

MINUTES OF THE  
HENDERSON CITY COUNCIL  
Regular Scheduled Meeting

February 17, 2026

**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 5:30 p.m.

Council members present were Stephen Strong, Michael Searcy, Greg Jackson, Lee Scoggins, and Gina Juarez.

Staff members present were City Manager Jay Abercrombie, City Secretary Cheryl Jimerson, City Attorney Russell Brown, Chief of Police Chad Taylor, Fire Chief Sonny Yabarra, Director of Operations Davis Brown, Director of Utilities Randy Boyd, Director of Utility Infrastructure and Delivery David Hortman, Community Development Manager/Building Official Cliff McElfresh, Finance Director Stephanie Kimbrell, Animal Center Director Charissa Blake, Civic Center Manager Christina Gray, Executive Leadership Assistant/HR Specialist Hillary Faulkner, Communications and Marketing Coordinator Phedra Johnson, and HEDCO Director Bret Gardella.

**INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:**

Council Member Michael Searcy led the invocation and Council Member Lee Scoggins led the pledges.

**CITIZENS COMMENTS**

Comments shall be limited to three (3) minutes and taken in the order they are received. By State law, no action may be taken on items not on the agenda.

Representatives from Christus EMS asked Council not to make a decision on the EMS contract for the city until they have had a chance to present to the Council what they have to offer the city.

**PRESENTATIONS/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Mayor Pace issued a proclamation for American Healthy Heart Month. Three Rusk County 4-H Healthy Texas Youth Ambassadors accepted the proclamation.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

1. Convene into executive session to consult with the City Attorney in accordance with Vernon's Texas Government Code, Chapter 551, section 087.

Mayor Pace convened into executive session at 5:37 p.m.

**REGULAR SESSION:**

2. Convene into regular session and take necessary action as a result of the closed session.

Mayor Pace reconvened into regular session at 6:44 p.m. asking the council if they had items from the executive session to consider.

Council member Michael Searcy made a motion to move the March 17th Council meeting to March 24th, duly seconded by Council Member Greg Jackson. The vote was unanimous.

3. Consideration and possible action upon a Chapter 312 tax abatement agreement for Velvin Productions located in the reinvestment zone known as the Henderson Industrial Park.

HEDCO Director Bret Gardella stated HEDCO has been working with Velvin Production Company, Inc. on a Performance Agreement for the development of a new production facility within the Henderson Industrial Park. Under the Agreement, HEDCO will convey approximately 29.16 acres to Velvin in exchange for a \$500,000 promissory note, payable over five years and subject to annual forgiveness contingent upon compliance with job creation and operational benchmarks.

Velvin will invest approximately \$2 million in the project, commence operations within twelve months, and create a minimum of fourteen full-time positions by 2030, with average wages of at least \$20 per hour. The Agreement includes provisions related to rail access, employment verification, insurance, indemnification, and statutory compliance, along with standard enforcement, dispute resolution, and venue provisions.

Council Member Michael Searcy made a motion to approve the agreement, duly seconded by Council Member Stephen Strong. The vote was unanimous.

4. Consideration and possible action upon an amendment to the UT EMS renewal contract with the City of Henderson.

Council Member Lee Scoggins made a motion to approve an amendment to the UT EMS contract for an additional three (3) years, duly seconded by Council Member Gina Juarez. Council Member Michael Searcy abstained due to the working relationship he has with the emergency services. The vote was four for and none against.

#### **CONSENT AGENDA**

5. Consideration of possible action upon the minutes of January 20, 2026, Council Meeting. (Jimerson)
6. Consideration and possible action upon a request for street closures downtown on Saturday, March 14, 2026 (Duke)
7. Consideration and possible action upon the HEDCO financial' s for the month of December 2025. (Gardella)
8. Consideration and possible action upon the annual Statement of Compliance for West Fraser Wood Products located at 600, 700 and 800 Blocks of Industrial Drive. (Jimerson)

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

#### **REGULAR COUNCIL BUSINESS**

9. Consideration and possible action upon the Amended Performance Agreement for First Methodist Church Preschool. (Gardella)

HEDCO Director Bret Gardella explained there was a change in the performance agreement with the First Methodist Church. The proposed agreement was for repairing the part of the retainer wall that was falling. The Church has now decided to replace the entire wall due to the longevity of the repair versus replacement.

Council Member Gina Juarez made a motion to approve the amended agreement, duly seconded by Council Member Greg Jackson. Council Member Lee Scoggins abstained due to him presenting this item to HEDCO on behalf of the Church. The vote was four for and none against.

10. Consideration and possible action upon the HEDCO 2026 By-Law Amendments. (Gardella)

HEDCO Director Bret Gardella stated the Board defined the bank executive as the council asked and recommended the council approve the amendments to the HEDCO by-laws.

Council Member Gina Juarez made a motion to approve the by-laws as submitted, duly seconded by Council Member Stephen Strong. The vote was unanimous.

11. Consideration and possible action to approve the waiver and release for Brasso Development & Construction, LLC. (Gardella)

HEDCO Director Bret Gardella stated there is a minor adjustment to the contractor's name. Secondly, there is no commitment to the property on Evenside. The cost of the infrastructure will push the price of the homes higher than what HEDCO wants them to be at. They want to see the homes sold at the lower end of the market value. The construction of homes will start on the Whippoorwill property because the infrastructure is already in place.

Council Member Stephen Strong made a motion to approve the release for Brasso Development & Construction, LLC, duly seconded by Council Member Lee Scoggins. The vote was unanimous.

12. Consideration and possible action on approval of the City of Henderson becoming a member of Sourcewell. (Hortman)

Director of Utility Infrastructure and Delivery David Hortman explained that Sourcewell is a company similar to Buy Board. After pricing the collection system cameras, they have better pricing, and we would like to use them but we must become members in order to do this. Council Member Stephen Strong asked how much it costs to become a member. David stated nothing, it is free.

Council Member Stephen Strong made a motion to approve the membership, duly seconded by Council Member Michael Searcy. The vote was unanimous.

13. Consideration and possible action upon a minor plat application to combine two lots at 418 Broadway St for purposes of development (Breitenberg)

Health and Code Enforcement Officer Wes Breitenberg recommended approval of a minor plat combining two lots into one for the purpose of building a multi-family structure.

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

14. Consideration and possible action upon the Main Street Advisory Board By-Law Amendments. (Duke)

Main Street Coordinator Alexa Duke recommended approval on the By-law changes to the Main Street Board. Changes were ex-officio officer definition, serve two consecutive terms then a one-term break from the board, members can be removed if three meetings out of a year are missed, a physical year same as the city's physical year, and any expenditure over 500 dollars; a board member can ask for financial reports at any time.

Council Member Gina Juarez made a motion to approve the changes to the by-laws, duly seconded by Council Member Michael Searcy. The vote was unanimous.

#### **DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS:**

15. 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
  - PD Racial Profile Report
- D. Animal Center
- E. Community Development
- 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 December 2025.
- L. Director of Operations Departmental Reports below.
  - Civic Center
  - Main Street/Tourism
  - Municipal Court

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  
HEDCO meeting minutes for January 2026.

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

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

16. Adjourn

Council Member Lee Scoggins made a motion to adjourn at 7:05 p.m., duly seconded by Council Member Michael Searcy. The vote was unanimous.

ATTEST:

  
Cheryl Jimerson, City Secretary

APPROVED:

  
Henry Pace, Mayor