

**MERCEDES CITY COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
JANUARY 6, 2026 – 6:30 PM
MERCEDES CITY HALL – COMMISSION CHAMBERS
400 S. OHIO AVE., MERCEDES, TX 78570**

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: Mayor Oscar Montoya

STAFF PRESENT: Alberto Perez, City Manager
Joselynn Castillo, City Secretary
Martie Garcia Vela, City Attorney
Meredith Hernandez, Interim Finance Director
Francisco Sanchez, Police Chief
Juan Vasquez, I.T Specialist
Tom Villagomez, Public Works Director
Marisol Vidales, Library Director

OTHERS PRESENT:

1. Call Meeting to Order

Mayor Pro-Tem Saldana welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M.

2. Establish Quorum

Commissioner Howell, Commissioner Garcia and Mayor Pro-Tem Saldana were present. Commissioner Martinez arrived during the open forum. Mayor Montoya was absent.

3. Invocation

Commissioner Howell said the invocation.

4. Pledge of Allegiance

Commissioner Garcia led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

5. Open Forum

Dr. Jacob C. Howell addressed the Commission expressing his approval of any entity donating to the City of Mercedes and expressed he is for funding the City and City projects. He stated he will not stand for false accusations and is looking into finding out what was leaked. He added that the water well ordinance had some miscommunication and existing wells were to be grandfathered in.
There were no further comments.

6. Presentation

- a. Presentation on Winter Wonderland Event Held December 12, 2025 at RGV Premium

Outlets

Police Chief Sanchez presented to the Commission regarding the Winter Wonderland event. He shared a video of the event and added the event was a success. Mayor Pro-Tem Saldana stated the event went well and would like feedback from staff regarding what improvements they can make for future events. Mr. Perez stated the positive was the accessibility for the handicapped children and adults. The Commission stated the event brought positivity to the community and the tree being moved to the outlet brought more people from other parts of the Rio Grande Valley to Mercedes. There was no further discussion.

b. Presentation on Mercedes PD and Friends Of The Library BBQ Cookoff Event Held November 15, 2025 at the Mercedes Recreation Center

Police Chief Sanchez informed the Commission about the BBQ Cook-off event held on November 15, 2025. They had 33 teams registered, with 28 participating. They raised over \$6,000 in registrations and raised over \$7,000 in sponsorships. Expenditures were also noted. The funds were split 50/50 with the Friends of the Library and the Police Department. He showed a video of the cook-off. Mayor Pro-Tem Saldana thanked Chief Sanchez for providing the report and added that some of the teams stated they would be attending next year. Commissioner Garcia and Commissioner Howell expressed their approval of the event. No further discussion.

Commissioner Howell motioned to move to item 9D. Commissioner Garcia seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

7. Consent Agenda

a. Approval of Minutes for Meeting(s) held December 16, 2025

Commissioner Martinez motioned to approve the minutes for meeting held December 16, 2025. Commissioner Garcia seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

b. Approval of the First Amendment to the Interlocal Cooperation Agreement Between the County of Hidalgo and the City of Mercedes, Texas Regarding the MVCPA Task Force (FY26)

Lt. Cuba was present for this item. The City Attorney stated she had reviewed and approves of the agreement. Commissioner Martinez motioned to approve. Commissioner Garcia seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

8. City Manager Update

a. Update regarding RioPlex

Mr. Perez informed the Commission about RioPlex which is an opportunity to shift to industrial development. RioPlex is a marketing arm of the RGV and is connected with all the EDC's in the region. Commissioner Howell agreed due to the city's residential area growing. At a question, Mr. Perez explained the membership fee of \$5,000 to participate and can be done administratively and only wanted to update the commission.

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

- a. Consider and take possible action to ratify the Final Plat Approval for Stable Estates Planning Director Hernandez stated this subdivision is just south of Valley Ranch Estates. The applicant is requesting final approval of a residential subdivision consisting of 109 lots with a mix of fourplex units and townhouses on a 30-acre tract. She added that there is a minor outstanding and engineering items which are being addressed by the applicant. Commissioner Martinez motion to approve. Commissioner Garcia seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.
- b. Consider and take action on the approval of the Interlocal Agreement between Hidalgo County Urban County Program and the City of Mercedes for FY 2025
Commissioner Martinez motioned to approve. Commissioner Garcia seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.
- c. Consider and take action regarding the Approval to Terminate the Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone No. 1 Agreement
Commissioner Martinez motioned to approve. Commissioner Howell seconded. Mr. Perez informed the Commission that since he started there have been issues with TIRZ No. 1 and the City could not provide any reports being requested by the County. In order to move forward with the TIRZ No. 2 development project, staff is recommending terminating TIRZ No. 1. Mr. Perez added that the City and County have been allocating funds for this project and terminating this agreement will send the funds back to the county's general fund. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.
- d. Discussion and Possible Action Regarding City Support for Catholic Cemetery
Ms. Edwina Salazar Trevino shared a brief history of the Our Lady of Mercy Cemetery. She stated the cemetery was unkept and, due to this, they established the Catholic Association in 1994. They have received contributions and support from different entities. There are over 3000 resting in the cemetery. Their goal is to maintain the cemetery to respect the graves and honor their loved ones and veterans. There was a historical marker stating the town was established in 1907, the Catholic Church was designated in 1909, the Capisallo company gave 4 acres to the Brownsville Diocese in 1910. The marker was erected in 2000. She listed the deceased and three living members of the original Catholic Association. Mayor Pro-Tem Saldana informed the Commission that the cemetery is nearly full, which slows down the revenues for that cemetery. He added there has been discussion about assisting with the maintenance and any legal issues that may arise. Commissioner Howell expressed his support in assisting with the maintenance but added for legal to research the legality. Commissioner Garcia also expressed his support. Mayor Pro-Tem Saldana stated there is probably not a solution today, but this item is for discussion. Ms. Trevino stated their budget is \$3,000 per month, and they do have some patrons that donate yearly, but there are few. Mayor Pro-Tem Saldan recommended adding funding for this project in the next fiscal year. The City Attorney recommended utilizing the volunteer boards to assist. Commissioner Martinez motioned to approve adding this item for consideration for the next fiscal year. Commissioner Garcia seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

10. Ordinances/Resolutions

- a. Consider and take action to Approve of Resolution 2026-01 regarding the Agreement for the Temporary Closure of State Right-of-Way – 87th Annual Rio Grande Valley Livestock Show Parade
- b. Consider and take Action on Approval of Resolution 2026-02 regarding the Agreement for the Temporary Closure of State Right-of-Way – 87th Annual Rio Grande Valley Livestock Show

Commissioner Martinez motioned to approve items 10A and 10B. Commissioner Howell seconded. Lt. Cuba mentioned there was a change to the exit route for the parade. There was discussion regarding the new route, congestion and notice to surrounding areas for street closures. Upon a called vote, the motion passed 3-1. Commissioner Howell voted against. Commissioner Howell stated he is for the parade but is against the route.

11. Bids/Contracts

- a. Consider and take Action on Agreement to Ratify the purchase agreement for the Neuhaus Property known as Capisallo S28.50 AC EXC AN IRR TR S200' -E476' LOT 9 BLK 81 26.50 AC NET

Commissioner Martinez motioned to approve. Commissioner Garcia seconded. Mr. Perez stated this property is located near the Public Works Department. At a question, Mr. Perez stated the property has been appraised. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

- b. Consider and take possible action to approve Municipal Court Judge Ms. Melisa Canales renewal agreement.

Commissioner Howell motioned to approve the renewal of Municipal Court Judge. Commissioner Martinez seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

- c. Consider and take action regarding the Conveyance of Real Estate to the Development Corporation of Mercedes: Mercedes Original Townsite S. 88.5' -E 110' BLK 2
The City Attorney corrected the legal description to Bixby S735.5' -W862.43' IRR TR -S OF HWY 83 Lot 5 & An IRR TR E202.58' -S665.51' Lot 6 17.338 AC GR 17.118 AC Net.
Commissioner Martinez motioned to approve the conveyance with the updated legal description. Commissioner Garcia seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

12. 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 move into executive session. Commissioner Garcia seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously. The meeting went into executive session at 7:55 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 ALP172 - Section 551.087

13. Open Session

Mayor Pro-Tem Saldana reconvened the meeting at 8:42 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

Commissioner Martinez motioned to approve submitting a letter of support for the grant application for the American Legion Project. Commissioner Garcia seconded. Upon a called vote, the motion passed unanimously.

14. Adjournment

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

[MIN_SIGNATURES]