



CITY OF JAMAICA BEACH

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CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

**August 24, 2023
6:00 P.M.**

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS:

Mayor Sharon Bower called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm

The following Council Members were present:

*Mayor Sharon Bower
Mayor Pro Tem Gil Madray
Alderswoman Lorraine Jones
Alderman David Welch
Alderman Sherwood Green*

The following Council Members were absent:

Alderman Russell Rupertus

The following staff were present:

*Lieutenant – Mark Posey
Finance Clerk - Ester Abrego
Water Clerk – Tina Sifuentes*

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE U.S. AND TEXAS FLAGS

SPECIAL PRESENTATION: None

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- **Paul Wendt:** Understands from previous budget workshop that the council wants to raise taxes as much as possible without citizen voting. All appraisals have gone up, and he does not understand why additional money is needed when the maximum rate charged not should generate enough revenue to cover projects.
- **Al Ayers:** Would like to discuss banning alcohol on the beach. Stated the City of Galveston is trying to close beaches to parking, alcohol has already been banned at the state park and all the beaches to the west. He believes if we ban alcohol on the beach, it will be more family friendly. Understands police cannot check all cups but believes that once fines are issued, it should take care of itself. He says it will help keep beach clean.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Mayor Sharon Bower stated Jamaica Beach will sponsor the Polar Plunge in January 2024.

REPORTS FROM DIRECTORS, POLICE, AND FIRE:

- Chief of Police, Garivey - Report attached – Lieutenant Posey spoke on the reserve program. He began in Jamaica Beach as a reserve, moved to part time, then full time, and is not a Lieutenant. 3 new officers were recently sworn in and have specific job duties.

Officer Ericson comes with a background in evidence collection and management and will assist Corporal Seurattan with evidence in the police department. Officer Siemek, Martinez, and Himburg will help with patrol, which will help when a full-time officer is out, we will not have to pay a part time officer to fill in. Officer Clayton is a TCOLE instructor, and other departments can pay to receive training. Officer Analize has a background in grant writing and will assist in grants for the city.

- Director of Operations, Quintero - Report attached – No questions were asked.
- Fire Chief, Baden - No report

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Mayor Sharon Bower presented the minutes for July 27, 2023, for approval.

*Motion made by Mayor Pro Tem Madray to **approve**, seconded by Alderwoman Jones*

VOTE

4 AYES (Green, Welch, Jones, Madray)

0 NAYS

0 ABSTAIN

MOTION PASSED

ALDERMAN REPORTS:

Mayor Pro Tem Madray: Bayside Lift Station 7 project is on track to be completed within the next three weeks with minimal disturbance and inconvenience to citizens. Kept fenced off for safety.

Alderman Green: No report.

Alderwoman Jones: I attended our Jamaica Beach Police Department fundraiser last weekend. It was well attended, and everyone had fun watching the officers getting dunked in the water dunking machine. Even Mayor Bower took a turn and raised several hundred dollars by taking the plunge. I want to thank our police officers and the Bistro for organizing this city event. I hope we can do this again next year. I would like to know how much money was raised and what the department is planning to use the money for. I'm looking forward to the First Annual Citizens Police Academy. Classes Begin September 12, 2023. I have already signed up. The Galveston County Community Emergency Response Team: CERT Academy will be starting September 15th. I plan on being there for that too. I have already taken the training, but it will be a good refresher. And Chief, I want to thank you for sharing the Police Reports every month in the agenda packets. Many tell me that they feel better informed about the work our officers are doing to protect and serve our city. A few weeks ago, there was talk on social media about the marina light not working again. I contacted Rob, our Director of Operations, and let him know. Yesterday, it was posted on the city FB page that the marina light had been fixed. I also contacted Mr. Quintero about some water leaks reported in the city and water meter covers that are missing. I noticed that the water meter cover has been replaced, thank you, but I've heard nothing back about the leaks. If you could let me know when the leaks are fixed, I would appreciate it. I noticed that the main ditch and ditches near the city pool have been cleaned out and the weeds removed. They haven't looked this good in years. The corner of Jolly Roger and Buccaneer ditches have been cleaned out too. Jack Jordan, who lived at that corner asked the city for years to clean out the ditch in front of his home. Jack would be so happy to see that it was finally done. Many have told me that our city is looking better than it has been in a long time, but we still have some work to do. And Mayor, I appreciate the work. I have a magnet on my fridge that talks about housework. I am going to change the saying on it too. "City maintenance is something no one notices unless it isn't done." I hope we can continue keeping Jamaica Beach beautiful and include more projects and better enforcement of ordinances. At the direction of Mayor Bower who has been busy with the budget, I spoke to FEMA, The Salvation Army, State Senator Mayes Middleton's office, Representative Terri Leo Wilson's office, and Judge Mark Henry's office. The mayor's idea is to be pro-active to remind them, if needed, that our city is offering city hall again like we did after Ike, to be a command post for the west end of the island in the event of a hurricane or a disaster event. Also, with permission from Mayor Bower, I have invited Sally Bakko, who is on the Governor's committee for the dune and beach projects, to come to the Council and explain the upcoming projects. Ms. Bakko has suggested a date and I emailed the mayor with that information. Last, I asked Mayor Bower if I could monitor her and Ester Abrego working on the budget for the next year. I feel more

informed and understand the budget better than I ever have. I can't tell you how much I appreciate watching the process and watching you both work. I appreciate the many hours and effort invested in creating the budget. Jamaica Beach Hardware offered to be a drop-off point for made-in-the-USA flags that need to be retired. We can use the stars for Stars for Troops and then have the stripes retired as always. Our Stars for Troops has now shared over 5,000 stars with Veterans, Active Military, and 1st Responders.

Alderman Welch: Agrees with Alderwoman Jones and believe the city looks great after being her for 23 years. This is due to city workers and many volunteers, such as Frank Sark on Jamaica Inn who is actively collecting trash in his five-gallon bucket daily.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. DISCUSSION AND CONSIDERATION TO POSSIBLY TAKE ACTION APPROVING RESOLUTION 2023-09, ESTABLISHING GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT IN THE CITY OF JAMAICA BEACH, TX. (Bower)

Mayor Sharon Bower stated that the liability waiver was not included in the previous meetings agenda but has spoken with legal and they have included language to help protect the city and potential exposure to confidential information. Every volunteer will have a city council liaison and a city employee to assist them with their duties. Alderwoman Jones stated she volunteered for a long time and does not believe Santa Clause would need to sign a waiver. She does not believe all volunteers need to sign the waiver, but that it should be required for volunteers that are working in city hall. She agrees with the language but does not believe volunteers for holiday events and picking up trash should be required to sign the waiver. Mayor Bower stated that the resolution title will be changed to volunteer engagement in the city of Jamaica Beach for office activities, boards, committees, commissions, and city maintenance activities. She asked if council would agree the changes and Alderman Green stated that he would like to review the revised resolution before deciding. Alderman Welch stated that reviewing legal items needs to be correct before approved. Alderman Madray questioned why the title change was not sufficient enough and Alderman Welch stated that the resolution needs to be fully revised and complete. Mayor Bower stated she could change the title or list where it pertains to.

*Motion made by Alderwoman Jones to **discuss**, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Madray*

*Motion made by Alderman Welch to **table**, seconded by Alderman Green*

VOTE

4 AYES (Green, Jones, Madray, Welch)

0 NAYS

0 ABSTAIN

MOTION PASSED

2. DISCUSSION ONLY ON MODIFYING ORDINANCE 2019-1, PROVIDING FOR SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL SERVICE TO INCLUDE 1) RATE OF \$15.00 PER UNIT 2) MAXIMUM SIZE OF 64-GALLON RECEPTACLE AND ALL RECEPTACLES MUST HAVE A TIGHT-FITTING LID 3) LIMIT TO 4 (FOUR) RECEPTACLES PER PICKUP 4) NO WHITE TRASH BAGS VISIBLE, MUST BE IN RECEPTACLE WITH LID CLOSED 5) PROVIDE FOR PENTALLY. (Bower)

Mayor Bower stated the ordinance will raise the rate to \$15.00, include a maximum of 64-gallon receptacle, whereas the previous ordinance listed a 30-gallon receptacle. Limits to 4 receptacles, including black trash bags, and specifies all white trash bags need to be inside receptacle with tight fitting lid. Glass is allowed, but should be empty and rinsed clean, which was not included in the previous ordinance. Palm fronds or green garbage needs to be bundled and no longer than 4 feet long, which was in the previous ordinance. All white trash bags will need to be in closed container. Alderman Welch questioned about black contractors' bags, which Mayor Bower clarified that the large bags are included in the count of 4 receptacles, and they are limited to 50 pounds. Construction debris has never been contracted to be picked up, but was picked up in the past, though they are cracking down on that. She will work with Robert to possibly schedule large dumpsters for citizens to remove construction debris. Alderwoman Jones had citizens question her about the \$2.81 raise in prices, so she

researched other cities rates. Galveston charges \$24.97, Texas city charges \$24.00, League City charges \$20.84, Dallas charges \$35.81, Chicago charges \$9.50, and San Antonio charges per cart, large cart, 64-gallon, is \$30.25 per cart, medium cart is \$19.76 per card, and small card is \$14.76, plus an environmental fee. \$15.00 for twice a week is a great rate. Mayor Bower stated she plans to move for approval at the next meeting.

*Motion made by Alderman Green to **discuss**, seconded by Alderman Welch*

3. DISCUSSION ON THE CITY OF JAMAICA BEACH PROPOSED BUDGET FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2023-2024. (Bower)

Mayor Bower stated there was a budget workshop and the current budget has some changes. Funds were added for the park fence, and the taxes for the dumpsters that the city pays for were included as a separate line. Alderwoman Jones asked if the payment was a HOT tax expense and Mayor Bower confirmed that the beach portion will be charged to HOT tax, but the city hall portion will not be. A donated fire hydrant will need to be installed and Chief Baden showed us a spot to install it. Funds for the police department's damaged and moldy duct replacement. The software the police department uses for tickets expires in March, so funds have been allocated to this expense and the city is looking into software options. Alderman Welch questioned if the police could qualify for a grant to modernize the software. Mayor Bower stated that the previous software was acquired with a grant, and as Lieutenant Posey stated, he is looking into bringing in a reserve officer who is familiar with grant work. Alderman Green stated the numbers for the end of the year audit were off because the systems were not working together to calculating correctly. Mayor Bower stated the court and fees have multiple line items, so it's hard to read. 30 percent of tickets goes to fees, so it is difficult to track. We are planning to transition to QuickBooks Online, but we are also exploring other options, as QuickBooks is not the best finance software for the city's needs. She also stated the tax rate is going down about 25% because appraisals have gone up. The current budget shows an additional 3.5% collection due to waterline and sewer plant repairs. Mayor Bower would like to propose a homestead exemption for next year's budget that needs to be passed by an ordinance and within a timeframe that the appraisal district can incorporate into their projections. There will be a budget amendment presented at the next meeting. Mayor Pro Tem Madray suggested that new decorations for the park be purchased for holiday events. Alderman Welch asked if donations to the park considered tax deductions and Alderwoman Jones stated from her knowledge, park donations are tax deductible.

*Motion made by Alderwoman Jones to **discuss**, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Madray*

4. CONSIDER FOR ACTION CALLING A PUBLIC HEARING ON THE CITY OF JAMAICA BEACH PROPOSED BUDGETS FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2023-2024, TO BE HELD ON SEPTEMBER 14TH, 2023 AT 6:00 PM AT CITY HALL. (Bower)

*Motion made by Alderman Welch to **approve**, seconded by Alderwoman Jones*

VOTE

4 AYES (Green, Jones, Madray, Welch)

0 NAYS

0 ABSTAIN

MOTION PASSED

MAYOR'S REPORT:

Mayor Sharon Bower stated that she is hoping to have a draft ordinance for short term rentals for the September 14th meeting. Occupancy limits will be proposed, as well as a higher registration rate. The ordinance will specify whether the occupancy will be 2 plus 2 or 2 plus 4 for permitted GCAD listed bedrooms, and GCAD tax paid areas. The ordinance will be open for discussion on September 14th and presented for approval on September 28th. There is a leak on Jolly Roger that was patched but not fixed, so Branch has been instructed to order the correct parts to completely fix the issue. Jolly Roger will be without water services for 3 to 4 hours, so please be patient with the city. New water meter boxes and lids are now made with resin and will not float, so the city is currently working on ordering new lids. Evacuation plans for emergency preparedness have been made and we will be in alignment with Galveston if an evacuation is

called for. Sandy Denby is planning for Halloween and the police department will also host National Night Out on the Saturday before Halloween.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

TAKE POSSIBLE ACTION OR GIVE DIRECTION ON EXECUTIVE SESSION ITEMS OF DISCUSSION:

1. Personnel matters: To deliberate the reassignment of duties of a public officer or employee.
2. Security: To deliberate the City's IT structure and vulnerability to breach.

No vote was required.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion made by Alderman Green to adjourn, seconded by Alderman Welch. Meeting adjourned at 7:37 p.m.