

Mayor Paul Gohman called the Regular City Council meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. April 18, 2024, and a quorum was established. In attendance were Mayor Paul Gohman, Mayor Pro Tem Gwen Dyess, Clabe F. Webb, Mike Bailey, Zach Davidson, Ricky Royall, Teresa Ballard, and Tara Robinson. RA Morris was absent.

Mayor Paul Gohman led with the pledge of allegiance and council member Mike Bailey led the prayer.

### **Public Comments**

Brenda Hines signed up to speak later.

Linda Scott asked how much money is now in our hotel motel tax fund. Teresa Ballard responded \$743.05.

### **March Monthly Reports**

#### **Fire Department**

No report

#### **Economic Development**

Linda Scott reported Cyndi Carlton board member and local realtor has some listings in Bronte houses but one, she has had a lot of interest for people from out of town, even though it is a flip house. She said several people have come to look at it from out of town and even out of state. They told her they had been looking in Robert Lee, Winters and even Miles. Bronte was the only town in this area that was growing with new businesses, and the city looks good, but they wanted to buy something for investment purposes. They wanted to live in a town that looked like it had business. It was very complimentary to our town.

4B board approved loan grant for new business job creation for three full-time employees at Bearden Automotive in the amount of \$9000. They have their public hearing tomorrow at 2:00 pm to hear comments then special to approve loan.

4A board paid for community baseball field score board and approved for signage as well.

#### **Cemetery Committee**

Brenda Hines reported working on their family plots for two hours just cleaning up weeds. She spoke to Stormy Vaughn and now, she does not know if they will come back and do anything over again after the way it looks because it did not get sprayed. We worked hard to get it to look the way it looked and to look at it now.

#### **Depot**

Linda Scott reported still waiting to hear from the historical commission to tell us what our choices are for the roof. They have given us permission for some alternative material for the roof, but she was wanting estimates and some pictures which have been submitted to Cynthia Turner.

May 7<sup>th</sup> is "San Angelo Gives" is a powerful 24-hour, online giving event that connects the Concho Valley with community nonprofits to reinforce the value of both local philanthropic giving and community engagement. LOCAL nonprofits' involvement in the event will give members of our community the chance to find and support an organization whose mission aligns with their passion.

Please donate to the Depot. If you do not feel comfortable with donating online, you can give a check to the sorosis club, or to the bank, they will put in the sorosis club's account.

### **Animal Report**

Trapper set cat traps at residence house, senior center with no luck catching any cats but did pick up kittens at the rehab center.

Had several calls throughout March of two German shepherds running loose and could not catch but on March 17, the two German shepherds killed chickens at a residence and then attacked livestock and they were destroyed. March 31, two dogs were fighting each other but the homeowner was able to get them apart until trapper could get there. Trapper took the dog back to its owner. The ordinance official was notified on all calls.

### **Ordinance / Municipal**

Ordinance official worked with Mike's Tire to comply with getting some of the tires removed from business. This is an ongoing issue until all is cleaned up.

Had a vehicle parked in alleyway and had residence move the vehicle and residence now understands the ordinance.

He contacted a residence regarding mattress behind house get curbside to pick up.

He has been working with another resident getting their junk for curbside pickup.

Helped resident board up broken windows on a vacant manufactured home to comply with ordinance.

No warnings or citations issued for March.

### **Permit Report**

Approved carport this month.

### **Regular Agenda**

**Finance:** Council member Clabe F. Webb presented his proposal for a cemetery caretaker. This is an opportunity that I've discovered when I was working at my wife's lot there in the cemetery, there's a lady working there at her family's lot and talking with her she wouldn't mind if we wanted to ask her if she would do some maintenance, told her I couldn't answer that, but I'd bring it up here to the council. So, I wanted on her behalf too, but on behalf of the city, I just thought I would bring it back up because it was something that has been discussed before. Stormy was the one that gave us the list of cemetery requests in the back of our folders. And the last thing #12 says get a maintenance person, so I thought I'd bring it, back up and see if the city, since we have someone that's willing to do something in the cemetery in conjunction with helping the cemetery committee, if we had any interest in getting a person to work for very little money to do a little bit of work each month to do some kind of maintenance out there, you know, just small things but you know things that we could address, see if we had any interest in that.

Mayor Gohman asked if there was a list of things that need to be done.

Clabe F. Webb reported in the back of our folder there is a whole list of them. It was the list of stormy turned in a year or two ago. I do not think there is a date on it, but she outlined some things that could be addressed should we decide it. We do have some possibilities if we wanted to do this, we do have a couple of avenues that we could pursue for paying a small amount each month, one since we do not have the prisoners coming over and working in the cemetery anymore. As far as I know that money hasn't been allocated to any special direction, plus one of the reasons why I asked about what's happening with our CD's is because we show now that we're getting a really nice return

on the CD's since the only thing it does is go back into the account and increased savings we could be using that amount of money to help in the cemetery that's a second source. Again, I mention these as possibilities. I do think we need to do something. We need to have somebody do something to help our community to make our cemetery look a little better it is a city cemetery. We can say we have a committee working to maintain the cemetery, but we do not have anything effective at this time.

Ricky Royall reported the new person spraying now said he could spray in January, to keep it from getting to the point now that he is responsible for it for a full year, where the other ones were only responsible for six months at a time.

Mayor Gohman said if we get all this dead stuff cleared off and spray it to where nothing comes up then there is not really no weed eating or mowing to be done except there is some trimming of trees occasionally and removal of dead branches from time to time. You must shape them up every once in a great while, so they grow like that instead of out. But some of the stuff is more heavy maintenance type of stuff.

Ricky Royall said we could put an article in the paper just asking people to help take care of their family plots.

Zach Davidson asked if Robert Lee has a cemetery? Yes, they have somebody to take care of the cemetery. The cemetery does not belong to the city.

Clabe F. Webb said she is a disabled lady that cannot do a whole lot as far as getting a job. She lives out there across the street from the roping arena. I do not know her physical limits, but I know that she is one of our citizens here in town. And she is looking for something to help her and her family but something that she can do to make her extra money. I was just brainstorming to think, what could we as a city do to help one of our citizens? I realize she cannot do the spraying that money is already allocated for spraying. I would not ask her to do that or to do the road maintenance, but we have a list here of things that she could do. Things that we have on our list of things like painting areas sanding the fences for painting. Ricky reported the fences have already been painted along with the archway.

Gwen Dyess said there may be some liability with hiring her unless she was an employee.

Clabe F. Webb we could hire as contract labor that way we do not have to employ her, we just hire by contract when she works. I think she should be responsible for her hours. If she cannot prove that she was over there, like checking in with the office or showing what she is doing. I do not know; she must have a certain level of responsibility to the city also be trivial things that some of us go out and do for our own plots, but we have a lot of people that are not here anymore.

Brenda Hines said for instance today when I was down there, Steve was running this machine that throws rocks all over the place. I went around walking around two sections and the biggest problem we have in the cemetery right now its trash blows through there and it is all hung in all those weeds. Two spots they had gone in with the weed eater and they hit all the artificial flowers that were in there. The ground is so hard could not pull them out of. I have piled up two big piles, but then after when someone dies nobody is responsible for removing the dead items but there is always something to be picked up.

Mike Bailey asked why the prison has not helped after covid, is it because they did not want to be outside. What keeps us from hiring them again? Ricky Royall reported the work camp inmates were shipped to Colorado City and there is no longer a facility. Before that happened, every year it was questionable about how much longer they were going to stay over. Mike Bailey said eventually, a designated fund that we have line item fund for that person will need to work as a 1099 employee responsible for their own taxes, their own everything and I would think like we would mentioned maybe some sort of liability clause or errors and omissions or something because right before they sprayed a few weeks ago, I guess 3 weeks ago it was just having to be the day before that they spray that and I had no idea they were going to do that, but I went down there and did a little mowing around the roads. I got into some easels, flags on metal posts, some curbs and stuff that were hidden. It did not bother my mower, but somebody could get hurt down there doing that stuff and they could tear up somebody's monument or whatever and so that is a real problem. I hate the way it looks down there. I spent some time cleaning our family plot and some others, plan to go back doing some more work. I think you would want to be careful about selecting people to work out there, and you would want all your bases covered.

Gwen Dyess added well, it is just like you talking about him throwing rocks, somebody is down there mowing, and you are over there cleaning, and you get hit with a rock. That is city property and I think no matter what, you had somebody could go to a lawyer and say, well, the city owns this property, they should be responsible for my injury. It just opens an assortment of problems.

Mike Bailey added, I have been responsible for seeing that a lot of facilities have remained weed free in the oil field and there is plenty of pre-emergent chemicals that you can put out that will keep the weeds gone. I do not know if that is an option.

Mayor Gohman mentioned I walk two miles a day in the cemetery, and I am walking along the roads, if there is anything near the roads, I will pick it up, or if there is just something that's obviously trash. There is a lot of stuff that is looks like lawn art or something. I mean, people put stuff, all sorts of stuff out there.

Gwen Dyess added, it is going to come down to the city's going to have to pay for somebody to do it. We do not get volunteers to do anything anymore. Look at the ambulance service. It has gone to pot. So, I just do not see anybody going down there in the heat and getting out and working, especially if they have no one there. I mean most all of us have somebody there, but somebody is going to have to be hired to do the cleanup or have our city employees like you all do not have anything else to do. But an employee could go once a week to keep it from getting in bad shape, stay ahead of the game.

Mayor Gohman said we would have to have a specific list of things that you would do and the things you do not want to do in somebody's family plot. So, we can put it on the agenda or when we start talking about budget.

Steve Hines mentioned he was told that the Robert Lee has a caretaker. Masons pay for it. They send out letters to all the citizens asking for donations to help pay for it. I think you can get somebody \$20 to go and clean the cemetery. Can we ask for donations. We do that for the fire department and the EMS, on the monthly water statement. If they signed the form for however much they want to donate it can be added to the water bill. We could not automatically charge everybody a fee.

Clabe F. Webb asked the question if you have a loved one that is buried there, is that private property? Mayor Gohman does not know the legal status of it being private property. Clabe F. Webb said he would not want one of our employees to go on private property even to do maintenance, even if it is being neglected. I do not think that would give us permission to go on someone's private property and take trash off their place. We may interpret it as trash. Mayor Gohman said that is exactly the point I was making. People put all kinds of stuff in their graveyard, so you think it may be trash, but they might not think it is trash. Someone put little toy cars and trucks down on this place. So, you got to be careful once. Trash blowing around is obvious. We will research that and see if that is. But if it were, if it were private property, if they purchased it from the city, wouldn't they be paying taxes on their personal property for property tax? Falls in a different category. My only thought was just have have a caretaker.

Water: Open submissions received for Request for Qualifications (RFQ) according to Texas Water Development Board (TWDB). Mayor Gohman reported that we have already gone through this once, but we must do it again because now we are we have a different funding. We have received one RFQ. We sent out four proposals to four different engineering firms, and they were the only ones to turn back in. The notice was published in the newspaper two consecutive weeks, March 1 and March 8<sup>th</sup> and the deadline was April 5<sup>th</sup> by 4:00 pm. Ricky Royall opened the bid was from Jacob & Martin. Mayor Gohman reported that since there was only one, we will go to item #3 to award the contract. The action taken was Ricky Royall opened the received box. No vote was needed on this agenda item.

Water: Consider awarding contract to Engineering Firm for services for the project at the City's Water Treatment Facilities according to Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) and authorizing the mayor to sign the contract with awarding engineering firm.

Zach Davidson made the motion to award contract to Jacob and Martin, Gwen Dyess seconded the motion: Vote: 4/0 motion carried.

### **March Consent Agenda**

March Aging Report; March Balance Sheet; Revenue and Expenditures

Gwen Dyess made the motion to approve aging and financials as presented, Mike Bailey seconded the motion. Vote: 4/0 motion carried

### **Informational Reports**

Mayor Gohman announced this was Gwen Dyess last meeting and we appreciate all the work she has done. Water Pilot Study should be starting next week.

Received a notice and Mayor Gohman read "You're currently invited to a special event that celebrates the essence of leadership within our community. We would like to recognize you as a leader in our community. We are excited to host an awards ceremony that honors the leaders among us and inspires us all to foster growth, resilience, and a positive change. The date is Friday, April 26<sup>th</sup> at 12:35 at Bronte High School Middle Gym" and there is an individual invite for each council member.

Utility Director Ricky Royall reported Michael we be attending training next month get his C license.

The city Secretary and the mayor will attend TMCN meeting next week in Abilene. The cemetery list is almost ready to be posted on website. Transitioning is almost complete from Asyst to QuickBooks.

Clabe F. Webb would like to discuss squatters in our community.

Deputy Lopez answered the question at the cemetery, which is considered private property, but in a property item not so much in a real estate type of way. I know you think that it is, but it is more like private property or private item of property, just as the tombstone or the items that you put there and if anybody takes something out of there without your consent or if they damage it in any way there are criminal consequences for that.

Deputy Lopez then addresses squatters. In Texas, if you are somewhere where you are not invited to be so, you do not have permission to be there. The only exception to that is a public place. Which this is a public place because it is a meeting. Anybody can be here unless they act out. That is the only exception. So, if someone is in somebody else's house that you know, and nobody's lived in that house for years and years, the back door is open and you know, you see somebody that you don't know, go in there all you have to do is call and say there's a suspicious person that that's in there you know, they're not supposed to be there. We come, we investigate and contact the person. So, you go ahead and just interject and say, hey, there is no such thing as that here. Bottom line is that you are somewhere where you were not invited to be.

Number one, this house is not livable. They do not have any utilities. This house is dilapidated, so forth and so or whatever the case may be. And you said, so that would only interpret to us. This is a dangerous situation or a potentially dangerous situation. You cannot stay here anyway. Either way, that whole squatter staying out, there is no detailed law in terms of that address squatters in Texas. I think the legislature really kind of shortcutting all that because they already know what laws we do have, and they know how those laws are already enforced. It is just left to the law enforcement interpretation. We do not even have the landowner here, does not matter. Somebody knows you are trespassing. They have never seen you here and that works good enough for us for in the meantime. I go a bit further and try to get them where or close to where they need to go and out of our county.

Clabe F. Webb asked if there is any update or when would we be hearing from the topic of the North Runnels County Water program. Mayor reported they are still looking at the particulars of what they want to do, but they have not determined that yet. So, I was hoping they would be a little further along by now, but they have not so maybe next month.

With no further business the meeting was adjourned at 6:21 pm.



*Paul Gohman*  
Paul Gohman, Mayor

ATTEST:

*Teresa Ballard*  
Teresa Ballard, City Secretary