City of Grand Saline
City Council Meeting
203 N. E. Pacific Street, Grand Saline, Tx 75140
AUGUST 19, 2025
6:00 p.m.

1. **Call To Order and Announce a Quorum Is/Is Not Present**
   ✓ Tommy Davis
   ✓Scott Gorby
   ✓ Amanda Greer, Mayor Pro Tempore
   ✓Brian Milliorn
   ✓Kathy Smith, Mayor
   ✓Scott Snodgrass

   6:00 p.m. Mayor called meeting to order.
   All council members were present.
   Quorum established.

2. Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance to the American and Texas Flag

   Methodist Church Pastor, Dr. Kelly Krone, provided the invocation. The mayor led the pledges of allegiance.

3. Administer the Constitutional Oath of Office and Officer's Statement of Anti-Bribery for City Administrator, Sonya Bishop, and City Secretary, Julie Fisher.

   Mayor administered oaths of office to Sonya Bishop and Julie Fisher.

4. Approve the minutes of previous meetings - Special Council Meeting on July 22, 2025, and the Town Hall Meeting held August 12, 2025.

   Motion to approve minutes from meeting of July 22, 2025, and August 12, 2025, by Tommy Davis. Second by Scott Gorby. Motion Carries. All in favor.

5. Approve Monthly Financial Reports for the month of July 2025.

   City Administrator, Sonya Bishop, shared that she did not have access to financial in time to provide them to council for review.

   Motion to table the review of financials until next month by Brian Milliorn. Second by Tommy Davis. Motion Carries. All in favor.

6. Departmental Reports

A. EDC/Main Street	D. Fire Marshal	G. Library
B. Salt Palace	E. Municipal Court	H. Police Dept./Code Enforcement
C. Fire Dept/EMS	F. Public Works	I. Parks & Recreation

- **EDC** - Owen Tiner began meeting stating the council had his report and to let him know. The mayor requested that he share a synopsis of his report for the listeners of the meeting. They have been busy with budget analysis, website development, and Salt Palace. Will demonstrate website with individual council members. EDC wants to bring the city along. Council asked about site licensing and cost. The initial set up is $6,100, then $8,400. Owen stated that if the city participates, this will be 'split 4 ways, of which the EDC picks up three.' EDC will provide 100% of year one. This is the same website platform used by Mineola. Tiner shared that he built that one too. Tiner has spoken to downtown owners about properties. Sales tax is up 8%. Main Street Q2 Report complete. Murial on Trax wall has experienced a break in progress due to maternity leave. Electrical issues have been resolved at Main Street Building. Councilman Milliorn would like a list of buildings that are under contract, in negotiation, or sales pending. Tiner said that lips were sealed to him and that he does not share until names are signed.
- **Salt Palace** – Tomas King shared that there was much activity. Lots of visitors from out of state and out of town. They have provided presentations to the Rotary Club in Lindale to talk about salt and will go to Athens next month for the same reason. Most guests are friends and family of residents. They bring them down to experience the salt house. Advertise in many travel sites. The only tourist destination in Grand Saline is the Salt Palace and its house of salt. Good funds from souvenirs.
- **Fire Dept./EMS** – Jeremy Barker shared that it was a very busy month. Usually run 60 but ran 91. Call volume was 440, have had 14 runs the first few days of this month.
  ESD2 – working on budget. We run Christus because Grand Saline is part of the ESD2 District.
- **Fire Marshall** – Chris Barajas shared that the complaints regarding the nursing home and the city have been resolved. Looking over Eco 360 to make sure in code. Assisting fire dept for VZ Co. with out of city limits fire. Review reporting software.
- **Municipal Court** – No oral report provided.
- **Public Works** – Joel McCraw shared that sewer plant has been the focus of the work this month mainly working on the racetrack. Spring Street had two sewer line collapses that were repaired. Q2 DLQOR submitted. Councilman Milliorn asked where we were with the repairs. McCraw said 'done until the next shaft breaks." The mayor asked about the grant funds. McCraw shared that the $750K grant was not for this project. It is for headworks to replace old parts.
- **Library** – Brandi Collard shared that the library has been learning and learning. Completed a summer reading program with almost 400 kids, had 1,000 visits, and programs are going well. Ballet has been a success.
- **Police Dept** – Jeremy Barker shared that the PD staff will transition on August 21 (new payroll period) to their permanent shifts. They are 100% staffed. Garza will return to 100% code enforcement Friday. The Countywide Radio project is being tested. It is money well spent as it expands our communication capabilities. GSHS was a mandatory test site, and it went flawlessly. Councilman Davis commended PD for morning patrol as it has effectively slowed traffic down.

- **Parks** – Dustin Mason shared that the park is in off season and preparing for next year. Business as usual. Park had a clean-up day Sunday.

7. City Administrator's Report
   - Sonya Bishop, City Administrator, shared that the transition of leadership has experienced many hardships including not having access to programs for the first week or more. She would like to have a Budget Workshop on August 26 as the city is far behind. Stated that the mayor has taken the lead on the budget and she just received a copy Tuesday, August 12 so has not had time to adjust it. She is open to any time on that date. Bishop shared that TMRS has been set up and penalty fees waived. Bishop would like to have a public hearing and special meeting September 11 to vote on tax rate. Bishop will meet with each department to determine budget needs. Bishop shared that *Fundview* has held the city hostage as it requires multiple training before providing access. Mayor echoed that it has been a 'nightmare.' Office is fully staffed but one is on maternity leave.

8. Public Participation:

Pursuant to Texas Government Code section 551.007, members of the public may speak on an agenda item during the Public Participation section of the meeting or at the time the agenda item is called for discussion by the mayor. Speakers shall be given three (3) minutes to speak. A speaker needing a translator and/or interpreter may be given six (6) minutes to speak. Criticism of city employees or staff shall be allowed, but only after all administrative remedies have been exhausted regarding any such complaint giving rise to the criticism. Those wishing to address the Council regarding an item not on the agenda must be a citizen, property owner or business owner of Grand Saline. Comments on such non-agenda items shall be limited to three minutes. The Council will not comment on or take any action on items not on the agenda; however, the Council may choose to place the item on a future agenda.

Citizen Rex White addressed the council to discuss the Salt Palace. He shared that although he is a member of the Salt Museum Board, these are his independent thoughts, and he is speaking for himself and no others. Mr. White is completely opposed to the sale of or relocation of the Salt Palace on Highway 80. He shares that the Salt Palace is an iconic representation of Grand SALINE (Salt!) – it is beyond itself, has longevity in the community, continued relevance, well regarded, has 2600+ visitors a year, has been in current location since 1975 (50 years) and in its current state 30 years. Invites council to go visit – they will be pleased with what they find. Moving away from the red light is not good and will impact number of guests. Leave it alone! It works! Let it continue to be an icon.

9. <u>The Following Will Be Discussed, Approved/Accepted/Rejected, Or Tabled for Further Study:</u>

a. Discuss and consider action to approve an amendment of names on all TEX POOL accounts to add Sonya Bishop, City Administrator, and Julie Fisher, City Secretary to the accounts and remove names of Kathy Smith, Mayor, and Beverely Pearson, former City Secretary, from the accounts.

Motion to add Sonya Bishop, City Administrator, and Julie Fisher, City Secretary to the accounts and remove names of Kathy Smith, Mayor, and Beverely Pearson, former City Secretary, from the accounts made by Amanda Greer. Second by Scott Gorby.
Motion Carries. All in favor.

b. **Discuss and consider action to approve the allowance of Sonya Bishop, City Administrator, and Julie Fisher, City Secretary to open/create checking accounts with City National Bank for the purpose of receiving and distributing Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds and other grants as necessary.**

Mayor explained that the grant is required to keep funds separated and recommends a separate account.

Motion to allowance of Sonya Bishop, City Administrator, and Julie Fisher, City Secretary to open/create checking accounts with City National Bank for the purpose of receiving and distributing Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds made by Scott Gorby. Second by Tommy Davis.
Motion Carries. All in favor.

c. **Discuss and consider action on 2020 Sewer Plant Renovation Grant – Project 73854 – TWDB, approved March 2020 - $400,000 interest-free, certificate of obligation, $40,000 per year payment. Jacob Martin is the engineering firm utilized for this grant.**
Mayor shared that a grant for $400K has existed with the Texas Water Development Board since 2020. It is costing the city $40K per year but nothing has happened, and the city has received no benefit of the grant. Attorney Blake Armstrong states that the city has two options: (1) continue to push for movement and action to fulfill the grant, or (2) formally cancel the grant and ask for all money back. Mayor shared that they submitted plan and it was not approved by the Water Development Board. Attorney recommended that the grant be cancelled and asked to return all the money. Councilman Snodgrass asked if the city was time limited on expending the funds of the grant were they received. Mayor shared they can't expend until approve plans and they have not even had an approval in 5 years. Regarding the push of action for the grant, the grant writer, Jacob Martin, Mayor Kathy Smith, and Attorney Blake Armstrong have made direct written contract with the Water Development Board with zero response. Attorney says will ask for 100% of city's money back. Councilman Snodgrass clarifies that doing so will put the city back to square one regarding sewer plant renovation. Mayor shares there are better plans out there – example, the current $750K grant only requires $37,500 from city. Councilman Milliorn asked if there is documentation of any work begin performed by previous employees regarding this grant. There is not. City Administrator, Sonya Bishop, says backing out of the grant will be frowned upon and may negatively impact the city in future grant considerations.

Motion to **table** and explore options made by Tommy Davis. Second by Scott Gorby.
Motion Carries. All in favor.

d. **Discuss and consider action to open and award bids for High Street infrastructure and road repairs.**

Bids received from three vendors:
-Woodrum Construction $300,757.40
-AreaWide Paving $184,630
-Texana Land & Asphalt $222,204.00

Discussion of bids. AreaWide completed 1803. Traditionally great work and lowest bid. Culvers and ditches will be handled in house. No timelines for work completion provided. Joel McCraw will explore that timeline. Says will grade out worst areas of Main Street until the company can begin new renovation of street.
Mayor reminded that there is an overall budget limit of $250K. Mr. Davis had hoped there would be enough remaining funds to also address Wolfe Street.

Motion to accept the bid of AreaWide Paving made by Tommy Davis. Second by Scott Gorby.
Motion Carries. All in favor.

e. **Discuss and consider action to adopt an updated organizational chart for the city of Grand Saline.**

Councilman Milliorn asked what changes had been made from last chart. City Administrator Bishop shared that due to controversy over Municipal Clerk and authority to hire, all clerks were listed under the City Secretary and office manager, Julie Fisher. She will have direct oversight of all clerks. They may still take direction from the Judge but hire, fire, reprimand, etc. will be the responsibility of the city as the clerk's position is an employee of the city. Court clerks are only one of the responsibilities. Attorney Blake Armstrong echoed the authorities. Fisher shared that attorney had been consulted and advised this was common practice. Attorney Armstrong agreed. Attorney Armstrong shared that the city of Grand Saline is not a court of record (meaning court reporter on hand reporting every word). He represents 26 cities and none of them are.

Motion to approve the new organization chart made by Brian Milliorn. Second by Tommy Davis.
Motion Carries. All in favor.

f. **Discuss and consider action to approve the reimbursement of $450 to Kathy Smith for the budget worksheet for the city of Grand Saline from Parks Reconciliation Services, LLC.**

Mayor shared that in her efforts to complete the budget she purchased a budget worksheet from Parks Reconciliation Services. It is not an actual reimbursement, but rather a bill to be paid. Shared that she would pay for it personally but asked because it is for the sole purpose of city work.

Motion to approve the payment of $450 for the budget worksheet made by Tommy Davis. Second by Amanda Greer.
Motion Carries. All in favor.

g. **Review and discuss the water rate, schedule a workshop, and inclusion with the budget.**

Mayor shared that there is not time to include this matter in the budget as it needs a workshop. Things need to be taken into consideration and movement made within the budget to reduce the expenses allocated to water. Would like to see additional funds added for future needs rather than taking out loans.

Motion to **table** made by Scott Gorby. Second by Tommy Davis.
Motion Carries. All in favor.

h. **Discuss and consider action to amendment to Ordinance Number 2008-11 changing the deposit refund of water deposits from 18 months to 12 months for accounts in good standing.**

Mayor shares that the existing ordinance contains conflicting information and is out of date. Ordinance says to refund deposits but that has not been made and if it says it, we need to do it.

Councilmen Milliorn and Davis share that the deposits should not be returned at all. That is what is in place to protect the city should people leave and not pay the last bill. Should only be returned when accounts are cancelled in good standing.

Councilman Milliorn asked how many would get refunds? Mayor shared there are no dates of service in the system and it was passed in 2008 but people have never got refunds because council was told 20 years but that is not what the ordinance says. Citizen in audience shared they received their deposit back years ago. City Secretary, Fisher, clarified that records likely exist in archives but only have access to what has been input into the system so determining who has/has not received refunds is not readily available.

Mayor says ordinance in conflict with practice and needs to get money back since that's what ordinance says. Milliorn asked why not keep the deposit forever so if they move out city is covered. Why return the deposit at all? Davis agrees.

Attorney says council can amend the language of the current ordinance and change the language OR they can follow the ordinance. It is up to the council.

T Davis restates city should not return the deposit until account is cancelled.
Mayor asked if deposits can be put in interest bearing account. Attorney said yes as long as interest is returned to the citizen.

Mayor says need citizen committee for input after budget completed. Need lots of input.

Motion to **table** to provide Julie Fisher and Sonya Bishop time to investigate made by Scott Gorby. Second by Tommy Davis.
Motion Carries. All in favor.

i. **Discuss and consider adopting a Budget Amendment for the 2024-2025 fiscal year to reflect the transfer of funds approved on June 24, 2025, Ordinance 2025-113 in the amount of $257,204.25.**

Motion amend budget to reflect transfer of $257,204.25 made by Brian Milliorn. Second by Scott Snodgrass.
Motion Carries. All in favor.

j. **Discuss and consider action to rescind Ordinance Number 2017-107: licensing of dogs and cats; collar and tag and provide an optional service of pet registration with same fee schedule.**

- Mayor recommends registration/licensing of pets be optional.
- Councilman Tommy Davis believes it is a waste of time because no one does it and no one pays and cats are just going to jump the fence anyway.
- Councilman Gorby is in favor of keeping the requirement to register
- Councilwoman Greer says the ordinance has been in place for year and is not being followed. Spirit and intent of ordinance not effective.
- Councilman Milliorn shared that he has lived here forever and never knew it was a rule.
- Police Chief Barker questioned about processes.
    - Barker shares that even if registered the pets often do not have tags to match and locate the owner. Has neutral opinion but does acknowledge that PD does not actively patrol and check tags due to more pressing matters.
- Councilman Gorby ask about cost to city for picking up a dog and taking to Mineola.
    - Barker says $40 plus fuel and administrative time. Says they charge $60 to reconnection fee to owners to cover costs. They also require registration and vaccination to return when pet detained.
- Councilman Davis – might work for a dog, but you can't control a cat.
- Mayor states that ordinances should be enforced and this is not enforceable.
- Councilman Gorby defends registration and hypothesized dog attack on child.
    - Attorney clarifies that different legal issues exist and the animal at large principle does not pertain to registrations.
- Citizen opinion – "Chip them all"
- Gorby reiterates that we should require the registration and force people to pay and enforce the vaccination, registration, etc.
- Councilman Milliorn acknowledges that the council is clearly in disagreement. He would make it optional.
- Milliorn: Optional and if caught require registration.
- Gorby: Require all
    - Organizing Dog Day at Park for low income spay and neutering. Promote event and have city registration available.
- Snodgrass: Agree with Milliorn. Not feasible to enforce. Falls to owner responsibility. Many won't do it.
- Greer: People don't know.
- Barker: It's honor system.

- Citizen, Dustin Mason, consider what is the goal of the ordinance? What is enforcement? Does citizen receive ticket for not following law?
- Utilize website and water bills to communicate registration expectation.

Motion to amend Ordinance 2017-107 to make pet registration voluntary and if a recovered animal is unregistered, registration will be required at a fee of $10 plus recovery fines made by Scott Snodgrass.

Gorby – how can you fine something that is not required? Members are referencing the reuniting with owner fees.

Second by Amanda Greer.
Motion Carries 4:1.
In favor: Snodgrass, Milliorn, Greer, Davis. Opposed: Gorby.

Councilman Milliorn request that city still advertise ability to register animals and publicize the benefits.

k. **Discuss and consider action allowance of Sonya Bishop, City Administrator, and Julie Fisher, City Secretary to subscribe to and create a YouTube account for the purpose of live feeds and streaming meetings, town halls, and matters of public interest.**

Councilwoman Greer requests that council consider You Tube channel because she is currently using personal account for streaming. Fisher shares that You Tube is currently less than $15 per month for a business account.

Motion to have Sonya Bishop, City Administrator, and Julie Fisher, City Secretary subscribe to and create a YouTube account for the city made by Tommy Davis. Second by Scott Gorby.
Motion Carries. All in favor.

l. **Executive Session –**
   i. **Pursuant to §551.072 (Deliberation Regarding Real Estate), council may discuss next steps for all matters pertaining to the Salt Museum, Salt Museum Board, and potential sale, relocation, and/or reorganization.**

Council retired to executive session at 8:14 p.m.
Council returns from the executive session at 9:09 p.m.

Upon return discussion is made pertaining to 101 & 103 Main Street.
City Administrator, Sonya Bishop, shared that deliberation item is not on agenda.
Attorney Blake Armstrong said it is allowable.
Councilwoman Greer request that the parties invited to executive session put their intentions in writing. Council discusses ramifications of following through with items discussed,

Motion to offer a new one-year lease for 103 Main Street, excluding the front 40 feet, and renegotiate the termination of lease for 101 Main Street made by Amanda Greer. Second by Scott Gorby.
Motion Carries. All in favor.

10. **Council Comments/Future Agenda Items:** _____

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11. **Adjourn**

Motion to adjourn at 9:24 p.m. made by Scott Gorby. Second by Tommy Davis.
Motion Carries. All in favor.

Executive Session – The City Council reserves the right to adjourn into executive session to discuss any of the matters listed in the agenda, as authorized by Texas Government Code Sections 551.071 (Consultation with Attorney), 551.072 (Deliberations about Real Property), 551.073 (Deliberations about Gifts & Donations), 551.074 (Personnel Matters), 551.076 (Deliberations Regarding Security Devices) or 551.087 (Deliberations Regarding Economic Development Negotiations).

Agenda items may not necessarily be considered in the order that they appear. Regarding any item, Council may take various actions, including but not limited to rescheduling an item in its entirety or for particular action at a future date or time.

In compliance with the American with Disabilities act, the City of Grand Saline will provide for reasonable accommodations for persons attending City Council meetings. Requests should be received 24 hours prior to the meeting. Please contact Julie Fisher, City Secretary, and 903-962-3122.

CERTIFICATION

I, the undersigned authority, do hereby certify that the above Notice of Meeting is a true and correct copy and that I posted a true and correct copy of said notice on the outside bulletin board of the Grand Saline City Hall, was place convenient and readily accessible to the general public at all times, and said notice was posted by August 13, 2025, 2025, 4:30 pm and will remain so posted continuously for at least 72 hours preceding the scheduled time of said meeting in accordance with Chapter 551 of the Texas Government Code.

Julie Fisher
Julie Fisher, City Secretary

Kathy Smith
Kathy Smith, Mayor

CITY OF GRAND SALINE TEXAS