

**Village of Salado
Salado Municipal Building
301 North Stagecoach Road
Salado, Texas
Minutes of Special Board of Aldermen Meeting
August 17, 2023, at 5:30 p.m.**

The Board of Aldermen meeting was called to order at 5:31 p.m. by Mayor Michael Coggin.

Board Members Present: Mayor Michael Coggin, Mayor Pro Tem Rodney Bell, Alderman Paul Cox, Alderman Bert Henry, and Alderman Jason Howard attended in person. Alderman D. Jasen Graham was absent.

Staff Present: Village Administrator Don Ferguson, Village Attorney Cobby Caputo, Assistant Village Administrator Andrea Howard, and City Secretary Debbie Bean.

Also Present: Ashley Lewis and Margaret Mead, the attorney representing Ms. Lewis.

1. EXECUTIVE SESSION

- (A) Consider an Appeal of the Termination of Former Employee Ashley Lewis Pursuant to Chapter 551.074 of the Texas Local Government Code

Mayor Coggin indicated the appeal would be held in public session at the request of Ms. Lewis.

Attorney Margaret Mead said Ashley Lewis was terminated from her job as Visitors Center Coordinator on July 21st for advising a representative of the Tablerock Theatre that an individual named Dustin Correa, who not supposed to be at the theatre, was working at the theatre on the night of July 20th. Mead said Lewis became concerned about Correa after learning that he was involved in the theatre at the same time he was facing active criminal charges.

Mead said Lewis first learned about Correa's involvement with the theatre prior to her employment with the Village.

Mead said Lewis was advised by the Village Administrator to stay out of the Correa matter when she started work for the Village.

She said Lewis' actions did not warrant termination but rather some form of progressive discipline instead. She said Lewis simply wants her job back.

Ms. Lewis presented a timeline and answered questions from board members.

Mayor Coggin called on the Village to present its side of the termination matter.

Village Attorney Cobby Caputo said Village Administrator Don Ferguson terminated Lewis for insubordination. Caputo said Lewis violated a direct order to avoid the Correa matter, as it was an active law enforcement issue. He said the Village Administrator deemed Lewis' actions flagrant, as she violated a direct order that she had been given just three (3) days earlier.

Caputo said Lewis assured Ferguson on her first day of employment that she would avoid the Correa matter and she did not.

Caputo and Village Administrator Ferguson answered questions from board members.

With there being no further questions, Mayor Coggin moved to Agenda Item 2(A).

- 2.(A) Discuss and Consider Possible Action Regarding Matters Discussed in Executive Session Regarding the Appeal of the Termination of Former Employee Ashley Lewis.

Alderman Jason Howard made a motion to reinstate Ashley Lewis to her position as Visitors Center Coordinator and that she receive a check representing backpay by 5 p.m. on August 17th and that Ms. Lewis' attorney's fees be reimbursed by the Village within ten (10) business days of receiving invoices for such. Alderman Bert Henry seconded. Motion carried on a 3-1 vote, with Alderman Paul Cox voting no.

Mayor Coggin announced the Board would take a break and start the Regular Board Meeting at 6: 30 p.m., as posted.

When questioned about the remaining items on the Special Meeting Agenda (Item 1(B) & Item 2(B), Mayor Coggin indicated the items would be addressed in the Regular Board Meeting.

Village Administrator Ferguson indicated the items were not posted on that agenda and they could not be discussed.

ADJOURNMENT


The Special Board Meeting ended at 6:14 p.m.

Recorded by Debbie Bean, City Secretary

APPROVED:


Michael Coggin, Mayor

ATTEST:



Debbie Bean, City Secretary