

**Village of Salado**  
**Salado Municipal Building**  
**301 North Stagecoach Road**  
**Salado, Texas**  
**Minutes of Regular Meeting of Board of Aldermen**  
**September 21, 2023, 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 in person and using videoconferencing. Public participation was available 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, Alderman Paul Cox, Alderman D. Jasen Graham, Alderman Bert Henry, and Alderman Jason Howard.

Staff Present: Village Administrator Don Ferguson, Assistant Village Administrator Andrea Howard, Police Chief Alan Fields, and City Secretary Debbie Bean.

**1. Citizens Communications**

Salado resident Tim Fleischer spoke in favor of a hiring freeze and budgeting funds for street improvements in the coming fiscal year.

Salado resident Cathy Sands expressed her compliments and appreciation for the street lights on Main Street and the positive effect it will have on the *Christmas in October Jingle Walk*.

Salado resident Charles Simmons spoke on the right to free speech and in support of Salado resident Jim Boynton.

Salado resident Joseph Torres spoke in support of Salado resident Jim Boynton and Alderman Henry and their efforts to ensure that residents are treated with respect by Village officials.

Salado resident Amber Dankert spoke in support of the censure of the Mayor Coggin proposed by Alderman Henry.

Salado resident Darrell Street encouraged unity on the Board and spoke against the censure of Mayor Coggin.

Salado Linda Reynolds said that the new Village Administrator who will replace retiring Village Administrator Don Ferguson needs to be a mediator.

## **2. Consent Agenda**

- (A) Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Board of Aldermen Meeting of September 7, 2023
- (B) Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Board of Aldermen Meeting of August 17, 2023.
- (C) Approval of the Minutes of the Special Board of Aldermen Meeting on August 17, 2023.
- (D) Approval of the Minutes of the Special Board of Aldermen Meeting on August 22, 2023.
- (E) Approval of the August 2022 Financial Statements for the Village of Salado.
- (F) Approval of the Amended Fiscal Year 2023 Operating Budget for the Village of Salado.
- (G) Approval of the FY 2023 Quarterly Investment Reports for the Village of Salado.

Mayor Coggin said Item 2(F) was pulled from Consent Agenda and will be presented for Board approval at a Special Meeting on September 28th.

Alderman Graham made a motion to approve all items on the Consent Agenda with the exception of Item 2(F). Alderman Henry seconded. Motion was approved on a 5-0 vote.

## **3. Discuss and Consider Possible Action Regarding any Item removed from the Consent Agenda.**

No items were removed from the Consent Agenda for separate consideration.

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

- Sales Tax Collections

Village Administrator Ferguson reported the July sales tax check was approximately \$64,000 which is up 11% from last year.

- Main Street Lighting

Village Administrator Ferguson said the street lights on Main Street have been repaired.

- Commercial and Residential Landscape Requirements

Village Administrator Ferguson reported that the Planning and Zoning Commission is looking at code requirements relating to drought tolerant landscaping. He said any recommendations from the Commission will be presented to the Board of Aldermen for review and consideration.

Mayor Coggin presented Cathy Sands with a *Mayor's Challenge Coin* in appreciation for her contribution to the design of the Main Street lights.

## **5. Ordinances**

- (A) Discuss and Consider Approval of an Ordinance of the Village of Salado, Texas, Adopting the Fiscal Year 2024 Operating Budget for the Village of Salado; Declaring Findings of Fact; Providing an Effective Date; Providing a Severability Clause; and Providing an Open Meetings Clause.

Village Administrator Ferguson briefed board members on the proposed operating budget and the process used to develop the spending plan. He noted a public hearing was previously held on the proposed budget.

Alderman Cox made a motion to approve the ordinance adopting the proposed Fiscal Year 2024 Operating Budget, as presented. The motion failed due to lack of a second.

Alderman Graham made a motion to approve the proposed operating budget with the following amendments:

- Reducing the proposed Village Administrator's salary from \$155,000 to \$140,000.
- Increasing the amount of capital outlay for Pace Park from \$10,000 to \$30,000.
- Increase the amount of capital outlay for streets to \$200,000.

Alderman Jason Howard proposed to amend the original motion by leaving the Village Administrator's salary at its current level of \$125,801.78.

Alderman Graham accepted Alderman Howard's amendment.

Alderman Howard seconded the amended motion. After brief discussion, in which the Mayor accused Alderman Graham of making "personal attacks" against the Village Administrator, the amended motion carried by a vote of 3 to 2, with Aldermen D. Jason Graham, Bert Henry and Jason Howard voting yes and Mayor Pro-tem Rodney Bell and Alderman Paul Cox voting no.

- (B) Discuss and Consider Approval of an Ordinance of the Village of Salado, Texas, Setting a Property (Ad Valorem) Tax Rate; Approving the Ad

Valorem Tax Rate and Levy of \$0.4147 per One Hundred Dollars (\$100) of Assessed Valuation of all Taxable Property Within the Corporate Limits of the Village for the 2023 Tax Year to help Fund the Fiscal Year 2024 Operating Budget for the Village of Salado; Providing for an Exemption on Residence Homesteads; Providing for Exemptions for Individuals who are Disabled or 65 Years of Age or Older; Providing for Penalties and Interest; Providing for Severability; Providing for Repealing Conflict; Providing for Proper Notice and Meeting; Providing for Engrossment & Enrollment; Providing for Notification to Assessor; and Providing for Publication & Effective Date.

Administrator Ferguson briefed board members on the proposed tax rate for the 2023 Tax Year and the options available to the Board. He noted a public hearing was previously held on the proposed tax rate.

Board members discussed the potential impact of the various tax rate options on the annual property tax bills for Village residents.

Mayor Pro-tem Bell made a motion to approve the proposed ordinance, with the required revenue disclosure caption, adopting a total tax rate of \$0.3947 for the 2023 Tax Year. He noted the total tax rate would consist of the following:

- A Maintenance & Operation Tax Rate of \$0.1586,
- A Debt Service Tax Rate of \$0.2161
- An Unused Incremental Tax Rate of \$0.0200 would be added to the Maintenance and Operation Tax Rate.

Alderman Graham seconded. Motion was approved by a vote of 4 to 1 with Mayor Pro-tem Bell and Aldermen Cox, Graham and Henry voting yes and Alderman Howard voting no.

## **6. Discussion and Possible Action**

- (A) Discuss and Consider Approval of a Proposed Contract with Clear Career Professionals, LLC.

Alderman Graham reported that the Board needed to decide whether it wants to contract with Clear Career Professionals, LLC to conduct a “turn-key” search for a new Village Administrator, at a cost of \$15,000, or whether the Board wants the firm to conduct a “hybrid” search and provide a list of semi-finalists at a cost of \$7,500.

Alderman Graham indicated there was a need for the Board to also establish a salary range for the Village Administrator’s position.

Alderman Howard made a motion to contract with the Clear Career Professionals LLC to conduct a “turnkey” recruitment at a cost of \$15,000 and that the salary range for the

Village Administrator's position be \$125,000 to \$160,000. Alderman Henry seconded. Motion carried by a vote of 5-0.

(B) Discuss and Consider Possible Action Regarding the Stagecoach Circle Drainage Improvement Project.

Village Administrator Ferguson said the design package for the Stagecoach Circle Drainage Improvement Project was complete and ready to be put out for bids.

Alderman Graham made a motion to authorize Village staff to seeking bids for the Stagecoach Circle Drainage Improvement Project. Alderman Cox seconded. Motion carried by a vote of 5-0.

(C) Discuss and Consider Possible Action Regarding a Proposal to Censure Mayor Michael Coggin.

Mayor Coggin announced he would be recusing himself from discussion and consideration of the agenda item and he left the building at 7:50 p.m.

Mayor Pro-tem Bell assumed the role of presiding officer.

Alderman Henry outlined his reasons for proposing the censure of Mayor Coggin, noting the Mayor improperly stopped a citizen from speaking during a public comment period at a recent Board of Aldermen meeting.

Mayor Pro-tem Bell called for public comments on the item.

Salado residents Jim Boynton, Sam Morris, and Charles Simmons spoke in favor of the censure.

Salado resident Michael McDougal expressed his opposition to the proposed censure, citing, in part, Alderman Henry's lack of experience on the Board, but urged the Board to find other ways to resolve the issues.

Salado resident Tristan Lancier questioned the ethics of the Mayor's actions, citing examples from the Professional Engineers Code of Ethics..

Alderman Cox inquired about the difference between a public meeting and a Board of Aldermen Meeting.

Village Administrator Ferguson answered questions regarding the requirements of the Texas Open Meetings Act. He urged the Board to err on the side of caution and reminded them of the Mayor's responsibility to protect the citizen's freedom of speech.

Alderman Graham spoke about his relationship with the Mayor and how that relationship has changed, citing examples of specific occasions in which the Mayor lashed out at him for voting in opposition to the Mayor's wishes.

Alderman Howard spoke about his unsuccessful attempts to reconcile with the Mayor over the past year, including unsuccessful attempts made by Village Administrator Ferguson on Alderman Howard's behalf.

Alderman Henry made a motion to censure Michael Coggin for his behavior in violation of Texas Government Code 551.07E, as it relates to freedom of speech and what is allowed and not allowed as far as that decorum goes. Alderman Howard seconded the motion. The motion was carried by a 3-2 vote with Aldermen Graham, Howard and Henry voting yes and Mayor Pro-tem Bell and Alderman Cox voting no.

Village Administrator Ferguson indicated the Mayor would be notified of the Board's action by letter.

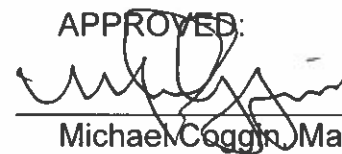
### **Adjournment**

With there being no further business, Mayor Pro Tem Bell adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Minutes recorded and prepared by Debbie Bean, City Secretary.

ATTEST:

APPROVED:

  
Michael Coggin, Mayor

  
Debbie Bean, City Secretary