

CITY OF TRINIDAD

Regular City Council Minutes

Tuesday, October 21, 2025

A regular city council session of the governing body of the City of Trinidad was held on the 21st of October 2025 beginning at 6:00 p.m. at the City Hall in Trinidad, Texas, at which time the following subjects were discussed:

1. **Call to order and establishment of quorum:** Councilmember Marie Bannister called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. The following members were present: Melvin Thompson and Velma Womack. Jeff McClintock was absent.
2. **Invocation:** Invocation was led by Lindsey Patterson.
3. **Citizen Comments:**
 - Betty Sanders spoke regarding the locked doors at City Hall and expressed her concern over not having money budgeted for new police vehicles.
 - Dennis Haws spoke about the need for recruiting potential council members, possibly even getting the younger generation involved. We currently have only 3 members and that is the minimal number we can have to conduct business for the City of Trinidad. He also stated "in order to be successful, we need a healthy city council." Finally, he encouraged people to vote for him even though he is running for Mayor unopposed.
4. **Reports:**
 - Water Plant Operator – Jeremy Crocker gave an update on everything he has been doing since he started working at the water plant. Testing agents were out of date, meters were not calibrated, and half of the meters were not even being used. There were so many procedures that were not being done. He recalibrated all the machines and every piece of testing equipment was recalibrated as well. He brought in Eagle Labs to test all the parameters for every chemical they put in and with their assistance, the water coming in is almost near perfect. There were issues with alarms not sounding because they were not turned on. They are all back on now and he has someone there daily that will be able to keep an eye on the equipment and any alarms that may be triggered. He then drained the clarifying tank and discovered the rake was not working and it had about 5 feet of solids in the bottom.
 - Municipal Court – Judge Bivens said for the month of October there were 73 new cases filed. One dismissed with the completion of a driver safety course, four after deferred disposition, and three with proof of insurance. There were sixteen cases that were satisfied by jail credit. Total fines and costs for the month were \$13,749, of which the city will keep \$8,476. Criminal costs and fees report was filed and our quarter payment was \$11,372.94.
 - Police Department – Chief Gregory said the department had 73 citations written, 32 warnings giving them a total of 106 traffic stops, 53 calls for service, 2 arrests, 5 incident reports, 1 crash and 4 agency assist. He briefly discussed the need for new body and car

cameras as well as newer vehicles. They were able to get the cages in the cars so they can transport safely now. The evidence audit is complete and it went very well considering there were things missing. He will be implementing an evidence inventory system.

- EDC – President, Lisa Hebrank, stated all of the performance agreements are completed. She stopped in to visit with Jonathan Bowman at his new business, Hwy 31 Pizza.
 - City Administrator – Lindsey Patterson gave a detailed update on the financial health of the city. The 2024 audit shows the city spent \$58,156 over the budget. The parking lot and city hall building are being paid out of the general fund; the water and sewer are not fully paying for themselves. The rates have not kept pace with the cost, and Ms. Patterson discovered that many accounts were on a “fixed” rate as opposed to the “base” rate. This means no matter how much water or sewer was used on those accounts, the rate would not change. Also, the trash rates have not kept up with the actual expense. These indecencies are currently being fixed. Our audits show that the city’s math doesn’t always reconcile and we have been in serious need of a true and accurate picture of where the city stands financially. The previous numbers presented in the budget were not accurate. The current council and administration has made some very fiscally responsible decisions in recent months with knowledge that the fiscal responsibility needs to be a priority. Some of the highlights of savings achieved are as follows: transition from Ford Services to Aqua Services reduced annual costs from \$166,000 to \$120,000, saving \$46,000 annually. Administrator salary adjustment savings \$15,000, TMRS reduction from 1-2 to 1-1, saving approximately \$12,000 annually. Payroll and benefit adjustments reduced approximately \$78,000. Vehicle maintenance decreased approximately \$10,000. That’s a total savings to date of \$161,000. The new expenditures, which are necessary, are the Municipal CPA services at \$24,000 to ensure accurate, transparent financial reporting and fiscal planning. Municipal Auditor (David Godwin) increased \$5,000 for a comprehensive audit and council presentation. What needs to happen next is that we need to adopt a cost of service utility rate. The system fund must be able to pay for its own operations, no more backstopping from the general fund. We should look into refinancing or restructuring the facility debt, establish reserve policies, essentially aiming for 90 days of operating cash in the general fund and a 120-180 days for the system fund, plus a reserved for additional capital needs. We need to create a 10 year capital improvement plan, and align with the EDC as they also can be applying for grants for infrastructure, storm water and drainage systems. These will double the chances of bringing in money for these expenditures. This infrastructure is vital to attracting and keeping business in Trinidad.
5. **Discuss and consider appointing a Mayor Pro Tem:** Melvin Thompson made the motion to appoint Marie Bannister as Mayor Pro Tem, with a second from Velma Womack. Two (2) for none (0) opposed. Motion carried.
 6. **Discuss and consider an Ordinance designating each posted meeting as a regular meeting until a full council is seated:** Melvin Thompson made the motion, with a second from Velma Womack. Three (3) for and none (0) opposed. Motion carried.

7. **Discuss and consider an Ordinance ratifying the previous fiscal years adopted budget and to continue expenditures at prior year levels on an interim basis until the City Council adopts a new annual budget. The 2024-2025 budget is still posted on <https://www.trinidadtexas.com/>**
A motion to ratify the previous fiscal years adopted budget was made by Melvin Thompson, with a second from Velma Womack. Three (3) for and none (0) opposed. Motion carried.
8. **Discuss and consider selling and/or placing in auction, 2016 F-250, 2000 Chevy 1500 to stop continual depreciation and waste:** these are the vehicles down at the water plant. A motion to put them up for auction was made by Marie Bannister made the motion, with a second from Melvin Thompson. Three (3) for and none (0) opposed. Motion carried.
9. **Discuss and consider purchase and/or lease 2 new vehicles for use of the Police Department:**
Chief Gregory proposed a lease program where we do not pay anything down or for the first year. We will be responsible for the maintenance. At the end of the lease we have the option to buy them for \$1.00 each or trade them in and start a new lease with new vehicles. He will keep the two vehicles we presently have as they are paid off. A motion to approve a 5 year lease plan with a 6.595% interest rate was made by Marie Bannister, with a second from Melvin Thompson. Three (3) for and none (0) opposed. Motion carried.
10. **Discuss and consider approval of Trinidad Police Department Policies and Procedures:** a motion to accept the Trinidad Police Department Policies and Procedures was made by Marie Bannister, with a second by Melvin Thompson. Three (3) for and none (0) opposed. Motion carried.
11. **Discuss and consider body camera/car camera system for Trinidad Police Department:** a motion to purchase 6 body cameras, 4 in car cameras, with 32 TB server dedicated to the PD with no subscription fees was made by Marie Bannister made the motion, with a second from Melvin Thompson. Three (3) for and none (0) opposed. Motion carried.
12. **Council Members Inquiry Time: Pursuant to Tex. Gov. Code Sec. 551.042 the mayor or Council Members may inquire about a subject not specifically listed on this agenda. Responses are limited to a recitation of existing policy, or a statement of specific information given in response to the inquiry:** there was no discussion from the council members.
13. **Adjournment:** Melvin Thompson made the motion to adjourn, with a second from Velma Womack. Three (3) for and none (0) opposed. The motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 7:32 p.m.

Signed: 
Marie Bannister, Mayor ProTem

Attest: 
Lindsey Patterson, City Administrator/ Secretary