



MINUTES OF A CALLED PUBLIC MEETING
May 20, 2024

Council Approved on June 10, 2024

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Mayor Grisham called meeting to order at 5:30pm
2. **ROLL CALL:** Members present for roll call were as follows: to wit: Mayor Grisham, Councilwoman Gonzales, Councilwoman Brown, Councilwoman Klepac and Councilwoman Amick. Members that were not present for roll call were as follows: to wit: Councilwoman Spears
3. **INVOCATION:** Councilwoman Brown gave the invocation
4. **PUBLIC COMMENT:** Jerry Leonard stated to lose our police department, means the city is dying. Leonard personally worked hard to grow De Leon. This is his opinion only, invest in the new officers that are coming out of the academy, use the S.O. until the pd can be built back up. Look to the future not to the past, we invested in the new vehicles, we don't need to waste that money. Gabe Price started off thanking the council for their time. Price stated we need a police department, the S.O is great but not their responsibility to take care of De Leon. He speaks as a former City Fire Department employee, most turn overs are due to under payment, Police officer's jobs are not an 8-5 job, most of them don't just go home and go to bed, they are always on call and on the job. Please be slow to act and please think before making choices. Rick Smitherman thanked everyone for their service, we appreciate you and respect you. No one wants to pay more taxes but when you wait a 1 ½ hour for help you're willing to pay more. Look into HB 54 for extra funding, the city may not qualify but it's worth looking into. Buddy Welch stated he has spoke before about the police department. One officer can not serve the entire city, we need more. Police Officers must get cost of living raises, get paid full wages, no docking pay while on probation or training. Not having full police force drops property tax values. Why isn't the city attorney here? I don't know why we keep losing police officers but it's happened time and time again, one has always stayed don't treat him wrong. Matt Horner thanked council. He has been in business for 5 years and has been through 5 police chiefs, the lack of coverage is affecting his business and it concerns him. The sheriff's department has been very helpful and has had a great attitude. In the past the police department has not always been helpful and has had a bad attitude. He supports exploring other options for coverage.

a. CALLED AGENDA: (Discuss and consider the following items)

- A. **Continue with the Police Department or contract with the Sheriff's Dept for Law Enforcement in De Leon** – Councilwoman Klepac thanked everyone for being at the meeting, it is very much appreciated. This is a big struggle for everyone trying to find a solution. The council is trying to raise salaries, but they also get other benefits such as vacation pay, sick pay, paid holidays, medical insurance, dental insurance, vision insurance and life insurance. We are posting ads on Facebook, Indeed, TCOLE, and TML, everyone is hiring officers so we are fighting against each other. We can offer incentives but after receiving them officers leave, not sure what to offer to keep them here. Its not always about the money, location helps a lot. The sheriff's department is helping us out of the kindness of their heart, we need to find a solution to make everyone happy. Councilwoman Amick stated they are trying to problem solve, she has reached out to a nearby police department. She explained the situation to the chief of police there and he has been through the same issue as we are now. He offered ideas, such as hiring part time officers at \$25 an hour until we get the department going again. We welcome ideas, anyone have any solutions, do you know of any retired officers that would be interested? We need help! Can we go up on wages, yes, we can but that isn't always the solution. Judge Davis said we have a responsibility to tax payers. Right now the sheriff's department is working 108 hours every two weeks, when you run the numbers, it is a \$9400.00. The residents of the county and the city are being double taxed. We are covering those 108 hours with no agreement, sad to see or hear judgement because of wait time. There is absolutely no hostility between the county and the city. We want nothing more than to see the city stand on its own but what is being done now

is not working. When the cadets get out of training, they have to do FTO ride along with the De Leon Police Department. At this point the county has to start invoicing the city. Our first preference is for De Leon to stand up on its own, we are open to helping, yes, we are, we are not trying to take over. Is this a reputation issue? What has been done isn't working. She has a responsibility to tax payers, not easy to have these talks but thank you for doing it. Both entities want to work together. Sheriff Pounds stated he wants De Leon to stand on their own. De Leon keeps having the same issues over and over again, the sheriff's department has been covering for almost 2 years. At this point we have two options dissolve the police department and let the sheriff's department take over or sheriff's department can invoice the city until it gets its police department back up and running. He again stated he wants De Leon Police department to succeed. No action was taken on this item

5. ITEMS OF COMMUNITY INTEREST:

- Expression of thanks, congratulations or condolences
- Information regarding holiday closings
- Honorary recognition of City officials, employees, or other citizens
- Reminders about upcoming events sponsored by the City or other entity that is scheduled to be attended by a city official or City employee.

6. ADJOURN: Mayor adjourned meeting at 6:30pm

CERTIFICATION

I, *Melenda K. Harbour*, City Secretary for the City of De Leon, Texas, do hereby certify that the above and foregoing is true and correct of the regular meeting by the City Council of the City of De Leon and of the minutes pertaining thereto on the 20th day of May, 2024.

Melenda K. Harbour,
City Secretary

Minutes **PASSED AND APPROVED** by the City Council of the City of De Leon on the 10th June day of 2024.



Jan Grisham, Mayor

