



**MINUTES: APRIL 18, 2023**  
**FOR THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE**  
**CITY OF WILLIS, TEXAS**

Leonard Reed, Mayor  
Tom Luster, Mayor Pro-Tem  
Ashley Nixon, Place 1  
Barney Stone, Place 2  
Thomas Belinoski, Place 3  
William Brown, Place 5

Sheyi I. Ipaye, City Manager  
Marissa Quintanilla, City Secretary  
Larry Foerster, City Attorney

The City of Willis, Texas convened into regular session at city hall on the date and time aforesaid with the following members present:

Leonard Reed, Mayor  
Tom Luster, Mayor Pro-Tem  
Ashley Nixon, Council Member  
Barney Stone, Council Member  
Thomas Belinoski, Council Member  
William Brown, Council Member  
Sheyi Ipaye, City Manager  
Marissa Quintanilla, City Secretary  
Jeff Cross, Director of Community Development  
Michael Ives, Public Works Director  
Lt. Alton Nelson, WPD

And the following members absent: none, constituting a quorum at which time the following business was transacted to-wit:

1. Call to order the regular meeting  
Mayor Reed called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.
2. Roll Call, Pledge of Allegiance, and Invocation  
I Pledge of 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.  
Honor the Texas Flag. I Pledge of Allegiance to thee Texas; one state under God, one and indivisible.  
The City Secretary called roll. Pledges were recited. Councilman Brown gave the invocation.
3. PUBLIC HEARING
  - a. Public hearing on the Juvenile Curfew Ordinance  
Mayor asked for any questions from the public regarding the Juvenile Curfew Ordinance. None were received. Mayor asked for any questions or comments from Council. None were received. Mayor closed the public hearing at 5:32 p.m.
4. CITIZENS INQUIRY
  - a. Public Comments  
Steve Weisinger representing Montgomery County ESD1 spoke to the Council about the abandonment of street and alley to build new fire station. Mr. Weisinger stated that ESD1 has purchased property across from the existing station on Kennedy Street and in order for them to build on the property a portion of street and alley would need to be abandoned by the City.
5. CONSENT AGENDA
  - a. Consider the minutes of the previous meetings: March 21, 2023
  - b. Approval of Accounts Payable
  - c. Approval of Financial Statements and Tax Collection reports  
Mayor asked if anything needed to be removed from the consent agenda and consider separately. No items were removed. Mayor asked for a motion. Motion was made by Councilman Belinoski to approve the consent agenda. Councilman Stone seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

## 6. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Presentation from Perdue Brandon, Fielder Collins & Mott LLP on Delinquent Tax Collection  
Presentation was made by Leslie Schkade, of Perdue Brandon on the City's tax collection, the procedures and amounts collected.
- b. Discuss and consider approval of a variance request from Cameron Johnson on reduced lot sizes and setbacks for Block 29, Town of Willis and Lot 5 of Block C, Town of Willis  
Mr. Cross stated that Block C Lot 5 is a single lot by itself, and he does not have the information he needs to be able to work the variance. Mr. Cross stated that he would have to get with Mr. Johnson and find out how he wanted to do this and would like to table this part of the variance. Mr. Cross stated that Mr. Johnson sent a preliminary layout showing all the lots he wants to put into this block. Mr. Cross stated the block originally has 10 lots and he has increased the amount of lots by reducing the size. Mr. Cross stated that the goal was to put houses in where they would go up to the property line. Mr. Cross stated that the water and sewer lines go around the block and are in the right of way, but not under the street. Mr. Cross stated that Mr. Johnson is hoping to have setbacks on the property line where the building could be built right up to the edge of the property line. Mr. Cross stated that with utilities going in there they put them between the pavement and the property line so that they can be excavated for repairs and replacement, so whenever you dig down and must work on these lines or a water line has a major leak and saturates the soil, often we get over the property line. Mr. Cross stated it would undermine the structure if it were right on the property line, we have our utilities and commonly place them in that right of way up to the property line. Mr. Cross stated that right now the setbacks are 25ft from the property line so if we dig a hole right next their property lines the load bearing soil will come out at a 45-degree angle. Mr. Cross stated that the separation between the property lines are covered by building code. Mr. Cross stated the building code indicates that you cannot have any structure that is not sprinkled and does not have fire rated materials within 5ft of the lot line that would split the two dwellings. Mr. Cross stated that Mr. Johnson is looking at having them 3ft apart from the property line which would be a 6ft space between structures. Mr. Cross stated that Mr. Johnson is also looking at having a 15ft setback and the problem with that is when you park a vehicle there, they will not fit on that 15ft setback. Mr. Johnson stated that regarding the ordinance talking about safety in the streets and the proximity to the house, with the increase of right of ways the houses off MLK and Stewart street will be about 20ft further away from the edge of pavement than a standard development. Mr. Johnson stated the zero-line setbacks on the north and south street, they will be installing the water on one side and sewer on the other and can make sure that those are farther away from the property line. Mr. Johnson stated they can make 5 feet work but 10 feet it would lose the appeal and makes projects like this does not work monetarily because of the amount of lots you lose. Mr. Johnson stated that he is intending on spending a lot of money improving the alley way. Mr. Johnson stated he would work with Mr. Cross with what the fire code. Mayor asked what staff recommendation was. Mr. Cross stated that staff recommended a 20ft setback on the alley side and 10ft setback on the street and a minimum of 5ft setback on the sides. Mr. Cross stated staff does not have recommendation on the side of the lots, these can be flexible. Mr. Ipaye stated that communication between staff and Mr. Johnson was limited, so he recommended that staff work with Mr. Johnson on this variance. Motion was made by Councilman Brown to table item 6b. Councilman Luster seconded the motion. Mayor asked for any further discussion. None was received. Motion passed unanimously.
- c. Discuss and consider approval of appointments to the Willis Community Development Corporation for terms expiring  
Mr. Ipaye stated that currently four seats on the Community Development Corporation are expired. Members were contacted and all have agreed to serve another term. Mr. Ipaye stated the members were Leonard Reed, Lisa Toliver, Yolanda Harris, and Mary Reed. Motion was made by Councilman Belinoski to reappoint Leonard Reed, Lisa Toliver, Yolanda Harris, and Mary Reed to the Community Development Corporation Board. Councilman Stone seconded the motion. Mayor asked for any further discussion. None was received. Motion passed unanimously.
- d. Discuss and consider approval for a partial replat of Lyndon Heights, a subdivision of 1.317 acres in the James Elkins survey, abstract 198 to create one commercial reserve

Mr. Cross stated this property was located on the corner of Highway 75 and Calhoun. Mr. Cross stated that it was zoned commercial and use to be a wrecking yard. Mr. Cross stated the owner wants to make this one commercial reserve. Mr. Cross stated this has gone through the Planning and Zoning Commission and they recommended approval to Council. Councilman Belinoski stated that he has heard from several residents, and they were concerned about their being entrances on Calhoun. Mr. Cross stated that they three entrances on this one on Highway 75 and two on Calhoun. Mr. Cross stated that there would not be any heavy traffic other than the garbage truck going through there. Mr. Cross stated that they have parking along 75 up to the building and this is the major entrance, it is about a 38- or 40-foot drive. Mr. Cross stated the other two entrances is just relive traffic coming in and out and are not designed for heavy traffic. Motion was made by Councilman Belinoski to approve a partial replat of Lyndon Heights, a subdivision of 1.317 acres in the James Elkins survey, abstract 198 to create one commercial reserve. Councilman Luster seconded the motion. Mayor asked for any questions or further discussion. None was received. Motion passed unanimously.

- e. Discuss and consider approval of a preliminary plat for the Woodland Hills Section 30, 15.033 acres in the F.K. Henderson survey, abstract 248

Mr. Cross stated that this section had 74 lots, three reserves which adds up to almost eight acres. Mr. Cross stated that they have allowed these reserves so that they can use lot sizes that were previously approved by Council. Mr. Cross stated all lots were single family R-1. Mayor asked for any questions. None were received. Motion was made by Councilman Stone to approve the preliminary plat for the Woodland Hills section 30, 15.033 acres in the F.K. Henderson survey, abstract 248. Councilman Belinoski seconded the motion. Mayor asked for any further discussion. None was received. Motion passed unanimously.

- f. Discuss and consider approval of a preliminary plat for the Woodland Hills Section 31, 19.714 acres in the F.K. Henderson survey, abstract 248

Mr. Cross stated that this section had 78 lots with three reserves of almost three acres and is next to section 30. Mr. Cross stated this would include areas for kids to play in and areas for drainage. Mr. Cross stated these lots are bigger than the previous section. Mr. Cross stated that these all meet the requirements that were approved by the Council previously. Mayor asked about open space for the kids to play and if there would be a park. Mr. Cross stated that the reserves they way they shaped them, they have areas that are large enough for the kids to play they are not all drainage easements. Mayor asked for any further questions. None were received. Motion was made by Councilman Belinoski to approve a preliminary plat for the Woodland Hills section 31, 19.714 acres in the F.K. Henderson survey, abstract 248. Councilman Luster seconded the motion. Mayor asked for any further discussion. None was received. Motion passed unanimously.

- g. Discuss and consider approval of a preliminary plat for the Woodland Hills Section 32, 16.263 acres in the F.K. Henderson survey, abstract 248

Mr. Cross stated this was across the street from section 28, which is at the beginning of the area we have been looking at. Mr. Cross stated this section has 62 lots with a little of one acre in reserve. Mr. Cross stated there should be a walking trail along the edge of the road that goes back and around. Mr. Cross stated that this section has smaller lots, but still fit the requirements approved by Council. Mayor asked for questions. None were received. Motion was made by Councilman Brown to approve a preliminary plat for the Woodland Hills section 32, 16.263 acres in the F.K. Henderson survey, abstract 248. Councilman Stone seconded the motion. Mayor asked for any further discussion. None was received. Motion passed unanimously.

- h. Discuss and consider action regarding the Calvary Lift Station Electrical Modification Issues and authorize the City Manager to proceed as directed

Mr. Ipaye stated that staff brought this item before the Council because the engineers are recommending modification to the Calvary Lift Station. Mr. Ipaye stated that the challenges we have are due to the Variable Frequency Drives -VFD. Mr. Ipaye stated that during the last two years three of those VFD's have been changed out, due to them blowing out. Mr. Ipaye stated that they are recommending to go to a soft start. Mr. Ipaye stated that tonight he is asking for direction from Council on if they would like to stay with the VFD system in the original design or go with recommendation to go with a soft start. Mr. Ipaye stated this would control the start and stop of the system and would have to use the pulleys. Mr. Ipaye stated that the

warranty is for five years, and two and a half years have passed. Mr. Wind stated that since the meeting in December we have a fully functioning lift station, but still have an incomplete lift station, one of the things that needs to be replaced is the final VFD, there was three in the original design and only have two. Mr. Wind stated that the reason we have not replaced that one is because of the reasons Mr. Ipaye mentioned. Mr. Wind stated that they have been discussing this with Mr. Anderson, several other electrical engineers, designers, and manufacturers. Mr. Wind stated that there are two options presented in the letter. Mr. Wind stated that they are willing to proceed with either one. Andy Anderson with Precision Pump Systems apologized for all the issues they have been having with the lift station and stated it is not typical of the pump stations they do. Mr. Anderson stated that this one has been giving them issues with the electrical system. Mr. Anderson stated it does have a five-year 100% warranty. Mr. Anderson stated they have not been able to definitively isolate the issue and have had several failures and some recommendations to eliminate to stop the failures was to change the technology to less electrical and more reliable system. Mr. Anderson stated they are here to offer solutions and will do what the City wants them to do. Mr. Anderson stated they have had third party engineers and electrical personnel come and look at this and can not pin it down to what is causing the failures. Mr. Anderson stated that the failures occur when no one is there, and they are coming after the fact. Mr. Anderson stated they cannot record any type of failure and cannot forensically analyze why we are getting this failure and so that is why he made the recommendation for a soft start to go with a more reliable system, that is less sensitive to power. Mr. Anderson stated that with that we would lose the ability to change speeds electronically. Mr. Anderson stated that the reason for the VFD's in the original design is because the lift station has a phase 1 and phase 2 flow requirement for build out. Mr. Anderson stated that on phase 1 we are slowing the equipment down to send less flow in the system and for phase 2 we would speed the pumps up to give more flow and pressure for the final build out. Mr. Anderson stated this could still be controlled but would have to do it manually if the City decides to go to soft start. Mr. Anderson stated this would be done by changing a pulley on each pump. Mr. Anderson stated they are trying to make a recommendation based on what they think will solve the problem and stop failures from happening. Mr. Anderson stated they have never lost the station completely; we have just had intermittent failures and they seem to be months apart, and to reduce this they made a recommendation for soft start, a simple design for the system, but still have the mechanical ability to change the speed of the pump when we must do it. Councilman Brown has how often would we have to change the speed of the pump. Mr. Anderson stated when phase 2 requirement is there. Mr. Anderson stated only one time whether it is a year, two, or three years from now. Mr. Anderson stated it is a simple process they would just increase the size of one pulley on each pump system to give us the higher speed that we need. Mr. Anderson and the Council continued a lengthy discussion on the VFD issue and the unknow cause of the failures. Mayor stated he would like to see the chronological timeline of the failures. Motion was made by Councilman Stone to continue to monitor the issue and to get the forensic report back from the manufacturer. Councilwoman Nixon seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

## 7. REPORTS

Input from Council related to issues for possible inclusion on future agendas; related to issues such as (but not limited to) municipal projects, personnel, public property, development, and other city/public business.

### a. Engineer's Report

#### 1. Catahoula Wells Upsizing

Mr. Wind stated that a preconstruction meeting has taken place on the Catahoula well upsizing. Mr. Wind stated there is some coordination and scheduling being done between the wells being updated and the Jasper wells.

#### 2. Water Plants 1 & 3 Improvements

Mr. Wind stated that survey is complete and preliminary designs underway and have been meeting with staff with some of the layouts getting their feedback. Mr. Wind stated that soon they will want to do some clearing at Water Plant 3 at Pin Oak to get the Geo Tech testing done where the ground storage tanks will be.

#### 3. Water Distribution System Improvements

Mr. Wind stated survey has been complete and have some coordination to do with the Woodland Hills as far as right of ways and easements to make sure water lines are in the right place and hope to be bidding soon.

### b. City Manager's Report

Mr. Ipaye stated there would be a power outage on Saturday for about 12 hours. Mr. Ipaye stated Entergy had been postponing the work but must move forward. Councilman Brown asked what part of town. Mayor stated that it would be over on I-45 from the highline right of way back towards Loves and then down Longstreet out to Calvary Road. Mr. Ipaye stated there are two generators at the WWTP and have scheduled a vacuum truck to make sure they are available and able to come out.

1. SJRA Notice of Proposed Amendments to Rate Order

Mr. Ipaye stated that the SJRA is proposing an amendment to the current rate order. Mr. Ipaye stated that the rate increase is what may be coming down for the ground reduction plan. Mr. Ipaye stated the currently scheduled for Monday April 24<sup>th</sup> with the review committee and the Board of Directors meeting is scheduled for Thursday April 27<sup>th</sup>.

2. Vacation Notice

Mr. Ipaye stated he would be going on vacation from May 11-19, 2023.

Ms. Quintanilla reminded Council about the Trash-off would be Saturday April 22<sup>nd</sup> across from city hall.

8. ADJOURN

Motion was made by Councilman Luster to adjourn. Councilman Stone seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:53 p.m.

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Leonard Reed, Mayor

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Marissa Quintanilla, City Secretary