

## **MINUTES FROM A SPECIAL MEETING ON August 12, 2025**

**The Government Body of the City of Rio Hondo, Texas met in a Special Meeting on August 12, 2025 at 6:00 pm in the Commission Chambers at City Hall, with Mayor- Gustavo Olivares Presiding- Present, Mayor, Present and Commissioners, Juan Garza- ABSENT, Diana Bustamante-Zavala – Present, Esteban Bocanegra- Absent, Olga Gallegos- Present, and Jose Cavazos- Present**

**ALSO PRESENT: Ben Medina - City Administrator, Lucy Garza – Finance Director, Robert Drinkard - City Attorney, Chief Longoria, Officer Perez, Assistant Fire Chief Arnold, Parks Supervisor – Aaron Martinez, PW Director – Murl Kemmerling, Osvaldo Garcia, Mr. Betancourt for Wrecking Crew Jams, Mr. Alaniz, Mr. Juan Bujanos**

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Call meeting to Order (Mayor) at 6:00 pm

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

UNITED STATES PLEDGE

INVOCATION: led by Commissioner Bustamante

Regular Agenda:

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 COMMENT**

2. Consideration and action on the May 30, 2025, July 11, 2025, July 15, 2025 and July 22, 2025 City Commission Minutes.

**Commissioner Bustamante made a motion to approve the Minutes from May 30, 2025, July 11, 2025, July 15, 2025 and July 22, 2025 with corrections on July 22, 2025 Item #6. Commissioner Gallegos seconded the motion, all voted “aye” to approve; motion carried.**

3. Presentation on the status of the Bridge Fest Festivities,

**Mr. Betancourt from Wrecking Crew Jams reported to the commission that Bridgefest will be held on November 28, 2025 (Black Friday). Bridgefest will be held on both sides of the river which will include the Spotted Sea Trout Park. Tractors & trailers will be used as a shuttle service. Festivities will begin at 11 am on both sides of the river. They will end at 7 pm on City Side and on Park side they will end at midnight. Event will be live streamed by Midnight via RGV Photo & Drones. The**

event will be advertised on streaming platforms such as Netflix, Hulu, HBO Max, Disney Plus, and streaming services around the world. Confirmed bands to date are: Ruben Garza y su Conjunto, Highway 281, La Zuerte Band, Regresso, and pending confirmation is the Blaze Brothers. Bridgefest will also have a Kiddie Zone with inflatables, obstacle courses for young adults, Jurassic RGV Dinosaur presentation, baby crawl race and Toddler Foot Race. The Civic Center will be converted to an 80's arcade which will host arcade tournaments. There will also be live wrestling, flag football, street basketball, strongman haybale and tractor tire toss competitions, battle of the bands, and wildlife tourism initiative which will include Texas Parks and Wildlife, Texas State Birding Center, and Gladys Porter Zoo. Festivities will end with Fireworks at Midnight. Fee to enter festival will be \$20. Vendors will be charged \$150 free for Rio Hondo Citizens.

4. Presentation of a plaque to Mr. Murl Kemmerling, Public Works Director, for his retirement from the City of Rio Hondo.

City presented Murl with a plaque for his 7 years of service. Murl addressed the commission stating he worked for East Rio Hondo - 24 years , Primera - 10 years, and City of Rio Hondo - 7 years. Mayor Olivares and City Administrator Ben Medina thanked Murl for his years of service.

5. Consideration and Action naming Mr. Osvaldo Garcia as the interim Public Works Director.

Osvaldo Garcia address the commissioners stating he has been with City of Rio Hondo for 8 years working under Murl. He stated that 80% of the time he spends at Water & Sewer plant the other 20% includes mowing and animal control.

Mayor asked Mr. Garcia what could he do to improve how the city is running right now with the staff and equipment he currently has.

Mr. Garcia stated he would need to look at his budget but help is definitely needed at water and sewer plant.

Mayor stated that he should not to expect to be told what to do on a daily basis that we need to act when we know something needs fixing.

Commissioner Bocanegra added that if appointed and he isn't happy with the culture then change it with accountability.

**Commissioner Cavazos asked if this was on a temporary trial basis because to his understanding we do not have a Public Works Director position; what we have is Water Operator and Wastewater Operator.**

**Mr. Medina stated that was correct but under TCEQ's recommendation we need to separate the duties from Public Works and Water & Wastewater Operations. So that is why we are doing this on a trial basis to separate the duties. Mr. Medina added also that Mr. Garcia does not hold a license for Water Operator and per TCEQ he cannot be at the Water Plant without it. This interim position will be for 90 days.**

**Commissioner Cavazos made a motion to appoint Osvaldo Garcia as interim Public Works Director. Commissioner Bocanegra seconded the motion, all voted "aye" to approve; motion carried.**

6. **Consideration and Action on a Proclamation celebrating the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley.**

**Mr. Medina stated that UTRGV reached out to City of Rio Hondo to pass this Proclamation in support of their 10<sup>th</sup> year Anniversary.**

**Commissioner Bocanegra made a motion to approve the Proclamation for the Celebration of UTRGV's 10<sup>th</sup> year anniversary. Commissioner Bustamante seconded the motion, all voted "aye" to approve; motion carried.**

7. **Status Report on the Public Safety Department regarding staff and equipment needs.**

**Chief Longoria reported that we currently have 3 full time officers plus 2 more will be coming on board for a total of 5 which will leave 1 more position to fill. Mr. Longoria is running background check on the 6<sup>th</sup> candidate. Per Chief Longoria will should be fully staffed in one week. We have 2 reserves and 2 more will be coming soon. As far as the Fire Department goes we have 18 volunteers and half of those we have acquired in the past 2 weeks. Mr. Longoria introduced Officer Perez, Jared – top responding volunteer, and Assistant Chief Arnold.**

**Chief Longoria has been updating policies and obtaining some equipment that is needed. Chief Longoria has been working closely with Mr. Medina. Chief Longoria stated that he is working on getting a vehicle donated.**

**Mayor Olivares asked for PD to map the locations of all the fire hydrants throughout the City. Per Chief Longoria they are already working on it. Mayor wants all the ones that are not working to be either covered or colored in black and to start painting all the working ones.**

8. **Consideration and Action readjusting the Police Officer base salary to \$20 per hour.**

**Mr. Medina explained to the council that at present time we pay \$311,161.12 in salaries for a year including fringe benefits at an hourly rate at \$17**

**at \$20 an hour it would increase \$344,747. 92 we 4 payperiods remaining for this fiscal year. If we change the pay rate to \$20 per hour it would be an increase of about to \$3000 to \$4000.**

**Commissioner Bocanegra asked what is expected for the upcoming years as far as salary increases. Chief Longoria replied that he would like to see a 3% annual increase but he also knows the situation and before he asks he has to show results.**

**Chief Longoria asked the commission he would like to go up to \$23 if possible for some positions. Mayor Olivares to work on the numbers with Mr. Medina and bring this back to the commission for the new Fiscal Year.**

**Commissioner Cavazos made a motion to readjusting the base salary for Police Officers from \$17 to \$20. Commissioner Gallegos seconded the motion, all voted "aye" to approve; motion carried.**

9. **Status Report on the Street Reconstruction and Lighting Replacement Program.**

**Mr. Medina reported that Mira Mar has been paved. On Kindinger they are doing the base, once that is done they are moving South to Harrold St. They are also doing the ditches and pipes. They continue removing the asphalt and should be finished in the next couple of weeks.**

**For the Lighting Project Juan Bujanos, from J & D Engineer was present. Mr. Medina stated that we finally got provision to start buying the lights. We will be switching out lights at City Hall, Police Dept, Fire Dept, Library, Event Center, and Senior Center. Civic Center will be getting new insulation and the size of the windows will be reduced. Mr. Bujanos added that the doors at Civic Center will also be replaced.**

**Project should start within 3 weeks.**

10. Consideration and Action to redesign the Heywood Street stormwater project to the secondary outfall.

**Per Mr. Medina City was going to use the outfall from Mr. Serna's property. The City had an agreement with him but Mr. Serna wants more money which the City does not have plus he wants to change the location of the pipe, therefore this outfall is no longer feasible. City will need to use alternate route which is going North on N. Arroyo to the secondary outfall where Bates and Arroyo meet or the ditch that is East of Town through Robert Garza.**

**Commissioner Bocanegra made a motion to redesign the Heywood Street stormwater project to the secondary outfall. Commissioner Cavazos seconded the motion, all voted "aye" to approve; motion carried.**

11. Consideration and Action accepting the letter of voluntary annexation of Rio Hondo Park Block 35, 1 acre , and Rio Hondo Park Block 35, 4 acres, from Miguel N. Alaniz.

**Mr. Medina stated that before finalizing annexation Mr. Alaniz needs to write a letter stating he is voluntarily annexing.**

**Per Mr. Drinkard the letter is not acceptable. The letter is not sufficient. The letter has to be in a petition format, it also needs to state if the property will be used for agricultural purpose. Mr. Drinkard stated this letter is not sufficient. There is a process that starts with a petition, a resolution and ordinance will have to be passed, an agreement reached with the services that will be provided. This is all part of a subdivision plat which is outside city limits within the ETJ. City will provide sewer service and East Rio Hondo will service the water. Per Mr. Drinkard there needs to be a Public Hearing.**

**ITEM WAS TABLED**

**Commissioner Bocanegra made a motion to table this item. Commissioner Cavazos seconded the motion, all voted "aye" to approve; motion carried.**

12. Discussion and Consideration of the Property Tax Rate Worksheet required by the Property Tax Code Sec. 26.04(b).

Mr. Medina reported on past property tax values as follows:

PROPERTY TAX VALUES				
	2022	2023	2024	2025
	\$62,981,098	\$72,879,634	\$81,692,932	\$95,290,314
ADOPTED TAX RATE	0.812207	0.812207	0.804012	0.804012

PROPOSED TAX RATE		
PROPERTY VALUE	\$	95,290,314.00
RATE		
X		0.8040
	=	\$ 76,613,412.46
	÷	100
	=	\$ 766,134.12
TAX RESOURCE DEBT	\$	(137,779.00)
-		
	\$	628,355.12

Per Mr. Medina the City will publish on the newspaper that taxes will increase.  
Mayor suggested having a budget workshop.

Commissioner Cavazos made a motion to approve the Tax Rate Worksheet as required by

**the Property Tax Doce Sec. 26.04 (b). Commissioner Bocanegra seconded the motion, all voted “aye” to approve; motion carried.**

13. Presentation of Property Annexation Processes in Texas.

**Mr. Drinkard presented process for annexation. Mr. Drinkard stated since we are General Law the only way for annexation is voluntary. There needs to be a petition, draft a resolution, decided what services will be provided, have a public hearing, then we pass an ordinance. There has to be an ETJ and it has to be voluntary.**

**Commissioner Cavazos stated that NINOS Headstart wants to be annexed.**

14. Adjournment.

**Commissioner Gallegos made a motion to adjourn at 7:45 pm. Commissioner Bocanegra seconded the motion, all voted “aye” to approve; motion carried.**

Approved:



Gustavo Olivares, Mayor

Date: 8/27/2025

Attest:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Ben Medina, City Administrator

Date: \_\_\_\_\_