

Minutes of August 14, 2023, Regular City Council Meeting at Heritage Hall, 7:00 PM.

The Merkel City Council met for a Regular City Council Meeting on August 14, 2023, at Heritage Hall, 7:00 PM. Mayor Schramper called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM and announced a quorum present. Council members present were Keith Darby, Gary Hicks, Larry Hewitt, Brady Rutledge, and Matthew Riggan.

Prayer led by Larry Hewitt.

Mayor Schramper led the Pledge of Allegiance and Texas Pledge.

Citizens were given an opportunity to comment.

Brady Rutledge motioned to approve the minutes of the July 10, 2023, Regular City Council Meeting and July 31, 2023, Called City Council Meeting. Matt Riggan seconded the motion. Approved 5-0.

Justin Ray gave the July Fire Department Report and said that Chief Harris is expected to return around September 11th. Chief Conklin gave the July Police Department Report. Mayor Schramper gave the July Water Usage and Municipal Court reports. Morse reported that possible grant and funding with USDA for sewer project.

Councilman Hicks opened the discussion of the vacation buyback policy stating that he had spoken with 2 cities that do not offer this. Hicks stated he would like to table the policy until a new City Manager is hired. Gary Hicks motioned to table decision on Vacation Buyback Policy until new City Manager is hired was seconded by Matt Riggan. Approved 5-0.

The council discussed the current Heritage Hall rental and deposit fees. Councilman Hicks suggested an increase of the charges to be competitive with the venues in town. Larry Hewitt made the motion to increase the Heritage Hall deposit to \$100 and the rental fee to \$150. Keith Darby seconded the motion. Approved 5-0.

Matt Riggan motioned to approve Ordinance No. 08142023 an ordinance of the City of Merkel, Texas amending Ordinance No. 08102020 providing an increase in Sewer Utility and Solid Waste Rates. Gary Hicks seconded the motion. Approved 5-0.

Brady Rutledge motioned to approve Ordinance No. 08142023-1 an ordinance of the City of Merkel, Texas establishing school zones; providing for decreased speed limits near schools during school hours; establishing one-way traffic on certain streets near schools during school hours; providing repealer and severability clauses; and providing an effective date. Keith Darby seconded the motion. Approved 5-0.

The council discussed the current Interlocal Government Agreement for School Resource Officer Program between the City of Merkel and the Merkel ISD. The discussion entailed SRO pay, SRO coverage, staffing and patrolling issues. Sheriff Bishop suggested increasing pay for Police

Department to help with recruiting. Superintendent Omalley brought up House Bill 3 for school campus security.

Brady Rutledge's motion to go to Executive Session to continue discussion was seconded by Matt Riggan. Approved 5-0.

The Council entered executive session at 8:28 pm under Texas Gov't Code Chapter 551, Subchapter D. Executive session ended at 9:52 pm.

The Council reconvened to open meeting at 9:53 pm.

Discussion of the FY 2023-2024 Budget regarding updates made.

Motion to approve 1st reading of Ordinance No. 09112023 an Ordinance of the City of Merkel, Taylor County, Texas fixing and establishing a Budget for the Fiscal Year beginning October 1, 2023 and ending September 30, 2024 (FY2024) was made by Matt Riggan and seconded by Larry Hewitt. Approved 4-1. Gary Hicks was against.


Motion to approve 1st reading of Ordinance No. 09112023-1 an Ordinance of the City of Merkel, Taylor County, Texas fixing and establishing a tax rate for the fiscal year beginning October 1, 2023 and ending September 30, 2024 (FY2024) was made by Brady Rutledge and seconded by Matt Riggan. Approved 5-0.

Brady Rutledge motioned to adjourn and was seconded by Keith Darby. Approved 5-0.

Meeting Adjourned at 10:10 PM.



Evelyn Morse, City Secretary



Mary Schramper, Mayor