



City of Santa Clara, Texas Regular City Council Meeting Minutes

Monday, June 23, 2025

The City Council called the special meeting to order on June 23, 2025, at 6:30 PM at City Hall located at 1653 N Santa Clara Road with Mayor Chase Grier.

A. PLEDGE

Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America: I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the republic for which it stands: one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

B. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

1. Roll Call: Marian Carty (Absent), Ernest Schoenefeldt, Amanda Desormeaux, Dwane Atkins and Darin Henningsen

2. Declaration of Quorum: Quorum was present for June 23, 2025, Regular City Council Meeting

C. PUBLIC COMMENT

- Carrie Itschner spoke about a resident's farm erosion & water retention ponds. She voiced concerns regarding water pumping on a local farm, causing land erosion. Ms. Itschner called for more oversight and review of handling the "debacle" near Persimmon Trail.
- Esther Henningsen read a letter from David Wilburn, County Attorney dated May 12, 2024 and referenced the indictment of Santa Clara Chief Marshal Jerry Airola for official oppression, misuse of official information, unauthorized access to criminal records. The letter referred to the policy of the County Attorney's Office to not accept criminal filings from officers facing criminal complaints or any of their subordinates. Ms. Henningsen stated that City was required to inform individuals whose private data was improperly accessed; hundreds of people were affected. The letter advised of the City's access to the TLO database was under suspension pending an investigation. Ms. Henningsen requested the repealing of Ordinances 2020-010 and 2024-005 to prevent perceived intimidation.
- Jeff Hunt (former Mayor) spoke regarding Open Meetings Act compliance and challenged the legality of the June 5th meeting, stating it was not properly posted, thus violating open meeting laws.
- Jerry Airola spoke regarding his recent trial and reputation. Mr. Airola recounted a three-day jury trial where two charges were directed away due to lack of evidence. He stated that a Texas Ranger testified that none of Airola's actions broke the law, but others should have been arrested. Mr. Airola called for council integrity and shared details about alleged bias from the current mayor.
- Fernando Silva (truck driver) made comments regarding concerns on law enforcement professionalism. Mr. Silva detailed his alleged wrongful citation and alleged unprofessional conduct. He spoke about alleged manipulation by the Marshal, lack of public discipline for subordinate's admitted misconduct. Mr. Silva cited ongoing county and TCOLE investigations and called for replacement in supervisory roles due to professionalism—NOT criminality—concerns.

- Paul Witherspoon II (RV & boat storage owner) shared support for local law enforcement and personal experiences. He shared experiences both supporting and critiquing local marshals and the importance of their presence for responding to issues rapidly.
- Dana Poole spoke regarding response times, service gaps, and intimidation. Ms. Poole reported that she has made four 911 calls in five years; and only county sheriffs responded. She stated that some residents feel intimidated into silence.

D. PRESENTATION

- Schertz EMS
Jason Mabbitt, Chief of EMS, explained that the current service is in year two of a five-year agreement. He advised that the current fee for Santa Clara is \$14,138.64/year for eight ambulances. Mr. Mabbitt stated that budget shortfalls necessitate increase and the options were as follows: Option 1 - 35% increase to \$19,087.16, then a 5% increase for years 4 and 5. Option 2 20% increase to \$16,966.37, then a 20% increase and a 5% increase for subsequent years. He explained that it is a flat (fixed) rate increase, with no per capita or inflation adjustment. There were some equity concerns regarding Santa Clara paying more per capita than larger cities, but it was same percentage increase for all.
- Josh Hatfield re: City Website and email
Mr. Hatfield, founder of Hatty AI, presented a City website and email proposal. He spoke regarding an offer for a free, modern website (design, implementation, management) for the city; the service would be free if the city chooses to host with them. Mr. Hatfield described the features including responsive design, improved document access, subscription for alerts/newsletters, compliance with government standards and security CJIS/HIPAA where relevant, with support services included.

E. PUBLIC HEARING: NONE

F. CITY STAFF REPORTS: NONE

G. CONSENT AGENDA

- 1. May 12, 2025 – City Council Regular Meeting Minutes**
- 2. June 5, 2025 – City Council Special Meeting Minutes**
Councilmember Atkins made a motion to approve the May 12, 2025 City Council Regular Meeting Minutes and the June 5, 2025 City Council Special Meeting Minutes. Councilmember Desormeaux seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion carried.

H. DISCUSSION ONLY: NONE

I. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ITEMS

Items listed under this heading are for discussion and possible action.

1. An ordinance to repeal 2024-005 which will eliminate the Marshal's Office and the position of City Marshal due to budget concerns, repealing all ordinances in conflict and establishing an effective date.

Proposal: Repeal ordinance to eliminate Marshal's Office and Marshal role, solely for budgetary reasons—NOT a personnel decision.

Extensive input for and against: safety, response times, professionalism concerns, legal liabilities, and vibes of retaliation.

Budget Impact: Marshal's Office is the city's largest expense (total losses cited at \$200,231 in 2023 24 for law enforcement/court operations).

Services Coverage: Guadalupe County Sheriff would assume lead law enforcement role if Marshal's Office dissolved. Sheriff present, stated coverage would continue, but without additional cost to city in the near term. Council asked for data on response/service impacts.

Current Revenue: \$885,000 budget with only \$180,000 allocated for road repairs, not enough for needed improvements.

Concerns: Roads cited as number one citizen concern, budget dominated by law enforcement/court costs.

Tax Base Issues: Many area residents not city taxpayers, money flows to county but city bears expense of road upkeep.

ETJ Opt-Out: New state law allows developers to opt out from ETJ controls, further limiting local power unless impact fees are enacted.

Ordinance Process: First reading per city rules; not final action

Action: A motion was made by Councilmember Atkins to table a decision on agenda item #1. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Schoenefeldt. Councilmembers Desormeaux and Henningsen voted against the motion and the tie was broken by Mayor Grier voting to table the final decision until the next meeting to gather more information and allow for further input.

2. An ordinance creating a minimum lot size of 1 acre per residential unit in the ½ mile Extra Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) of the City of Santa Clara, Texas, repealing all ordinances in conflict and establishing an effective date.

Proposal: Ordinance to set one-acre minimum lot size per residential unit in the city's half-mile extraterritorial jurisdiction ETJ.

Purpose: Limit dense developer subdivisions for safety reasons and manage impact on roads and drainage.

Legal Authority: City attorney asserted cities may do this in ETJ for public health/safety.

Status: Motion made by Councilmember Atkins to approve one-acre ETJ minimum lot size. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Desormeaux and all voted in favor.

3. Creating a Request for Qualifications for a traffic engineer to conduct a traffic impact study for the purpose of imposing a Traffic Impact Fee for new development in the ETJ of Santa Clara, Texas.

Need: City must have official studies to legally impose impact fees on new developments (for roads/drainage).

Costs: Approximate costs—traffic study \$50,000, drainage study \$70,000.

Potential Benefit: Had studies been done earlier, city could have collected \$7.5 million for roads from one major new development with over 3,000 homes).

ETJ Opt-Out: New state law allows developers to opt out from ETJ controls, further limiting local

power unless impact fees are enacted.

Council Decision: Councilmember Atkins made a motion to approve the item as written and to utilize existing city traffic count data to possibly lower costs. Councilmember Henningsen seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

4. Creating a Request for Qualifications for a storm engineer to conduct a drainage study for the purpose of imposing a Drainage Impact Fee for new development in the ETJ of Santa Clara, Texas.

Discussed in conjunction with agenda item # 3. Councilmember Atkins made a motion to approve the item as written. Councilmember Henningsen seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

5. Budget Amendment to pay for Traffic and Drainage Impact study.

Action: Decision on budget amendments to pay for these studies tabled until cost quotes are received and further discussion at next meeting.

6. Presentation of Schertz EMS price increase proposal.

Councilmember Desormeaux made a motion to approve Option 2: 20%, 20%, 5%. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Atkins and all voted in favor.

7. Flood gates and possible relocation or removal in the City Limits and ETJ of Santa Clara, Texas

Reason: Gates block property access, no current effective use, and residents circumvent or damage them.

Decision: Councilmember Atkins made a motion to remove the flood gates. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Henningsen and all voted in favor.

8. Presentation of Josh Hatfield website and email for the City of Santa Clara, Texas

Discussion: General approval for improvements; concerns about law enforcement data security/compatibility. There were concerns about sensitive law enforcement email/data compatibility CJIS compliance and discussion about the current traffic being low but residents want better information access.

Action: Councilmember Atkins made a motion to table the item for further review and discussion for compliance and operational needs. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Schoenefeldt. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

9. Planning and Zoning actions concerning the Lantana and Goerke Subdivisions.

Update: Lantana withdrew; Goerke likely to go through replatting but not yet before council. No action taken.

10. Floyd Akers, Interim City Attorney, being hired as City Attorney

Action: A motion to approve Floyd Akers appointment as permanent city attorney via ordinance with the compensation to be the same as prior was made by Councilmember Atkins. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Schoenefeldt. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

J. ANNOUNCEMENTS: None

K. EXECUTIVE SESSION: None

L. ATTENDANCE BY OTHER ELECTED OR APPOINTED OFFICIALS

M. ADJOURNMENT

Councilmember Ernest Schoenefeldt made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:19 PM.
Councilmember Dwane Atkins seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Mayor: Chase Grier



City Secretary: Vacant