



City of Santa Clara, Texas Regular City Council Meeting Minutes

Monday, May 12, 2025

The City Council called the regular meeting to order on May 12, 2025, at 6:35 PM at City Hall located at 1653 N Santa Clara Road with Mayor Jeff Hunt.

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, Dwane Atkins, John Reagan, Danny Trammell, and Ernest Schoenefeldt

2. **Declaration of Quorum:** Quorum was present for May 12, 2025, City Council Meeting

C. PUBLIC COMMENT

- Shirley Owens extended gratitude to the current mayor, city council and city volunteers. Ms. Owens provided encouragement and blessings for the new mayor and city council. She requested a focus on positivity, active listening and community friendliness.

D. PUBLIC HEARING: None

E. CITY STAFF REPORTS

- Financial Report - City Secretary
Budget vs. Actuals: FY 2024-2025 - FY25 P & L
October 2024 – September 2025

F. CONSENT AGENDA

1. April 28, 2025 – City Council Regular Meeting Minutes

Councilmember John Reagan made the motion to approve City Council Regular Meeting Minutes for April 28, 2025. Councilmember Ernest Schoenefeldt seconded the motion. All in favor and the motion carried.

G. DISCUSSION ONLY

1. Santa Clara Loop/Wetz Road project warranty work:

The inspection by the City and City Engineer determined that there was poor ditch work and a punch list for corrections was sent to the contractor. They also found that no crack seal was completed on Wetz Rd and they are required to return and complete it. Several other specific unresolved issues were noted (failed to address areas near residences,

unmowable ditches, and incomplete grading). The consensus is that warranty work is not completed, the project will continue until the work that is done is acceptable.

H. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ITEMS

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

1. **Guadalupe Appraisal District Resolution 2025-03:**

Pete Snaddon, Chief Appraiser presented the Guadalupe Appraisal District's facilities and expansion plans. Mr. Snaddon has been with the district since 2008, the Chief for 5 years. He reported that the current facility is located at 3000 N Austin St in Seguin. The 5,000 square foot facility was built in 1984 and an expansion took place in 2008 which added 3,600 square feet. Mr. Snaddon explained the current operational scope and challenges due to the facility's shortcomings. He stated that the district administers 87,000+ exemptions, maintains records for 90,000 taxpayers, handles mapping amid numerous new subdivisions, serves 32 taxing units, processes over 24,000 filed visits on average and has a compressed appeals window of 70 days (April 15-July 25) to process 95% of appeals for tax certification. Mr. Snaddon reported that there is severe crowding in workspaces, an inadequate number of bathrooms (4 for 40+ staff and 100+ daily visitors), undersized secure/data rooms (216 sq ft for IT/server), poor public accessibility, lobby overcrowding during appeals, parking lot safety/access issues, and the repurposing of closets/small spaces for workstations/dual occupancy of supervisory offices. He also reported that there was a shared break room between staff and the Appraisal Review Board (ARB), which is problematic for confidentiality and legality (possible misdemeanor violations). Mr. Snaddon explained that the 2024 target was up to 200,000 presumed parcels/records and growth projections show that by 2045, that number is projected to be 280,000. He stated that staff is projected to increase by 30-50% over 20 years (from 41 to between 51 and 61 employees). He reported that ARB appeals are expected to increase to 40,000 annually by 2045 resulting in the need for four ARB panels for timely appeals management. The district is looking to increase digital solutions to mitigate staff increases and a greater implementation of self-service kiosks planned in the new facility. Mr. Snaddon advised that the proposed facility upgrade recommendation is to renovate and move into the old American Erskine building in Seguin. He stated that the property is on a 4-acre city block and that the benefits would be ample onsite storage (eliminating rising offsite storage fees), space for ARB panels, taxpayer liaison office, training room, enhanced public accessibility and service areas, and increased break room separation. Mr. Snaddon reported that there was a flexible design for future expansion, including a gymnasium that could house ARB activities during peak season. He explained the renovation plans which would address fire suppression, HVAC, utilities, and windows for efficiency. The facility would be three stories, with a public lobby and service areas on second floor, administrative, break, and conference rooms on the upper floors. The cost breakdown for the project would be as follows:

Site acquisition: approximately \$1,895,000

Renovation: \$8.4 million (increase due to HVAC/windows; anticipated long-term energy savings)

Total project cost: approximately \$10,000,000

Mr. Snaddon explained the funding allocation would be an annual incremental cost to each taxing unit of an approximately 16.3% increase over current levy, or approximately \$310/year for Santa Clara's share. He stated that there would be a 20-year note for financing and that cost mitigation would occur via the sale of the current facility (estimated \$1.5-1.75 million), unspent budget funds (approximately \$300,000 returned per year over 5 years), and low-risk

investments. Some questions were raised by the Council and the audience. Why expansion is not covered by expected new tax revenues from growth and it was explained that there was some flexibility, but based on adopted rates/service demands; expansion needs exceed current returns). Someone inquired about the process and Mr. Snaddon reported that it requires approval from $\frac{3}{4}$ of the 28 eligible taxing units (21 needed), with each entity getting one vote. Mr. Snaddon provided clarification on how shares are calculated; Santa Clara's is minimal (\$310/year for 20 years), county is 20% of total cost, Marion ISD and others share based on size. There were concerns voiced about accumulated costs to individual taxpayers due to multi-entity contributions and questions about repurposing county-owned properties that were dismissed due to legal/political structure and need for impartiality. It was discussed that the increase in protests was partly attributed to strong market growth, challenges of mass appraisal in a non-disclosure state (limits on getting reliable property sale data) and a question about transparency resulting in the answer that all project documentation is open record. Mr. Snaddon explained the project timeline, with the project being under consideration since April 2024 and a Board resolution to proceed passing the week prior. It was proclaimed that a Council vote from Santa Clara would be needed within 30 days of this meeting to be considered and after 30 days the vote is counted as "no." Council postponed the vote.

2. Approval to apply for SB 224 Catalytic Converter grant to offset LPR:

Sgt. Hall explained that Senate Bill 224 established grant for law enforcement to combat catalytic converter theft with License Plate Reader (LPR) cameras. He reported that LPRs also aid general crime prevention, vehicle theft recovery, illegal dumping, and missing person alerts. Sgt. Hall provided Council with details regarding the grant. He advised that the grant pays 80% of the camera cost via Motor Vehicle Crime Prevention Authority and the remaining 20% would be covered by outside partner (Johnny's Wrecker Service), so the City would pay nothing. Chief Marshal Airola explained that the grant cycle is annual and a new application is required each year. Technical and operational points that were made were: Cameras capture license plate, vehicle make/model/color only (no facial recognition). Data kept for 30 days; accessible only to law enforcement, with case justification for each search. System not linked to traffic tickets; for investigative use only. An example was provided regarding a recent Santa Clara hit on a felony warrant vehicle due to existing LPRs. The Marshals explained that there is comparable use in other area cities (Cibola, New Braunfels, Seguin, New Berlin, Houston) and that they are law enforcement-only accessible, with multi-agency cooperation. Public concerns and Council discussion included: Questions around privacy and surveillance; clarified as no facial recognition or personal tracking. Concerns about insurance fee—clarified that general insurance fees subsidize the fund statewide, not linked to LPR use specifically in Santa Clara. No manpower increase required; officers are notified automatically of hits. Usefulness in crime investigation and prevention repeatedly demonstrated. Councilmember Dwane Atkins made a motion to grant the approval of the application before the May 23rd deadline. Councilmember John Reagan seconded the motion. Motion carried with four votes in favor and Councilmember Marian Carty abstaining.

3. Approval of FY 2023 – 2024 Audit: Councilmember Ernest Schoenefeldt made a motion to approve FY 2023 – 2024 audit. Councilmember Danny Trammell seconded the motion. All in favor and the motion carried.

I. ANNOUNCEMENTS: None

J. EXECUTIVE SESSION: None

K. ATTENDANCE BY OTHER ELECTED OR APPOINTED OFFICIALS: None

L. ADJOURNMENT

Councilmember Ernest Schoenefeldt made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:35 PM. Councilmember Dwane Atkins seconded the motion and passed unanimously.

Mayor: Jeff Hunt



City Secretary: Donna White-Absent