



**CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION MINUTES  
CITY OF ODESSA, TEXAS**

**February 15, 2022**

On February 15, 2022, a work session meeting of the Odessa City Council was held at 3:00 p.m., Council Chamber, fifth floor, City Hall, 411 W. 8<sup>th</sup> St., Odessa, Texas.

City Council present: Mayor Javier Joven; Council members: Mark Matta, District One; Steven P. Thompson, District Two; Detra White, District Three; Tom Sprawls, District Four; Mari Willis, District Five; and Denise Swanner, At-Large.

Others present: Michael Marrero, City Manager; Norma Aguilar-Grimaldo, City Secretary; Natasha Brooks, City Attorney; Cindy Muncy, Assistant City Manager; Phillip Urrutia, Assistant City Manager; and other members of City staff.

A quorum being present, Mayor Joven called the meeting to order, and the following proceedings were held:

Council member Thompson gave the invocation.

**Discuss litigation with the City Attorney and the attorneys hired by the City, Cause No. B-20-08-0127-CV, AIM Media, Texas LLC d/b/a The Odessa American vs. City of Odessa.**

Ms. Brooks stated that the City received the grant plea and the City provided information in accordance with the law. Keith Stretcher, attorney, highlighted several factual stipulations. Stipulations included that the Odessa American received all public information entitled under the Public Information Act, the City complied with all the Attorney General's opinions pertained to all information requested by the Odessa American and was in full compliance with the Attorney General's opinion and produced all the public information response to requests. He stated that the City has not refused to supply any public information requested. The court granted the City's plea to the jurisdiction. The Odessa American was not entitled to the attorney's fees. Council member Swanner appreciated the City Attorney and staff and thanked them for their work. Council member Matta believed in no settlement once he heard all the facts and emphasized that the City complied and nothing was done wrong. He thanked the City Attorney for the job well done. Council member Thompson was pleased and was proud of staff. He thanked the attorneys. Council member White believed in Ms. Brooks and the team. She stated that the City was fair and protected the citizens of Odessa. Council member Sprawls stated that the lawsuit was to sell newspapers and was proud of staff. Council member Willis stated that the City had nothing to hide and took a hard but never doubted the legal team. She thanked the legal staff and supported the job done. Mayor Joven asked for explanation on the basic and immediate definition of information under the Act. Mr. Stretcher stated that the Public Information Act had a broad definition. The documents must be produced promptly but certain exceptions were not required to be released as driver's license or social security. Mayor Joven asked about the cause of information being requested in sending to the Attorney General. Mr. Stretcher stated that there could be sensitive information and there was a duty to protect privacy information. Mayor Joven asked if it was practice or at any time over excessive in sending requests to the Attorney General. Mr. Stretcher reported after thorough review that the City complied with the Public Information Act and requests were made when appropriate. He thanked the Council. Ms. Brooks recognized the legal team for an excellent job. Mayor Joven stated that the news media was a source that entrusted public trust. After being

elected and briefed on the case, he stood behind the expertise of the attorney and staff as they were being transparent. The City defended, stood by the law, and protected the citizens. He congratulated Ms. Brooks and the team for the countless hours of excellent work.

**Odessa College (OC) Downtown project update.** Greg Williams, Odessa College President, thanked the Council for its partnership to beautify and invest in downtown. Ken Zartner, Odessa College Vice President of Administrative Services, reviewed renderings of the concept designs for the downtown project. The construction documents were about 75% complete. He reviewed the budget, with two phases, with a total cost of \$15,548,580. Dr. Williams stated that there would be a small on-going fee for use of the facility and the City would have opportunity to reserve the facility. Security would be maintained with the OC police and cameras. Mr. Marrero explained the funds that could be used for the project. He stated that there was a total of \$1,027,129.54 from the Hotel Motel Tax Fund from the operations of the Marriott Hotel. Additional funds would be available in September 2022. Mayor Joven stated that the funds met the stipulations to utilize the funds for the downtown revitalization. Council member Thompson thanked the Eoffs for their support and OC for the project. Council member Willis stated that with partnerships it made Odessa a better place to live. The Eoffs generosity showed their love for Odessa.

**Discover Odessa quarterly report.** Monica Tschauner, Discover Odessa Director, reported the quarterly report from October to December 2021. She provided the economic impact and hotel nights. There were 33 groups assisted with 53,532 total attendees. She reviewed the upcoming events. Discover Odessa's activities included 293 sales calls, a monthly newsletter and meeting planner celebration. There were 3,624 website visits and active billboards.

**Support an application to the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs for 2022 competitive 9% housing tax credits for Woodcrest Apartments.** Bill Fisher stated that support was required for a 9% tax credit for Woodcrest Apartments. Woodcrest served the elderly and disabled with subsidized rent. The redevelopment project would provide for 80 new efficient units and HUD would extend the rental assistance for 20 years. The residents supported the project. The moving expenses would be provided to the residents. Construction would begin at the end of the year or early next year. RISE Residential Construction was the contractor of the project and it owned and managed the property. Mr. Marrero stated that impact fees would be applied based on the units and sector.

**Bid award for 2022 sealcoat project.** Yervand Hmayakyan, City Engineer, stated that the lowest bid received was Ronald Wagner for \$1,770,582.78. The purpose of the project was to sealcoat 16.5 linear miles of streets. He reviewed the map for sealcoat.

**Discuss the Gertrude Bruce building.** Mr. Marrero stated that the Gertrude Bruce building was in disrepair as it experienced property damage. There was a lack of maintenance on the leased building. Scott Anderson, Director of Building Services, presented a virtual tour of the building. He identified the areas damaged in the building. There was water damage after the 2021 winter storm. The cost for mold remediation was \$30,000 and total cost for the project was \$100,000 for the building to be used. Council member Matta stated that the Black Cultural Council wanted to take over the building as it would be a positive impact on the south side for the building to be utilized. Council member Willis stated that the building would be a tourist destination as it was an integral part of Odessa history. Jo Ann Davenport-Littleton, Black Cultural Council, provided the history on the Gertrude Bruce Center, a historical landmark. The building would house the history of African Americans, provide educational exhibits, Juneteenth memorabilia, and a rented venue. She reviewed

the operating hours and budget. She stated that the FMH Foundation supported the request and was a possible funding source for future events. Gavin Norris, attorney, stated that cultural impacted the community and brought awareness through activities. Mrs. Davenport-Littleton requested that the Black Cultural Council be given ownership of the Gertrude Bruce Center after the City repaired the building. Ms. Brooks would research if the City could provide ownership to the non-profit organization. Mrs. Davenport-Littleton had no problem with a long term lease agreement if ownership could not be done. Council member Thompson asked if historical funds were available and was not interested in leasing. Staff would research if the center was designated under the National Historical Society.

**Purchase two ZOLL cardiac monitors for Rescue 9 and Engine 9.** Daniel Chavez, Training Captain, stated that two ZOLL monitors would be purchased for a total cost of \$84,133.58. He explained the functions of the monitors.

**Amend the budget and appropriate a transfer of \$2,000,000 from the Stormwater Fund to the Capital Projects Fund for the Faudree linear detention basin project.** Tom Kerr, Director of Utilities/Public Works stated that the item would provide for a budget transfer from the Stormwater Fund to the Capital Projects Fund for \$2 million for the Faudree linear detention basin project.

**Adopt the updated Downtown Master Plan for the City of Odessa.** Mr. Urrutia provided the background information from the 2016 Downtown Master Plan. He reviewed the items that were accomplished. The updated Downtown Master Plan process was reviewed with workshops and public engagement. He reviewed the strategies that included marketing, wayfinding, grant corridor, residential partnerships, and parking.

**Amend the budget for Fiscal Year 2021-22 to appropriate additional funds from the Water/Sewer Fund to provide for the first annual payment of the 2021 Certificates of Obligation issue.** Mrs. Muncy stated that the budget amendment would provide for appropriation of \$2,394,004.72 funds to pay the two payments of the Certificates of Obligation.

Motion was made by Council member Sprawls and seconded by Council member Matta to adjourn the meeting. The motion was approved by the following vote:

Aye: Joven, Matta, Thompson, White, Sprawls, Willis, and Swanner  
Nay: None

The meeting adjourned at 5:03 p.m.

ATTEST:

APPROVED:

Norma Aguilar-Grimaldo, TRMC, CMC  
City Secretary

Javier Joven  
Mayor