



City of San Marcos

Meeting Minutes City Council

Friday, February 19, 2021

12:00 PM

Virtual Meeting

This meeting was held using conferencing software due to COVID-19 rules.

I. Call To Order

With a quorum present, the regular meeting of the San Marcos City Council was called to order by Mayor Hughson at 12:05 p.m. Friday, February 19, 2021. This meeting was held online.

II. Roll Call

Council Member Scott arrived after roll call at 12:07 p.m.

Present: 6 - Mayor Pro Tem Melissa Derrick, Mayor Jane Hughson, Council Member Maxfield Baker, Council Member Saul Gonzales, Council Member Alyssa Garza and Council Member Mark Gleason

1. Consider approval of Resolution 2021-42R, under the authority of Section 418.108 of the Texas Government Code, declaring and extending a local state of disaster in the City of San Marcos, Texas due to severe winter weather.

A motion was made by Council Member Gonzales, seconded by Council Member Baker, to approve Resolution 2021-42R.

Bert Lumbreras, City Manager provided an update on the severe winter weather our community has experienced and the need to extend the disaster declaration related to this event. Mr. Lumbreras knows there are lot of questions regarding City operations over the past week and he stated there will be an after action review, which is a report that will be sent to Council. Mr. Lumbreras stated the City was fortunate to have received advance notice of the extreme cold that began this past weekend. The Code Enforcement staff and the Police Department's Homeless Outreach Team worked in cooperation with community partners to find safe places for approximately 150 people experiencing homelessness or were in need of food and shelter. The City's Transportation crews worked around the clock to make the roads as safe as possible due to the icy conditions. The Mayor also signed a disaster declaration on Saturday, February 13 allowing us to have access to FEMA funding due to

emergency operations already in progress. San Marcos was one of the first Cities to sign a disaster declaration and many other cities and counties across the State followed suit as the severity of the disaster became clear.

Mr. Lumbreras stated one of the most challenging aspects of this event has been its evolving nature. City Staff has adapted as new problems have arisen and stepped up to take on additional tasks. First responders were initially busy responding to numerous accident calls as the storm first rolled in last Friday and Saturday and ice began to form. As conditions continued to worsen and people began to stay home and off the roads, they took on additional tasks of delivering meals to those we had helped shelter in hotels and transported individuals who had been released from the local hospital but were unable to drive.

At 1:20 Monday morning the Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT) entered into Energy Emergency Alert 3 and began implementing rolling outages across the State. What were supposed to be hour-long outages became much longer per the direction from ERCOT. The non-emergency lines at the San Marcos Police Department (SMPD) became inundated with calls from people seeking information about the weather event. The City quickly set up a phone bank staffed remotely by employees from various departments to take some of this demand off SMPD personnel. As calls came in, Police and Fire began responding to areas of particular need, such as the Stonebrook Senior Community, and making welfare checks on residents throughout the City when requested.

In response to the winter storm, Hays County set up five warming shelters throughout the County with two in San Marcos. In addition, the City worked with San Marcos Consolidated Independent School District to send out a few of their buses to serve as mobile warming vehicles to targeted areas. Messaging was directed to residents informing them of these locations if a warm place was needed and also to encourage people to check in on their vulnerable neighbors and provide assistance if possible. Our Public Communications staff has been extremely busy sending out up-to-date information throughout the event so that residents could stay informed of the rapidly changing conditions.

As the week continued, challenges have centered around power outages, water supply issues, various shelter concerns, and water/food distribution. Until the rotating outages were ceased on Thursday, it was difficult to determine if outages were due to a localized issue or a rolling outage. Electric crews continue to work around the clock to troubleshoot those locations without

power. The lack of consistent power along with freezing temperatures has also affected our water distribution system. The rotating outages as well as burst pipes have made it difficult to refill our reservoir and maintain adequate pressure in the system. A certain pressure level is required by the Texas Commission on Environment Quality and not meeting that standard is the reason for the boil water notice citywide. Many cities throughout Texas are under the same notice. Now that the rolling outages are hopefully complete and as water crews work non-stop to fix the remaining leaks, this will also be remedied.

One of the largest impacts of the water system outages was the effect it had on the hospital, creating a potential public health crisis. After bringing some of our best minds together with their CEO, solutions were developed that addressed both their potable and non-potable water needs until our distribution system is fully operational again.

A lot of good work has been done in cooperation with community partners. An example of that is the delivery of food to people in need. A local food truck wanted to help and we brought together the resources of Southside Community Center, the Salvation Army, HOME Center and the City to prepare and distribute hundreds of meals throughout the community. The City's relationships with local big-box stores have also allowed us access to food and water that have been distributed to those in need.

The magnitude of this statewide disaster is evident by the number of national headlines it has made, and the effects have been unprecedented. Mr. Lumbreras expressed his pride and appreciation in the way the City organization has stepped up to face this disaster. City employees are working around the clock to make sure our citizens are taken care of, some of them facing issues at their own homes due to these conditions. We have city front-line workers engaged in very non-traditional service delivery during this event and doing what it takes to get the job done. Mr. Lumbreras expressed his gratitude for the steady leadership of Kelly Kistner, Interim Emergency Management Coordinator and Chase Stapp, Director of Public Safety, the Directors and the entire City team for working to identify problems and doing what is needed to find a solution. The City has gotten creative and has collaborated with community partners, and we have worked tirelessly to ensure our residents get through this difficult time.

Ms. Derrick expressed her gratitude to Staff.

Mayor Hughson expressed her gratitude for everything Staff has done during this event and to those in the community who have stepped up to help their neighbors and others in the City.

Council Member Baker expressed his appreciation for the work Staff has done. He asked if this extension of the declaration gives the City the ability, with a little more discretion, to help with homelessness as this is still an issue. Will the City be able to utilize some of these funds for housing needs? Chase Stapp, Director of Public Safety stated yes we can and we have already started doing this. Local partners have helped in sheltering during this time and there are conversations on how to extend this for some additional days.

Council Member Gonzales expressed his appreciation for the work of Staff.

Mayor Hughson also thanked those that have donated during this time.

The motion to approve carried by the following vote:

For: 7 - Mayor Pro Tem Derrick, Mayor Hughson, Council Member Baker, Council Member Gonzales, Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Scott, Council Member Garza and Council Member Gleason

Against: 0

III. Adjournment.

A motion was made by Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Scott, seconded by Council Member Baker, to adjourn the emergency meeting of the San Marcos City Council at 12:22 p.m. The motion carried by the following vote:

For: 7 - Mayor Pro Tem Derrick, Mayor Hughson, Council Member Baker, Council Member Gonzales, Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Scott, Council Member Garza and Council Member Gleason

Against: 0

Tammy K. Cook, Interim City Clerk

Jane Hughson, Mayor