

**MERCEDES CITY COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
MARCH 4, 2025 – 6:30 PM
MERCEDES CITY HALL – COMMISSION CHAMBERS
400 S. OHIO AVE., MERCEDES, TX 78570**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Oscar Montoya
Commissioner Joe Martinez
Commissioner Jacob Howell
Commissioner Armando Garcia
Mayor Pro-Tem Ruben Saldana

STAFF PRESENT: Alberto Perez, City Manager
Joselynn Castillo, City Secretary
Martie Garcia Vela, City Attorney (Virtual)
Patricio Avila, Asst. City Manager
Meredith Hernandez, Interim Finance Director
Francisco Sanchez, Police Chief
Javier Campos, Fire Chief/EMC
Kristine Longoria, Human Resources
Juan Vasquez, I.T Specialist
Tom Villagomez, Public Works Director
Marisol Vidales, Library Director
Richard Morin, Recreation Director
Armando Villela, Parks Director
Adrian Perez, Planning Director

1. Call Meeting to Order

Mayor Montoya welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

2. Establish Quorum

All members of the Commission were present which constitutes a full quorum.

3. Invocation by Mayor Pro-Tem Saldana

4. Pledge of Allegiance by Commissioner Martinez

5. Open Forum

Ms. Hinojosa stated her concern regarding the lack of sweeping on her street. She stated the sweeper went by a week ago and stated they only cleaned one side and did not go back to finish the other side of the street. She stated she lives on Liberty Street. There were no further comments and Mayor Montoya directed her to the Public Works Director.

6. Presentation

a. Introduction of MISD Superintendent Dr. Ben Clinton

Mayor Montoya welcomed and congratulated the new Superintendent, Dr. Ben Clinton to the City of Mercedes. Dr. Clinton shared his excitement about being a part of the City and working with Mercedes ISD. Mayor Montoya offered to work closely with the School

District and would like to set up a meeting. Dr. Clinton would like to raise school academics. The Commission welcomed Dr. Clinton to the community and expressed that with their leadership and faculty, they can produce great leaders. Dr. Clinton stated that with MISD success, there's City success. The Commission extended their support and asked that they provide their best to the children. Dr. Clinton stated he shares the same perspective as the Commission for Children. Mayor Montoya read the acknowledgment for Texas Public School Week and recognized all the staff and students present at the meeting. No action required.

b. Proclamation for Autism Acceptance Month

Mayor Montoya expressed his gratitude to see people in law enforcement stepping up to help do a fundraiser for Autism Acceptance. Ms. Melissa Ortiz stated from experience it may be difficult to find information that may help people with autism and the fundraiser will assist in providing information. Mr. Joel Serna addressed the commission about learning about his autism at the age of 7 which does not define him and he invited everyone to the fundraiser to assist in educating others about creating more understanding and inclusion for people with autism. Mayor Montoya welcomed and invited everyone to attend the fundraiser. Mayor Montoya read the proclamation. No action required on the proclamation. Commissioner Martinez motioned to move to item 7A. Commissioner Garcia seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

7. Management Items: Present, discuss, consider and possibly take action regarding:

a. Approval of Request for Sponsorship for the Mercedes Autism Acceptance Fundraiser
Commissioner Martinez motioned to approve the sponsorship for \$5,000. Commissioner Howell seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

b. Approval of Possible Sponsorship for the TML Region 12 Workshop
Mayor Pro-Tem Saldana motioned to approve \$1,500. Commissioner Martinez seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

c. Approval of Certificate of Convenience & Necessity (CCN) Agreement for buyout and transfer of water CCN service area between the City of Mercedes, North Alamo Water Supply Corporation, and Buenavista Developers, LLC in reference to the development of Redstone Subdivision here in the City of Mercedes.

Commissioner Martinez motioned to approve. Commissioner Garcia seconded. Mr. Perez stated there is an entity building in the west side of the town and is in the CCN and water is with North Alamo. Mr. Adrian Perez stated the amount is \$13,000 for the water. The cost will be for the developer and not the city. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

8. Consent Agenda

- a. Approval of Minutes for Meeting(s) held February 18, 2025
- b. Approval of Second and Final Reading of Ordinance 2025-06 amending the zoning code to R-1 Single Family Residential District
- c. Approval of Second and Final Reading of Ordinance 2025-07 amending the zoning

code to R-2 Duplex-Fourplex Residential District

d. Approval of items for surplus to be placed in auction

Commissioner Martinez motioned to approve A-D. Commissioner Garcia seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

e. Approval of Budget Amendment 2025-519-519

Mr. Perez stated the funds are for cameras for security. There was discussion regarding the funds being moved from Public Works Admin. Mr. Rocha clarified that the funds were allocated for a mother board for the fuel pumps, but when the city upgraded the servers, the issue with the fuel pumps was fixed. The funds would no longer be used for the fuel pumps and recommended the transfer to non-departmental for the security camera. The camera is to be used for documenting the vehicles that are disposing of sludge. The funds are in the I.T budget and will be transferred within the I.T budget. Commissioner Martinez motioned to approve. Commissioner Garcia seconded. Mr. Rocha attended virtually and stated the amount was \$15,000. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

9. Ordinances/Resolutions

a. Approval of Resolution 2025-07 in opposition to House Bill 1683

Commissioner Martinez motioned to approve. Mayor Pro-Tem Saldana seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously. Mayor Pro-Tem Saldana stated there is a bill that has been filed that is specific to Hidalgo County that, if passed, will need to go a centralized road system and one person would be hired to manage the road system for the entire county. Currently, the Precincts are in charge of their roads and distributing the funds. It was stated that moving to the new system would make it more difficult for smaller cities to get funds. The rest of the cities are also voting to oppose House Bill 1683. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

b. Approval of Resolution 2025-08 regarding the State Crisis Intervention Grant

Commissioner Martinez motioned to allow Chief to speak on item B through E. Commissioner Howell seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously. Police Chief Sanchez stated the State Crisis Intervention Grant amount is for \$156,160.00. The Homeland Security grant is for an emergency operation center. The total grant amount is \$150,000.

Operation Lone star is a border related grant for overtime (\$50,000) and license plate readers 2 large ones and 2 smaller ones being \$204,000 for the equipment. The total amount of the grant is \$254,000.00

Operation Stone Garden total amount is \$93,000. This includes \$57,521 for equipment and \$35,479 for personnel overtime.

Commissioner Martinez motioned to approve items B. Commissioner Garcia seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

c. Approval of Resolution 2025-09 regarding the Homeland Security Grant

Commissioner Howell motioned to approve. Mayor Pro-Tem Saldana seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

d. Approval of Resolution 2025-10 regarding the Lone Star Grant

Commissioner Garcia approved. Commissioner Howell seconded. Upon a called vote, the

motion passed unanimously.

- e. Approval of Resolution 2025-11 regarding the Stone Garden Grant
Mayor Pro-Tem Saldana motioned to approve. Commissioner Garcia seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.
- f. Approval of Resolution 2025-12 regarding the Border Zone Fire Department Grant
Commissioner Martinez motioned to approve. Commissioner Garcia seconded. Fire Chief Campos stated last year they were able to purchase the command truck and UTV. The new grant they are looking at a skid steer that can cut a line during fires to stop it from spreading. The package comes with a vehicle trailer and skid steer. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

10. Bids/Contracts

- a. Consider of approval of First Amendment to the City of Mercedes Operations Services Agreement
Commissioner Martinez motioned to move items A and B to Executive Session.
Commissioner Garcia seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Back from Executive Session:

Commissioner Martinez motioned to consider item 10A. Commissioner Garcia seconded. Mr. Perez stated theres a 10-year agreement. Mr. David Salinas stated the 10 years is from the commencement of the agreement, which is from 2021. The original agreement was 5 years and the amendment is for a 5-year extension. Legal Counsel recommended adding the exit clause from the original agreement to the amendment. Mr. Perez asked if they could consider adding up to 45 lift stations and adding a 3rd stormwater pump which USW is in agreement to adding it to the agreement. He stated as long as they have sufficient resources to support the additional lift stations. Mayor Montoya asked them to add the verbiage to the agreement. Mayor Pro-Tem Saldana motioned to authorize the city manager to finalize the contract based on the terms discussed. Commissioner Martinez seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

- b. Consideration of approval of CB3 Consultants, LLC lease to own multi-disc screw press
Commissioner Howell motioned to direct the city manager to determine the total cost. Commissioner Martinez seconded. Mayor Pro-Tem Saldana stated that Mr. Steven Cruz provided the city with two prices one to purchase outright, and the second is lease to own. Mr. Cruz stated that with the lease to own option, if in 2 years something breaks down, their company would be responsible for the maintenance of the equipment. The city would have cost savings using the equipment. Mr. David Salinas stated they would work closely with Mr. Cruz to provide the amount of sludge being hauled out and installation cost. Commissioner Howell amended his motion to approve pending legal review and ROI. Commissioner Martinez seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

11. Executive Session: Chapter 551, Texas Government Code, Section 551.071 (Consultation with Attorney), Section 551.072 (Deliberation regarding Real Property), Section 551.074 (Personnel Matters) and Section 551.087 (Economic Development)

Mayor Montoya called the meeting into executive session at 7:31 p.m.

- a. Discussion with City Manager regarding personnel matters - Section 551.074
- b. Consultation with Attorney regarding update on litigation - Section 551.071
- c. Consultation with Attorney regarding Project Updates - Section 551.087

12. Open Session

Mayor Montoya called the meeting back to order at 8:36 p.m.

- a. Possible Action pertaining to executive session item A
No action.

- b. Possible Action pertaining to executive session item B
No action.

- c. Possible Action pertaining to executive session item C
No action.

At this time, the Commission moved back to item 10 A and 10B.

13. Adjournment

Commissioner Martinez motioned to adjourn. Commission Garcia seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously at 8:55 P.M.