

MINUTES  
BALMORHEA CITY COUNCIL  
REGULAR MEETING  
AUGUST 14, 2023

MEMBERS PRESENT: MAYOR JOHN L. DAVIS, IKE WARD, BERNADETTE PORTILLO,  
ROSA DOMINGUEZ, JOSUE MENDOZA

MEMBERS ABSENT: JOY LEWIS

STAFF PRESENT: SANDRA NAVARRETE, ESEQUIEL DUTCHOVER, GREG PERRIN (7:15)

VISTORS: SYLVIA INIGUEZ, HARRY BARRON III, LARRY TURNBOUGH, FARAH REYES, DEMARCO  
MADRID, RICKIE GRAY, ELIDA MENDOZA, LOUANN HERNANDEZ, DAVID SMITH,  
TIMMERIE SMITH, MIKAELA SMITH

1. The meeting was called to order by Mayor John L. Davis at 7:02 pm.
2. Mayor John L. Davis led the Pledge of Allegiance.
3. Josue Mendoza made a motion, seconded by Ike Ward to approve minutes for July 10, 2023. Motion Carried 4-0.
4. Josue Mendoza made a motion, seconded by Rosa Dominguez to approve bills and adjustments as presented. Motion Carried 4-0.

5. Reports

- A. Report was submitted by ESD 1&2. Representative was not able to attend.
- B. City Clerk reminded the Council that the back to school supply bash & hot dogs would take place downtown Balmorhea on August 15<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 pm. The event was being sponsored by United Supermarkets and the City of Balmorhea.
- C. Greg Perrin was not present. Mayor Davis stated that David Matta was at the pump station at this time working on the electrical box due to the bad weather we have had recently. The repair to Huelster tank should begin next week. The repair will cost the City about \$45,000 dollars. This is the reason we have alerts and postings. The City will be on a water restrictions asking residents to limit usage to household use only until further notice.
- D. Rosa Dominguez presented the Council with a list of names of individuals that were interested in serving on the Balmorhea Economic Development Board for approval of appointment. Information of appointment and meeting location and times will be sent to the state. Mrs. Dominguez added that she is still working on by-laws for the corporation at this time. Organization of board titles will be done at first official meeting.

1. Ike Ward made a motion, seconded by Bernadette Portillo to approve appointment of names of individuals interested in joining the Balmorhea Economic Development Board. Motion Carried 4-0.
2. Oath of Office was administered by Mayor John L. Davis.


Mayor Davis welcomed all board members that were appointed to the Balmorhea Economic Development Board and stated that the Council looks forward to working together. There is a lot of projects that can be done. The City has a building that was donated to them which is located downtown that can be used for an economic development project. The intentions for this building was to have a senior citizen center for the elderly. If when the school decides what they want to do with the old building, we might still consider to use that building for a senior citizen center. Mayor Davis added he had asked to add an item on the Balmorhea ISD school agenda to discuss the future of the old building. The purpose of that discussion was to utilize the buildings, gyms and football field for the community to use. A couple of class rooms would provide room for trainings or some for continuing education courses for the community. A facility for a medical clinic would also benefit this community. The old gym and cafeteria could possibly serve as a Red Cross shelter. The City stores cots and blankets in a rescue trailer at this time due to no designated shelter. At this time there is still no decision from the school board as to what decision will be made in regards to the old school buildings. Larry Turnbough stated that he had attend the Balmorhea ISD school board meeting last week and they acted like no one from the community has approached them. They acted like they were going to tear up the old gym floor. Bernadette Portillo stated that it sound like it was a communication issue. It was not explained to the community. Several Balmorhea Council members attended the meeting of August and some of the Balmorhea ISD Board members appeared a bit uneasy on what the district was going to do with the old buildings. The school district needs to be a bit more transparent with the community. Mayor Davis added he would not go back and beg the school district for the buildings. If anyone wants they can go back and request the minutes to confirm that the Mayor and some Council members did address the Balmorhea ISD board about the old school buildings. Mr. Turnbough added that City Clerk Sandra Navarrete is a board member of the Balmorhea ISD and at the last meeting her board and Superintendent had set her up to make her look bad. They pulled a childish stunt and nobody on that board would address the public that was there, so that you could give your opinion. Their attitude was that it was passed by Mrs. Navarrete who made the motion 3 years ago to build the new school. Mrs. Navarrete's concern was that there had never been a discussion or vote to tear up the old gym floor to transfer portions of the floor to the new gym that is being constructed for display. Mr. Turnbough added that the City Council needs to continue to discuss these issues and oppose destruction of the old school buildings. Mayor Davis responded that in addition to being there at that Balmorhea ISD School board meeting a written proposal had also been submitted to the board. The board seemed interested but did not commit or respond to any request. Mayor Davis added he would continue to try and stay in contact with John Massey the Balmorhea ISD Superintendent. Mr. Turnbough stated that it may take a court order to stop them from destroying the old gym floor. The night of that meeting the school board members did not even want to discuss the topic or voice their opinion.

6. Elizabeth Cook stated that it has been 3 years since she came before the City Council to request extra time to relocate the old structures on her property. But due to health issues and money issues she was unable to complete task. At this time Mrs. Cook is requesting that the Council give her an extension until the 1<sup>st</sup> of the year to clean up her property. The structures will be removed. We will continue to mow the property and will give the Council a monthly report on the progress. Mayor Davis stated that would not be a problem. We are willing to work with your schedule.
  
7. Rosa Dominguez requested that a budget workshop agenda item was needed to make some changes on the proposed budget to and itemize to better understand. Mrs. Dominguez presented a budget request from the Balmorea Economic Development Corporation for fiscal year 2023-2024. This would include a onetime transfer of funds. Line item fiestas we are requesting \$25,000 for the entire year. This would include Memorial Day, Labor Day, Fourth of July & Christmas events. This would match the amount that the City designated to use out of the Hotel/Motel account. Total amount of request would be \$59,000 if approved, this would include office supplies, travel/education, utilities and rent. There will be a request of \$10,000 dollars for electrical work to bring power to the second block of the downtown park area. This would allow us to extend vendor booths during the festivals and allow the City to decorate another block during the Christmas holidays. Mrs. Dominguez asked if line item Hotel/Motel budget needed to be increased due to a possibility of hosting a TML quarterly meeting. Mayor Davis responded, yes we will try to host it every other year. Mrs. Dominguez asked is \$13,000 a good number to keep from the previous year. Mayor Davis responded, yes. Fencing for the C.T. Gray Park will be budgeted to \$20,000. Mrs. Dominguez stated she had a concern on line item contract labor. Will this amount be lowered now that we hired a licensed employee? Mayor Davis responded, no not this year we are so far behind to make any changes at this moment. We don't have to use it if we don't need it, but it will be available. Festivals and advertisement needs to be increased to \$35,000. Festivals being \$25,000 and advertisement \$10,000. City Clerk stated that travel/education needed to be increased if Mayor Davis wanted to continue on track with the Municipal Court training for the Judge and Clerk position. Mayor Davis added maybe we need to increase to \$10,000 which would include Municipal Court training and TML annual conference.
  
8. Mayor Davis explained that Municode is needed to be purchased to update all existing City ordinances and create new ordinances. With the possibilities of having a Municipal Court the City will enforce its own ordinances and not have to depend on Reeves County. The one time cost of the Municode is \$9000 and it will be split into 2 annual payments. The City will be required to pay an annual fee to continue to use the software as needed to add any new ordinances, maintenance and have it automatically link to our City website. Bernadette Portillo made a motion, seconded by Ike Ward to purchase Municode. Motion Carried 4-0
  
9. Mayor Davis stated item 10 would be skipped.

10. Bernadette Portillo stated that she is happy that the Balmorhea Economic Development Corporation was coming together to assist with future festivals. Ms. Portillo stated that she was requesting \$10,000 out of the Hotel/Motel account to organize this 2023 Labor Day Festival. City Clerk responded that Laura Lannom had stated that there was \$6,200 still on this year budget to use. Ms. Portillo added that with the increase of the vendor fees of \$300 it would sure help to make up for some of the cost and possible come close to having the \$10,000 that is needed. Advertisement will be paid be the City and would be part of the request. The event will be a 2 day event and vendors will be allowed to set up on Friday after 5:00 pm. A \$50.00 cleaning deposit is also required from each vendor in addition to City vendor fee. Making a total of \$425.00 to participate.

11. Rosa Dominguez made a motion, seconded by Bernadette Portillo to adjourn meeting at 8:50 pm. Motion Carried 4-0.

**PASSED AND APPROVED THIS 11 DAY OF SEPTEMBER, 2023.**

  
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JOHN L. DAVIS, MAYOR

  
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SANDRA NAVARRETE, CITY CLERK