss and or Consider Acceptance of La Grange Audit Report. **Motion** Councilman Eilert, **Second** Councilmember Zbranek to approve the City of La Grange Annual Audit Report for 2018-2019 as presented. Motion carried 8-0.

Discuss and or Consider a Resolution changing date of May 25th meeting. Resolution was presented to move the regular City Council meeting to Tuesday, May 26th as Monday, May 25th is the Memorial Day Holiday. **Motion** Mayor Pro tem Cernosek, **Second** Councilmember Dockery to approve the Resolution moving regular City Council meeting to Tuesday, May 26th, due to the Memorial Day Holiday. Motion carried 8-0. **Insert #1.**

The Mayor then asked Chief of Police Gilbreath for his updates prior to going over the Active Project Status Report. Chief of Police David Gilbreath had nothing to report for this meeting.

The next item was the Active Project Report. City Manager Shawn Raborn stated that the City portion of LGISD construction is complete for the Electric Department in reference to setting transformers. In working with LCRA, the replacement of City owned breakers at the substation is now scheduled to start at the beginning of May. The grant to upgrade the water line to a 14" line between Well Station D and B has been approved. This project moving forward should go out for bid in late July to late August with construction to start this fall or early next year. The new wastewater line has been replaced on Lower Line Street to the plant and is fully operational. The contractor is working on raising two (2) manholes and cleaning up the impacted area at this time. The reclaiming of Lower Line Street will be completed during the annual street reclaiming project this summer. The contract for the River Bridge construction on Travis Street is scheduled to be awarded in September of 2020. Due to COVID-19, the State has moved/pushed back some dates but this project is still moving forward on the State's schedule. Mr. Raborn stated that according to the developer, the La Grange Springs Development at the corner of Hwy 77N and FM 2145 is still moving forward. Staff is working with BEFCO on the extension of water and wastewater to the site. The preliminary design is complete. The City is currently performing a study on the impact to the River Street lift station. The White Rock Park restroom project is complete. Following the Governor's orders that were just released today, the restrooms cannot yet be opened. The shade structure project over the playscape at the Library Park has been finalized and the Lions Club has ordered the structure with the intent to install the structure by July. Staff has been working with the Texas Women's League and the Czech Center on developing plans to upgrade the restroom facilities at the Fair Pavilion. This project has been put on hold to evaluate the City of La Grange's finances in response to COVID-19 and its financial impact. Lastly, the GLO CDBG-MIT action plan has been approved by HUD for 2020 projects, and CAPCOG will begin

formulation of the method of distribution. Funding has been set aside for Fayette County and the City of La Grange. Councilman Taylor asked about damages done to Vail Street curbing with all of the construction happening at LGISD. Those repairs would be in next years' street project budget with the hopes of LGISD's contractor helping to repair those damages caused during construction.

City Manager Update

Staff has completed the initial review of the anticipated financial impact of COVID-19 and we are in the process of reducing expenditures by \$300,000 in the General Fund. On the Utility side, we are projecting a \$100,000 reduction. We are making cuts to capital outlays in the General Fund associated with facility improvements and technology. We will also be making slight adjustments to the capital outlays in the Electric and Water Departments totaling \$25,000. The evaluation of the financial impacts of COVID-19 is a fluid process. Staff will continue to make adjustments to maintain financial integrity. As an organization, we are strong financially and are equipped to weather the current financial hardships. Mayor Pro tem Cernosek asked how the Locals Love La Grange utility rebate program is going? As of April 27th, about \$6,000 in total receipts had been received. The public has embraced the program. City Manager Raborn then went on to discuss Governor Abbott's plans to "Open Texas" during Phase 1 effective Friday, May 1st. Staff is working to get information out to La Grange area retailers and restaurants. Phase 1 allows for 25% of seating capacity for restaurants following minimum standard health protocols. Councilmember Eilert asked about small gatherings. It is still required to follow "social distancing" guidelines and for "at-risk" groups to stay home. Staff is working on an action plan for City facilities to open back up. Mr. Raborn is meeting with Janet Rangel, our Recreation Center Director, to discuss summer camps and what to do in the next few weeks. Phase 2 to "Open Texas" will look at other businesses and whether to open their doors to the public again towards the middle of May.

At 6:34 PM a **Motion** was made by Mayor Pro tem Cernosek, with a **Second** by Councilmember Zbranek that the teleconference meeting be adjourned. Motion carried.

Janet Bayer, City Secretary
These Minutes Approved by City Council on:

Janet Moerbe, Mayor