

**Village of Salado  
Salado Municipal Building  
301 North Stagecoach Road  
Salado, Texas  
Minutes of Regular Meeting of Board of Aldermen  
December 17, 2020 at 6:30 p.m.**

The Board of Aldermen meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Mayor Michael Coggin. The meeting was conducted via videoconference.

Mayor Coggin gave the Invocation and the Board of Aldermen led the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States and Texas flags.

Board Members Present: Mayor Michael Coggin, Mayor Pro-tem Rodney Bell, Aldermen Amber Preston Dankert, John Cole, Paul Cox, and Jason Howard.

Staff Present: Village Administrator Don Ferguson

### **Proclamation**

Mayor Coggin presented a proclamation honoring Denver L. Mills for his long history of service to the community and celebrating his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. Mr. Mills expressed appreciation to the Board.

### **1. Citizens Communications**

Michael McDonald spoke of his experience designing a camera system similar to the Flock Safety camera system that is the subject of tonight's Agenda Item 7A. He said there are many advantages to such a system, but more disadvantages. He expressed security concerns because the system is cloud-based and he felt it would be vulnerable to hacking. He also cited ethical issues with the camera system, which would take a photo of a vehicle and its geographical location at any given moment. He stated "by any other language in a nefarious hand, that's profiling." He did not feel that this type of system or its additional expense is something Salado needs right now because there is a quality police force and a vigilant population. He asked the Board to strongly consider his comments before taking action.

Matt Crisp presented questions to the Board regarding the proposed video camera system's data gathering; types of violations the system looks at (such as non-violent warrants, immigration issues, outstanding traffic fines/parking tickets); what types of violations the police department is going to investigate and enforce; whether or not the system brings value to the Village; "false positive" error rate; financial issues such as projected return on investment/liability to Village; expectation of the system to be revenue-generating or revenue neutral; statistical evaluation/analysis of crime rates to show value from the system; financial incentives for the vendor; processing fees; data sharing/security issues; contingency plan for mismanagement of data; references from other communities using the system; adequacy of a 30-day trial period and type of data used before decision is made to enter into a contract; ongoing analysis; risks and benefits of data collection; and need for thoughtful and empirical analysis when considering this system.

Mayor Coggin noted that many questions posed during comments were addressed during the Board's prior discussions on the proposed camera system, including data storage/security/usage. Village Administrator Ferguson reiterated that the system would not be used for profiling, to write tickets, or to seek out violations. He stated it would be used as a data source for criminal investigation purposes such as identifying vehicles that may be used in burglaries, as well as dealing with wanted vehicles coming into the community that may be flagged in Amber alerts, senior (Silver) alerts, or vehicles associated with criminal violations that are entered into a national/state crime database system. He said there is a rigid protocol in place for use of data.

## **2. Consent Agenda**

- A. Approval of minutes of the Regular Board of Aldermen meeting of December 3, 2020.
- B. Approval of the November 2020 Financial Statements for the Village of Salado.

Alderman Cole moved to approve the Consent Agenda, as presented. Alderman Dankert seconded. Motion carried on a vote of 5-0.

## **3. Village Administrator's Report**

- Wastewater Project Update

Village Administrator Ferguson reported the Village will be proceeding with connecting those properties that have not connected by the December 24<sup>th</sup> deadline. He said there are still a few unresponsive property owners.

- Main Street Improvement Project

Village Administrator Ferguson reported TxDOT anticipates delivery within the next two weeks of remaining railing that is currently being fabricated. He noted the lighting contractors are finishing up work on the decorative street lights. He said TDLR inspectors are expected to be on site after the holidays to identify any issues that need to be addressed. He noted that TxDOT has agreed to have its maintenance crews paint the crosswalks at the north end of Main Street. He said installation of the specially fabricated Thomas Arnold railing is expected to begin on Sunday evening and to last about three days.

- Salado Stroll Update

Village Administrator Ferguson reported the two primary weekends of Stroll went very well, with mostly positive comments from merchants. He said there were some weather-related issues that affected the Main Street Bridge lighting installed and powered by private individuals. He hoped that next year the Village will assume responsibility for permanent lighting of the Main Street Bridge. He noted that sidewalks and lighting were very helpful in enhancing safety.

- COVID-19 Update

Village Administrator Ferguson reported on the climbing number of cases, recoveries, deaths, and hospital capacity. He said there have been no spikes in Salado proper, but noted careful monitoring continues. He stated that Bell County has received its first shipment of vaccine and the process of administering the vaccine has started for frontline health care workers. He spoke of the anticipated sequence of vaccine administration to various essential groups/individuals and vulnerable populations. He advised that the Village has sought reimbursement for COVID-related expenses and ordered personal protection/screening equipment.

- FY 2020 Financial Audit Update

Village Administrator Ferguson reported that auditors are expected to be onsite after the holidays as the preliminary informational phase has begun.

- Tourism Director Update

Village Administrator Ferguson reported that the application window has closed, with 22 applicants vying for the position. He noted the first round of interviews is currently underway and the second round will begin after the holidays. He anticipated making an offer during the first week of January.

Discussion addressed mandating COVID vaccinations for returning students (not required at this time); clarification on total COVID cases (number of those testing positive versus hospitalized); wastewater system maintenance costs, which include added chemical expenditures related to the odor control system trial period; staff performance standards; approval of the grant-funded Thomas Arnold railing and "S" design by the Board at the request of Keep Salado Beautiful; weekend staffing of Visitor's Center; and monitoring of efficacy of odor control system during 90-day trial period.

#### 4. Presentations

- A. Presentation by the Bell County Tax Assessor-Collector regarding funds collected by Bell County for school crossing guard, health/nutrition, child abuse prevention/intervention, and drug/alcohol abuse prevention programs in Salado. (*Bell County Tax Assessor-Collector Shay Luedecke*)

Bell County Tax Assessor-Collector Shay Luedecke provided information on 2020 statistics on registration fees impacted by COVID; lifting of expired registration waiver by Governor Abbott; and collection of child safety fees on 276,739 vehicles in Bell County. He noted that since program inception in 2001, Bell County has distributed \$65,623.46 to the Village of Salado. He referenced a letter sent to the Village of Salado and Salado ISD explaining fee collection, distribution according to census population data, and allowed uses of funds. He advised that this year's allocation check to the Village totals \$2,577.82. Discussion established that the check is payable to the Village, which may opt to give its allocation to Salado ISD for its school crossing guard program. Village Administrator Ferguson stated that historically the Village has given its allocation to the Salado ISD, with proof provided by Salado ISD on how funds were expended. Mayor Coggin expressed thanks to Bell County officials for their support.

## B. Presentation of Village of Salado salary and staffing study. (*Village Administrator*)

Village Administrator Ferguson presented the salary portion of the study, with the staffing portion to be presented in January. He explained the purpose of the study to measure competitiveness of employee pay and to establish benchmark information for salaries. He said low-mid-high salary ranges were gathered from area cities for various positions, some of which are included in long-range staffing plans. He noted that currently employees are performing multiple job duties that in other cities are filled by one or more individuals. Comparison of pay ranges for specific positions reflected that the current administrative salaries are within surveyed ranges, with certain police department positions (sergeant and officer) showing to be in the lower ranges or slightly below. He reported that administrative salaries reflect levels of experience, certification, education, and noted disparity in police sergeant/officer pay, which would require adjustments to reach mid-point salary range. Comparisons with adjacent counties and smaller cities showed that police pay is an issue while trying to compete for police officer applicants. He recommended looking at comparable cities when reviewing salary information, considering increased pay for police officer positions, and analyzing benefits to remain competitive. Discussion addressed the need to retain police personnel; Board consideration of increased police pay in January 2021; benefits analysis; finding funds to increase base officer/sergeant pay without increasing taxes; and multiple duties performed by limited administrative staff.

## 5. Resolution

Consider approval of a resolution of the Village of Salado, Texas, accepting that the value of the land at issue is \$10.00 (ten dollars), approving the herein referenced deeds ("Slimp Deed" and "Matthews Deed" or "The Deeds") and authorizing the Mayor of Salado to execute the deeds on behalf of the Village of Salado, Texas. (*Village Administrator*)

Village Administrator Ferguson explained that the subject property owners have requested that the Village abandon and transfer ownership of two very narrow strips of property that serve no short- or long-term public purpose. He said that the resolution includes approval of Special Warranty Deeds and each of the requesting property owners would pay the Village \$10 to complete the transfer. Property owner Mr. Slimp stated his purpose for the request is to provide a buffer from future development and noted Mr. Matthews' purpose is to provide driveway access for a future residence.

Discussion addressed possible future conveyance of the strips of land should current property owners choose to sell in the future and possible reasoning for Village's ownership of the subject strips.

Mayor Pro-tem Bell moved to approve the resolution, as presented. Alderman Cox seconded. Motion carried on a vote of 5-0.

## 6. Ordinance

Consider approval of an ordinance of the Board of Aldermen of the Village of Salado, Texas repealing Ordinance No. 2020-16 providing for the addition of stop signs at the intersection of

Hester Way and Winners Circle, creating a three-way stop; providing for severability; providing an effective date; and providing for proper notice and meeting. (*Village Administrator*)

In accordance with the Board's previous direction to staff, Village Administrator Ferguson presented an ordinance repealing Ordinance No 2020-16, which authorized the creation of a three-way stop at Hester Way and Winners Circle.

Mayor Pro-tem Bell moved to approve the ordinance repealing Ordinance No. 2020-16. Alderman Cole seconded. Motion carried on a vote of 4-1. Alderman Dankert voted against.

## **7. Discussion and Possible Action**

- A. Discuss and consider possible action regarding a proposed program relating to the installation of video security cameras at certain locations within the corporate limits of Salado to assist the Salado Police Department. (*Village Administrator & Police Chief*)

Village Administrator Ferguson spoke of past Board discussions and noted that the vendor, Flock Safety, has agreed to legally reviewed revisions to the customer agreement. He presented the Salado Police Department's system use policy that was also reviewed by legal counsel. He emphasized that this is not a traffic camera system intended to monitor the whereabouts of citizens, but is an investigative tool designed to provide data to help identify suspects/vehicles involved in criminal activity in the community or entered into national/state criminal databases. He stressed there is a verification process to take place before any vehicle is stopped. He noted there is a 30-day trial period before entering into a one-year agreement. He said the Board will receive regular reports on use of the system, which is hoped to be a crime deterrent.

Discussion addressed gauging effect on citizens, assistance that cameras provide to police officers in responding to or preventing crimes; response times for receiving alert data (approximately 30 seconds to reach officer); citizen concerns regarding camera surveillance; authentication process used to identify vehicle and locate registered owner; Amber/Silver alerts or vehicles used in crimes entered into TCIC/NCIC databases; verification procedures; positioning of cameras at main ingress/egress points; timing of trial period to test system effectiveness during times of anticipated heavier vehicle traffic; consistent volume of weekend traffic; difficulties associated with estimating future vehicle traffic; relevance of increased traffic and lack of correlation to increased crime; and benefit of system as a criminal investigation tool to help Salado Police Department identify wanted vehicles/suspects.

Alderman Cole moved to approve the installation of video security cameras, as presented. Alderman Dankert seconded.

Discussion established system costs of approximately \$13,000 and length of trial period and contract, if approved after end of trial period. Mayor Pro-tem Bell favored spending on interactive "human capital" in the police department versus stationary cameras. Alderman Cole stated that officers will still be doing their normal jobs, not monitoring cameras and will respond if an alert is received. Alderman Cox spoke of the area that officers have to cover and said the cameras may help improve citizen safety. He stated that the one-year contract does not have to be renewed if

the cameras do not prove to be beneficial. Alderman Dankert questioned Chief Boone on his preference for use of funds for cameras for one year versus spending on personnel. Chief Boone said ultimately it is a Board decision, but noted that the cost of the system will not cover the cost of one additional officer, which would total approximately \$60,000 per year, including benefits and equipment costs.

Motion carried on a vote of 4-1. Mayor Pro-tem Bell voted against.

- B. Discuss and consider possible action regarding the selection of a location in downtown Salado for the Village of Salado's new restroom trailer. (*Village Administrator*)

Village Administrator Ferguson advised the trailer has been delivered and is temporarily located in the Salado Civic Center parking lot. He said the following three sites have been previously discussed: the Civic Center parking lot near a sewer line; the Tyler House property, which would require installation of a pump; or behind 21 Main Street. He favored Tyler House as the most central location and noted that the trailer is not ADA-accessible. He said the current owners are in the process of trying to sell the property, and advised that if the new owners do not want to continue the agreement, then the Salado Civic Center could be considered as an acceptable alternate site.

Discussion addressed the need to work out a written agreement with the property owners, with the Village covering utility and sewer pump costs; cost savings to locate at the Civic Center, which would not require pump installation; less visibility at 21 Main Street location; Salado ISD's position and concerns on public use of Civic Center restrooms; Tyler House as the best location; reluctance of some business owners to allow public use of their restrooms; possible feedback from adjacent property owners on trailer location; and lack of objection from First Baptist Church on locating the restroom trailer at Tyler House.

Alderman Cole moved to authorize staff to negotiate an agreement with Tyler House property owners to locate the restroom trailer on their property, including provisions for utility and installation costs. Alderman Cox seconded. Discussion established that the Board will be presented a draft agreement for approval, once finalized. Motion carried on a vote of 5-0.

- C. Discuss and consider possible action regarding a proposal to modify the membership requirements and name of the Village of Salado Pace Park Advisory Board. (*Village Administrator*)

Village Administrator Ferguson cited current membership requirements that limit public involvement and proposed that the name be changed to the Salado Parks Advisory Board, as Pace Park is not the only Village park. He recommended the Board remove the membership requirements to make all positions at-large, except for one (1) member representing the former Pace Park Board of Trustees, modify the scope to include all public parks, and rename the board the Salado Parks Advisory Board. Discussion addressed the application and appointment process which remains unchanged; lack of meetings held during the past year; board member duties to include making recommendations relating to park improvements, operations, and policies; at-large positions as less restrictive to public participation; and number of recent applicants who did not meet current membership requirements.

Alderman Cox moved to modify the membership requirements and rename the Village of Salado Pace Park Advisory Board to become the Salado Parks Advisory Board, as recommended by Village Administrator Ferguson. Alderman Cole seconded. Discussion established that residency in the Village is required to serve as a member. Alderman Dankert suggested amending the motion to allow those who live in the ETJ to serve. Village Administrator Ferguson's suggested considering that one (1) position on the board be filled by an ETJ resident. Alderman Cox did not expressly object to Alderman Dankert's suggestion to amend the motion, but felt that any member of the public has the opportunity to attend and speak at board meetings. Alderman Cole said it would be prudent to open up membership to those residing in the ETJ for a percentage of open positions. Mayor Pro-tem Bell favored filling one (1) position on the Board with an ETJ resident. Alderman Cox agreed to amend the motion to add that one (1) position on the board that may be filled by individuals residing in the Village's ETJ. Alderman Cole seconded the motion, as amended. Motion carried on a vote of 5-0.

- D. Discuss and consider possible action regarding a proposed participation policy for Village of Salado employees relating to use of the Village's social media accounts. (*Village Administrator*)

Village Administrator Ferguson spoke of efforts with Alderman Howard to enhance the Village's social media presence and develop policy. He recommended approval of the policy, as plans are moving forward. Discussion addressed concerns regarding staff time monitoring social media accounts and legal review of the policy.

Mayor Pro-tem Bell moved to adopt the policy, as presented. Alderman Dankert seconded. Motion carried on a vote of 5-0.

### **Adjournment**

Alderman Cole moved to adjourn. Mayor Coggin called the meeting adjourned at 8:47 p.m.

Recorded by:

Don Ferguson

These minutes approved on the 7<sup>th</sup> of January, 2021.

**APPROVED:**



Michael Coggin, Mayor

**ATTEST:**



Cara McPartland, City Secretary

