



# The City of West University Place

*A Neighborhood City*

## CITY COUNCIL

Bob Higley, Mayor  
Kevin Trautner, Mayor Pro Tem  
John P. Barnes, Councilmember  
Lauri Lankford, Councilmember  
Ed Sobash, Councilmember

## STAFF

David J. Beach, City Manager  
Scott Bounds, City Attorney, Olson and Olson  
Thelma Gilliam, City Secretary

## CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

The City Council of the City of West University Place, Texas, **met via Zoom** in a workshop and regular meeting on **Monday, April 26, 2021**, beginning at **5:30 p.m.** due to social distancing guidelines suggested by the CDC in light of the Novel Coronavirus (COVID 19).

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### WORKSHOP (5:30 p.m.)

#### 1. Call Workshop to Order/Roll Call

Mayor Higley called the virtual meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. Mayor Pro Tem Trautner and Councilmembers Barnes, Lankford and Sobash were all present.

Staff present were City Manager Beach, City Attorney Bounds, City Secretary Gilliam, and Public Works Barrera, Assistant to the City Manager Thompson.

Also in attendance were Richard Weatherly, Kendall Ryan and Bailey Keller with consultants Freese and Nichols.

#### 2. Drinking Water Capacity and Efficiency Study

Matters related to the City's final presentation regarding the drinking water capacity and efficiency study. *Recommended Action: Discuss and take any desired action. Mr. Gerardo Barrera, Public Works Director*

Richard Weatherly with Freese and Nichols gave a presentation summarizing the Water Assessment study, which included:

- Field Testing
- Developed Distribution System Model
- Analyzed Modeling Hydraulic Results
- Phased Improvement Recommendations
  - Partnering with City Staff and City Engineer (IDS) to develop CIP

### Summary of Deliverables

- Water System Assessment Technical Memorandum (Draft submitted – under review)
- Calibrated Water System Model (for the City to use as a tool in the future)
- City staff and IDS to work toward the Capital Improvement Plan using the output of the Study.

### **Options for Level of Service**

- Full System Improvements
  - Independent of service disruptions from City of Houston (Self Reliance)
  - Reduce likelihood of water facility failure
  - Add system redundancy
  - Maintain regulatory compliance
  - Plan for future water demands
- No System Improvements
  - Subject to service disruptions from the City of Houston
  - Infrastructure failure as facilities continue to age
  - Failure to maintain regulatory compliance

### **System Analysis Summary – Key Takeaways**

- Autonomy/Resiliency
  - If Houston surface water supply is offline, West University does not have enough well capacity to meet TCEQ supply requirements
  - Without Milton Water Plant, the City would not meet TCEQ requirements for supply, pumping, and pressure
  - Water system pressures would fall below regulatory limits under any demand conditions if Bellaire EST or Wakeforest EST it taken offline
  - If desired service level is to be self-reliant, third well would need to be considered
- Real Estate
  - The Bellaire EST site has property and regulatory constraints for new tank and/or well
- Rehab/Useful Life Considerations
  - Facilities are reaching the end of their useful life, increasing the risk of system failure
    - Bellaire Elevated Storage Tank – 86 years old
    - Milton Water Plant – 64 years old
    - Wakeforest Water Plant – 30 years old
- Regulatory Requirements
  - Water system pressures approach regulatory limits under existing peak summer water demands
  - Water demands are projected to increase as private residences development

### **Draft Facility Recommendations (In order of necessary sequence)**

- A. Bellaire Elevated Storage Tank Replacement
  - Construct a new elevated storage tank (up to 750,000 gallons) to replace aging Bellaire Tank
  - Site constraints to construct any size replacement tank
  - Conduct siting study to relocate Bellaire EST
  - TCEQ requirements not met with Bellaire EST offline under summer demand conditions
- B. New Water Plant
  - West U cannot supply current max day (July-Sept) water demands during a City of Houston water service interruption

- New water plant would provide resiliency against interruption in service at Milton or Wakeforest and would allow Milton to be taken offline for full rehab
- Conduct siting study to select new water plant location
- New 1,500 gpm well, 3 MG ground storage, 6,500 gpm firm distribution pumping

C. Milton Water Plant Rehab and Improvements

- Facility is critical to system operations
- Conduct full water plant rehabilitation
- Replace (2) ground storage tanks
- Replace (4) booster pumps and motors with VFDs

D. Wakeforest Water Plant Rehabilitation and Improvements

- Conduct full water plant rehabilitation
- Install flush valve on surface water interconnect
- Install generator and transfer switch
- Replace (2) booster pumps and motors with VFDs
- Upsize 12-inch distribution line to 16-inches

There were questions and answers during and after the presentation by Mr. Shelton.

Regarding the Bellaire Storage Tank requirement, Mayor Pro Tem Trautner asked if the Bellaire Elevated Storage Tank was there before the Wastewater Treatment Plant and if so are any of the regulations grandfathered with respect to the tower at that site. He also asked if the City could do some overall reconstruction of that tower so that it is effectively new but somehow falls under the regulation of existing.

Mr. Shelton responded that he believes the elevated tower was there before the wastewater treatment plant and the grandfathering part does work if the tower stays at that site, but he does not recommend it due to minimum space and the unlikelihood of getting the required variance.

With respect to Recommendations A and B, Councilmember Barnes asked if there is already a sense of site size where the tanks would be situated or if that would be determined from the site study. Mr. Shelton said Kimley-Horn would look at finding around half an acre sites for the new elevated storage tank site and 1 to 1 and a half acres for the new water plant.

Councilmember Barnes asked if there are limits how far outside the City limits these plants can be placed. City Manager Beach said 1/8 of a mile is preferred, but not more than a half mile. In respect to how the Wakeforest plant is outside the City, City Manager Beach confirmed that it is a little more than half a mile outside the City.

Councilmember Lankord asked in replacing the Bellaire tank is there a requirement that it has to be located on the same side of town. Mr. Shelton said the south side is better, but it could be on the north side but with different piping improvements.

Councilmember Barnes asked with respect to replacement of distribution line for the Wakeforest facility, does the City anticipate having to acquire additional easement. Public Works Director Barrera said, yes, the City would require an easement from Houston.

**Draft Water Line Renewal Recommendation**

- Coordinate 2-inch and 4-inch water line upsizing with planned roadway improvements, which will help to increase water pressure and available fire flows.

- Replacement and upsizing of cast iron water lines is highest priority

City Manager Beach noted that one of the deficient lines (from Bissonnet to Amherst) is being replaced in coordination with the Buffalo Speedway project.

### General Water System Recommendations

- American Water Infrastructure Act (AWIA) Tier 3 (Recent Mandate)
  - Risk and Resiliency Assessment Due June 30, 2021 (currently underway)
  - Emergency Response Plan Due December 30, 2021 (currently underway)
- Lead and Copper Rule compliance (Upcoming Mandate) – Deadline September 16, 2024\* (planned compliance prior to deadline)
  - \*Under review by EPA

### Next Steps

- Develop water system Capital Improvement Plan
- Conduct preliminary engineering for new elevated storage tank
  - Detailed design, bid, and construction phase to follow
- Conduct preliminary engineering of third water plant
  - If level of service is to be self-reliant during City of Houston service interruptions
- New generator and transfer switch for Wakeforest Water Plant
- Conduct critical needs assessment of Milton and Wakeforest Water Plants
  - Evaluate conduction of pumps, tanks, valves, etc. at water plants to prioritize improvements

Councilmember Sobash asked Mr. Shelton if in the analysis did Kimley-Horn look at Southside Place and its water and how there might be a strategic alignment with Southside Place and West U. Public Works Director Barrera said staff did not because they are two separate systems and their (Southside) capacity is a little bit less and does not know if Southside will have the means and method to share with West U.

Councilmember Sobash said this is a 60-year venture so it seems like a good opportunity to think about aligning strategically with Southside Place when approaching the engineering studies. Public Works Director Barrera said there used to be an interconnect with Southside Place up until 2003 or 2004, but not any longer and so the systems are now running independently. City Manager Beach said staff could look into this and have discussions with Southside Place.

City Manager Beach said this is the very beginning of looking at the City's overall water system. He said from the workshop staff will come back with recommendations on how to move forward. He also said staff will come back at the second meeting in May for City Council to accept the study.

### 3. Adjourn Workshop

At 6:15 p.m., Councilmember Lankford moved to adjourn the workshop. Councilmember Sobash seconded the motion. **MOTION PASSED.** Higley adjourned the workshop.

**Ayes:** Higley, Trautner, Barnes, Lankford, Sobash

**Noes:** None  
**Absent:** None

*A copy of the workshop audio in its entirety is on the City's website or contact the City Secretary's office for a copy of the audio and/or the presentation.*

#### **REGULAR MEETING (6:30 p.m.)**

##### **4. Call Regular Meeting to Order/Roll Call**

Mayor Higley called the virtual meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Mayor Pro Tem Trautner and Councilmembers Barnes, Lankford and Sobash were all present.

Staff present were City Manager Beach, City Secretary Gilliam, City Attorney Bounds, Public Works Director Barrera, Assistant to the City Manager Thompson, Finance Director DuBose, Police Chief Walker, and Fire Chief Taylor.

Also in attendance were Dustin Qualls and Victoria Mota with consultants TEI and Mike Shelton and Mike Mortuary with consultants Kimley-Horn.

##### **5. Pledge of Allegiance**

Councilmember Lankford led the Pledge.

##### **6. Public Comments**

This is an opportunity for citizens to speak to the Council relating to agenda and non-agenda items.

**Regina and David Nolan**, 4001 Tennyson, thanked council for performing a traffic study and said that she and her neighbors support reduction of the speed limit from 30 to 25 mph on Wesleyan and other streets that the traffic study indicated would create greater safety in the neighborhood.

**David Cole**, 4104 Cason, spoke to say he objects to the proposed primary change in the speed limit from 30 mph to 25 mph and stated his reasons, such as associated costs and confusion to drivers. He said he prefers that PD concentrate on criminal activity instead of drivers trying to figure out the speed limit.

**Eddie Matthews**, 5906 Fordham, spoke to say he agrees that road and safety is important, but the problem with the TIE study and recommendation is that it focuses solely on speed and not the other factors that can cause accidents.

**Ann Furse**, 6430 Wakeforest, spoke in support of reducing the speed limit to 25mph on residential streets and thanked Council for commissioning the study and being proactive.

**Richard Cole**, 2904 Sunset, spoke against reducing the speed limit to 25mph because he feels there is no justification for the reduction.

##### **7. Citywide Speed and Safety Plan Ordinance**

Matters related to an ordinance approving the Citywide Speed and Safety Plan. *Recommended Action: Approve the ordinance adopting the proposed amendments to Chapter 46, Article II that adds Section 46-47.01 to the Code of Ordinances on the first of two readings. Mr. Gerardo Barrera Public Works Director*

Public Works Director Barrera stated that based on the April 12, 2021, workshop and review of data resulting from the study, the City Engineer's recommendation is to reduce the speed limit from 30 mph to 25 mph for the majority of the streets, excluding Buffalo Speedway, which will remain at 30 mph and the 4100 and 4200 blocks of Bissonnet that will remain at 35 mph. Mr. Barrera said most of the other streets that were identified as major arterials or collectors would be reduced to 25 mph. He also said those streets currently marked at 20 mph around parks and school zones will remain at 20 mph.

City Attorney Bounds spoke to say that at the time he wrote the ordinance, which is included in the agenda packet, it was his understanding that all the streets that the 25 mph zone was applied to would be two-lane, undivided streets. He said since drafting the ordinance, there has been at least one street brought to his attention that has a small median, so his recommendation is to pass the ordinance drafted, deleting the two references to "two-lanes undivided" in the caption of the ordinance and in Section 2 of the ordinance.

Mayor Pro Tem Trautner moved to adopt the ordinance decreasing the speed limit to 25 mph with the revisions proposed by the city attorney. Councilmember Barnes seconded the motion.

Before there was a vote on the motion, Councilmember Sobash clarified with staff that the draft ordinance includes changing mph from 30 mph to 25 mph on Weslayan.

There was a vote on the motion. **MOTION PASSED.**

**Ayes:** Higley, Trautner, Barnes, Lankford, Sobash  
**Noes:** None  
**Absent:** None

**8. Award Preliminary Engineering Report (PER) for Effluent Water Reclamation Project**

Matters related to awarding PER for the Effluent Water Reclamation Project. *Recommended Action: Award contract to complete the Preliminary Engineering Report for the Effluent Water Reclamation Project to Kimley-Horn and authorize the City Manager to execute the contract. Mr. Gerardo Barrera, Public Works Director*

Public Works Director Barrera presented and said after workshops with Council and discussions related to the Effluent Water Reclamation Project, staff is moving forward with the next phase, which is to request that Council award a Preliminary Engineering Report for the project.

Councilmember Sobash said he thinks this is very exciting and a big step for the City. He said it is a lot of work and takes a long time, but is a positive, revenue-generating project that will live on.

Councilmember Lankford said she thinks it is a great idea. She said, however, in the workshop it was stated that the City wanted to get the end-user locked in and involved in the financing. She said is there a way to get the potential end-user locked in at this point or is it too early.

Public Works Director Barrera said in speaking with the end-user, they are interested in a long-term agreement and are committed to entering into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). He said he will speak with the City Attorney regarding the parameters of a MOU.

Mayor Higley asked if Council decides to approve the funds for a PER and then work on an MOU is that feasible. City Manager Beach said the PER is to just remove variables so that the City can get an MOU wrapped up quickly. He said the PER does not construct anything but rather lessen the number of variables, help refine costs, determine what it will take to get to the end user, and what the return will be on the investment to the rate payer in West U, which will help set the fee needed to

recoup costs. He said this is the logical next step that puts the City in a better position when sitting at the table.

Mayor Higley asked City Attorney Bounds if the City could legally move forward if this passes with thoughts on the MOU. City Attorney Bounds responded that the City could move forward on an agreement or the City could hold this agreement up pending a MOU. He said it is up to Council how it wants to proceed.

Councilmember Sobash moved to approve the contract contingent upon an MOU with a potential partner. **Motion died due to lack of a second.**

Councilmember Lankford said she likes the idea of the contract being contingent on having an MOU.

Councilmember Barnes confirmed with City Manager Beach that there is only one potential end-user identified. Councilmember Barnes said the profit-generating aspect of this depends upon participation of that end-user so, apart from the basic environmental sustainability aspect, the financial benefit to West U residents is itself contingent upon that end-user's participation. He said so it would make sense to secure the end-users participation at least to the extent of having an MOU in place prior to jumping into the cost of a PER. City Manager Beach said that's Council's prerogative.

Mayor Pro Tem Trautner said if the PER is to determine the return on the investment, should not the City know its own numbers before asking the end-user to commit.

Councilmember Barnes said maybe what is needed is a Letter of Intent so there is formalized understanding that both parties are moving forward together without getting into actual numbers and essential terms. Mayor Pro Tem Trautner agreed.

City Manager Beach said if the Council wants to move forward with an MOU, staff would move forward to get an MOU in place, which, as asked by Mayor Pro Tem Trautner, would not commit the City to any particular price.

Mayor Pro Tem Trautner said if it is non-binding and vague, why would Council not just move forward on the study. Councilmember Barnes said he thinks there is value to having something in writing, whether a Letter of Intent or an MOU.

Mayor Higley said if the City is in search of an MOU or Letter of Intent will that significantly slow up the project. The City's, Engineer Mike Shelton, said he does not think so if they can talk to the end-user in the next 15-30 days. He said there are items that will be done in the PER that may contribute to the end-users comfort with an MOU, but it will be up to the end-user to tell the City.

Councilmember Sobash moved to approve the preliminary engineering study on the water effluence with the contingency of an MOU or a Letter of Intent from the end user. Councilmember Lankford seconded the motion. **MOTION PASSED.**

**Ayes:** Higley, Trautner, Barnes, Lankford, Sobash  
**Noes:** None  
**Absent:** None

**9. COVID-19**

Matters related to COVID-19. *Recommended Action: Discuss and take any desired action. Mr. Aaron Taylor, Fire Chief and Emergency Management Coordinator*

Chief Taylor reported:

- Over the last month, very little change in COVID hospitalization rate and positivity rates in the state.
- Rate of fatalities have continued to decrease.
- Texas Medical Center ICU statutses is reporting 7.9 percent capacity.
- Harris County Public Health data indicates West U to have 583 total confirmed cases, 9 active cases, 571 recovered cases, and 0-5 range for fatalities (with doing the math, 3)
- Vaccine data indicates that 37 percent of Texas have received at least the first dose of the vaccine and 25.3 percent have been fully vaccinated
- Harris County data shows that 62% of the seniors in Harris County are fully vaccinated
- As of last Friday, Johnson and Johnson vaccine had been suspended but is now administering it again
- Starting to see where vaccine supply is actually greater than number of people seeking the vaccine

#### 10. Consent Agenda

All Consent Agenda items listed are considered to be routine by the City Council and will be enacted by one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a Council member requests in which event the item will be removed from the Consent Agenda and considered in its normal sequence on the agenda.

##### A. City Council Minutes

Approve Minutes of the regular meeting of April 12, 2021.

##### B. Zoning Quarterly Investment Report

Matters related to accepting the City's Quarterly Investment Report. *Recommended Action: Accept the City's March 2021 Quarterly Investment Report.*

Councilmember Barnes moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Mayor Pro Tem Trautner seconded the motion. **MOTION PASSED.**

**Ayes:** Higley, Trautner, Barnes, Lankford, Sobash  
**Noes:** None  
**Absent:** None

#### 11. Adjourn Regular Meeting

At 7:20 p.m., Mayor Pro Tem Trautner moved to adjourn the meeting. Councilmember Barnes seconded the motion. **MOTION PASSED.**

**Ayes:** Higley, Trautner, Barnes, Lankford, Sobash  
**Noes:** None  
**Absent:** None

