

City Council Special Meeting

Meeting Minutes

September 18, 2026, 10:00 AM

100 Park Street, Trinidad, TX 75163, US

A.1. Call to Order, Quorum Determined, Meeting Declared Open

Mayor Dennis Haws called the City Council Special Meeting to order at 10:00 AM at Trinidad City Hall, 100 Park Street, Trinidad, Texas.

Present: Mayor Dennis Haws; Mayor Pro Tem Marie Bannister; Council Member Velma Womack; Council Member Steven Stearman; Council Member Leah Melton

A quorum was established upon roll call.

A.2. Invocation

The invocation was led by Mayor Haws.

A.3. Pledge of Allegiance and Texas Pledge

Mayor Haws led the Pledge of Allegiance.

B.1. Visitors / Citizens Inquiry

Two citizens addressed the Council. Jason Tatum urged cooperation among council members and expressed the view that, without a valid Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (TCOLE) certification, the cost and effort of challenging the revocation outweighed the potential benefit. Lindsey Patterson spoke directly to agenda items D.1.a and D.1.b, urging the Council to end the dispute with TCOLE. She cited the city's existing financial pressures—including the prior transfer of water and sewer funds into

the general fund—as grounds to question whether the city could afford to pursue an appeal, and called on the Council to weigh the full fiscal cost before authorizing any expenditure in connection with litigation.

C.1. Executive Session

The Council convened into closed executive session at 10:06 AM pursuant to:

- **Section 551.071(1)(A)** — Consultation with the City Attorney regarding pending or contemplated litigation, including the TCOLE letter dated September 9, 2026, revoking the authority of the Trinidad Police Department (Agency 213213) to make or continue appointments of licensees effective September 18, 2026, and options for appeal under Section 1701.506 of the Texas Occupations Code.
- **Section 551.071(2)** — Consultation with the City Attorney on matters where the attorney's duties conflict with Chapter 551, including the city's continuing legal obligations following the revocation, record retention under Section 211.19(f) of Title 37 of the Texas Administrative Code, reporting of motor vehicle stop data for calendar year 2026, and the resolution of unresolved misconduct allegations against licensees.

The Council reconvened into open session at 10:57 AM.

D.1. Reconvene Into Open Session – Discussion and Possible Action on Matters Discussed in Executive Session

a) Litigation Authorization

Following consultation with the City Attorney, the Council determined that it was not feasible to maintain a functioning police force during the pendency of an appeal and that

the financial burden of such a process on the City of Trinidad was not justifiable. On that basis, the Council voted not to pursue an appeal of TCOLE's revocation.

Motion not to pursue an appeal of the TCOLE revocation was made by Council Member Steven Stearman and seconded by Council Member Velma Womack. The motion carried 3–1 with 1 abstention.

b) Expenditure of Funds

As the Council voted not to pursue an appeal or seek an injunction, no expenditure of funds in connection with litigation was required. The item was tabled.

Motion to table Item D.1.b was made by Council Member Steven Stearman and seconded by Council Member Velma Womack. The motion carried unanimously.

In connection with Item D.1.a, the Council also authorized the termination of Trinidad Police Department officers, with paid administrative leave extended through Saturday, September 26, 2026, at which point employment with the City of Trinidad would conclude.

Motion to place officers on paid administrative leave through September 26, 2026, constituting the end of their employment with the City of Trinidad, was made by Council Member Steven Stearman and seconded by Council Member Leah Melton. The motion carried unanimously.

c) Interlocal Cooperation Agreement for Law Enforcement Services

The Council authorized the Mayor to negotiate and pursue an interlocal cooperation agreement for law enforcement services pursuant to Chapter 791 of the Texas Government Code. Any resulting agreement would be brought back before the Council for final approval.

Motion to authorize the Mayor to pursue an interlocal cooperation agreement for law enforcement services was made by Council Member Steven Stearman and seconded by Council Member Velma Womack. The motion carried unanimously.

d) Administrative Measures to Comply with Continuing Obligations

The Council authorized all administrative measures necessary to comply with the city's continuing legal obligations as described in Item C.1.b, including record retention, motor vehicle stop data reporting, and the resolution of outstanding misconduct allegations.

Motion to authorize the necessary administrative measures to comply with the continuing obligations described in Item C.1.b was made by Council Member Steven Stearman and seconded by Council Member Leah Melton. The motion carried unanimously.

E.1. Council Member Inquiry Time

Mayor Haws offered brief remarks acknowledging the gravity of the decisions made, stating that the outcomes, while difficult, reflected the limited choices available to the Council given the circumstances.

F.1. Adjourn

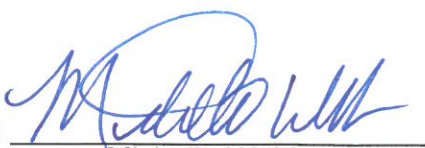
Motion to adjourn was made by Mayor Pro Tem Marie Bannister and seconded by Council Member Velma Womack. The motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned.



Approved on 10/20/26

Mayor: 
Dennis Haws

Interim City Administrator/Secretary: 
Michelle Webb