

**MERCEDES CITY COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
AUGUST 5, 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

MEMBERS ABSENT: Mayor Pro-Tem Ruben Saldana

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

OTHERS PRESENT: Eduardo Castellanos, Alvaro De Leon

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Mayor Montoya welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m.

2. ESTABLISH QUORUM

Four members of the Commission were present, which constitutes a quorum. Mayor Pro-Tem Saldana was absent.

3. INVOCATION

Invocation by Commissioner Martinez.

4. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Pledge of Allegiance led by Mr. Garcia, a veteran present at the City Commission meeting.

5. OPEN FORUM

Ms. Jessica Zuniga, a resident of South Mile 2 West, addressed the Commission regarding speeding in her area. She noted an increase in police presence and recommended the

installation of speed bumps. She also reported incidents of shootings and loud music on weekends, playing a recording of both for the Commission. Ms. Zuniga expressed concern for her safety and inquired about possible solutions. The City Attorney informed her that the Commission could not respond to questions during open forum, assured her that her concerns would be addressed, and advised her to speak with the Police Chief.

Ms. Alejandra Marquez stated she was present with Ms. Zuniga and did not wish to speak.

6. PRESENTATION

a. Proclamation for UTRGV

Ms. Galvan addressed the Commission, thanking them for recognizing UTRGV, its programs, the School of Medicine, and the Cancer Center. She announced the upcoming opening of an optometry program and a football program. Mayor Montoya shared a story about UTRGV, congratulated the university for being one of the top-ranked schools in Texas, and read the proclamation.

b. Update on Texas Water Development Board Reporting

Mr. Jonas Gonzalez with South Texas Brightwater Solutions presented the utility profile for the City of Mercedes, noting that the existing water and wastewater system demands and trends are essential for maintaining information for the Texas Water Development Board. He reported that in 2024, the City's water loss decreased from 24% to 12%, which he described as an impressive improvement.

Mr. Gonzalez explained that the Water Conservation Plan is a 10-year plan, currently extending to 2035; however, the Texas Water Development Board requires a 5-year update, which is why they were presenting a new/updated plan. He noted that Mercedes residents currently use an average of 116 gallons of water per day, with a target to reduce usage to 95 gallons per day. This plan will help track utility performance, identify the highest users, and work with them to reduce water loss.

Data from 2020 to 2024 shows that while the regional average is 135–140 gallons per person per day, the City has reduced usage to 116 gallons, indicating more efficient water use. The average water loss in the City is now 11–13%. Mr. Perez added that daily flushing has decreased, contributing to reduced water loss.

In response to a question from Commissioner Howell, Mr. Gonzalez stated the goal is to reach 95 gallons per person in 10 years, with a review of the plan in 5 years.

Commissioner Martinez motioned to move to Item 7A. Commissioner Garcia seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

c. Condemned Properties Update by Alvaro De Leon

Mr. De Leon presented before-and-after photos of several condemned properties. He explained that the City contacts property owners, who have either remodeled or demolished the condemned structures. Mayor Montoya noted that these efforts are part of

an ongoing initiative, with Code Enforcement and the Building Official working to beautify Mercedes and encourage more people to live in the city. He expressed appreciation to community members who are investing in remodeling or demolishing their properties and recommended that the City send thank-you letters to those property owners.

d. Presentation by Arredondo, Inc regarding lights

Mr. Arredondo participated virtually to provide an update on City streetlight outages. He reported that a meeting with AEP was held on July 1, 2025, during which the City provided an Excel spreadsheet identifying 65 lights in need of repair. As of this date, AEP has completed repairs on 57 streetlights, replacing them with LED fixtures. Commissioner Martinez noted that a light on Maryland continues to go out; Mr. Arredondo confirmed that this issue is being addressed.

Mr. Arredondo also discussed decorative streetlights, noting there are 105 in total, with an estimated cost of \$13,000 to replace. Mr. Perez stated that five lights were retrofitted with LED bulbs as a test to ensure adequate brightness, and the City plans to budget for replacement of the remaining 100 lights in the next fiscal year.

Regarding City Park lighting, Mr. Arredondo stated that all marked lights have been replaced; however, some have since gone out and will be repaired through AEP. He also noted that one park currently has no lighting at all.

7. ORDINANCES/RESOLUTIONS

a. Approval of Resolution 2025-18 adopting the City of Mercedes Water Conservation Plan

Mr. Gonzalez stated that they plan to implement a quarterly school outreach campaign to educate students on water conservation. Mayor Montoya emphasized the importance of informing the public to promote conservation, noting that while most cities wait until their equipment fails, the City of Mercedes is taking proactive measures for the future. Commissioner Martinez remarked that many take for granted the convenience of simply turning on a faucet.

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

At this time, the Commission moved back to item C of the presentations and continued with the order of the agenda.

b. Approval of First Reading of Ordinance 2025-19 approving the Final Project Plan for TIRZ No. 2

c. Approval of First Reading of Ordinance 2025-20 approving the Tri-party Agreement for TIRZ No. 2

d. Approval of First Reading of Ordinance 2025-21 approving the Reimbursement Agreement for San Jacinto Enterprises as it relates to TIRZ No. 2

- e. **Approval of First Reading of Ordinance 2025-22 approving the Reimbursement Agreement for Olivarez Organization as it relates to TIRZ No. 2**
- f. **Approval of First Reading of Ordinance 2025-23 approving the draft interlocal agreement with the County as it relates to TIRZ No. 2**

Commissioner Martinez motioned to approve item B through F excluding E.

Commissioner Garcia seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

8. CONSENT AGENDA

- a. **Approval of Minutes for Meeting(s) held July 15, 2025**
- b. **Second and Final Reading of Ordinance 2025-17 amending Garage, Patio, Yard Sale Ordinance**
- c. **Second and Final Reading of Ordinance 2025-18 amending Cross-Connection Control, Backflow Prevention, and Irrigation System Installation (TCEQ)**

Commissioner Martinez motioned to approve all items under consent agenda.

Commissioner Garcia seconded. Upon a called vote the motion passed unanimously.

9. MANAGEMENT ITEMS: Present, discuss, consider and possibly take action regarding:

- a. **Approval to accept the Voluntary Annexation Petition filed for Salvador Roel Garcia and Jeffrey Adam Bryant**

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

- b. **Approval of Budget Amendment for Equipment Maint./Sidewalk Repair**

Commissioner Martinez motioned to approve. Commissioner Garcia seconded.

Commissioner Martinez stated there was never a sidewalk on Florida St. and he is happy to see that the city is finally putting a sidewalk from 5th street to 10th street. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

- c. **Discussion and Possible Action to Approve a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) Between the City of Mercedes and FEMA for Participation in the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS)**

Fire Chief Campos provided an update to the Commission regarding the formalization of an agreement with FEMA for the IPAWS (Integrated Public Alert and Warning System) to issue emergency notification alerts to the community. He noted that the City will continue using CodeRed and transition to CivicReady, which will integrate with IPAWS and connect to federal alert systems. Mercedes will be the third city to enter into such an agreement. Mayor Montoya clarified that CodeRed alerts are used for notifications such as water outages and street closures. Commissioner Howell moved to approve both items 9C & 9D, and Commissioner Martinez seconded the motion. Upon a called vote, the motion carried unanimously.

- d. **Approval of the City of Mercedes Policy on the Use and Notification of FEMA IPAWS**

This item was approved in the same motion as item 9C.

e. Approval of amend the City of Mercedes Personnel Policy Manual Chapter 13. Dress Code

Commissioner Martinez motioned to approve. Commissioner Howell seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously. A brief discussion followed regarding the topic of blue jeans.

f. Consideration and possible action to solicit bids for Energy Consultants

Mayor Montoya stated that he placed this item on the agenda and recommended that the City join a cooperative to reduce electricity costs. Commissioner Martinez moved to solicit bids for energy consultants, and Commissioner Garcia seconded the motion. Upon a called vote, the motion carried unanimously.

10. BIDS/CONTRACTS

a. Approval of Agreement with Galindo Auctions, LLC for Auctioneering Services

Commissioner Martinez motioned to approve. Commissioner Garcia 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)

Commissioner Martinez motioned to go into executive session. Commissioner Garcia seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously. The meeting went into executive session at 7:45 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 WTP2 - Section 551.087
- d. Discussion regarding Project M30 - Section 551.087

12. OPEN SESSION

Mayor Montoya called the meeting back to order at 10:02 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.

d. Possible Action pertaining to Executive Session item D

No action was taken on this item.

13. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Garcia motioned to adjourn. Commissioner Martinez seconded the motion. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 10:03 p.m.