

CITY OF ALAMO HEIGHTS  
CITY COUNCIL  
May 22, 2023

A regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Alamo Heights, Texas was held at the Council Chamber, located at 6116 Broadway, San Antonio, Texas, at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, May 22, 2023. A teleconference was held via Zoom; staff and meeting attendees were welcomed in the Council Chamber.

Composing a quorum were:  
Mayor Bobby Rosenthal  
Mayor Pro Tem Blake M. Bonner  
Councilmember Lawson Jessee  
Councilmember Karl P. Baker  
Councilmember Lynda Billa Burke  
Councilmember John Savage

Also attending were:  
Assistant City Manager Phil Laney  
City Attorney Richard Lindner  
Assistant to City Manager Jennifer Reyna  
City Secretary Elsa T. Robles  
Director of Finance Robert Galindo  
Police Chief Rick Pruitt  
Fire Chief Michael Gdovin  
Public Works Director Pat Sullivan  
Deputy Police Chief Cindy Pruitt

Absent:  
City Manager Buddy Kuhn  
Community Development Services Director Lety Hernandez  
Human Resources Manager Brenda Jimenez

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Mayor Bobby Rosenthal opened the meeting at 5:31 p.m.

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*Item # 1      Presentation of Certificates of Election and administration of Oaths of Office to newly elected officials: Mayor, Bobby Rosenthal, Councilmember, Place 1 – Lawson Jessee, and Councilmember, Place 2 – Karl P. Baker*

City Secretary Elsa T. Robles stated on May 6, 2023 a General Election was held in the City of Alamo Heights to elect a Mayor and Councilmembers Place 1 & 2. Citizens voted and elected the following who will serve 2-year terms as Mayor and Councilmembers respectively: Mayor – Bobby Rosenthal, Councilmember, Place 1 – Lawson Jessee, and Councilmember, Place 2 – Karl P. Baker. Ms. Robles administered the Oath of Office and congratulated the newly elected officials.

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*Item # 2      Election of Mayor Pro Tempore*

Councilmember Lawson Jessee moved to nominate Councilmember Blake M. Bonner as new Mayor Pro Tempore. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Lynda Billa Burke and passed by unanimous vote.

*Item # 3      Approval of Minutes*

Mayor Bobby Rosenthal asked City Council for a motion on the May 8, 2023 City Council Meeting minutes. Councilmember Billa Burke moved to approve the minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Bonner and passed by unanimous vote.

Mayor Rosenthal asked City Council for a motion on the May 16, 2023 City Council Special Meeting minutes. Councilmember Jessee moved to approve the minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Billa Burke and passed by unanimous vote.

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*Item # 4      Announcements*

Mayor Rosenthal read the following captions.

**a. Strategic Action Plan Work Session, June 15, 2023**

Ms. Robles announced Council and staff will hold a Strategic Action Plan work session on Thursday, June 15th in the council chamber starting at 8:30 a.m. It is open to the public and will be accessible via Zoom and social media.

**b. EMS Week, May 21-27, 2023**

Fire Chief Michael Gdovin announced Emergency Medical Services Week is May 21-27 this year. It brings together local communities and medical personnel to honor the dedication of those who provide the day-to-day lifesaving services of medicine's frontline. These organizations are working to ensure that the important contributions of EMS practitioners in safeguarding the health, safety and well-being of their communities are fully celebrated and recognized. Fire Chief Gdovin encouraged Council to participate in EMS Week by coming out and having their blood pressure read, etc. by the city's personnel.

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*Item # 5      Citizens to be Heard*

No comments made.

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Items for Individual Consideration

Item # 6 Mayor Rosenthal read the following caption.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2023R - 164**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF ALAMO HEIGHTS, TEXAS AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO AWARD FUNDS TO FRIENDS OF THE HONDONDO CREEK TRAILS IN AN AMOUNT OF \$12,500 AND TO ALAMO HEIGHTS BIKE PARK IN AN AMOUNT OF \$12,500 FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2023 ALAMO HEIGHTS COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT GRANT; AND SETTING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.**

Assistant City Manager Phillip Laney presented Fiscal Year 2023 Alamo Heights Community Improvement Grant recipients for consideration. He stated Council had budgeted \$25,000 in FY 2023 to support groups that oversee parks and other community assets. Interested groups were asked to submit improvement projects for funding consideration.

Mr. Laney provided background information and advised the Community Improvement Grant funding would be allocated via competitive process. Six (6) groups were solicited to submit improvement projects for grant funding. Staff received three (3) project applications, from Alamo Heights Optimist Club, Friends of the Hondondo Creek Trails, and Alamo Heights Bike Park. He stated after staff's initial review, an additional opportunity was given to each applicant to submit supplementary information for their projects. Of the three (3), two (2) applicants submitted the requested information: Friends of the Hondondo Creek Trails and Alamo Heights Bike Park.

Mr. Laney noted the three (3) applicants requested funding in different amounts for different projects.

- The Alamo Heights Optimist Club requested \$24,698 to add lights & sprinkler system to irrigate green space at Albert Earl Plaza (212 Kampmann). Improvements were intended to make the park more usable and inviting for residents.
- Friends of the Hondondo Creek Trails requested \$25,000 for materials to improve the condition & longevity of an existing section of Jack Judson Nature Trail (section between Acacia & Greely). Improvements were intended to address erosion, drainage & trail safety.
- Alamo Heights Bike Park requested \$25,000 for entry gate & site fencing at Bike Park, 230 Jones Maltsberger. Improvements were intended to heighten visibility of Bike Park, orient users, MOU compliance, maintain trails, safety of users and fundraising opportunities.

Mr. Laney stated each grant application was evaluated according to organization's goals & experience, project proposal, anticipated project impact, return on City investment & leveraged outside funding, and project completion timeline. After evaluating the applications, staff proposes awarding equal funding to Friends of the Hondondo Creek and the Alamo Heights Bike Park in the amount of \$12,500 each.

The award of Community Improvement Grant funds is consistent with the City's efforts to provide quality recreational services to citizens of Alamo Heights and the City of San Antonio (COSA). COSA is the owner of land at each proposed location.

Mr. Laney noted this item was coordinated with the City Attorney and City Manager. He reiterated staff proposes to award \$12,500 each to Friends of the Hondondo Creek Trails for trail improvements and Alamo Heights Bike Park for entry gate & site fencing. The total grant award of \$25,000 is currently available in FY 2023 General Fund Adopted Budget.

Councilmember Jessee asked for a timeframe for awarding future community improvement grants. Mr. Laney advised if Council's provides direction and authorizes funding in the upcoming fiscal year, staff can start the process for grant considerations in October.

Councilmember Karl P. Baker asked for clarification on funding for these projects. He also noted the applicants had requested more funds than were being awarded and asked how the organizations would supplement. Mr. Laney advised the funds would be allocated by reimbursement or direct payment to a vendor. As for additional funding, he asked each applicant to elaborate.

Mayor Rosenthal asked to hear comments from citizens who signed up to speak on this item.

- Ms. Maryjane Gish, Friends of the Hondondo Creek, stated she and other volunteers have worked for over 13 years servicing the trails at the Hondondo Creek with the help of donated funds. She commented additional donations would be forthcoming and would help supplement additional funds needed. Ms. Gish took the opportunity to thank Council for awarding them the grant. She also thanked Public Works Director Patrick Sullivan for his attention and help at the trails.
- Kirstin Silberschlag, Alamo Heights Bike Park, shared she appreciated Council and staff for selecting their organization for a grant. She noted this project came together during COVID-19 due to concerned citizens/parents/children who needed a place to ride their bikes and be kids. Ms. Silberschlag stated fundraising would provide additional funds for the project. She added she was thrilled Council may consider offering community improvement grants to other organizations going forward.

Councilmember John Savage moved to approve Resolution No. 2023R-164 as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Lynda Billa Burke and passed by unanimous vote.

*Item # 7* Mayor Rosenthal read the following caption.

**RESOLUTION NO. 2023R - 165**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF ALAMO HEIGHTS, TEXAS REQUESTING SPONSORSHIP BY THE TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (TXDOT) FOR THE CITY'S APPLICATION TO TXDOT'S 2023 TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES SET-ASIDE (TA) CALL FOR PROJECTS; AND SUPPORTING TXDOT'S APPLICATION SUBMISSION ON BEHALF OF THE CITY; AND SETTING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.**

Mr. Laney stated the item for consideration is a resolution supporting the City application with the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) to apply for funding from TxDOT's 2023 Transportation Alternatives (TA) Set-Aside Call for Projects and issuing the City's request for sponsorship of the application by TxDOT. This funding would be used in support of the Lower Broadway project. The funding request is for \$5M to \$25M to support roadway and stormwater improvements for Lower Broadway project. The city is requesting TxDOT to serve as application sponsor for the project on TxDOT right-of-way (ROW).

Mr. Laney explained TxDOT's 2023 TA program includes \$250M to fund bicycle/pedestrian infrastructure and planning. The TA program is not a grant program, but a federal reimbursement program for eligible activities. These funds are part of the 2021 Infrastructure Investment & Jobs Act approved by Congress, signed by President Biden. There are four project categories available and the city is pursuing an award with the largest payout. The large scale active transportation infrastructure category supports the funding of long distance active transportation routes, active transportation connections to intermodal hubs, comprehensive or area-wide accessibility improvements, and removing barriers to bicycling/walking. Awards for these projects could range from \$5M to \$25M.

The timeline for this grant program started January 27th with the preliminary application due (Phase 1), now completed. On June 5th a detailed application is due (Phase 2) and requires a Resolution of Support from the local governing body. On October 2023, funding will be awarded.

Mr. Laney reiterated the TA program application is for the Lower Broadway road and stormwater improvement project, referred to by TxDOT as the State Loop 368 Project, Broadway, between Austin Hwy and Burr Rd. The Lower Broadway project is envisioned to encompass multiple improvements to this TxDOT-owned and maintained roadway. He reminded Council the project has had a few versions, but the final plan has the number of travel lanes remaining at 6, including a turn lane in some areas.

Mr. Laney stated staff has met regularly with TxDOT regarding project design and plans since August 2022. At this time, staff desires to request TxDOT to serve as a sponsor for their TA program application. The City supports an application for TA funding of SL 368 Project & commits to project. As part of the application process, a Resolution of Support is required. The Resolution and detailed application must be submitted by June 5th. Staff is working closely with TxDOT to submit it before then.

Mr. Laney noted the city recognizes the project cost is high, but staff is exploring other alternatives. Applying for the TA Program is consistent with the City's intent to explore funding options to support the roadway and stormwater project. Ultimately, this project will help address flooding issues and provide multi-modal enhancements. He added this item was coordinated with TxDOT – San Antonio District Office, the City Attorney and City Manager.

In terms of fiscal impact, the Resolution authorizes support for TxDOT's 2023 TA Program application for amount of \$5M to \$25M. It is a federal reimbursement program – if awarded, eligible expenses will be paid by project sponsors (City & TxDOT) and the program would then reimburse funds spent. An agreement will be developed with City's financial services providers to obtain initial funding and then reimburse.

Mayor Rosenthal stated he appreciated staff's work on this funding opportunity and asked Mr. Laney to elaborate on additional impacts to the city.

Mr. Laney stated staff is doing everything possible to make a good faith effort to get funding. They have been working very closely with TxDOT who agrees the project is a good opportunity. However, he noted the odds of getting 10% of the statewide \$250M are low, but the city is willing to take a chance and apply.

After further discussion, Councilmember Jessee moved to approve Resolution No. 2023R-165 as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Billa Burke and passed by unanimous vote.

*Item # 8* Mayor Rosenthal read the following caption.

**An agreement with Barcom Technology Solutions providing network management services for a three-year term**

Assistant to City Manager Jennifer Reyna stated the city has worked with Barcom Technology Solutions since 2017 to ensure all city devices and software are efficient within network management services. The current contract ended in February 2023, with an option for an additional three-year renewal which initiated the new proposed contract agreement for Council's consideration.

Ms. Reyna advised Barcom Technology Solutions will maintain the same role and provide Texas Department of Information Resources (DIR) pricing. As a BuyBoard vendor, Barcom also serves 2 other locations to include Austin and Harlingen. Information Technology (IT) service professionals available under the agreement include Technical Support staff, Account Managers, Service Support staff, Cisco and Microsoft certified technicians, and application development programmers.

Ms. Reyna provided some background information and stated Barcom provides a proactive approach to 24/7 monitoring and a preventative maintenance service program. They effectively monitor 13 servers, 75 workstations, and 52 network devices, as well as 3rd party applications, network routers, firewalls and switches to ensure optimal performance. She noted Barcom is familiar with City's Public Safety Software and Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS) regulations. To ensure cybersecurity, Barcom has installed Sentinel One and Huntress programs.

The City has complied with best practices by following the Texas Government Code, Chapter 252 for purchasing by obtaining a proposal from a Texas Buy Board and Texas Department of Information Resources (DIR) vendor to manage and maintain the City's network infrastructure.

In terms of fiscal impact, Ms. Reyna advised funds are designated within the FY 2024 Annual Operating Budget for an annual cost of \$77,100/year for a three-year term. She explained DIR pricing is regulated by the state specifically for information/technology resources.

Councilmember Savage moved to approve agreement with Barcom Technology Solutions providing network management services for a three-year term. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Billa Burke and passed by unanimous vote.

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Staff Reports

Item # 9 Mayor Rosenthal read the following caption.

**Staff report on the status of the Water and Wastewater Rate Study and a Meter Assessment Study**

Mr. Laney stated he was providing an update on the status of the water & wastewater rate study and metering system assessment. He commented Willdan is the same firm who conducted the previous rate study in 2018, at which time Council adopted rate increases over 3 years. The metering assessment will provide a professional analysis on the condition of metering equipment and provide feedback on how to develop and implement a replacement strategy. The results of the study and assessment are anticipated prior to the proposed budget in August.

In 2018 Willdan Financial completed a rate study for the City and recommended rate increases each year for 10 years. In October 2018, Council adopted rate increases for 3 years in 5% increments each year, beginning in March 2019. The last rate increase was in March 2021 and are still in effect today.

Currently, the Utility Fund is self-sustaining and relies on user rates to pay for City's water & sewer system operations, debt service and infrastructure improvements. The updated rate study will recommend rates for the next 10 years and ensure a reliable and efficient utility system.

Mr. Laney stated in February 2023, Council selected Willdan Financial to conduct a rate study and meter assessment. They will provide a comparison of existing rates from surrounding cities. The new study will update rate study from 2018 with current operating costs & revenues. Additionally, it will provide a forecast for 10 years with rate structure to meet all operations & infrastructure improvements and include alternate rate structures for consideration.

The metering assessment will include field testing of existing infrastructure with current systems to identify gaps. In late May or early June, a sample of old meters will be temporarily replaced by digital or cellular meters. The testing of old meters will determine capabilities and potential water loss. After a 90-120 day testing period, the cellular meter will be removed and the old meter will be re-installed. This process will affect approximately 30 residences. No extra cost will be assessed.

Mr. Laney noted the testing group of approximately 30 residences will be contacted to provide a timeframe for the installation. Door hangars and emails will provide additional information. The City Utilities staff will be available for resident questions during install and residents do not need to be present at the time of the install and testing. Willdan seeks to present the preliminary results of water & sewer rate study and meter assessment to Council prior to the proposed budget in August, likely sometime in July.

Councilmember Jessee inquired if cellular meters would be installed and used going forward. Mr. Laney advised this could be explored if Council decides. They will be used for the study to measure real time usage of water consumption.

Councilmember Bonner suggested staff study other non-cellular options to avoid additional fees for consumers. Mayor Rosenthal agreed and noted this option might be done as a city expense if the increase in water usage is captured.

Mr. Laney shared staff had a list of residents that would be ideal for the study; however, they had not been informed yet. Councilmember Baker asked if participation was optional. Mr. Laney stated it was and added staff had a back-up list of residents to pull from if needed.

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With no further business to consider, Mayor Pro Tem Bonner moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:16 p.m. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Savage and passed by a 5-0 vote.

**PASSED AND APPROVED THIS 12<sup>th</sup> DAY OF JUNE, 2023.**

  
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Elsa T. Robles, TRMC  
City Secretary

  
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Bobby Rosenthal  
Mayor

