

MINUTES FROM REGULAR MEETING ON JULY 22, 2025

The Government Body of the City of Rio Hondo, Texas met in a Regular Meeting on July 22, 2025 at 6:00 pm in the Commission Chambers at City Hall, with Mayor- Gustavo Olivares Presiding- Present, and Commissioners, Juan Garza- Present, Esteban Bocanegra- Present, Olga Gallegos- Present, Jose Cavazos- Present, and Diana J. Bustamante, Present.

ALSO PRESENT: Lucia Garza, Finance & H.R. Manager; Robert Drinkard - City Attorney,; Julian Longoria, Public Safety Director; Eddie Garcia, Consulting Engineer.

Mayor Gustavo Olivares called the meeting to Order (City Commission) at 6:00 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

UNITED STATES PLEDGE

INVOCATION: Led by Commissioner Diana J. Bustamante-Zavala

Regular Agenda:

Reports by City Commission

The Mayor reported that the roads under construction are moving very fast.

1. **Public Comment Period: Please Note- The Public Comment Period is designated for hearing concerns regarding City of Rio Hondo Public Policy or City of Rio Hondo business that is or is not on the agenda or items listed on the agenda.**

No Public Comments

2. **Consideration and Action on the June 24, 2025 City Commission Meeting Minutes.**

Commissioner Diana Bustamante requested corrections and reviewed the corrections needed with the Commission and staff.

Commissioner Diana Bustamante motioned to approve the minutes with the corrections; Commissioner Juan Garza seconded the motion, and all voted aye and passed unanimously.

3. **Discussion regarding the last date for employee reviews/evaluations by position were made.**

Mrs. Lucia Garza discussed with the Commission the employee evaluation process and the spreadsheet that was presented. The Mayor stated that it is very important to have evaluations in the file, and every employee should be evaluated. The Mayor directed the Human Resources Manager to ensure that all evaluations are done and filed. Commissioner Juan Garza commented that evaluations are important for merit increases, and everyone should be evaluated yearly and should have their evaluations in their personnel file. The City Attorney said evaluations should be for merit raises. The Mayor directed Mrs. Garza to come to the Commission with a report on the evaluation of staff.

4. Consideration and Action to create a City Secretary position or reassign the position.

Commissioner Bocanegra stated that he requested this item be placed on the City Commission agenda because after the June 24, 2025 City Commission meeting, he came in to City Hall to ask for Mr. Medina and noted that there were four Veteran individuals that were waiting to meet with Mr. Medina to discuss possible Annexation of their properties, two ended up leaving; he was not in the office at that time and neither was the Assistant Administrator, so there was no one on the premises that they could meet with on this matter. Commissioner Bocanegra stated that he feels there is redundancy and that if there was a City Secretary (another person) then such individual would have been able to take care of people coming in for any type of concerns. Commissioner Bocanegra also stated that since the City Administrator is also the City Secretary, he can't evaluate himself and added that instead of having other staff preparing the meeting Minutes, there could be an individual specifically assigned to do this. Commissioner Bocanegra stated that he wants to create a position of City Secretary.

Mayor Olivares responded to Commissioner Bocanegra's concern and stated that the reason the Assistant City Administrator's position was created is to assist the City Administrator whenever these types of scenarios came up; whether the City Administrator was not available at that time because he is out on the field, in other meetings, out of town, etc. Mayor Olivares further mentioned that these types of circumstances are bound to happen, but it is important to communicate, especially with the City Administrator. Mayor Olivares asked Mrs. Garza the Finance Manager if there were funds available for this position if it was created as a separate position.

Mrs. Garza responded No; currently, the budget cannot withstand funding another position, especially a non-budgeted position. The Mayor and Commission have already created the position of Assistant City Administrator to assist the City Administrator with any of his responsibilities and duties. Mrs. Garza's recommendation was to keep the positions as they currently are, since no funding is available and other more important positions need to be looked at to keep up with current living standards for employee retention.

City Attorney Robert Drinkard mentioned that the City of Rio Hondo is not Home Ruled, but the law does state that there must be a City Secretary, but it can be the same person that is holding another position; so, it doesn't have to be a separate person. The City Attorney stated that the City Commission already has the responsibility to evaluate the City Secretary and City Administrator and can be done at the same time or separately, since it's one person holding those two positions. The duties of the City Secretary such as the Minutes can be done by other office staff, as delegated by the City Administrator/City Secretary. The City Attorney's recommendation is to place an item on the agenda to discuss and evaluate the position of City Secretary, before deciding to create or reassign the City Secretary position. If so and when instructed, he can write the item with the correct wording.

Commissioner Juan D. Garza and Commissioner Jose Cavazos agreed with the City Attorney to evaluate the position of City Secretary.

Mayor Olivares requested that the City Secretary Job Description be submitted to the Commission, in preparation for the review and evaluation of the City Secretary position.

Commissioner Bocanegra was adamant to bring back this item as is to the City Commission agenda, so he was instructed to send an e-mail to Mayor Olivares as a reminder.

Commissioner Bocanegra made a motion to Table the item and Seconded by Commissioner Garza; Commissioner Gallegos and Commissioner Jose Cavazos voted Aye and Commissioner Bustamante voted Nay; motion carried.

- 5. Consideration and Action on the City Engineer's report on the Parkway Estates Subdivision. Mr. Raul Garcia discussed of process of preliminary plat approval and subdivision approval. The engineer discussed his review of the Parkway Subdivision review and produce a letter and reviewed the letter with the commission. Discussion was had regarding he need for the utilities to be approved by the city before construction. The annexation is request by the owner as part of the subdivision application. The Mayor requested that a report be given at the next City Commission Meeting. No action taken.**
- 6. Consideration and Action to allow the Cameron County Clerk to have a passport fair in the City Center in October 2025.**

Commissioner Diana Bustamante stated that a staff member from District Clerk Laura Perez-Reyes' office had approached her to inquire about having a passport fair at the Rio Hondo Civic Center on October 2025. This would be a Saturday in October 2025 but did not provided with a date yet. She would call the District Clerk's office to find out and follow up on the day.

Commissioner Jose Cavazos motioned to allow the District Clerk to have a passport fair in the city civic center on October 2025; the motion was seconded by Commissioner Esteban Bocanegra and all voted aye and past unanimously.

- 7. Discussion and Status of the Public Safety 2024-2025 City Budgets.**

The Mayor place the item on the agenda for all to understand the Public Safety budgets and be transparent of what is on the budet and what is available in funding. Mrs. Lucia Garza presented the budget. She explained the revenues for police department. The revenues for police department are \$5,500 budget and revenue of 4,223.12 and for the Fire Department \$119,000 budgeted and revenue of \$61,091.89. The Mayor asked a question the question that the City receives only approximately \$89,000. The Mayor clarified how the accounting for

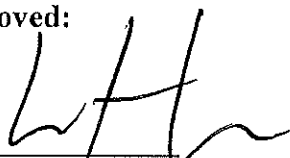
the budget and used the legal fees that will be charged to the Police Department. Mr. Longoria, the Public Safety Officer, stated that he was concerned with the staffing levels. He needs to increase the hourly rate to attract new applicants. All cities pay more than Rio Hondo. The salaries in Precinct 2 is \$41,400. Harlingen Police start \$45,968, Brownsville Police start \$39,000 after probation to \$53,000. Mr. Longoria said that he wants the officer to start at \$20 per hour to \$23 per hour. Mr. Juan Garza requested that he would like to know what small cities pay. He knows that the city could be a transition for new officers out of the academy, which is good. He will support \$20 per hour, but the City can not raise taxes or water rates. Mr. Longoria was invited to the Commission to tour the fire and police departments. Mr. Esteban Bocanegra requested that the chief's ideas be identified with a monetary value. The Mayor asked that the hourly rate be placed on the agenda. Mr. Juan Garza requested what the city is doing to have police officers to patrol. Mr. Longoria explained that the shift has been extended to 20 hours of overtime and mutual aid.

8. Adjournment

Commissioner Olga Gallegos made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Bustamante.

Mayor Olivares adjourned the meeting at 7:54 p.m.

Approved:



Gustavo Olivares, Mayor

Attest:

Ben Medina, Jr. City Administrator