

MINUTES OF THE
HENDERSON CITY COUNCIL
Regular Scheduled Meeting

April 15, 2025

CALL TO ORDER: *The Mayor will call the meeting to order, declare a quorum if present, and declare notices legally posted pursuant to Open Meetings Act.*

Mayor Pace called the meeting to order at 6 p.m.

Council members present were Stephen Strong, Michael Searcy, Greg Jackson, Melissa Morton, and Gina Juarez.

Staff members present were City Manager Jay Abercrombie, City Secretary Cheryl Jimerson, City Attorney Russell Brown, Chief of Police Chad Taylor, Assistant Fire Chief Jeff Stoddard, Director of Operations Davis Brown, Director of Public Services Kirk Kimbrell, Director of Utilities Randy Boyd, Director of Utility Infrastructure and Delivery, Community Development Manager/Building Official Cliff McElfresh, Finance Director Karen Arnall, Animal Center Director Charissa Pool, Civic Center Manager Stephanie Kimbrell, Executive Leadership Assistant/HR Specialist Hillary Faulkner, Communications and Marketing Coordinator Phedra Johnson, Dispatchers for the Police Department, and SIT Committee.

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Council Member Greg Jackson gave the invocation, Council Member Stephen Strong led the Pledges.

CITIZENS COMMENTS

There were no citizens' comments.

Council Member Gina Juarez wanted to pass on a compliment from business owner, Trey Segoria. There was a water leak at his building located on N. Jackson Street. City workers Webubba and Jace went over and beyond the call of their duties to help him, and he wanted to publicly say thank you.

PRESENTATIONS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Council Member Michael Searcy read and presented the proclamation to the Police Department Dispatchers that were present at the Council Meeting.

1. Proclamation for Sexual Assault Awareness Month.

Council Member Gina Juarez read and presented the proclamation to The Women's Center of East Texas.

2. Proclamation for Historical Preservation Month.

Mayor Fullen read and presented the proclamation to the Civic Center Manager Stephanie Kimbrell.

CONSENT AGENDA

3. Consideration of possible action upon the minutes of the March 18, 2025, Council meeting. (Jimerson)

4. Consideration and possible action upon the HEDCO Financial's for the month of February 2025.

Council Member Michael Searcy made a motion to approve the consent agenda, duly seconded by Council Member Melissa Morton. The vote was unanimous.

COUNCIL BUSINESS - REGULAR SESSION

5. Consideration and possible action appointing Mayor Henry Pace and Council Member in District 2 Michael Searcy to the ETCOG Board of Directors as members representing Rusk County.

Council Member Melissa Morton made a motion to approve Mayor Henry Pace and Council Member Michael Searcy to represent the City on the ETCOG Board of Directors, duly seconded by Council Member Gina Juarez. The vote was unanimous.

6. Consideration and possible action upon a recommendation from the Cemetery Board to appoint John (Buzz) Fullen to a vacant seat on the Board. (K. Kimbrell)

Public Services Director Kirk Kimbrell recommended the Council approve the appointment of John (Buzz) Fullen to the vacant seat on the Cemetery Board.

Council Member Michael Searcy made a motion to approve the appointment of Buzz Fullen to the board, duly seconded by Council Member Gina Juarez. The vote was unanimous.

7. Consideration and possible action upon extending the Solid Waste contract with Allied Waste System of Kilgore for an additional 5 years. (Abercrombie)

City Manager Jay Abercrombie made a recommendation to extend the Solid Waste contract with Allied Waste for 5 years. Gene Keenon of Allied Waste Services spoke to the Council about the services they continue to provide. He updated them on the Recycle Center in Kilgore, which is being rebuilt.

Council Member Michael Searcy made a motion to extend the contract for 5 years, duly seconded by Council Member Stephen Strong. The vote was unanimous.

8. Consideration and possible action upon the recommendation of the Strategic Insight Team (SIT) proposed Personal Time Off (PTO) policy. (Abercrombie/Faulkner)

Purpose

The Strategic Insights Team (SIT) is established to serve as a representative body of employees that provides input on policies, programs, and initiatives impacting the City of Henderson. The team aims to foster a collaborative and inclusive work environment by ensuring employees have a voice in key decisions, enhancing engagement, and improving workplace satisfaction.

Membership

The SIT will be composed of middle-level managers and employees from all departments. Membership will be voluntary, with individuals selected through a nomination and approval process. The team will aim to maintain a balanced representation from different functional areas within the City of Henderson.

The City of Henderson currently maintains separate policies and accrual rates for vacation and sick leave. For regular full-time employees, the initial accrual rates are 3.07 hours of vacation and 3.69 hours of sick leave per pay period. For regular full-time firefighting personnel, the starting accruals are 3.69 hours of vacation and 4.43 hours of sick leave per pay period.

Under the proposed Paid Time Off (PTO) policy, these separate accruals would be consolidated into a single bank. The combined starting accrual rate would be 5.2 hours per pay period for regular full-time employees and 6.8 hours per pay period for firefighting employees.

Council Member Greg Jackson made a motion to approve the PTO policy, duly seconded by Council Member Melissa Morton. The vote was unanimous.

9. Consideration and possible action upon discussions to negotiate an agreement with Rusk County utilizing the Henderson Animal Center and the City of Henderson utilizing Rusk County Jail. (Abercrombie/Searcy)

City Manager Jay Abercrombie explained to the Council that the City and County have been working under the same Pets for Prisoners agreement for 20 years or more. The city would be able to use the County jail for prisoners in exchange for the city taking in the animals from the county. Over the years, the laws have changed to where there are a lot more animals going to the Animal Center than misdemeanors going to the County jail. It is time to look at the agreement and see how we can partner with the County moving forward.

Council Member Michael Searcy added it is tough enough for the Animal Center to do what they have to do just to control the animal population within the city. To get this agreement negotiated, we have to exercise the option to collaborate on it and start all over. That is why he asked for this item to be put on the agenda. Jay added the new agreement has to come back to the Council. This just allows us to start the conversation.

Council Member Stephen Strong made a motion to approve the negotiation with the County on the Pets for Prisoners agreement, duly seconded by Council Member Melissa Morton. The vote was unanimous.

10. Consideration and possible action upon Resolution 2025-04-01 Master Fee Schedule making adjustments to some of the fees.

City Secretary Cheryl Jimerson announced that Alan Dutt of the Sabine Oil and Gas office in Kilgore has joined us this evening. The city has been working with them to update the street usage fees, which have not increased since 2011. Cheryl made a recommendation to the Council to approve an increase of twenty-cents per foot for the 2025-2026 budget year with a five-cent increase each year for 6 years to get the fee where it should be.

Council Member Michael Searcy made a motion to approve the street usage fee resolution, duly seconded by Council Member Greg Jackson. The vote was unanimous.

11. Consideration and possible action upon a minor plat request submitted by Fordal LLC on a property located at 710 W. Fordall Street. (Breitenberg/Jimerson)

Code Enforcement Officer Wes Breitenberg explained to the Council the minor plat is a ten-foot purchase of property located at 710 W. Fordall Street to have their driveway belong to them. When Ken Hale had his property surveyed, he reached out to the property owners of 710 W. Fordall Street, making them aware of the results and sold it to them.

Council Member Greg Jackson made a motion to approve the plat, duly seconded by Council Member Michael Searcy. The vote was unanimous.

12. Consideration and possible action upon a minor plat request subdividing property from Frank and Suzanne Dastrous located in the 1500 block of W. Main Street. (Breitenberg/Jimerson)

Code Enforcement Officer Wes Breitenberg made a recommendation that the Council approve the minor plat of Frank and Suzanne Dastrous. They own both the house and lots at 1503 and 1505 W Main St. The original plat of Lot 2 Block 2/291 JD Tate Addition is shown on the survey to contain a little over an acre of land. The owners want to retain ownership of the back portion of the land shown as Lot 2B and create the ability to sell the house and lot at 1503 W Main separately on Lot 2A.

Council Member Melissa Morton made a motion to approve the plat, duly seconded by Council Member Gina Juarez. The vote was unanimous.

13. Consideration and possible action upon the second reading of Ordinance 2025-03-01 changing the City of Henderson's zoning map from Low Density Single-Family Residential (R1) Zone to General Commercial (C2) Zone on a property known as 2500 S. Evenside Street for WCG Properties. (Jimerson)

City Secretary Cheryl Jimerson explained there have been no changes to this ordinance since the first reading and recommended the Council approve the zoning change.

Council Member Gina Juarez abstained from voting. Council Member Stephen Strong made a motion approving Ordinance 2025-03-01 zoning change, duly seconded by Council Member Michael Searcy. The vote was four for and one abstention.

14. Consideration and possible action upon the second reading of Ordinance 2025-03-02 changing the City of Henderson's zoning map from Low Density Single-Family Residential (R1) Zone to General Commercial (C2) Zone. The property is described as PT OF LT 1 BLK 890, 13.357 Acres J Smith Survey, located near the corner of HWY 79 S. and S. Evenside for BIH LLC. (Jimerson)

City Secretary Cheryl Jimerson explained to the Council no changes have been made to this ordinance since the first reading and recommended the Council approve this second reading.

Council Member Gina Juarez made a motion approving Ordinance 2025-03-02 zoning change, duly seconded by Council Member Michael Searcy. The vote was unanimous.

15. Consideration upon the first reading of Ordinance 2025-04-01 changing the City of Henderson's zoning map from Medium Density Single-Family Residential (R2) Zone to General Commercial (C2) Zone. The property is described as, LT 8A BLK 1134, Tall Pines Estates, directly behind United Ag and Turf. (Jimerson)

City Secretary Cheryl Jimerson explained to the Council that United Ag and Turf knew they would need more space to park inventory and reached out to the property owner behind them. Mr. Dervey subdivided his parcel, selling a half-acre tract to United Ag and Turf. United Ag and Turf requested the lot be changed from a R2 Zone to a C2 Zone for overflow inventory parking.

Council had no questions or comments on the first reading of Ordinance 2025-04-01.

16. Consideration and possible action upon the re-appointment of Bill Garmon, LeeAnn Mills, and Jean Stokes to the Civic Center Advisory Committee.

Civic Center Manager Stephanie Kimbrell explained to the Council that the members of the Civic Center Advisory Committee's terms expire May 1, 2025. Their original appointment date was April 27, 2010, and is a two-year term. All the members wish to remain on the Committee.

Council Member Michael Searcy made a motion to approve the re-appointments of the members listed above, duly seconded by Council Member Greg Jackson. The vote was unanimous.

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS:

17. The City Council may deliberate and make inquiry into any item listed in the Departmental Reports.

A. City Manager

B. Fire Department

C. Police Department

D. Animal Center

E. Community Development

Community Development Manager and Building Official Cliff McElfresh gave a presentation on the department's duties for the previous month. He was excited to have two employees that now have their official code enforcement license. They will now be able to start enforcing the code of ordinances. He also summarized the building permit construction value for the month of March to be \$1,655,070.00 and the year to date for this budget to be \$2,712,570.00. He also thanked the council for being one of the best councils he has worked with.

F. Public Services/Parks and Recreation Department

G. Public Utilities

H. Finance Department

I. City Secretary

J. Communications and Marketing

K. HEDCO

Sales Tax Revenue for February 2025.

L. Director of Operations Departmental Reports below.

Civic Center

Main Street/Tourism

Municipal Court

The council had no questions or comments on the monthly reports.

BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Board of Adjustments Minutes

Planning and Zoning Minutes

Cemetery Board Meeting Minutes

Main Street Meeting Minutes

Preservation Minutes

Council had no questions or comments on the Board meeting minutes.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

REGULAR SESSION:

ADJOURNMENT

18. Adjourn

Council Member Gina Juarez made a motion to adjourn at 6:54 p.m., duly seconded by Council Member Melissa Morton. The vote was unanimous.

ATTEST:


Cheryl Jimerson, City Secretary

APPROVED:


Henry Pace, Mayor