

**MINUTES
BALMORHEA CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
OCTOBER 15, 2024**

**MEMBERS PRESENT: MAYOR JOHN L. DAVIS, IKE WARD, DANNY VASQUEZ III,
ROSA DOMINGUEZ, JOY LEWIS, JOSUE MENDOZA**

MEMBERS ABSENT: NONE

STAFF PRESENT: SANDRA NAVARRETE, GREG PERRIN-ABSENT, RUSSELL MORRIS

VISTORS: JULIE LEWIS, ROGELIO MIRANDA, LANDON BROOKS, DEMARCO MADRID

1. The meeting was called to order by Mayor Davis at 7:05 pm.
2. Mayor John L. Davis led the Pledge of Allegiance.
3. Ike Ward made a motion, seconded by Danny Vasquez to approve minutes for September 9, 2024. Motion Carried 5-0.
4. Joy Lewis asked who had donated in the amount of \$18,000 to the fire department. Josue Mendoza responded that Kinetik Midstream has an annual golf tournament, and they chose to donate to the Balmorhea Fire Department. Mrs. Lewis added that Commissioner Paul Hinojos had also found some money available on the Reeves County Commissioners budget that was given to the Balmorhea fire department during the elections this year. Mr. Mendoza responded yes, there had always been some money in the budget in the past from the Reeves County budget but had stopped receiving for quite some time. Mayor Davis added you might not ever see it again until maybe the next election or next four years. Ike Ward made a motion, seconded by Danny Vasquez, to approve bills and adjustments as presented 5-0.
5. Reports
 - A. ESD1 &2 report was not submitted.
 - B. The City Clerk asked the city council for some direction on how long they wanted to carry out the socializing after the TML quarterly meeting or what time frame to put on the invitation. I need to know how many more refreshments to purchase or plan to provide. Mayor Davis responded that the mariachi band will play for at least 2 hours and then the meeting will be conducted. Daniel Alvarado with Reeves County will be contacted about his DJ services for the after-party that goes through maybe 11:00pm or 12:00am.
 - C. Russell Morris, our water operator, reported that the city has had water loss during the night hours when everyone is asleep. It seems to have a same size leak or water loss on both sides of town because if both valves directly under the storage tank are shut there is no water loss. As soon as they are open, we start to lose water. We have no wet spots or physical

standing of water. What caused the water operator to conduct this investigation was that the pump had not stopped pumping in 10 days and the well had dropped below 4 feet. Will continue to monitor the issue. The water Operator added that he and Greg Perrin, the license holder, worked diligently to meet the deadline on the lead service line inventory. The information was submitted to the state in the timely matter requested.

D. Rosa Dominguez with BEDC reported that there were some changes made to the lease agreement that was presented to the council last month. After the city clerk spoke to the city attorney about this matter. He advised that only one change should be made. That change would be line-item 16. **Taxes**- Landlord pays all real property taxes. This item does not pertain to the Balmorhea Economic Development Corporation. The Balmorhea Library is exempt from property taxes. Mrs. Dominguez stated that the Balmorhea Library board accepted the agreement with that one change. Mayor Davis added he would not like any changes on the address of meeting location for the BEDC since we are lacking only 4 months of the possibility of relocating. Mrs. Dominguez stated there is no reason to change the address at this time because this address is already registered at the state level as the meeting place for BEDC. Mrs. Dominguez asked Mayor Davis if he was suggesting forgetting the agreement and relocate the BEDC to the McKnight building. Mayor Davis responded either or because even if we go with the agreement there are only 3 months left in the year. We must decide in January where we will go whether it's the McKnight building or the old school building. Mrs. Dominguez asked if the city was not going to consider selling the McKnight building. Mayor Davis responded the building is empty but if someone had the money to buy it, it would be the best way to go. There has been some interest. Joy Lewis stated she would like to put that property on the market. Mayor Davis stated that we need to hire someone to appraise the building first before considering selling the property. This agreement was also discussed at the last meeting. Mrs. Lewis added she would like for BEDC to remain meeting at the Balmorhea Public Library being that it is more economical to have it there than any place else. Mayor Davis asked for a motion, no motion was made. Mrs. Dominguez stated that if the council was unhappy about or not sure about the agreement now is the time to tell her to reschedule or cancel the BEDC meetings.

1. No motion was made to approve the lease agreement. Joy Lewis made a motion, seconded by Ike Ward to table section D. item 1. Motion Carried 5-0.
2. Three BEDC resignations were submitted by Ricky Gray, Elida Mendoza and Bernadette Portillo. Rosa Dominguez made a motion, seconded by Joy Lewis to approve resignations. Motion Carried 5-0.
3. Rosa Dominguez stated that Rogelio Miranda and Landon Brooks were interested in serving on the BEDC and needed to get appointed. Rosa Dominguez made a motion, seconded by Ike Ward to appoint new members. Motion Carried 5-0.
4. Oath of Office was administered by Mayor Davis.

E. Rosa Dominguez stated that the Balmorhea Event Committee would have a Veteran's Day event on November 9, 2024, that would include a parade and presentation. Time and final details are still in the works.


6. Mayor Davis stated that the possible increase started out on the sewer side of the budget. But

we ended up considering a water rate increase instead. Water operator presented the council with 3 possible adjustments for the water 2024-2025 budget. There has not been an increase to the water since 2017. The last water increase was about \$3.00 on the residential, \$7.00 on the ¾ commercial and a 2" meter \$134.00 for 2000 gallons each. Russell Morris our water operator, asked if the council would consider eliminating the 2000 gallons that are built in because the city has 53 accounts that never are close to using that amount. They pay for water that they never use. This would give people with fixed incomes a break. The second spreadsheet pretty much states adjusted rate with zero gallons and no reserve. It reflects bare bones on what we need to run the system. We can decrease the ¾ residential by \$1.50 and charge only \$5.00 per 1000 gallons and it would meet our budget for 2024-2025. The 2" meters would go up by \$22.00. Mayor Davis stated he agreed with the proposal for the residents that are on fixed income and the ones that don't use 2000 gallons will get a break. As far as the 2" meters Mayor Davis believes 1 RV trailer on a property is not considered a RV Park. We need to revisit this because you can run 1 to 3 trailers on a ¾ meter. This decision might hurt the city, but it will be fair. We are here to provide service, not profit from the residents. The third spreadsheet reflects a \$25,000 emergency reserve and capital improvement plan. From the \$25,000 that would be allotted \$15,000 will be put into depreciation and \$10,000 into set aside in the emergency reserve in case the pumps go down or meters going dead due to the batteries because they have been in the ground for over 10 years. The money will only be spent in an emergency situation. If the city was to do that, we would still be giving 0 gallons built in and the residential meters would increase only by \$3.39 from the current \$21.00. Making that a rate of \$ 24.39 and decreasing the current \$9.00 to \$5.00 per extra 1000 gallons. The 2" increase on commercial meters would be \$60.00 but there would be a \$4.00 decrease per 1000 gallons. If you drop it to 1000 gallons and keep the \$25,000 then you would be looking for an increase of \$8.39 for residential and \$100 increase for 2" meters. Mayor Davis suggested that the council take them spreadsheets home and study them and put this item on the agenda again next month. Joy Lewis Added that since this item is going to be tabled, she would like to look to eliminate the fire department fee off the water bills. Mayor Davis responded I don't think you can. Mrs. Lewis adding why not we already pay taxes to the county for the emergency service district for the fire and Ems services here in Balmorhea. It is illegal to charge anything on a bill that is not a utility charge. Mayor Davis added if it's something that we need to look at and change we will. Joy Lewis responded, this would be the perfect time to make those changes since we are looking make changes to our water bills.

7. Danny Vasquez made a motion, seconded by Ike Ward to approve account closure on account#3642. Motion Carried 5-0.
8. Ike Ward made a motion, seconded by Danny Vasquez to approve time change during the daylight saving time. Motion Carried 5-0.
9. Ike Ward made a motion, seconded by Danny Vasquez to approve Proclamation for Halloween Trick or Treat. Motion Carried 5-0.

10. Danny Vasquez made a motion, seconded by Ike Ward to adjourn the meeting at 8:18 pm.
Motion Carried 5-0.

PASSED AND APPROVED THIS 12 DAY OF November, 2024.



JOHN L. DAVIS, MAYOR



SANDRA NAVARRETE, CITY CLERK