

Mayor Coggin called the **January the 4th, 2024 Board of Aldermen** meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. *The meeting was conducted in person and using videoconferencing. Public participation was available via videoconferencing.*

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 Manuel De La Rosa, Assistant Village Administrator Andrea Howard, Police Chief Allen Fields, and Tourism Marketing Manager April Walker-Davis.

Mayor Coggin recognized the first meeting with new Village Administrator, Manuel De La Rosa

Presentations

Mayor Coggin presented a Mayor's Key to Larry and Maurine Nathanson for their work in the community. They spearheaded the first responder's monument at the Civic Center, are involved with the Citizens on Patrol program, and their work to establish the Salado Senior Center.

Mayor Coggin presented a Mayor's Key to David and Barbara Swarthout for their time in volunteer work in the community, Mr. Swarthout's time at the Salado Museum and their involvement at the Salado Senior Center.

Citizens Communication

Jim Boynton spoke about the previous administration and asked for unity among the community.

Linda Reynolds spoke of having her taxes prepared and would like the money used wisely. She presented a handout from Congressman Carter's office and noted that it said there was 5.5 million dollars for West Village Road development and is not sure what federal tax dollars go fix that road. She also asked if QT is in the village, and whether sales tax is going to come from them? She also asked for a city map.

Consent Agenda

Approval of minutes of the regular Board of Aldermen meeting minutes from December 7, 2023.

Appointment of Jill Shipman to the Salado Cultural Arts District advisory board.

Appointment of Richard Paul Thomas to the Salado Cultural Arts District advisory board

Appointment of John Senger to the Tourism Advisory Board.

Appointment of Kathryn Meloy to the Music Friendly Community Advisory Board.

Approval of the designation of Village Administrator Manuel De La Rosa as a signatory on all bank accounts of the Village of Salado.

A motion was made to approve all items on the consent agenda as presented by Alderman Paul Cox and seconded by Alderman Bert Henry. The motion passed 5-0.

Discuss and Consider Possible Action Regarding Any Item Removed from the Consent Agenda.

No items were removed.

Status Reports

Village Administrators Report

Village Administrator De La Rosa updated on two items. The Stagecoach Circle drainage improvements. He has been in communication with the contractor and the village engineer and will need the notice of proceed signed by the mayor to move forward on the project and get it scheduled as soon as possible.

Update on the Center Circle overlay project. To start that project, the temperature cannot be under 50° to lay down the asphalt. The project should take about four to five days to complete. It does affect some of the businesses, and a hotel on that road. The concern is that no work would be done on Saturday, so it would not affect the businesses or residents on the weekend. The contractor will go door to door to make sure that residents and businesses are aware of the construction and timeline. Village Administrator De La Rosa will continue to send emails to the Board to keep them informed. If citizens have concerns or questions, they can contact him. He will continue to update during the Village Administrators Report.

Mayor Pro-tem Bell asked if notices have been placed in the newspaper, in addition to going door to door on the Stagecoach Circle drainage project.

Village Administrator De La Rosa said they did go door to door and have sent letters to residents with two or three who have not responded. He is meeting with Solman Thomas, P.E., of MRB Group, to contact those who have not responded. All efforts will be made to ensure everyone has been contacted before construction begins.

Mayor Pro-tem Bell suggested signage on bridge because of the traffic that comes thorough that way.

Mayor Coggin said he understands that there will be steel plates on the road so at least one lane remains open.

Village Administrator De La Rosa said it may be shut down for various short periods of time. There is a traffic management plan and to give everybody enough advanced notice of what is happening.

Alderman Cox asked if the best possible outcome would be if they did the entire width at one time?

Village Administrator De La Rosa replied it is yet to be determined if they can do it. He indicated that he does have a meeting the next day discussing these projects, traffic management, and notifications.

Alderman Howard added that there has been some bad experience in the past so far, including EMS vehicles having a difficult time navigating construction projects. He wants to be sure that the contractor has good signage in place and letting people know what is going on.

Village Administrator De La Rosa stated he appreciated the comments and will pass those on to the contractor and that we protect our residential and commercial customers.

Alderman Henry asked about a map of the village. He would like to see that in some capacity as it has been requested and not provided. Additionally, there are questions about the sewer and who is on it, and he would like an answer to that.

Village Administrator De La Rosa said he has met with the accountant, Ms. Christy Stegall, along with staff is working to reconcile those wastewater accounts, and to make sure that the billing is properly managed. In addition, he is also looking into the maps. He did state that all city limit and zoning maps are statutorily required.

Salado Police Chief's Report

Salado Police Chief Allen Fields reported that the month of December had a lot of events going on, but that the calls for service did drop slightly. There were 415 calls for service, with 22 priority one calls, and most calls are usually priority four, which are self-initiated, or field activity. That could be conducting a house watch, an area check, making a citizen contact or traffic stop. Additionally, the majority of the calls were on Friday and Saturday, between midnight and 5:00 AM. Previously there had been very little activity at that time, and they did see a spike in that and that the police department has 24 hour coverage and the night shift officers are being proactive in getting out there and making contacts

There was one arrest for an assault family violence, a Class C, Assault by Contact. The arrest was made to prevent the consequence of further violence if the individuals were left together. There were 13 reports, 14 supplemental reports, and 25 crash reports. Most of the crash reports were in two separate locations, one is southbound IH-35 at exit 285 and the other ss southbound IH-35 at the exit 283. Chief Fields contacted the Bell County Communications Center about the Salado PD being dispatched to the majority of traffic accidents IH-35 and was told that DPS says it is in Salado's jurisdiction.

Chief Fields checked the Texas Administrative Code chapter, Title 37, and it says that if there are less than 50,000 residents, DPS has primary jurisdiction on the Interstate. He spoke with Lieutenant Hoover and said that Salado PD is available to assist, but the main responsibility is to the village of Salado and its residents.

Additionally, there were 88 traffic stops, 31 citations, 57 warnings, for a total of 35.22 enforcement rate. Response time was a little higher than the previous month, with the majority of priority one calls for service for traffic accidents on the Interstate. The response time is down to 3 minutes and 21 seconds, about where it should be. Priority four calls for service is at 3 minutes and 42 seconds.

They conducted 75 house watches. The FLOCK-LARP reported 46,808 unique plate hits. The system was accessed four times for administrative use. One was to check a gang member alert, one was to assist an outside agency on a theft report of a partial plate, and the other two were used in reference to theft reports in the Village.

Chief Fields thanked C.H.I.P.S. volunteers for parade prep and the assistance that we received. They were instrumental in keeping our costs down, as they were able to occupy positions, so officers were able to assist elsewhere. He is also looking at the "Are You OK" program, which helps a vulnerable portion of the population. Belton has a good program in place and has contacted Anita Wyatt, who runs the program to come on Monday, January 29 and present at the monthly C.H.I.P.S meeting.

Tourism Department Report

April Walker-Davis, Tourism Marketing Manager reported that the website had 305 total sessions in December, with 2,965 page views. There were 262 total users, with 139 new users and 123 returning users. In December 2022, there were 269 users and December 2021 had 302 users.

The lodging report for the month of December showed increased occupancy during the month, which is reflective of the different events that were happening that month.

The Visitor Center welcomed 482 in December. Previous years had 561 visitors in 2022, and 2021 we had 733, and 2019 was 666. The shuttle was also utilized for both weekends of the Stroll and 563 got a ride. She also recognized the contributions of the tourism volunteers.

Ms. Walker-Davis provided a list of upcoming events.

Alderman Henry asked if there was an event happening during the eclipse.

Assistant Village Administrator Andrea Howard stated that the Village is not hosting an event, but it is listed to make people aware that it is coming. She also said that there are a few hotel rooms left in the Village.

Ordinance

An ordinance ordering a general election for the May 4th, 2024, for the purpose of electing a Mayor and two Aldermen was presented.

Village Administrator De La Rosa explained that the ordinance is in accordance with the Texas election law calling for the three positions, the two Aldermen and Mayor, and establishes the dates and times. He also addressed an earlier question on filing dates, start and end dates, for candidates. Those items will be available in the candidate packet the next day, via the Village website, a paper copy in the office, and on USBs for those interested in filing for the open positions. He stated that it is the staff recommendation to approve the ordinance.

Alderman Graham asked if the school district was going to be joining in the election and there was mention of the tax appraiser's office, as well.

Village Administrator De La Rosa said that yes, both entities would be participating and there will be a memorandum of understanding between all entities, that some cost sharing. All the participating entities are in communication and are sharing information.

Mayor Pro-tem Bell motioned to approve, and Alderman Henry seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

Discussion and Possible Action

- A. Chief Fields presented information to hire Justyn Manning and support his enrollment in the Temple College Peace Academy. Historically, Salado has only hired personnel that were certified and licensed police officers, which limits the applicant pool. The proximity to Fort Cavazos is an asset to draw from. He had discussions with previous administration about the option of hiring non-certified personnel and having them attend the Temple police Academy. Chief Fields has been associated with the Temple Police Academy for over 10 years as an instructor, and Sergeant Dunshie is also an instructor there.

After an extensive interview process, it is Chief Fields' recommendation to hire Justyn Manning, a 28-year-old, veteran of the United States Army, as an employee of the Police Department, and to have him attend the Temple Police Academy, starting January 22, 2024, and that upon graduation, he will be sworn in as a full-time officer for the Village of Salado.

Alderman Graham asked about the start date of the Academy. Alderman Cox asked how long it lasts.

Chief Fields said the Academy starts on January 22nd and is approximately 6 months long. Mr. Manning would graduate in July.

Alderman Graham motioned to approve the hiring of Justyn Manning and his enrollment in Temple College Police Academy and seconded by Mayor Pro-tem Bell. The motion passed 5-0.

- B. Chief Fields presented a copy of the Temple College Police Academy departmental agreement to the board, which must be executed prior to Mr. Manning attending the Academy. Mr. Manning will receive support from his assigned mentor, Sergeant Dunshie. Sergeant Dunshie will have direct access to his schedule, receive biweekly updates on his progress in the Academy, and if there are any shortfalls, Sergeant Dunshie will be there to assist him through the process. The agreement does state that Salado as the employing agency is required to provide the necessary materials and supplies for the for the cadet. That includes a mechanically sound safe operational police package vehicle for police driving courses, and must ensure that Mr. Manning participates in all aspects, activity, blocks, and phases of the course. It is also to ensure that Salado PD takes appropriate action in the event the cadet fails to meet expectations of conduct, training, standards, participation, or attendance. The agreement needs to be signed by the Chief of Police and with board approval. Chief Fields is requesting approval to enter into the departmental agreement with the Temple College Police Academy.

Alderman Henry motioned to hire Justyn Manning and approve the department agreement with the Temple College Police Academy and seconded by Alderman Cox. The motion passed 5-0.

- C. Chief Fields provided a copy of the training reimbursement agreement between the Village of Salado and Justyn Manning to the board and explained that there are costs associated with putting Mr. Manning through the Academy. Cadet tuition is \$400, and he will have to have the required pre-employment physical and drug screening, TCOLE documents, a psychological assessment, books, uniforms, and supplies that are needed during his time at the Academy. He will also be paid \$17.50 an hour and after graduation, he will be at full salary.

The reimbursement agreement is there in case Mr. Manning is unable to either complete the Academy or leaves his employment voluntarily, prior to reaching the four-year condition. The agreement is at a scalable, prorated rate. There are also clauses should he leave due to no fault of his own because he got Injured and is unable to perform duties as peace officers, then those fees would be waived. Should he voluntarily leave to go to another agency, this gives assurance that all parties are acting in good faith. Chief Fields requested authorization to have the village personnel, and the Mayor, sign to enter into the reimbursement agreement with Mr. Justyn Manning.

Alderman Graham asked if the total estimated training cost of \$24,343.20 falls within the budget of the department this year.

Chief Fields responded yes.

Alderman Cox motioned to approve the execution of the reimbursement agreement with Justyn Manning and seconded by Alderman Henry. The motion passed 5-0.

- D. Chief Fields provided a proposed Salado Police Department Community Video Partnership Program policy for the board to review. After discussion from the previous meeting, Chief Fields was asked to get information on other departments' policies on private cameras used for investigation purposes. After reaching out to other area agencies he found that they do not have any place and he created the one presented. He explained that the system would be voluntary, how registration would be done, and the collecting, storing, and disposing of videos.

Alderman Howard asked if the Village's legal counsel had reviewed the policy.

Chief Fields replied that yes, and it is currently under review by legal counsel and was not back prior to the meeting. He did say that if the Board would like to table it until it has been reviewed and if any corrections need to be made, he understood.

Alderman Cox asked if other departments are using polices as described?

Chief Fields stated that he spoke with the Belton Police Department, and they did not have a policy, nor did the Temple Police Department or Copperas Cove Police Department. All advised him that if the video is used as evidence, it is treated as evidence. If it is not evidence, they do not use it.

Mayor Coggin used an example that if Alderman Cox drives through his yard and tears up all his flower bushes, and he has a video camera that sees him clearly. He then calls the police to come and check out the video. He asked why do we need a policy when the video is being furnished?

Chief Fields said that this policy gives the department something to fall back on, especially in the case that that somebody has either an authorized release of the video or an unauthorized access to the video.

Mayor Coggin asked if it still is treated as evidence with or without the policy in place?

Chief Fields said that the evidence still gets treated as evidence.

Alderman Cox stated that this just formalizes so that more citizens will get involved.

Alderman Howard said this also outlines the part on the citizen, even if it is used as evidence or not.

Mayor Pro-tem asked about holding off until legal counsel has finished their review.

Chief Fields said none and that he was hoping to have it back from legal before the meeting and can wait until the review has been completed by legal.

Alderman Cox asked Village Administrator De La Rosa if they could approve it now, pending the review by legal counsel.

Village Administrator De La Rosa they could, and that was one of the suggestions. The item was left on the agenda for Board review and that ordinances and/or policies are sometimes approved, subject to legal counsel, with minor tweaks and not anything of any substantial changes and then the Board does not have to hear it again.

Mayor Pro-tem Bell said that they do necessarily need to hear it again, and that if it comes back, to place it on the consent agenda with whatever minor changes may need to be made.

Village Administrator De La Rosa addressed the Mayor's concerns about agencies utilizing that are city owned or operated Police Department. This policy is to give everybody a comfort level and it is all in writing.

Alderman Henry made a motion to approve the Police Department Community Video Partnership Program Policy, pending review and feedback from legal counsel. Seconded by Alderman Cox. Motion passed 5-0.

- E. At the December 7, 2023, meeting a representative from the Bell County Tax Office provided to check in the amount of \$2720.65 from license plate fees. The request is to authorize the transfer of those funds allocated to the Salado Independent School District for school crossing guard, health and nutrition, child Abuse prevention/intervention and drug/alcohol abuse prevention programs in Salado.


Alderman Graham made a motion to transfer the funds to SSISD and seconded by Alderman Cox. Motion passed 5-0.

- F. Village Administrator De La Rosa presented a proposed calendar relating to the development of the fiscal year 2025 village of Salado operating budget. There was an exception made to move the regular meeting, which would have been on July 4, to a special meeting to be called on July 2, 2024. It is recommended to adopt the calendar, with the note that the dates are always subject to move and that would be with Board approval.

Mayor Pro-tem Bell moved to adopt the recommended dates and seconded by Alderman Henry. Motion was approved 5-0.

Alderman Cox made a motion to adjourn at 7:48 p.m.

The minutes were approved on February 1, 2024.



Michael Coggin, Mayor

ATTEST: 

Manuel De La Rosa, Village Administrator