



CITY OF GRAND PRAIRIE
PUBLIC SAFETY, HEALTH, AND ENVIRONMENT
COMMITTEE
COUNCIL BRIEFING ROOM
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 06, 2023 AT 3:00 PM

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Meeting was called to order by Chairwoman Clemson at 3:01 pm.

PRESENT

Chairwoman Jorja Clemson
Council Member Junior Ezeonu
Council Member Jacquin Headen

STAFF PRESENTATIONS

1. Recognition of Lana Yancey

Deputy City Manager Cheryl DeLeon and City Manager Steve Dye stated their appreciation to Lana Yancey for her time in taking minutes for Public Safety, Health, and Environment meetings. Chairwoman Clemson presented her with a Certificate of Appreciation.

2. Atmos Presentation

City Manager Steve Dye introduced the Atmos team. After the snow of Feb 2021, the city had Atmos issues at the Peninsula in the south end of the city. Al Hernandez, Manager of Public Affairs and liaison for the city, gave a progress report. Scott McCracken with Atmos, apologized for the situation with the failure during the December 2022 snow. He stated some improvement was seen in the past week with the ice and snow. Brad Cook, VP of Operations at Atmos, stated there are 1.8 million customers in the area and none lost service. He stated that Atmos fell short in communication in December. Mr. Dye asked about the status of construction projects. The Atmos group said the Westchester fortifications have been done and Atmos now has a contingency plan in place. They completed projects in the Peninsula after 2021 that started with Seaton Road which finished in January. They have increased their fleet and made modifications. Councilmember Ezeonu asked if customers are paying for services and whether there is a plan to reimburse people who lost heat during the storm. Atmos representatives stated they will reimburse 100% for purchases of heaters, wood and hotel rooms for those affected by the winter storm. If gas was turned off, those customers were not billed for that service and said customers can go to claims@atmosenergy.com to complete a claim form and attach receipts. This information is specifically for Westchester and the Peninsula residents. Councilmember Headen asked how long the fortification in Westchester will last. The Atmos team stated they did not have to inject extra gas this during this past week's storm so fortifications are working. Atmos continued to monitor the area during the storm to ensure that there was no loss of gas pressure. Chairwoman Clemson asked what plans Atmos has to improve communication. Atmos team stated that when contingency plans were determined inadequate, Atmos started sending out emails to the community to communicate the outage, which was an

average of 12 hours. HOA presidents were able to identify homeowners that did not have gas service. Mr. Dye stated we had to notify Atmos instead of Atmos notifying us. Atmos stated that call centers are open twenty-four hours a day and seven days a week in Waco and Amarillo, and due to the number of calls, some had to be diverted to the Plano call center. In December Atmos thought their contingency plan was adequate. They have added to the fleet for the additional gas tanker truck in the area. Councilmember Ezeonu asked if there is an app for notifying citizen of outages or text messaging system that citizens can sign up to receive updates. Atmos stated text messages were sent out but only to those who have signed up for the notification. They will begin proactively asking people to opt-in to the service before the winter weather. Mr. Dye suggested adding information to the gas bill to opt-in for emergency alerts. Emergency Management Coordinator, Chase Wheeler stated communication was good during the storm this past week, noting they need to do welfare checks on special needs individuals therefore communication is vital. Councilmember Headen asked how the increase in gas bills due to the storm would be handled. Atmos explained that the gas is sold for the same cost as is paid by Atmos, therefore as gas cost rise, so does the cost to the customer. Rider fees are set and that is how Atmos makes its money. Gas bills are rising due to the rising cost of gas. If you have a concern about your bill, he advised to call Atmos to investigate. Councilmember Headen asked if Atmos has a payment plan and/or a utility assistance plan. Mr. Hernandez said Atmos partners with non-profit organizations to assist with utility payments. Atmos also has average billing allowing customers to spread payments over time. He said the "Share the Warmth" program gives dollars to assist customers in repairing energy draining appliances. Police Chief Daniel Scesney asked that Atmos look at the communication piece differently. He said 911 staff receives calls that are not answered by Atmos customer service, causing a ripple effect to 911 preventing operators from answering emergency calls. Councilmember Ezeonu ask if Atmos would consider setting lower rates for the city. Atmos stated this would be problematic to set a lower rate for a specific city. The city can contest the overall rate with the Railroad Commission. Mr. Dye stated that gas and electric utilities have not kept pace with growth in the Peninsula. Atmos is confident the current infrastructure will be adequate for the growth in the area.

Speaker Harold Willis – 538 Lindley

Stated he does not trust Atmos to take care of the issues with gas pressure and would like more communication with the citizens in the area when issues arise. He suggested to communicate with citizens through the water bill as to what work Atmos is doing in their area.

3. FY22 Airport Update

Mark Divita, Airport Director said Airbus moving operations to Mississippi caused a drop in fuel usage. He stated American Rescue Plan Act funds were used to upgrade the Café to assist in the recovery from the Covid shutdown. Councilmember Ezeonu asked how much the rent was for the Café. Mr. Divita stated it is now a fixed rate instead of a percentage to avoid the turnover. Chairwoman Clemson asked about the hours of operation. Mr. Divita stated the hours of operation are 8am-3pm Monday through Saturday. Councilmember Headen asked about the airport rating in relation to other municipal airports not including Love Field and DFW. Mr. Divita stated we ranked thirty-two in the country before 2020. No rating has been done since 2020.

4. Fire Station 11 presentation to explain the Insurance Services Office (ISO) rating to the South Gate area and define the components of Fire Station 11

Fire Chief Robert Fite gave a summary of ISO rating. Five companies joined for one prediction of risk. All insurers use the ISO rating except State Farm. They use a one-hundred-point system (Forty-Water, Ten-911 and Fifty-Fire Departments). In 2016 we went from a rating of three to a one. We were also ranked ten for people who are not within 5 miles of a Fire Station. The Southgate area is getting a rank of ten due to this distance. Station 11 is to be located at Davis and 287 on land donated for the Fire Station. This will be a modest residential Fire Station. We would like to have three bays at this station, a radio tower and a fuel station. The apartments being built in the area will affect the ISO as we would need the ariel ladder truck to be able to service the apartments. The Fire department is looking into the purchase to protect the ISO rating. The city is also seeking input for a community room at the Fire Station for neighborhood use. The community room does not improve the ISO. Councilmember Headen liked the idea of a community room for Town Halls or Public Improvement District meeting space.

5. Big Event Update

Deputy City Manager, Cheryl DeLeon stated the Big Event is scheduled for March 25, 2023, from 8:00am – 1:00pm. Kickoff is at 8:00am at South Grand Prairie High School. The goal is 1000 volunteers, 100 jobs, and 60 tons collected. We will be contacting past volunteer groups and sponsors to assist this year. City Council is asked to be involved by promoting the event on social media, form teams, suggest a job in your district, and to drive by jobs in your district on the day of event. Downtown Manager Chip Nami said there is a portal on the website to sign up your group and to register for jobs. The deadline is the first week of March. No city dollars are used as funds are from sponsors and work is by volunteers.

AGENDA ITEMS

Citizens may speak for five minutes on any item on the agenda by completing and submitting a speaker card.

6. Minutes of the January 9, 2023 Public Safety, Health, Environment Committee Meeting

Motion made by Councilmember Headen to approve. Seconded by Councilmember Ezeonu. Approved unanimously

7. Annual Contract for mosquito laboratory services and chemical application with Municipal Mosquito for an amount not to exceed \$72,500 for one year with the option to renew for four (4) additional one-year periods totaling \$362,500 if all extensions are exercised

Public Health and Environmental Quality Director, Cindy Mendez said 17 companies were sent an invitation to bid with only one response which was our current vendor, Municipal Mosquito. The city only used \$25,000 of the contract this past year.

Councilmember Ezeonu motioned to approve. Seconded by Councilmember Headen. Approved unanimously.

8. An Ordinance Amending Chapter 7.5 “Special Events” to Require a Special Event Permit for Block Parties when a Street, Right-of-Way, or Sidewalk will be Blocked or Closed

Deputy City Attorney, Mark Dempsey stated the special event ordinance requires a permit if the street is closed. Currently block parties are an exception. This is proposed to be changed to have the block parties has a requirement to get a permit. Chairwoman Clemson asked how citizens would be notified of the change. Emergency Management Coordinator, Chase Wheeler suggested we work with Homeowner Associations, Public Improvement Districts and the Nextdoor app to notify citizens once this provision is included.

Councilmember Headen motioned to approve. seconded by Councilmember Ezeonu. Approved unanimously.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

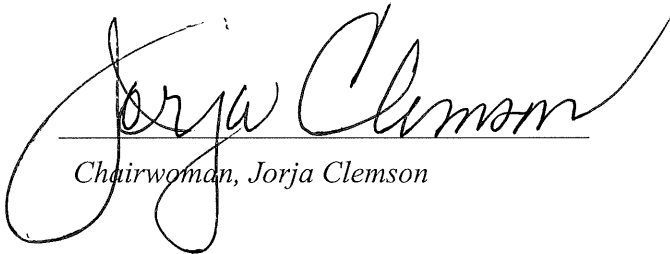
No executive session.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

No citizen comments.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 4:33 p.m.



Chairwoman, Jorja Clemson