

Minutes
Regular Council Meeting
February 17, 2026

On this 17th day of February 2026, at 6p.m., the City Council of the City of Devine convened for a Regular Meeting, the same being open to the public, at the Dr. George S. Woods Community Center, 200 E. Hondo Avenue, Devine Texas 78016. Notice of said meeting having been prescribed in Chapter 551, Government Code, and Vernon's Texas Codes, Annotated, and the following members being present:

Alderman Ray Gonzales
Alderman Jeff Miller
Alderman Michael Hernandez
Alderman Harold Lance Jr
Mayor Butch Cook

Thus, constituting a quorum. District #4 Empty.

Personnel Present: Michelle Martin, City Secretary, Pete Sanchez, Director of Public Works, Juanita Romero, Director Permits/Code Enforcement, Cassandra Maldonado, Court Administrator, Stephanie Martinez, Utilities Supervisor, Sophia Benavides, Finance Director, Lt. Chris Andrews, Police, Tom Cate, City Attorney.

Others Present: Raul Garcia (JR), Garcia & Wright Consulting Engineers Inc, Anton Riecher, Devine News.

Mayor Butch Cook called the regular council meeting to order at 6pm.

The second order of business was invocation and the pledge of allegiance. Alderman Jeff Miller led the invocation. Council and attendees recited the Pledge of Allegiance and the Texas Pledge.

The third order of business was the Visitors'/Citizens' Forum. Mayor Cook asked if there were any citizens present who wanted to comment at this time. Uhdav Bhayat owner of the Country Corner Inn spoke on the following:

- Motel has generated \$100,000 in hotel occupancy taxes over the past six years
- Requesting the city explore additional tourism events and marketing efforts.
- Suggested better utilization of HOT Tax Revenue to promote tourism.
- Encouraged the city to bring more events to Devine.

The fourth order of business was

- Devine High School Basketball: Mason Beaver and Karson Ray. They have been selected to represent DHS at the Valero San Antonio Sports-All Star Basketball Game. Mayor and

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City Council recognized Mason and Karson for being selected to represent Devine High School at the Valero San Antonio Sports-All Star Basketball Game. It is a great honor to be selected and not an easy task to do.

- Devine High School: 11 FCCLA (Family, Career and Community Leaders of America) are advancing to state. Congratulations to Mrs. Outlaw and her students. Mayor and Council recognized the FCCLA group for advancing to state. Mrs. Outlaw was also acknowledged for her leadership of the program.

The fifth order of business was Employee Recognition. Pete Sanchez, Public Works Director was honored and recognized for his 18 years of service to the City of Devine.

The sixth order of business was to approve the meeting minutes from November 18, 2025, and January 20, 2026. Alderman Hernandez made a motion to accept the meeting minutes. Alderman Miller seconded the motion. Motion carried 4-0.

The seventh order of business was to consider and act upon appointing Jim Soret to the Planning and Zoning Commissioners Board. Mayor Cook made the recommendation to appoint Jim Soret to the Planning and Zoning Committee. Mayor Cook provided some background experience on Mr. Soret as well. Alderman Hernandez made a motion to appoint Jim Soret to the Planning and Zoning Commissioners Board. Alderman Gonzales seconded the motion. Motion carried 4-0.

The eighth order of business was to consider and act upon a resolution authorizing the submission of a Community Development Block Grant to the Texas Department of Agriculture for the Downtown Revitalization Program. City Administrator David was absent due to a family emergency, so Mayor Cook took the lead on this matter.

- To apply for a \$1,000,000 million dollar grant.
- Requires a \$50,000 city match.
- This is for downtown revitalization.
- Grant is competitive among other communities, but the City of Devine has a great opportunity to apply.
- This is mostly for the historical areas of Devine around the community center.
- Pete Sanchez, Public Works Director recommends areas up to Park, Bright, Commercial, and Dilley Street. There are other areas to be considered as well.

Alderman Miller made a motion that council act upon the resolution authorizing the submission of a Community Development Block Grant to the Texas Department of Agriculture for the Downtown Revitalization Program. Alderman Gonzales seconded the motion. Motion carried 4-0.

The ninth order of business was to consider and act upon bids received on the TxCDBG Contract No. CDV23-0290 New Water Well Project. Raul Garcia (JR) with Garcia & Wright Consulting Engineers Inc who is the City Engineer presented the following:

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- Grant Project is for a test hole for a new water well located near the football field and Warhorse Plant area.
- A bid was placed in the newspaper and on CIVCAST.
- JR checked all references and reviewed all bids received.
- Received a base bid for \$311,000 from Underground Water Resources who is a local company here in Devine. There will be two alternates for the bid as well depending on what is found once they drill the test hole.
- Drilling will approximately be around 600 feet into the Carrizo Wilcox aquifer.
- Water testing will be done as well to test the quality of the water.
- Once completed the goal is to apply for another grant to finish out building of the water well.

Council had the following comments/questions in regards to this project:

- Mayor Cook had some questions on the cost of drilling the test hole and what all is entailed in the process. JR described what all is entailed in this type of project (e.g. materials, labor, project scope).
- Questions were brought up on environmental studies and use of drilling resources to continue the project if water test is found favorable.
- Alderman Miller asked if there is a timeframe of when you drill and cap it to proceed to the next step. JR said he would have to verify that information with TCEQ.
- Alderman Miller also asked about the timeframe of when UWR starts the project to finishing the project. JR said that UWR will have 60 days to complete the project for the test hole.
- Alderman Lance asked how one knows what the quality of water will be. He also asked about the long-term benefits of this water being viable for the community. JR stated that it is a risk and there is no way of knowing until you drill and test the water.
- Alderman Miller asked what grant these funds would be coming from and what the balance is.
- City Secretary Michelle Martin stated that the City of Devine is partnering with Langford Community Management Services on this grant to ensure all requirements are being met. Grant is for this specific project. The grant is for \$400,000, but with a contingency not to exceed \$500,000.
- Alderman Hernandez provided his experience and knowledge of the aquifer and strong possibility of being able to target good quality water. He also had a question to clarify the reason for drilling this test hole.
- Pete Sanchez, Public Works Director provided some background information on the benefit of this water well being built.

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Alderman Hernandez made a motion to act upon the bid on the TxCDBG Contract No. CDV23-0290 New Water Well Project from UWR. Alderman Gonzales seconded the motion. Motion carried 4-0.

The tenth order of business was to consider and act upon reimbursing businesses that incurred extra costs due to water main breaks. Mayor Cook brought up that with the recent water main breaks around the golf course area, some businesses incurred some extra operating costs. Alderman Miller wants to ensure on how we approach this issue. We do not want to set a precedent that businesses will be reimbursed for these extra costs due to the limited budget that the City of Devine has.

Alderman Miller said he could see how a possible utility credit could be taken into consideration. He does understand how water main breaks can put a constraint on restaurants when there is no water available. Alderman Hernandez brought up the fact that families who were without water, also incurred costs too. For example, having to buy bottled water or going out to eat due to there being no water. Mayor Cook mentioned that there may be some economic development funds per City Administrator David Jordan that could offer some assistance. Mayor Cook asked City Attorney Cate on this matter and how to approach it. City Attorney Cate said that the City of Devine has government immunity on this issue and is under no obligation to reimburse for incurred expenses due to water leaks. The City of Devine is not under any legal obligation to do this. Council took no action on this item.

The eleventh order of business was to consider and act upon commercial water rates vs. residential (Utility Supervisor Stephanie Martinez).

- Mayor Cook asked about winter averaging on sewer rates. Stephanie Martinez Utility Supervisor said it is based off December-February usage. Mayor Cook said that this determines the base rate, no matter how much water is used.
- Businesses are not allowed to use winter averaging. They get charged according to consumption only. The result is businesses are paying more for sewer than a resident is.
- Want to look at this and get more consistent across the board to be based on size of the meter.
- Stephanie did confirm that the rate is based on the size of the water meter not whether it is residential or commercial. The main difference comes from the sewer rate.
- Business owners have expressed concern about the sewer rates they are being charged. It seems that sewer rates should be the same as residents.
- Alderman Miller asked why the sewer rates are set up this way. Stephanie stated that she does not know the exact reason why, but that it has been set up this way since she has been here for the past 8 years.
- We need to determine the financial impact if the adjustment was made in regards to the sewer rates.

Council took no action on this item. This item has been tabled for further discussion.

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The twelfth order of business was to consider and act upon the adoption of Public Utilities Authority for the Aquifer Storage Reserve. It is required by law that this item be advertised in the paper for two weeks and an ordinance be created. Alderman Hernandez made a motion to table this item for next month's council meeting. Alderman Miller seconded the motion. Motion carried 4-0.

The thirteenth order of business was to consider and act upon the increase for the Edward's Aquifer Permit Fee; Code of Ordinances Sec. 98-26. The Edward's Aquifer fee will be increasing from \$3.05 to \$3.26 per household. Alderman Miller made a motion to approve the Edward's Aquifer Fee increase. Alderman Hernandez seconded the motion. Motion carried 4-0.

The fourteenth order of business was to consider and act upon an ordinance for appointment to fill a vacant seat on Council (Mayor Butch Cook and City Attorney Thomas Cate).

- Alderman Miller mentioned that more time may be needed to review applicants being considered for council positions. He recommends 90 days.
- Mayor Cook proposed a 6month threshold for appointing an Alderman. It gives time for promoting it in the newspaper and interviewing as well.
- City Attorney Cate said that you can set a specific date of when you want to replace someone due to resignation.
- Alderman Hernandez had some concerns about the interview process and the length of time to act.
- Alderman Gonzales had concerns about using 180 days due to it running into budget season.
- City Attorney Cate will create an ordinance outlining all the specifics of appointing a council person plus the recommended timeframe for selection.

Alderman Miller made a motion to amend the ordinance, but City Attorney Cate is already going to amend the ordinance from the feedback received from Council. No one made a motion for a second since council took no action on this item. This item has been tabled for further discussion at next month's council meeting.

The fifteenth order of business was to consider and act upon the resolution for the City of Devine Police Department to apply for the FY27 Safe Neighborhoods Grant Program (Lt. Andrews).

Lt. Chris Andrews presented the grant information. This is a no cash match grant. Looking at going with a company named Axon. They have a product called Fusus. The system allows for local businesses and residents to register their cameras or share their video feeds, providing law enforcement with direct immediate access to camera footage in the event of an emergency. It would allow for upgrades of PD car cameras that are approximately 8 years old. Alderman Gonzales asked if PD sees any backlash on this. Lt. Andrews said he does not, because it is voluntary. Residents can choose to opt into the program. Alderman Hernandez made a motion to approve the resolution for the City of Devine Police Department for the FY27 Safe Neighborhoods Grant Program. Alderman Gonzales seconded the motion. Motion carried 4-0.

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The sixteenth order of business was to consider and act upon the resolution for the City of Devine Police Department to apply for the FY27 Operation Lone Star Grant Program. City of Devine Police Department is applying for a grant that allows for overtime for the Police Department. PD just received \$10k from this program to assist with overtime. PD was just a part of a task force because of Operation Lone Star. This will also allow to offset overtime for PD with the City of Devine budget. Alderman Miller made a motion to approve the resolution for the City of Devine Police Department to apply for the FY27 Operation Lone Star Grant Program. Alderman Hernandez seconded the motion. Motion carried 4-0.

Informational items

- Michelle Martin mentioned that bulk and brush pick up is occurring this week encouraging residents to place items out for pick up.
- Mayor Cook said that Code Enforcement Department has made a great impact in working with residents in cleaning up the City of Devine.
- Alderman Miller mentioned that he is pleased with the communication online and on the website about the bulk/brush pick up. Communication has greatly improved.
- Alderman Hernandez brought up HOT (Hotel Occupancy Tax) TAX and suggestions on how the funds can be used (e.g. community center updates, lighting, historical markers). He was questioning if the funds can go to the Fall Festival. He would like information sent to council on this to verify.
- Alderman Miller has spoken to City Admin Jordan about putting together an economic foundation plan.
- Mayor Cook suggested to bring these items during budget workshops to discuss further in detail and for planning.

The eighteenth order of business was to adjourn. Alderman Miller made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Alderman Hernandez seconded the motion. Motion carried 4-0. Meeting ended at 8pm.



City Secretary



Mayor