

Minutes of August 18, 2026, Regular City Council Meeting at Heritage Hall, 6:00 PM.

The Merkel City Council met for a Regular City Council Meeting on August 18, 2026, at Heritage Hall, 6:00 PM. Councilman Jacobs called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM and announced a quorum present. Council members present were Elaine Chaney, Tyler Newberry, Lexi Smith, Collin Jacobs and Matthew Riggan.

Mayor Cobb led the Pledge of Allegiance and Texas Pledge.

Prayer was led by Collin Jacobs.

Citizens were given an opportunity to comment.

The presentation was tabled for the September 15th City Council meeting.

Tyler Newberry motioned to approve Consent Agenda and was seconded by Matthew Riggan. Approved 5-0.

Introduction of Safebuild inspector was tabled for the September 15th City Council meeting.

Mayor Cobb opened a Public Hearing to allow for public input regarding Creation of Reinvestment Zone Number One, City of Merkel at 6:05 PM. Teresa Rogers of S. 8th asked the council about the environmental impact, would the development consist of residential or commercial, and would this change the zoning.

Public Hearing closed at 6:09 PM.

The council discussed the annexation of a portion of FM 126 beginning at the present City Limits to the Northern Boundary of 1137 FM 126, Tin Cup RV Park. Motion to approve Ordinance 08-18-2026-1 AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF MERKEL, TEXAS ANNEXING PROPERTY DESCRIBED AS A PORTION OF F.M. HIGHWAY NO. 126, BEGINNING AT THE PRESENT CITY LIMITS OF THE CITY OF MERKEL AND CONTINUING NORTH TO THE NORTHERN BOUNDARY OF A PARCEL OF LAND DESIGNATED AS 1137 F.M. 126, TO THE CITY OF MERKEL, TAYLOR COUNTY, TEXAS; EXTENDING THE BOUNDARY LIMITS OF SAID CITY TO INCLUDE SAID PROPERTY WITHIN SAID CITY LIMITS; AND GRANTING TO ALL THE INHABITANTS OF SAID PROPERTY ALL THE RIGHTS AND PRIVILEGES OF OTHER CITIZENS AND BINDING SAID INHABITANTS BY ALL OF THE ACTS, ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS, AND REGULATIONS OF SAID CITY; AND ESTABLISHING AN EFFECTIVE DATE was made by Elaine Chaney and seconded by Collin Jacobs. Approved 5-0.

A discussion of the Ordinance 08-18-2026-2 creating the reinvestment zone was opened by Mayor Cobb stating that this subdivision would be beneficial to Merkel. The discussion continued regarding zoning changes from Agricultural to Residential, no commercial in zone, quality homes to be built, housing availability, and current and future infrastructure needs. Councilwoman Chaney spoke against the creation of the reinvestment zone, speaking on the current infrastructure needs, and spending of reserves for sewer line. City Manager Hitt explained how the Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone works and who it would affect. Motion to approve Ordinance 08-18-2026-2 AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MERKEL, TEXAS, DESIGNATING A CONTIGUOUS GEOGRAPHIC AREA WITHIN THE CITY LIMITS AND

EXTRATERRITORIAL JURISDICTION OF THE CITY AS "REINVESTMENT ZONE NUMBER ONE, CITY OF MERKEL, TEXAS"; CREATING A BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR THE ZONE; PROVIDING THE EFFECTIVE DATE AND TERMINATION DATE OF THE ZONE; ESTABLISHING A TAX INCREMENT FUND FOR THE ZONE; DETERMINING THE PORTION OF THE CITY'S TAX INCREMENT TO BE DEPOSITED TO THE FUND; MAKING FINDINGS REQUIRED BY CHAPTER 311, TEXAS TAX CODE; AUTHORIZING AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM WITHIN THE ZONE; AND PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE was made by Collin Jacobs and seconded by Matthew Riggan. Approved 4-1 with Elaine Chaney opposed.

The council discussed Ordinance 08-18-2026-3, the master fee schedule. A motion by Tyler Newberry to approve Ordinance 08-18-2026-3 AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF MERKEL, TEXAS ADOPTING APPENDIX A "MASTER FEE SCHEDULE" OF THE MERKEL CODE OF ORDINANCES TO ESTABLISH A MASTER FEE SCHEDULE FOR THE CITY OF MERKEL TO ESTABLISH RATES AND FEES FOR CITY SERVICES; AMENDING CERTAIN FEES FOR BUILDING PERMITS AND ZONING APPLICATIONS; PROVIDING REPEALER AND SEVERABILITY CLAUSES; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE was seconded by Elaine Chaney. Approved 5-0.

City Manager Hitt gave an update on EDC property closings, hosting a Homecoming Bash, and Retail Coach prospects.

Discussion of the upcoming Town Hall meeting on August 31st at 6:00 pm to get public input on city comprehensive plan and water/sewer rates. City Manager Hitt also stated that the survey for the town hall meeting is available on the city website, Facebook page and city app.

Chief Conklin gave an update on the Police department's current recruitment and hiring efforts. Conklin spoke on the applications for the Police Academy and a possible officer. Cadets would start the academy in November and graduate in May 2027, after successful state testing and a 12 week field training program, they could be eligible for regular patrol by end of August 2027.

City Manager Hitt gave an update on TCEQ, saying the city would be sending out form letters for lead line replacement to citizens and that at this time the city has not found any lead lines but has found galvanized steel. Hitt also stated that the city is getting technical guidance from TCEQ on the wastewater ponds.

City Manager Hitt gave an update on the grants the city has applied for and been tentatively awarded this year though CCM Advisors.

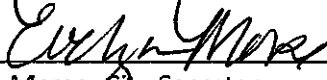
City Manager Hitt discussed extending the temporary summer hours for the city employees to permanent hours for the city, stating there would be no change for patrol officers. Elaine Chaney motioned to approve the permanent hours for the city and was seconded by Tyler Newberry. Approved 5-0.

The council discussed the Water Rate Study and the upcoming town hall meeting. The council discussed the increase in rates, infrastructure replacement needs, and water losses from leaks.

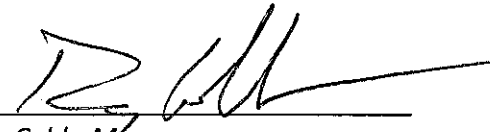
Discussion of the FY2027 Budget, tax increase has been added, Budget online and filed with the City Secretary. Public hearing for the budget will be on September 8th and the Public Hearing for the Tax Rate will be on September 15th.

Lexi Smith motioned to adjourn and was seconded by Tyler Newberry. Approved 5-0.

Meeting Adjourned at 7:02 PM.



Evelyn Morse, City Secretary



Ray Cobb, Mayor