



CITY OF ARCOLA

CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL MINUTES

Arcola City Hall
13222 Highway 6
Arcola, Texas 77583

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2025

CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL MINUTES

6:00 P.M.

CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Veeda V. Williams, PhD

Mayor Veeda V. Williams called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

INVOCATION

Mayor Pro-Tem Greg Abarr

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Council Member Florence Jackson

ROLL CALL

Mayor, Council Members and Administration

QUORUM PRESENT

City Council Members that were present.

Council Member E. Jones; Mayor Pro -Tem G. Abarr; Council Member Fred Burton; Council Member R. Bigby; Mayor Veeda V. Williams

Absent: Council Member Florence Jackson

I. PUBLIC COMMENTS

GENERAL AUDIENCE. Citizens who desire to address the City Council with comments of a general nature will be received at this time. The total amount of time that a member of the public may address the City Council is limited to three (3) minutes, provided that any member of the public who addresses the City Council through a translator is limited to six (6) minutes. In accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act, the City Council is restricted from discussing or taking any action on items not listed on the agenda. It is our policy to have all speakers identify themselves by providing their name and residential address when making comments.

CONSENT AND REGULAR AGENDA ITEM. Citizens who desire to address the City Council, with regard to matters on the Consent Agenda or Regular Agenda will be received either at this time or, if they state at this time that they elect to do so, during the City Council's consideration of the item. The total amount of time that a member of the public may address the City Council on a given item is limited to three (3) minutes, provided that any member of the public who addresses the City Council on a given item through a translator is limited to six (6) minutes. Comments or discussion by the City Council Members will only be

made at the time the agenda item is scheduled for consideration. It is our policy to have all speakers identify themselves by providing their name and residential address when making comments.

- 1) Priscilla T Graham

II. PUBLIC HEARING

A. Public Hearing on the proposed Budget for Fiscal Year 2025-2026

- 1) Council Member F. Burton

Council Member Burton expressed concern about the budget allocation, noting that while funds were allocated to various departments including \$12,000 for photography and website, and \$6,200 annually for uniforms and added money to the summer program, he did not see allocation for street improvements, particularly for Honey Grove which he had inquired about three months prior.

Mayor Williams explained that street improvements were addressed through certificates of obligation that the city obtained over the summer, which are specifically designated for drainage, streets, and other public infrastructure.

Council Member Burton questioned why \$12,000 was allocated for photography and website maintenance. Mayor Williams explained that these funds would help promote the city and that a photographer was utilized last year for the State of the City presentation at the Chamber of Commerce.

Regarding the uniform program, Mayor Williams explained that the service would provide maintenance staff with appropriate professional attire and proper uniforms that are suitable for working in hot weather conditions, noting that currently some staff wear their own clothes while working.

Council Member Burton also questioned the allocation of \$50,000 for equipment. Mayor Pro- Tem Abarr clarified that these funds were budgeted as a contingency for any equipment needs that might arise for the maintenance department.

During the discussion, Council Member Burton stated that he sent information to three individuals, and he was still waiting for a response from them.

Mayor Pro-Tem Abarr responded, clarifying that the City had provided an opportunity for Council Member Burton to meet with City Administrator Annette Goldberg and the bookkeeper to get the necessary information, without having to produce thousands of pieces of paper. Council Member Burton was concerned about seeing an invoice for expenses related to the investigation on him. Council Member Burton stated that no one called him to come in about an appointment; to which Mayor Williams stated that it was said in the last meeting. Mayor Pro-Tem Abarr suggested visiting in person to review records, emphasizing the efficient use of resources. Mayor Williams stated that the city does not have invoices to give out and that they would not provide information on invoices due to it being related to an ongoing investigation.

City Attorney David Olson intervened to redirect the focus back to the budget hearing, reiterating its importance. Dr. Annette Goldberg noted that \$8,000 of the \$12,000 is allocated for the website.

- 2) Mr. Olufusayo- asked for clarification on the proposed 20.34% increase mentioned in budget materials.

B. Public Hearing on the proposed Tax Rate for Fiscal Year 2026

There were no public comments regarding the proposed tax rate.

III. PRESENTATIONS (INFORMATION ONLY)

A. State of the City- *Mayor Veeda. V. Williams, PhD*

This item was moved to the bottom of the agenda before going into Closed Executive Session

IV. TAX RATE ADOPTION ITEMS

A. Discussion and possible action regarding the adoption of the portion of the Tax Rate to fund the debt service of the City for Fiscal Year 2025-2026. *Dr. Annette Goldberg, City Administrator*

Dr. Annette Goldberg, City Administrator, proposed a debt service rate of 0.139755.

Mayor Pro- Tem Abarr made a motion that the city Approve the debt service rate of 0.139755. The motion was seconded by Council Member Jones. The motion Passed unanimously.

Ayes: Council Member E. Jones, Mayor Pro-Tem G. Abarr, Council Member R. Bigby, and Council Member F. Burton

Absent: Council Member F. Jackson Motion carried. 4-0

B. Discussion and possible action regarding the adoption of the portion of the Tax Rate to fund the maintenance and operations of the City for Fiscal Year 2025-2026. *Dr. Annette Goldberg, City Administrator*

Dr. Annette Goldberg, City Administrator, stated that the proposed maintenance and operation tax rate for 2025-2026 is 0.509864.

Mayor Pro- Tem Abarr made a motion that the city Approve the maintenance and operation tax rate of 0.509864. The motion was seconded by Council Member Bigby. The motion Passed unanimously.

Ayes: Council Member E. Jones, Mayor Pro-Tem G. Abarr, Council Member R. Bigby, and Council Member F. Burton

Absent: Council Member F. Jackson Motion carried. 4-0

V. REGULAR AGENDA ITEMS

A. Discussion, Consideration of and Possible Action on the "Petition for Release from ETJ of City of Arcola," a 26.2161-acre tract of land situated in the A.B. Langermann Survey, Abstract No. 456, Fort Bend County, Texas, being more particularly described by metes and bounds on Exhibit A attached hereto and made a part hereof for all purposes (the "Property"). *David Olson, City Attorney*

City Attorney David Olson explained that there were still discrepancies with the metes and bounds description that needed to be worked out with Mr. Patel. He recommended tabling the item until they could clean up the legal description and bring a valid petition to the Council.

Mayor Pro- Tem Abarr made a motion to **Table** the petition for release from the ETJ of the City of Arcola until staff could work out the exact size of the piece of property. The motion was seconded by Council Member Jones. The motion **Passed** unanimously.

Ayes: Council Member E. Jones, Mayor Pro-Tem G. Abarr, Council Member R. Bigby, and Council Member F. Burton

Absent: Council Member F. Jackson Motion carried. 4-0

- B.** Discussion Consideration of and Possible Action to approve the Arcola City Hall landscaping project for an amount not to exceed \$25,000.00 (General Fund). *Mayor Veeda V. Williams, PhD*

Mayor Williams discussed the landscaping project, indicating that she had consulted with the maintenance staff and intended to reach out to the Fort Bend County Master Gardeners project to improve the landscaping in front of City Hall. She also mentioned plans to level the nearby property to ensure safety for community events. She emphasized that the estimated cost, which is not to exceed \$25,000, might end up being less. Mayor Williams explained that the funds for the landscaping project were to come from portions of the funds that were not expended for the parking lot.

Mayor Pro- Tem Abarr made a motion to **Approve** the Arcola landscaping project not to exceed the amount of \$25,000. The motion was seconded by Council Member Jones. The motion **Passed** with the majority in favor and Council Member Burton opposed.

Ayes: Council Member E. Jones, Mayor Pro-Tem G. Abarr, and Council Member R. Bigby

Nay: Council Member F. Burton

Absent: Council Member F. Jackson Motion carried. 3-1

VI. CONTRACTS AND AGREEMENTS

- A.** Discussion Consideration of and Possible Action to approve a contract with Cintas to participate in their Uniform Program for maintenance uniforms for an amount not to exceed \$6,300.00 annually (General Fund). *Mayor Veeda V. Williams, PhD*

Mayor Williams referred to her earlier explanation about the uniform program for maintenance staff. She emphasized that the contract would supply official City of Arcola uniforms, incorporating materials suitable for hot weather conditions. This initiative aims to ensure that maintenance staff present a professional image of the city. Council members generally supported the program as beneficial for city representation.

However, Council Member Burton raised concerns about the allocation of funds for this initiative, questioning why the uniforms, particularly their cleaning, warranted such a budget. He noted that the cost might be an unnecessary expenditure. Mayor Williams countered that the program is not only about aesthetics but also about providing comfort and ease to staff, who often work hard in varying weather conditions. Furthermore, she pointed out that these uniforms could boost morale and foster a sense of pride among the workers.

Council Member Bigby then made a motion to **Approve** the amount of \$6,300 for maintenance uniforms. The motion was seconded by Council Member Jones. The motion **Passed**, with most in favor, though Council Member Murphy and Council Member Burton opposed.

Ayes: Council Member E. Jones, Mayor Pro-Tem G. Abarr, and Council Member R. Bigby

Nay: Council Member F. Burton

Absent: Council Member F. Jackson Motion carried. 3-1

VII. ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

- A. Discussion and possible action regarding AN ORDINANCE APPROVING AND ADOPTING THE CITY OF ARCOLA, TEXAS, GENERAL BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2025-2026; MAKING APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE CITY FOR SUCH YEAR AS REFLECTED IN SAID BUDGET; ESTABLISHING THE PROCEDURE FOR INTRA BUDGET TRANSFERS; AND CONTAINING OTHER PROVISIONS RELATING TO THE SUBJECT. *Dr. Annette Goldberg, City Administrator* [Record Vote]

Dr. Annette Goldberg presented an overview of the proposed 2025-2026 fiscal year budget. Key aspects of the budget included a general fund of \$5,100,927, which represents a 9% increase from the previous year, and anticipated sales tax revenue increased by 8% to \$904,500. The City's taxable value has increased by 2% to \$246,893,527, though the tax rate remains unchanged at 0.649619. Additionally, the City has accumulated total cash and investments of \$13,700,148. The City Administrator also highlighted a 3% cost of living increase for employees, a \$1,000 wellness benefit per employee, and only a 4% increase in health insurance premiums under Blue Cross Blue Shield.

Dr. Goldberg thanked the budget team, including the Mayor, Police Chief Carr, Jennifer Huhn, and Priscilla Graham for their efforts in preparing the comprehensive budget.

During the meeting, there was a question about the use of 4B funds for recreational purposes. Council Member Burton asked when recreational purposes were added to the 4B funding. City Attorney explained that 4B's original purpose was for economic development, but public infrastructure projects and recreational purposes had been authorized additions. It was noted that these inclusions were approved during Council Member Burton's tenure, with authorization by City Council. Additionally, it was clarified that any 4B expenditures would first require approval from the 4B committee and then be brought before City Council for final approval.

Mayor Pro- Tem Abarr made a motion to **Approve** the budget ordinance as presented. The motion was seconded by Council Member Jones. In a record vote: Council Member Bigby - Yes, Mayor Pro- Tem Abarr - Yes, Council Member Jones - Yes, Council Member Burton - Nay. The motion **Passed** with 3 in favor and 1 opposed.

Absent: Council Member F. Jackson Motion carried. 3-1

- B.** Discussion, Consideration of and Possible Action on AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ARCOLA, TEXAS; PROVIDING FOR THE LEVY AND COLLECTION OF AD VALOREM TAXES OF THE CITY OF ARCOLA, TEXAS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2025-2026; PROVIDING THE DATE ON WHICH SUCH AD VALOREM TAXES SHALL BE DUE AND PAYABLE; PROVIDING FOR PENALTY AND INTEREST ON ALL TAXES NOT TIMELY PAID; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; AND, REPEALING ALL OTHER ORDINANCES OR PARTS OF ORDINANCES INCONSISTENT OR IN CONFLICT HERewith. *Dr. Annette Goldberg, City Administrator*

Dr. Annette Goldberg presented the ordinance for the levy and collection of ad valorem taxes, which included the previously approved rates of 0.509864 for maintenance and operations and 0.139755 for debt service.

Mayor Pro- Tem Abarr made a motion to Approve the collection of ad valorem taxes at the rate stated in the ordinance. The motion was seconded by Council Member Jones. In a record vote: Council Member Bigby - Yes, Mayor Pro- Tem Abarr - Yes, Council Member Jones - Yes, Council Member Burton - Yes. The motion Passed unanimously.

Ayes: Council Member E. Jones, Mayor Pro-Tem G. Abarr, Council Member R. Bigby, and Council Member Burton

Absent: Council Member F. Jackson Motion carried. 4-0

- C.** Discussion, Consideration of and Possible Action to approve an Ordinance of the City Council of the City of Arcola, TX, Designating the Fort Bend Herald as the official newspaper of the City of Arcola, TX for the Fiscal Year 2025-2026; Providing for repeal, providing for severability; and providing an effective date. *Ingrid Flornoy, City Secretary*

City Secretary Ingrid Flornoy explained that this was an annual housekeeping matter to designate the official newspaper that the city has been using.

Mayor Pro- Tem Abarr made a motion to Approve the Fort Bend Herald as the official newspaper of the City of Arcola. The motion was seconded by Council Member Jones. The motion Passed unanimously.

Ayes: Council Member E. Jones, Mayor Pro-Tem G. Abarr, Council Member R. Bigby, and Council Member Burton

Absent: Council Member F. Jackson Motion carried. 4-0

X. CITY COUNCIL COMMENTS

Notice is hereby given in accordance with Section 551.0415 of the Texas Government Code, the City Council of the City of Arcola may receive reports about items of community interest from City staff and/or a member of the City Council, but no action or possible action shall be taken or discussed concerning the subject of such report, except as provided by Section 551.042 of the Texas Government Code.

Mayor Veeda Williams, Council Member Evelyn Jones, Mayor Pro-Tem Greg Abarr, Council Member Florence Jackson, Council Member Fred Burton, and Council Member Rosemary Bigby.

Council Comments were moved up before Closed Executive Session

Council Member Bigby commented that the new driveway looked nice and suggested adding shrubbery and a blue stripe in front of City Hall to increase visibility.

Council Member Jones expressed appreciation for the work of the Mayor and Council in moving the city forward and regretted that more citizens don't attend meetings to hear information firsthand.

Council Member Burton responded to Mayor Williams' presentation, expressing disagreement with her characterization of events and suggesting that there were "mistruths" presented by the Mayor and Police Chief.

III. PRESENTATIONS (INFORMATION ONLY)

A. State of the City- *Mayor Veeda. V. Williams, PhD*

Before delivering her State of the City address, Mayor Williams presented a certificate of achievement to Police Chief Carr for her nomination for the US Attorney's Award, thanking her for her service and dedication to the city.

Mayor Williams then addressed the state of the city, emphasizing its solid financial position. She briefly mentioned concerns about divisive local politics and addressed allegations made about an Arcola parking lot incident by presenting video evidence. This evidence was intended to counter claims that she was the aggressor, showing instead that she was subjected to verbal abuse. The Mayor stressed the importance of safeguarding the city's finances and encouraged residents to be more active in governance.

VIII. CLOSED EXECUTIVE SESSION

The City Council will convene into Closed Executive Session as authorized under Section 551.071 of the Texas Government Code for:

- A. Consultation with Attorney.** The city council may consult its attorney about contemplated litigation and matters in which the duty of the City Attorney requires the discussion to be conducted in close executive session.

RECESS: The Mayor recessed the meeting into Closed Executive Session at 7:06 p.m. under Texas Local Government Code, Section 551.087, for the purpose of deliberation regarding Section 551.071 Consultations with Attorney.

PRESENT

All Members of City Council were Present.

Council Member E. Jones; Mayor Pro-Tem G. Abarr; Council Member R. Bigby; Council Member F. Burton; Mayor Veeda Williams; Annette Goldberg, City Administrator; David Olson, City Attorney; and Ingrid Flornoy, City Secretary

IX. COUNCIL ADJOURNS CLOSED EXECUTIVE SESSION AND RECONVENES INTO REGULAR SESSION

- A. Council Members may take possible action on matters discussed in Closed Executive Session. *David Olson, City Attorney*

RECONVENED: The Mayor reconvened into the regular meeting at 7:16p.m. with no action taken after closed executive session.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:16 pm. Motion to **Adjourn** was made by Council Member Bigby and seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Abarr. Motion **Passed** unanimously.

Ayes: Council Member E. Jones, Mayor Pro- Tem G. Abarr, Council Member R. Bigby, Council Member F. Jackson, Council Member F. Burton.

Nays: 0 Motion carried: 5-0

Ingrid Flornoy, City Secretary

