

CITY OF TATUM
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
July 14, 2025
5:30 PM



Mayor

Michael Henry

City Council

Wendell Moore J.R. Smith
Tate Smith – Mayor Pro-Tem
Robin Palmer
Jonathan Knapp

City Secretary

Jackie Muckleroy

CALL TO ORDER:

Mayor Henry called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm.

PRAYER:

Observed by all in attendance.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Observed by all in attendance.

CITIZENS' COMMENTS:

No citizens' comments.

OLD BUSINESS:

Change of date and time for City Council Meetings

Wendell Moore made a motion to discuss changing the date and time for City Council Meetings, and Jonathan Knapp seconded the motion. After a brief discussion, it was suggested that we change the meeting time to 6:00 pm on the 2nd Monday of each month.

Wendell Moore motioned to change the meeting time to 6:00 pm on the 2nd Monday of each month. Jonathan Knapp seconded the motion. All in favor. None opposed. Motion passed.

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS:

Information Only:

- Police Dept: Chief James Smith – reviewed monthly reports.
- Public Works: Mr. Mike Morton – reviewed monthly reports.
- Volunteer Fire Dept: Asst. Fire Chief Cody Jones reviewed monthly reports.
- Economic Dev Corp: Mr. Nakia Smith
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Presented TEDCO's projected budget for 2025-2026. This item was not on the agenda and will be added to the August agenda for approval. Mr. Smith informed us that O'Reilly Automotive is coming next to Tractor Supply. This is a 2-acre lot, and O'Reilly will be on a one-acre lot, which leaves another acre lot available, maybe for a fast-food restaurant. A person is looking for 30 acres of land to build a community. Encouraged folks to let him know if they have or know of someone who has 30 acres available for sale.

- City Administration: City Secretary Jackie Muckleroy

The council was asked to review the adjustments tab in their packet. Ms. Muckleroy explained the reason for adjustments and how it allowed for transparency of funds; Reviewed grant requirements and expectations. Citizens were notified that a survey will be conducted at the end of the month. This survey will provide the grantors with the information needed to ensure that we meet the LMI (low to moderate income) threshold. Citizens were encouraged to participate in the survey. Mayor Henry, Jonathan Knapp, and City Secretary Jackie Muckleroy met with Jeff Simmons, the engineer from SPI (Schaumburg & Polk), the engineering firm assisting with this grant, on July 14, 2025. The city submitted a priority list of projects that we would like the grant to cover. The following streets were submitted: Chaparral, Falcon, Robin, Lark, Menefee, Ivy, Bluebird, Jefferson to Ivy, and Winona. A request was submitted for sidewalks along Sterling Price. This request was not accepted due to Sterling Price being a state-owned street and not a city street. Also, a request was submitted for a splash pad/park for children. This grant does not address that need. The city will need to look into a grant sponsored by Texas Parks and Wildlife.

- Mayor: Mr. Mike Henry

Discussed the need to create a planning and zoning commission. Multiple people would like to serve on the committee, but we need someone willing to lead the commission. This is necessary if we are to take care of the city. Hearings will be scheduled over the next couple of weeks.

The mayor had conversations with stakeholders regarding retaining Christus as our emergency service, or if we would like to look at other options, such as UT Health.

Discussions with the city attorney and others have revealed that the city has let things slide when it comes to enforcing ordinances dealing with abandoned buildings, old cars, etc.

In reference to ordinances, planning, and zoning, we have hired AOKA Engineering to handle our permitting and code enforcement for most items, and they will have the portal online on 8/1. This will no longer be handled by local individuals. Effective 9/1, ordinances will be enforced, and licensed building inspectors from AOKA Engineering will be enforcing building ordinances. Chief Smith will be going through official training for code enforcement certification, not to serve as the officer, but so that we are covered all around, per Mayor Henry. Wendell Moore asked if Matt Allison was previously doing this? Chief Smith answered yes. Mr. Moore stated that the council needs to discuss who will be serving as the code enforcement officer and what that pertains to, before a decision is made. Mayor Henry agreed.

The mayor addressed the code of conduct during council meetings. He recognized that many were present to discuss an item on the agenda and that he is happy to hear citizen comments, but he doesn't want it to turn into a back-and-forth. He asked citizens to come forward to speak, one at a time, for 3 minutes at a time. He asked that afterwards, citizen's allow council to deliberate and make their decision.

Mayor Henry requested that we move the fireworks ordinance be moved to the front to consider it first. He asked for a motion to suspend the rules. Robin Palmer motioned to suspend and Jon Knapp seconded the motion.

Wendell Moore motioned to discuss and JR Smith seconded the motion to discuss the firework ordinance.

Mayor Henry asked to elaborate on this agenda item. Wendell Moore noted that he wanted to ordinance to prevent the sale and use of fireworks in the city limits. Mayor Henry requested citizen comments:

- Mr. Woods commented that it is a joy of a small town for kids to enjoy. He stated this is only 3 times a year that we have fireworks and it is should be part of a small town.
- Ms. Cindy Brown commented that her grandchildren enjoy the fireworks. There is not much for kids to do in Tatum. She stated that she has never caught the town or school on fire and requested that the council not take this away from the children.
- Ms. Palmer read a statement that a total of 28 days of selling fireworks is not too much to ask Council to allow.
- Elaine Cutright stated that she is single, and this is how she makes a living. She stated that "we should be building up the city, not tearing it down".
- Alan Flores spoke on behalf of the Eagle Ridge residents, stating that they were disappointed that this is an issue on the agenda. He suggested that if we are looking at taking things away, we should consider alcohol and tobacco. He also stated that the city doesn't have the manpower to enforce these ordinances. He stated that he "works for the City of Longview and the officers there don't enforce the rules around fireworks, because it is too hard, it's impossible." He said there is a better way to approach this, and if this goes forward, it might result in more retaliation against the city. He said that he is speaking on behalf of five other citizens.
- Donna Craig commented that the fireworks are constant, not just 4-5 times a year. She stated that every one of her animals is afraid. She commented that we have plenty of things for kids to do. She commented that she would love a splash pad for the kids and would like to have a petting zoo for kids.
- If the ordinance stays, make it so they can only use them on that day, not two weeks before.
- Jeff Mace commented that he is a responsible pet owner and cares for them. He stated that if this council revokes the ordinance, they would be going back on previous council approval for the sale of fireworks and that would be wrong.

Mayor noted that he had received a petition signed by 121 people. He stated he has not verified if they are all registered voters.

Robin Palmer stated that we are taking enjoyment from citizens. He stated that there are other things, such as streets and buildings, that we should be taking care of. JR Smith stated that the City of Tatum is the only city around that allows in the city. He stated he doesn't know what to do when his pets get afraid due to the fireworks.

Robin Palmer asked what do you do when there is a thunderstorm or a truck uses its jake brake? JR Smith stated Longview, Kilgore, Beckville, or Carthage does not allow the sale or use of fireworks in the city.

JR Smith commented on the recent damage caused by fireworks in surrounding cities. Robin Palmer stated that we don't have any numbers on the damage or injuries caused by fireworks. Mr. Palmer incorrectly stated that insurance wasn't necessary. Insurance is a requirement for any permit issued by the City of Tatum.

Wendell Moore acknowledged that it may bring revenue. He stated that we are hearing of damage done by fireworks in other cities and he asked, "what if there is damage?" he asked why take the chance? He stated that if something happens at the four-way next to the gas station. He stated we all know what could happen if something goes wrong at the firecracker stand. He said the city does not want that liability.

Wendell Moore made a motion to ban the sale and use of fireworks inside the city limits of Tatum. JR Seconded the motion. Mayor asked all in favor and Wendell Moore and JR Smith voted yes. Mayor asked if any are opposed? Jonathan Knapp and Robin Palmer voted no. Vote was split 2/2. Mayor Henry was the deciding vote. Mayor Henry stated that he did not agree with that and stated the motion will not pass.

NEW BUSINESS:

- **Discussion and Motion:** Approve last month's meeting minutes and checks for the City of Tatum
Jonathan Knapp motioned to approve last month's meeting minutes and checks, and it was seconded by Robin Palmer. Mayor Henry reminded them that due to special meetings that there are several meeting minutes to review and approve. Checks were also distributed for signature and approval. It was noted that Councilman Knapp still needs to sign the required paperwork at Vera Bank. Wendell Moore inquired about the wording of the minutes regarding the ordinance 2010-12. Mayor Henry advised if an amendment is needed, it would have to occur at the next meeting.

Jonathan Knapp made a motion to accept minutes, and JR Smith seconded the motion. All in favor. None opposed

- **Discussion and Motion:** JR Smith motioned to discuss, and JR Smith seconded the motion. These signatures are required that require the signature of the Mayor and City Secretary to sign on behalf of the city for matters related to the Street Grant; civil rights policies, excessive force policy and Fair Housing Month in April.

Wendell Moore motioned to approve the following and it was seconded by Jonathan Knapp.

- Resolution authorizing signatories for the GLO Resilient Communities Program grant 23-160-111-F232
- Discuss, consider, and approve a resolution adopting required CDBG Civil Rights policies
- Proclaim April Fair Housing Month. This proclamation will help to fulfill Fair Housing activity obligations as required by the grant.

All in favor. None opposed.

- **Discussion and Motion:** Mass Communication Software

Wendell Moore made a motion to discuss the Mass Communication Software and JR Smith seconded the motion. Mayor Henry said this is for emergency notices, such as weather alerts. He reviewed the options for each potential provider:

ETCOG - \$1800 one-time fee – no setup fee

Go Gov - \$3600 annually

Hyper Reach: \$4400 annually/\$500 initial setup

ReGroup - \$2500.00 annually. If we did three years, it would be \$5625, basically one year free.

Mayor Henry's preference was Hyper Reach.

Jonathan Knapp asked if this was automatic or would it require that someone hit a button to activate. The mayor stated that it would require that we assign someone to do this. Citizens would be required to opt in or out of the service. A citizen asked who would be responsible for sending this out? Would the City hire someone? Mayor Henry said it would be "organic and would depend on the type of emergency, i.e., if it is a fire emergency then the fire department would be responsible for sending it out. City Secretary asked if any of these providers offered an automated service that could be based on a zip code vs having someone on call to handle it. Wendell Moore made a motion to table this item until we can get more information on it.

JR Smith seconded the motion to allow time for all to read over the options. All in favor. None opposed.

- **Discussion and Motion:** Approve Hill-Top Security

Mayor Henry reminded all that a representative was present at our last meeting to provide overview of what they offer. Mayor would like to take money from the money market accounts

JR Smith made a motion to use Hill-Top Security (TexStar and Logic), and Wendell Moore seconded the motion, but added that the specifics of what we plan to rollover will need further review. Mayor Henry asked as for as the amounts and from which accounts funds would come from? Ms. Muckleroy stated that the CDs will not mature until October/November 2025. JR Smith suggested that we do further review.

Nakia Smith commented that it is good to diversify funds. He was against taking everything from the local bank that supports the city. He stated that \$500k is being taken out of the community. He asked what we planned to do with the interest earned. He asked if we are making money to just make money or do we plan to do something with what we earn? Are you going to use the funds for the city? He stated that constantly passing ideas at each meeting is not productive. We need to have a plan for the city. Mr. Nakia Smith says that only seven people know the budget until the budget is released. He stated that if all the city seats were filled during the council meetings, things would move faster because questions would be asked. There should be transparency for the citizens. He stated that, for the past few years, we have had folks on the council with personal agendas. Mayor Henry stated that the reason we were able to balance the budget was that we took projected spending from interest to keep us in the black, and out of the red, so it is being utilized properly. Mr. Smith stated that the agenda is filled with something different each month. He said there is a reason why there is an old business and a new business section on the agenda. He suggested we stay on one item until it is finished, before we move on to something different, instead of changing to something new each month and adding something new to the agenda. decide which funds we will be using. Ms. Muckleroy stated again that the CDs do not mature until November or December.

Jonathan Knapp asked if we could make a motion to approve Hilltop Security and wait until a committee is formed that will be responsible for selecting which funds are moved. Nakia Smith stated that decisions made in secret that affect citizens. If transparency fills this room, then things will get done.

Mayor Henry told everyone that he was reminded by the City Secretary that we need to have a committee in place before we make a decision on what amount will be transferred to HillTop Security.

- **Discussion and Motion: City Council Policies and Procedures**

Jonathan Knapp made a motion to discuss and Wendell Moore seconded the motion. Mayor stated that he would like to make this a resolution. These procedures will provide an outline for rules on how council will operate, preparation of agenda, actions and procedures on how to respond to misconduct during meetings, etc. This is posted and is public knowledge. Mayor Henry said that if council needs time to review first and to hear back from the attorney before voting on this, that would be ok. Wendell asked if Mayor Henry was waiting to hear back from the attorney? Mayor responded yes and that we could turn this into a resolution tonight.

Jonathan Knapp made a motion to approve and JR Smith seconded. All in favor. None opposed.

Wendell Moore made a motion to adjourn and Robin Palmer seconded the motion.

Meeting adjourned at 7:10 PM

Michael A. Henry
Mayor, City of Tatum

Attest: City Secretary, Jackie Muckleroy