

**MERCEDES CITY COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
OCTOBER 21, 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

MEMBERS ABSENT:

STAFF PRESENT: Alberto Perez, City Manager
Joselynn Castillo, City Secretary
Martie Garcia Vela, City Attorney
Jonas Gonzalez, Assistant City Manager
Meredith Hernandez, Finance Director
Francisco Sanchez, Police Chief
Michael Rocha, I.T Director
Kristine Longoria, Human Resources Director
Marisol Vidales, Library Director
Denisse Hernandez, Planning Director
Richard Morin, Recreation Director
Armando Villela, Parks Director

OTHERS PRESENT: Orlando Diaz, Nelda Longoria, Juan Vasquez, Michelle Muniz

- 1. Call Meeting to Order**
Mayor Montoya welcomed all attendees and called the meeting to order at 6:33 P.M.
- 2. Establish Quorum**
All members of the Commission were present, constituting a full quorum.
- 3. Invocation**
Commissioner Martinez led the invocation.
- 4. Pledge of Allegiance**
Commissioner Garcia led the Pledge of Allegiance.
- 5. Open Forum**
There were no residents signed up to speak during the Open Forum.
- 6. Consent Agenda**
 - a. Approval of Minutes for Meeting(s) held October 7, 2025

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

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

a. Approval of appointments/reappointments to the Keep Mercedes Beautifully committee
Parks Director Mr. Villela recommended the appointment of Samuel Garcia and Gilbert Vasquez. Commissioner Martinez motioned to approve the appointments, and Commissioner Garcia seconded the motion. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

b. Approval of Budget Amendment for Building Maintenance to divide the funds by departments

Mr. Perez stated that building maintenance supplies will be divided by department to identify needs, which will assist with budgeting. Commissioner Martinez motioned to approve the plan, and Commissioner Howell seconded the motion. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

c. Approval of Vehicle Budget Amendment to move from PD and Streets Capital Outlay to Vehicle Lease Equipment

Mr. Perez informed the Commission that funds originally budgeted for five vehicles will be moved to the lease budget line item to lease a total of eleven vehicles. In response to a question, Ms. Hernandez explained that the lease line item contains funds because the city has Police Department units under lease.

Mayor Pro-Tem Saldana motioned to approve the vehicle leasing plan, subject to legal review of the lease agreement. Commissioner Garcia seconded the motion. The leasing plan is considered beneficial as it eliminates the need for outright vehicle purchases and allows the city to maintain newer vehicles more efficiently. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

8. Ordinances/Resolutions

a. Approval of Resolution 2025-24 updating the authorized signatories for Wells Fargo Bank

Ms. Hernandez stated that the account in question is a backup account and needs to be updated to reflect the current staff. Commissioner Howell motioned to approve the update, and Mayor Pro-Tem Saldana seconded the motion. The funds in this account are strictly for payroll purposes. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

b. Approval of Resolution 2025-25 denying the Texas Gas Service Company's intent to increase rates

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

c. Approval of First Reading of ordinance 2025-33 amending Water Conservation and Drought Contingency Plan

Ms. Denisse Hernandez stated that the proposed regulations aim to require permits and

inspections for water wells and to prevent future unauthorized wells. In response to a question, Ms. Hernandez noted that not all subdivisions allow water wells and that some require connection to city water lines.

There was discussion regarding applicable Texas law. Mayor Pro-Tem Saldana expressed concern about banning all wells without any provisions, while Commissioner Martinez noted that some residents use water wells for watering their yards. Mayor Montoya suggested obtaining legal and engineering opinions and reviewing ordinances from other cities before taking action.

Commissioner Martinez motioned to table the item for further review, and Mayor Pro-Tem Saldana seconded the motion. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

- d. Approval of First Reading of Ordinance 2025-34 amending Chapter 4 "Business Regulations" of the Code of Ordinances to add a new section, Article 4.13 entitled "Business License"

Ms. Hernandez stated that the ordinance had been previously approved but will now include a penalty provision. She noted that some businesses have not applied for a business license. Legal recommended a public awareness campaign via social media. The standard business license fee is \$80.00, while the penalty for noncompliance is \$500.00. In response to a question, Ms. Hernandez reported that approximately 20 businesses have not yet purchased their business license.

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

- e. Approval of First Reading of Ordinance 2025-35 amending Chapter 3, "Building Regulations" of the Code of Ordinances to add new Articles 3.10 and 3.11, Entitled "Acquisition, Disposition, and/or Use of City Property"

Ms. Hernandez stated that the primary purpose of the ordinance is to regulate cell towers. She noted that a party has contacted the city regarding the installation of a tower, and this ordinance will ensure proper regulation. Ms. Hernandez explained that the ordinance is modeled after the City of Pharr's regulations.

Commissioner Martinez motioned to approve the ordinance and forego the reading, and Commissioner Garcia seconded the motion. In response to a question, Ms. Hernandez stated that businesses must comply with both State and City laws regarding cell towers. Mayor Pro-Tem Saldana clarified that the ordinance pertains to city property use and inquired about the specific problem being addressed. Ms. Hernandez noted that State law allows 120 days for review, after which plans are automatically approved. The ordinance will provide the city additional time to review plans, particularly for towers located on city easements.

Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

9. Bids/Contracts

- a. Discussion and Possible Action on Approval of Interlocal Agreement City of Weslaco and City of Mercedes Mid-Valley Regional Communication Center
Commissioner Howell motioned to approve. Mayor Pro-Tem Saldana seconded the motion. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

10. Monthly Departmental Reports and Accomplishments

- a. Planning, Recreation Center, Finance, Police Dept., City Secretary, Parks, I.T., Fire Dept., Library, Public Works, Human Resources

Finance:

Ms. Hernandez reported that it was a challenging year due to new staff. A CPA has been engaged to review the books on a monthly basis.

Recreation Center:

Mr. Morin updated the Commission on the increase in children's programs and partnerships with nearby cities. Mr. Puckett provided information on the aquatic program, noting approximately 50 children participating in the pool. Commissioner Howell recommended adding a slide and diving board and suggested painting the building. Mr. Morin stated that quotes for a new slide are being obtained.

Planning:

Ms. Hernandez reported that internal issues are being addressed, revenues collected, and preparations for subdivisions are underway. Commercial developments have been received, and permits have been issued accordingly. Mr. Perez noted that sludge haulers sometimes spill, requiring staff to clean up, but the ordinance now includes penalties for such spills. Updates were provided on weedy lots, demolitions, and homestead home removals.

Police Department:

Chief Sanchez and Lt. Diaz provided an update on grants and funding. Chief Sanchez highlighted the acquisition of new systems and tablets, increases in Municipal Court revenues, awards received, and training attended. He noted that traffic detail assignments are now available to officers.

City Secretary:

Ms. Castillo reported on 29 resolutions and multiple contracts, including those for a judge and IPaws services. Efforts continue to digitize records and claims. Vehicle purchases were made across all departments. Funds totaling \$15,661 were received via auction. A new incident reporting form and a committee for incident management were established. A new platform with NextRequest has been implemented to improve efficiency in responding to records requests. Mayor Montoya inquired about an essential employee policy and requested ICS training for all department heads.

Parks:

Mr. Villela provided updates on park improvements, lighting, and basketball court upgrades. Plans are underway for a basketball tournament. Commissioner Howell recommended that all new playground equipment be all-inclusive. Mr. Villela confirmed that future playground equipment will be inclusive. Grants and other funds received were

also noted.

Information Technology (I.T.):

Mr. Rocha reported updates to the city website, the transition from CodeRed to IPaws and CivicPlus for notification systems, and CivicRec for facility reservations. An internal staff portal with forms has been implemented, along with new camera systems. Mr. Rocha noted that Magic Valley donated a utility pole for a camera to monitor sludge haulers. Mayor Montoya commended the I.T. department in their presentation.

Library:

Ms. Vidales and Ms. Michelle Muniz updated the Commission on the historic preservation project, awards received, library events, grants, Spanish classes, and craft programs for adults and children. Beanstack has been implemented for reading challenges, and the summer reading program exceeded prior years' participation.

Public Works:

Ms. Nelda Longoria reported on accomplishments including sidewalk repairs and street resurfacing. Cast iron and asbestos materials have been identified, and old structures leading into the sewer system are recommended for replacement. Mr. Perez stated that SAM is approximately two months away from completing GIS mapping.

Human Resources:

Ms. Longoria reported that onboarding has been digitized, leave requests are paperless, and electronic signatures for timesheets are being implemented. She noted that 68 new employees have been onboarded, reducing the time from interviews to hire date. Employee birthdays are being highlighted, and standardized departmental goals with KPIs have been established. She added that she is managing building maintenance through the work order system, which helps prioritize tasks. Free staff trainings are planned.

Ongoing projects include improvements to the Rec Center roof, Library roof, and City Hall. Efforts are being made to improve the Civic Center using available materials. The Commission recommended renovating the exterior of the building. Commissioner Martinez suggested reaching out to artists for a mural on the north exterior wall. Additional improvements noted include restrooms, kitchen, floors, exterior, and door keys.

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)

Commissioner Martinez motioned to go into executive session, and Commissioner Garcia seconded the motion. Upon a called vote, the meeting entered executive session at 9:04 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 9:55 P.M.

- a. Possible Action pertaining to executive session item A
No action was taken on this item.

- b. Possible Action pertaining to executive session item B
No action was taken on this item.

- c. Possible Action pertaining to executive session item C
No action was taken on this item.

13. Adjournment

Commissioner Martinez motioned to adjourn the meeting, and Commissioner Garcia seconded. The motion carried, and the meeting was adjourned at 9:56pm.

[MIN_SIGNATURES]