

CARL HARBERT/ *AARON ROCCAFORTE <i>**Mayor Pro-Tem /Council Member, Place 1</i>	DAVID RUTLEDGE <i>Mayor</i>	DANNY HARRINGTON <i>Council Member, Place 4</i>
MIKE REED <i>Council Member, Place 2</i>		TERRI GAUTHIER <i>Council Member, Place 5</i>
TAMMI FISETTE <i>Council Member, Place 3</i>		LUCY FIELDS <i>Mayor Pro-Tem / Council Member, Place 6</i>

OUTGOING COUNCIL MEMBER
****CHANGE IN APPOINTMENT****

CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

CITY OF BRIDGE CITY

May 11, 2021

The City Council of Bridge City met in a meeting on Tuesday, May 11, 2021, at the City Hall of Bridge City, 260 Rachal, Bridge City, Texas.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor David Rutledge called the City Council meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

CITY COUNCIL PRESENT:

Mayor David Rutledge
 Council Member Carl Harbert (Outgoing)
 Council Member Aaron Roccaforte (Incoming)
 Council Member Mike Reed
 Council Member Tammi Fisette
 Council Member Danny Harrington
 Council Member Terri Gauthier
 Mayor Pro-Tem Lucy Fields

CITY STAFF PRESENT:

City Manager Jerry D. Jones
 City Secretary Jeanie McDowell
 Finance Director Karen Morgan
 Chief Paul T. Davis
 Public Works Director Mike Lund
 Utility Superintendent Mike Die
 Municipal Court Judge Bill Dixon
 Police Captain Richard Teague
 Assistant Police Chief Robert Bergeron
 Police Sergeant Jesse Byrd

2. INVOCATION

Following the invocation given by Council Member Fisette.

3. PLEDGE TO THE UNITED STATES FLAG AND THE STATE OF TEXAS FLAG

Mayor Rutledge led in the pledge of allegiance to the United States flag and to the State of Texas flag. At the conclusion of the pledges, Mayor Rutledge thanked everyone for coming to the meeting.

4. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Council Member Gauthier made a motion to approve the agenda, seconded by Council Member Harrington.

With no discussion, Mayor Rutledge called for a vote.

MOTION CARRIED.

Ayes: Mayor Rutledge, Mayor Pro-Tem Fields, Council Members Harbert, Reed, Fisette, Harrington, and Gauthier.

Noes: None.

Absent: None.

5. CANVASS RESULTS OF THE MAY 1, 2021 GENERAL ELECTION

(EL ESCRUTINIO DE LOS RESULTADOS DE LA ELECCIÓN GENERAL DEL 1 DE MAYO DEL 2021)

(a) Council to canvass the results of the Bridge City General Election held on May 1, 2021

(El Concilio escrutinia los resultados de la Elección del 1 de mayo del 2021)

Mayor Rutledge passed out the May 1, 2021 Bridge City General Election canvass (Attachment No. 1) for Council to review.

6. ELECTION RESOLUTION

(RESOLUCION DE ELECCIÓN)

(a) Consideration and possible approval of Resolution No. 2021-10(R) declaring the results of the May 1, 2021 City of Bridge City General Election for Council Members - Places 1, 3, and 5

(La Consideración por el Concilio de la adaptación de la Resolución Número 2021-10(R) declarando los resultados de la Elección General del 1 de mayo del 2021 de la Ciudad de Bridge City de los Miembros del Concilio en los Lugares 1, 3, y 5)

Mayor Rutledge read Resolution No. 2021-10(R), in its entirety, declaring the results of the May 1, 2021 City of Bridge City General Election.

Mayor Pro-Tem Fields made a motion to accept Resolution No. 2021-10(R) declaring the results of the May 1, 2021 City of Bridge City General Election, seconded by Council Member Harrington.

MOTION CARRIED.

Ayes: Mayor Rutledge, Mayor Pro-Tem Fields, Council Members Harbert, Reed, Fisette, Harrington, and Gauthier.

Noes: None.

Absent: None.

7. CONDUCT CEREMONIES FOR COUNCIL MEMBERS

(EL REALIZO DE CEREMONIAS A LOS MIEMBROS DEL CONCILIO)

(a) Presentation of Certificate of Election to Council Members - Places 1, 3, and 5

(Ceremonia de Presentación de Certificados de Elección a los Miembros del Concilio—Lugares 1, 3, y 5)

Mayor Rutledge read and presented the certificates of election to Council Member Aaron Roccaforte, Place 1; Council Member Tammi Fisette, Place 3; and Council Member Terri Gauthier, Place 5, along with his congratulations to everyone.

(b) Oaths of office:

Council Member, Place 1

Council Member, Place 3

Council Member, Place 5

(Juramentos de Oficio:

Miembro del Concilio, Lugar 1

Miembro del Concilio, Lugar 3

Miembro del Concilio, Lugar 5)

Judge Bill Dixon administered the oaths of office to Aaron Roccaforte, Place 1; Tammi Fisette, Place 3; and Terri Gauthier, Place 5. The audience acknowledged the newly sworn-in council members with their applause.

(c) Newly elected officers seated on Council

(Oficiales recién elegidos asentados en el Concilio)

The newly elected officers took their seats on Council. Mayor Rutledge said "Welcome" to Council Member Roccaforte and "Welcome Back" to Council Members Fisette and Gauthier.

(d) Recognition of outgoing Council Member Harbert

(Reconocimiento del Miembro Saliente del Concilio, Miembro Harbert)

Mayor Rutledge presented a plaque to Council Member Harbert. Mayor Rutledge thanked Mr. Harbert on the behalf of the City Council for his service. He said they really enjoyed him being on the City Council. He said they appreciate all his hard work and everything he has done for the City and all of the citizens of Bridge City. The audience acknowledged their thanks with applause.

8. PRESENTATION

(a) Department of Parks and Wildlife Programs and water safety regulation presented to City Council by Raj Ataya, Game Warden

Good evening everyone. Mayor, Council, Staff, Chief and members of the community, I appreciate y'all inviting me to be here. This is our ongoing, every year the Parks and Wildlife reaches out to the community and discuss changes regards to hunting and fishing and mostly around here we talk specifically about water safety. Orange County especially Bridge City is a

huge area where there is boating activity, lots of people are on the water. He said he had some stats to share on that. Last year here locally was the busiest water safety season he has ever seen as a Game Warden. He said his partner, who has been here for 10 years, said it was the busiest he had ever seen. He said it looks like we will start the same year again as a very busy water safety season. He said to give you an example the amount of contacts, this is a rough estimate, between 5 Game Wardens around Orange and Jefferson Counties, we had over 1,000 boat contacts in four months last year. He said it was very successful, it was twice the amount of normal contacts we had in previous years. He said when he says it was successful there were problems on the water, and they did their best to resolve those with enforcement they do. There were 2 reported boat accidents, one with serious bodily injury. He said their goal every year is to make sure that is zero. He said this was not a phenomenon locally, state wide they saw a huge increase in water safety contacts. He said for the whole state of Texas, there were over 130,997 boat compliance checks and that was conducted by around 500 Game Wardens across the State. He said of those 130,997 contacts, that resulted in 523,000 individual contacts on the boats that were checked. He said that is a lot of people on the water. He said Orange County is a part of that, we are a major, major water safety county. He said we have major bodies of water here, in fact five. We have the Neches, the Cow Bayou, Adams Bayou, Sabine River, and the Ship Channel. He said between those five, they are all connected and it really resulted in a lot of contacts. We have a lot of development on Cow Bayou with a new restaurant, creating a lot of opportunity for boaters to come in, and a lot of fishing tournaments. He said last year with COVID was an off year, we believe this year will be busier here. He said they are happy about that, this is very encouraging, first of all we need jobs, so I need people on the water, part of our job is to encourage people to enjoy the public water. He said there's great water here and very easy to navigate, great fishing spots, great recreationally to enjoy, so we encourage people to do that. He said last year was a shock in terms of the number of boats we checked state wide. He said there is negativity that is associated with that, we had some accidents and unfortunate we had some fatalities with those accidents. Last year state-wide there were 286 boat accidents, that was an increase of 67% over the prior year. He said of those 286 accidents, 53 were fatal, that resulted in a number of fatalities of 55, which was an increase of 44%, part of that there were 103 injuries, which was an increase of 58%, and this was a resulting property damage close to \$2.7M, which was at a 34% increase. He said he did not have the exact stat, but he believed that most of the accidents, above 50% had to do with boating while intoxicated. He said that will be the next topic for him, he said we have talked about water safety, he said their big thing they have been focusing on is boating while intoxicated. He said for those of you that are new to boating, you can drink and operate a boat at the same time, that is by law, it's not like driving a car, however, it is still illegal for you to be intoxicated. He said the same level of intoxication that applies for driving while intoxicated also applies for boating while intoxicated. Last year, they really upped their boating while intoxicated enforcement, just in our district they had 18 boating while intoxicated arrest and just over 50 investigations. This was more than 4 times the amount the prior year and this year will be no different. They are really focusing hard on that, he suspects people will still be drinking and that is fine, but you can't be intoxicated. Please if you boat make sure you have designated operators in the boat. If you are going to drink, that will be the risk you will take. If you are drinking, don't be upset if a Game Warden checks you for drinking. They have one primary goal this summer, and it is to make our accidents zero, but here is the problem they have already lost that battle. He said three weeks ago, they had their first boat accident before

summer ever started, they are down by one. Their focus this year is really water safety, and you will see them on the water like you have never seen them before. He said one of the things that is helping them out, of course, is the local community and local support to assist them with that. He said last year, the City Council initiated a new “no wake zone” that is now enforceable by their department. Last year, they stopped over 50 vessels that violated the “no wake zone”. He said most of them they were issued warnings, the “no wake zone” was new last year, they were giving people the opportunity to understand what the “no wake zone” was, what the requirements were, a lot of people ask what is the speed limit, or what is it all based on. He said it was based on your boat going the lowest speed possible to not produce a wake, that is different for each boat. He said their recommendation is to go at head way speed through the “no wake zone”. Head way speed is the minimum speed required to maintain steerage of your vessel. This year will be a little different, the warnings will be less, they will be enforcing it heavily, by writing citations. This is something he wanted everyone to be aware of as we move with that. With all that said this is great news, there is a lot of traffic increasing, their department saw this county’s increase in water safety traffic. He said with some various funds, they were able to get new equipment, that is here or on the way and some of you have seen our brand new boat, troll boat, we have a brand new state of the art troll boat, it is the fastest boat the department has in the region right now. It goes very fast, if you are on a jet ski, we are able to catch up to you. Speaking of jet ski’s, he said jet ski’s are fun to drive but they are high performance machines. He said one of the most common violations they encounter is the 50 foot rule. If anyone has a jet ski and they talk about it all the time, everyone knows what the 50 foot rule is, but if you are on a jet ski and you are within 50 feet of another boat, or object, on the water, manmade object, pier, bridge piling you have to be at head way speed on your jet ski. He said this is the most violation they write. He said this is like no life jackets, it is black and white, you committed and you will get a ticket. He said all the major points, the intersection points, they know what the distances are, they have it on their GPS, so if you pass one of those point, they know you violated the 50 foot rule. Game Warden Ataya said enjoy the waters this year, we are here to promote people on the boat, this will be a great summer and it will be another hot summer. He said he had a couple of things he wanted to talk about, the department has some brand new equipment, not necessary related to water safety but to hurricane response coming towards the end of the year. He said the department was issued a grant to get a brand new air boat that will be assigned to Orange County. He said the air boat will be used for local patrol, but mostly to respond to weather incidents, like tropical storm and hurricane here locally. He said they do get deployed across the State. He said they are also getting a brand new surface drive boat at the end of the year, which would not be quite like an air boat but used for the same purposes. He said that was the end of the water safety talk, but hunting rules nothing has changed since last year. He said there is a hot topic for fishing, the flounder limit is changing. He said this November and the first two weeks of December the flounder limit, the daily bag limit drop to zero. Don’t catch any flounder, the Department has advertised it, we have had a number of meetings, the department was suppose to do it last year. He said the department delayed by one year and they did change the size limit on the flounder from 14 to 15 inches. The reason the department does this is they are having a drop in the flounder population. He said in November is the flounder’s propagation month. He said they have to allow them the time to come in shore to reproduce. He said this will also be a black and white thing. He said they will issue mostly civil restitution and it is more expensive than a ticket. He said the Game Wardens are not about writing tickets, we are all about

protecting the resources. Sometimes the only way you can encourage people to follow the law is to write the ticket. He said that is unfortunately something they have to do. He said that concludes his discussion and thanked the City Council for having him speak.

A citizen asked Game Warden Ataya what happened to the handbooks that was given out with the hunting and fishing licenses, you can't get them anymore.

Game Warden Ataya said unfortunately last year with COVID happening, they lost one of the major sponsors who fronted the cost for printing the books. He said he did not think they were doing it again this year, however they have one of the best apps if you have an iPhone or Android phone in the Country with regards to hunting, fishing and boating. If you download Texas Outdoor Annual App, you can link your license to it, so you won't have to physically carry your license unless you are involved in a tagging engagement. He said if you are a hunter probably, you will still need your tags. It is great and has a lot of fish identification on it, so if you catch a fish and you don't know what it is you can look in that app and it will help to identify it. He said it has all the daily bag limits and the sizes. It is in the app store the icon says Texas OA and it is more informative than the book. He said he has collected every book since he became a Game Warden and years before. He said he has a stack and hope they become more valuable.

Mr. Carl Harbert said he launched and fishes Louisiana waters, how would you determine if he has flounder.

Game Warden Ataya said that is pretty easy, in Texas wherever you land your boat is the rule you have to follow, it does not matter where you catch the fish. He said if you land in Louisiana and you drive back over you will be fine. If you land in Texas and you have flounder in November, you will be in violation and that goes for all fish. Louisiana has some very progressive limits when it comes to their fish sizes. He said if anyone has any questions, his phone number is 409-433-8025, it is public information, call him anytime.

9. REPORTS & COMMENTS

(a) City Manager

City Manager Jerry Jones had the following report for Council:

1. Workshop – Tuesday, May 18, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. he said all the various projects the City is working on will be covered during the meeting.
2. He said when leaving the meeting make sure you go out the entrance because the City is installing the generator and there is a trench cut in the cement on the exit side of the building. Please go out the way you came in.

(b) City Council

Mayor Pro-Tem Aaron Roccaforte thanked everyone and he said he looked forward to working with the citizens, the City Council and the City in general.

Council Member Mike Reed said he would like to welcome the new Council Members.

Council Member Tammi Fisette said she definitely looked forward to being on the Council again for another term. She welcomed Mr. Roccaforte and said she looked forward to working with

him. Council Member Fisette told Council Member Gauthier she was glad that she was back. She told Mr. Harbert that it has been fun and she has enjoyed it and thanked for his service. She thanked Mr. Prosperie and Mr. Nickum for their interest and she said she appreciates them and hope to see them at every meeting. She said she would like to thank the citizens for their faith and it is definitely a blessing to be back here. She said she would do anything in the world for the employees and she is here for them.

Council Member Fisette asked Mr. Jones if the City has advertised and do we have any applications for the HR position she hears is about to come open.

Mr. Jones said we have not advertised, yet.

Council Member Fisette asked Mr. Jones if he knew when that would happen.

Mr. Jones said he was writing up some specks on the job and he would have it in the next week or so.

Council Member Fisette asked if he could get them and have them trained, and if Mitzi would have time to train the new person.

Mr. Jones said yes.

Council Member Danny Harrington said he had nothing to report, but he would like to congratulate Council Member Roccaforte, Council Member Fisette, and Council Member Gauthier for being on the Council. He welcomed Aaron Roccaforte aboard. He thanked Carl, for being a great mentor, giving him a lot of good advice and he appreciated his time.

Council Member Terri Gauthier said she is grateful and thankful for being re-elected to serve the City again. She said she looks forward for any opportunity to contribute good decisions for the City, which is a blessing. She said it strengthens the City and gives a good future to children as they grow and become a part of the City. She welcomed Aaron and Tammi. She said she was excited about Council Member Fisette being back on the Council again. She also told Carl Harbert to have a good vacation and she said she thinks he is looking forward to having some free time. She said she wanted to give some updates. The EDC, which she put on social media, but wanted to remind everyone if they knew of anyone with a small business tomorrow is the virtual small business summit. The SBA with Dow is actually sponsoring it, but the SBA will be a part of it and helping with any questions small businesses may have on how to recover on some of the hardships we, have been through this past year. She said if they have questions on how to grow their business or anything about their business, the EDC is wanting small businesses to connect to the summit tomorrow morning. She said she has it on the City's Facebook page and on several groups on social media. She said it was tomorrow morning at 9:00 a.m. and if you have any other questions or have a business that would want or need to hear what they have to say, it will be all things business. She said Regional Planning did this last year, they had the Southeast Texas Stand Down 2021. She said if you know of anyone homeless or any of the City's disabled veterans that are really struggling, please let them know the Regional Planning Commission is putting together a special event at the Bob Bower Civic Center, Friday, May 14, 2021 from 9 a.m. -2 p.m.. She said medical screening will be done, help with legal services, lunch will be provided, and they would be there to help in any way they can to aide people that are struggling and homeless to get the help they need. She said last year, this was a great event that helped a lot of people. If you know of anyone, please get the word out. She said she wanted to make sure the City Council was updated.

Council Member Lucy Fields said thank you to Mr. Harbert, it has been great working with him. She said have a great vacation and thanked him for all his service to the City. She said she wanted to welcome Aaron Roccaforte, and it would be exciting to work with new members again, and Tammi Fisette and Terri Gauthier as well. She said it would be good for the City and she is looking forward to the workshop next week, and hopefully the Council can come up with some good ideas to help better the City. She said she looking forward to working with all the Council Members this next year.

(c) Mayor David Rutledge report:

1. Thanked all the successful candidates.
2. Thanked all the candidates. He said everyone that steps up for any office and puts their name out there and wants to do what they can for the City he can't say enough to say thank you. He encouraged the citizens to continue to participate in voting and more than they have in the past. He said everyone wanting serve, please step up.

(d) City Staff

None.

There were no comments from City staff.

10. CITIZEN COMMENTS

Kenneth Prosperie
819 Sunnyside

Mr. Prosperie said they wanted to thank Carl Harbert for his dedicated service as their Council Member. He said Carl has worked really hard for the citizens of Bridge City. He said Carl went the extra mile by watching over the flushing of our drinking water system, and by being out in the middle of the night when our new filtration system was put into operation while most were in bed sleeping. He said Carl always watched to make sure the City was fiscally responsible with the citizens tax dollars, and always asked questions which is what a good council person should always do. He said Carl has always worked hard for the citizens making the City a better place for everyone. He said we all knew Carl was on the council for all the right reasons and we all appreciate him for that. He said also, Carl spends his time volunteering to help the City Court. He said the you're the best Carl, job well done. He said on another note, this is a reminder to our City Council and Mayor, Bridge City is down to two wells and the Council needs to stay really focused on this issue before it turns into a bad problem for the Citizens of Bridge City. He said if we lose water pressure for any type of reason or even lose another well, just like the other two wells your citizens may have to boil water to make it safe to use. He said they have been talking about these wells for the last two years. He said he has kept some paper work where it was actually brought up, they were going to put a well on Sunnyside and it is going on two years. He said they are starting to hear about it again, so the main thing is they need to make sure the water is safe to drink and the ditches drain properly. When a citizen comes and tells you they have a problem, don't just start automatically saying he is a trouble

maker. He said everyone needs to stop that and just say what is going on and ask questions and try to get it corrected for them. He said he appreciated it.

11. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION & POSSIBLE ACTION

(a) *Consideration and possible action to approve the April 20, 2021 City Council meeting minutes*

Council Member Harrington made a motion to approve the April 20, 2021 City Council Meeting minutes, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Fields.

With no changes, discussion, or alterations, Mayor Rutledge called for a vote.

MOTION CARRIED.

Ayes: Mayor Rutledge, Mayor Pro-Tem Fields, Council Members Roccaforte, Reed, Fisette, Harrington, and Gauthier.

Noes: None.

Absent: None.

(b) *Consideration and possible action to appoint new Mayor Pro-Tem to the City Council, as required by the City Charter, Section 3.05*

Mayor Rutledge explained that the normal procedure is to go from year to year starting at Place 1 and going to Place 6. Ms. Fields was the Mayor Pro-Tem this past year as Place 6. Mayor Rutledge said he would now entertain a motion.

Council Member Gauthier made a motion to appoint Aaron Roccaforte as new Mayor Pro-tem, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Fields.

With no other nominations or discussion, Mayor Rutledge called for a vote.

MOTION CARRIED.

Ayes: Mayor Rutledge, Mayor Pro-Tem Fields, Council Members Roccaforte, Reed, Fisette, Harrington, and Gauthier.

Noes: None.

Absent: None.

(d) *Consideration and possible action to appoint a City Council Liaison to the City Planning and Zoning Commission*

Mayor Rutledge said the City has a lot of work to do and they are trying to spread this out and everyone get a little piece of it. He said Council Member Fisette has been serving as the P&Z Liaison for 3 years now. He said will entertain a motion.

Council Member Fields made a motion to appoint Council Member Harrington as City Council Liaison to the Planning and Zoning Commission, seconded by Council Member Gauthier.

With no other nominations or discussion, Mayor Rutledge called for a vote.

MOTION CARRIED.

Ayes: Mayor Rutledge, Mayor Pro-Tem Roccaforte, Council Members Reed, Fisette, Harrington, Gauthier, and Fields.

Noes: None.

Absent: None.

(d) Consideration and possible action to appoint the City Collective Bargaining Committee for the 2021-2022 Bridge City Police Association contract negotiations

Mayor Rutledge said he would like to keep another procedure and he thinks the Mayor Pro-Tem should be a part of this and will need one other person as well. He said he was looking over the list as who had been serving on it for a while and Lucy had been called on for a number of times, Council Member Harbert had served on it and Council Member Harrington had served on it. He asked Council Member Reed if he had served on it.

Council Member Reed said he has not, but he will be out of town probably during negotiations. Mayor Rutledge asked Council Member Fisette if she had ever served on the Police Bargaining Committee.

Council Member Fisette said she served when she was first elected to Council.

Mayor Rutledge asked Council Member Fisette if she would like to serve on it again.

Council Member Fisette said she would love to.

Council Member Gauthier made a motion to appoint Mayor Pro-Tem Roccaforte and Council Member Fisette to the City Collective Bargaining Committee for the 2021-2022 Bridge City Police Association contract negotiations, seconded by Council Member Reed.

With no other nominations or discussion, Mayor Rutledge called for a vote.

MOTION CARRIED.

Ayes: Mayor Rutledge, Mayor Pro-Tem Roccaforte, Council Members Reed, Fisette, Harrington, Gauthier, and Fields.

Noes: None.

Absent: None.

12. ADJOURN

Council Member Harrington made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:41 p.m., seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Roccaforte.

MOTION CARRIED.

Ayes: Mayor Rutledge, Mayor Pro-Tem Roccaforte, Council Members Reed, Fissette, Harrington, Gauthier, and Fields.

Noes: None.

Absent: None.

David Rutledge, Mayor

ATTEST:

Jeanie McDowell, City Secretary