

STATE OF TEXAS

COUNTY OF BRAZORIA

CITY OF LAKE JACKSON

BE IT KNOWN THAT the City Council of Lake Jackson met on Monday, July 7, 2025, at 6:30 p.m. in Regular Session at 25 Oak Drive, Lake Jackson, Texas, Lake Jackson City Hall in the Alice Rodgers Council Chambers with the following in attendance:

Gerald Roznovsky, Mayor
Rhonda Seth, Mayor Pro Tem
Jon "J.B." Baker, Councilmember
Ralph "Buster" Buell, III, Councilmember
Vinay Singhania, Councilmember
Leonard Schooler, Councilmember

Modesto Mundo, City Manager
Riazul Mia, Assistant City Manager
Sherri Russell, City Attorney
Sally Villarreal, City Secretary
Ana Silbas, Asst. to the City Manager
Sal Aguirre, City Engineer
Eric Wilson, Public Works Director
Robin Hyden, Parks Director
James Bryson, Finance Director
Paul Kibodeaux, Police Chief
Jose Sanchez, Human Resources Director

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Councilmember Singhania led the pledges.

INVOCATION

Councilmember Buell led the invocation.

PRESENTATIONS

Mayor Roznovsky proclaimed July as Parks and Recreation Month and presented the proclamation to the staff members of the Parks and Recreation department.

VISITOR COMMENTS

John Gray commented that he noticed the parks in Lake Jackson do not have signs indicating when the parks are closed. He suggested to the council that they consider putting up signs stating what the park hours are or indicating when the park is closed, so citizens can be aware and avoid being confronted by the police.

DECLARATION OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

There were none.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approval of minutes – 061625 - **approved**
2. Accept Board and Commission minutes: **accepted**
 - a. LJDC – 032725 & 062525
 - b. Planners – 050625

3. Ratification of an emergency well-casing repair in addition to a well-pump overhaul for Well # 17 with Felder Water Well & Pump Services, LLC., in the amount of \$74,300 as budgeted. - **approved**
4. Authorize the city manager to execute a contract with Construction Master for the construction of the Garland Park and Jasmine Park restroom facilities in an amount not exceeding \$205,576 through the Choice Partners Co-op #24/018MR-R1 as budgeted. - **approved**

On a motion by Councilmember Baker, seconded by Councilmember Buell, with all present members voting “aye,” the consent agenda items 1-4 were approved.

DISCUSS AND CONSIDER OPTING OUT OF THE COUNTY HEALTH CLINIC AND ENROLLING IN THE TEXAS HEALTH BENEFITS NEXT LEVEL PRIME OPTION

Mr. Sanchez presented the proposal to opt out of the county health clinic and enroll in the Texas Health Benefits Next Level Prime option. He explained this would increase options for employees, providing access to services every day from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., compared to the county clinic's Monday-Friday 7:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. hours. The Next Level option also offers access to 45 clinics, with 29 in the Houston area.

Mr. Mundo stated that the city had been with the county clinic since 2017. He noted the clinic has shown good results in claims reduction. The city budgets about \$125,000 for it annually, with employees also contributing a small portion. Mr. Mundo said that both employees and their families can use the clinic, even if not on the city's insurance plan.

Councilmember Baker asked about the cost comparison. Mr. Mundo clarified that there is an additional \$25,000 cost for Next Level, but insurance rate reduction savings would cover it. The main benefits are increased flexibility in clinic locations and hours, as well as telemedicine options.

Councilmember Seth noted that Next Level provides imaging services, such as X-rays, which can help keep employees out of emergency rooms, which can be very expensive. She viewed this as a great move that would benefit employees. Councilmember Seth suggested providing employee education, so they know the difference between the services offered.

Councilmember Schooler asked about the quality of service. Mr. Sanchez explained that Next Level previously ran the county clinic until April, and city staff have found it harder to get appointments since the new change. He noted the city already uses Next Level for pre-employment and post-accident testing with good results.

Councilmember Singhania commented that the savings on emergency room visits alone would likely pay for the \$25,000 cost increase multiple times over.

Mr. Sanchez stated that the city is covering about \$200,000 in ER visits. The new plan should cut that down with the clinics having extended hours and providing more services.

On a motion by Councilmember Seth, seconded by Councilmember Baker, with all present members voting “aye,” opting out of the county health clinic and enrolling in the Texas Health Benefits Next Level Prime option was approved.

This becomes effective on October 1, 2025

APPOINT A NEW TRAFFIC COMMISSION MEMBER TO REPLACE RICK WRIGHT

Mayor Roznovsky explained that Rick Wright had to decline the offer to be appointed to the Traffic Commission due to personal conflicts. The council reviewed a list of two individuals who had previously expressed interest in serving on the Traffic Commission.

On a motion by Councilmember Seth, seconded by Councilmember Buell, with all present members voting “aye,” James Durand was appointed to fill the vacancy on the Traffic Commission.

DISCUSS AND CONSIDER THE OFFER FROM TXDOT TO PURCHASE THE RIGHT-OF-WAY IN THE AMOUNT OF \$241,461 FOR 1.1043 ACRES AND THE VALUE OF THE IMPROVEMENT ON THE PROPERTY AT THE WILDERNESS GOLF COURSE FRONTAGE

Mr. Mia presented the offer from TxDOT to acquire a right-of-way at the Wilderness Golf Course frontage, a necessary step in the highway widening initiative that requires the purchase of adjacent properties. Originally, TxDOT extended an offer of \$121,000, which the city deemed inadequate because it was too low.

Following a site meeting with TxDOT's appraisal team, the proposal was revised to \$241,461 for 1.1043 acres. Mr. Mia noted that the city negotiated to retain specific assets, such as gates and boulders, on the property, with TxDOT agreeing to a small 1% deduction for these. All the gates and stones will be kept. Mr. Mundo stated that the staff believes this is a fair offer, which will include the costs for relocating the electrical and irrigation systems, as well as hiring an engineer for a cursory review of the wetlands in the area.

Councilmember Singhania asked about possible issues with the wetlands. Mr. Mundo said staff didn't think there would be any, but that's why an engineer will review it. Councilmember Seth asked if TxDOT could do the survey. Mr. Mundo replied no and explained that the \$241,461 includes the cost of hiring an engineer.

Councilmember Seth asked Mr. Aguirre if he was satisfied with the offer, given the scope of work needed. Mr. Aguirre said he was, noting they had received multiple contractor estimates that came in below the offer amount. He confirmed that the new offer will not impose any burden on taxpayers.

Mayor Roznovsky confirmed that if the costs came in higher, it could be budgeted.

The council discussed the timeline, with Mr. Mia explaining that staff would move forward on relocating city property soon after the council's approval, rather than waiting for TxDOT's construction timeline, which could be years away.

On a motion by Councilmember Seth, seconded by Councilmember Schooler, with all present members voting “aye,” the offer from TxDOT to purchase the right-of-way in the amount of \$241,461 for 1.1043 Acres and the value of the improvement on the property at The Wilderness Golf Course frontage was approved.

APPROVE A NON-PROFIT RATE FOR THE WEBB-SCHMITT PRACTICE BASEBALL FIELD

Ms. Hyden presented a proposal for a non-profit rate for the Webb-Schmitt practice baseball field, also

known as Gator Field. She explained that it is the only lighted practice field the city rents out, with current rates at \$20 per hour after a recent increase from \$15 per 1.5 hours.

Ms. Hyden mentioned that a non-profit organization that frequently rents the field had requested a discounted rate. She proposed a 25% discount for Lake Jackson-based non-profit organizations, which would lower the rate to \$15 per hour. Additionally, she suggested a 40% bulk rental discount for organizations renting 4 days a week for at least 1 hour daily over three consecutive months, lowering the rate to \$12 per hour.

Councilmembers asked about how the nonprofit rate for the Webb-Schmitt baseball field compares to other rental rates. They also requested clarification on the first-come, first-served policy for field rentals to see how it might affect availability for different teams. Ms. Hyden explained that field rentals are handled on a first-come, first-served basis, similar to park pavilion or other facility rentals, where reservations are only confirmed upon payment.

Ms. Hyden also stated that organizations based in Lake Jackson are defined by their nonprofit documentation, which must include a physical address in Lake Jackson. Unlike recognized sports associations such as Little League or Girls Softball, which are open to all players and have a history of facility use, select teams must prove nonprofit status and are subject to rental fees. She noted that this nonprofit discount only applies to Lake Jackson-based organizations, ensuring local teams benefit while teams from other areas must pay the full rental fee.

On a motion by Councilmember Buell, seconded by Councilmember Singhania, with Councilmembers Buell, Singhania, Seth, Schooler, and Mayor Roznovsky voting “aye,” the non-profit rate for the Webb-Schmitt practice baseball field was approved.

Councilmember Baker excused himself before the vote took place.

DISCUSS AND CONSIDER THE FIRST READING OF AN ORDINANCE TO REMOVE ALL SCHOOL TRAFFIC RESTRICTIONS NEAR ELISABET NEY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL – SHERRI RUSSELL

Ms. Russell presented the first reading of an ordinance to remove school traffic restrictions near Elisabet Ney Elementary School, which is no longer in use as a regular school. She explained the areas where school zones would be removed, including along Yaupon Street up to Camellia Street.

Mr. Mundo noted they would need to move some lighted school zone signs to align with the new boundaries. Councilmember Seth suggested moving the signs to avoid confusion about where the school zone starts.

Mr. Mundo read the ordinance caption.

On a motion by Councilmember Schooler, seconded by Councilmember Seth, with all present members voting “aye,” the first reading of an ordinance removing all school traffic restrictions near Elisabet Ney Elementary School was approved.

DISCUSS THE UPDATED STRATEGIC PLAN

Ms. Silbas reviewed changes made to the strategic plan based on previous Council discussions.

Ms. Silbas highlighted changes including:

- Moving the item about supporting the development of an industrial park on the Alden acreage to the "Fostering a Thriving and Diverse Economy" section.

- Adding a quarterly update to the City Council on the bond progress tracker under "Digital Engagement Infrastructure."
- Changing wording from "removing" to "suspending" PEG fund fees.
- Adding "work with industry partners to partner on a recycling program" under "Upgrade and Maintain Facilities."

Mayor Roznovsky suggested adding separate bullet points for industrial park development and mixed-use development on the Alden property, as they may have different timelines. The council agreed to change the wording from "support" to "assist" for both items.

Councilmember Singhania raised a concern about removing the "Establish Central Park" item, suggesting that an inventory of properties purchased for that purpose be kept. Mr. Mundo agreed they may have been premature in removing it and suggested keeping it until a new master plan is adopted.

SUBMISSION OF THE PROPOSED BUDGET FOR FY 25-26

Mr. Mundo presented a brief overview of the proposed FY 25-26 budget to the City Council.

The highlights of the presentation included:

- The total budget across all city funds is approximately \$63 million. Within this, the general operating fund is budgeted at \$28.5 million, which represents a 3.9% increase from the previous year. Mr. Mundo emphasized that this increase is primarily attributed to operating expenses.
- Mr. Mundo recommended a no-new-revenue tax rate, maintaining the current tax burden on residents. However, he noted an increase on the debt side of the tax rate due to previously voter-approved bonds. The current tax rate stands at 0.3259, with the proposed tax rate being 0.3673.
- The budget includes three new authorized positions. These positions are specifically for the new animal control facility, and their addition amounts to \$171,000 in expenditure.
- A 4% pay increase for city employees is proposed, aimed at maintaining competitive staff salaries and supporting recruitment efforts. However, there is no merit increase budgeted for this year; Mr. Mundo explained that this difficult decision was made to ensure competitiveness in starting pay, especially for roles such as police officers and laborers, where the city is currently behind the market rate.
 - Councilmembers Singhania and Schooler expressed concerns about the no-merit incentive. They felt that there should be something for employees who go above and beyond.
- The utility fund is budgeted to see a 7.3% increase in operating expenditures. Key drivers of this increase include growing expenses associated with the Brazosport Water Authority, debt service for ongoing capital improvements, and rising costs for items such as chemicals and sludge hauling.
- Mr. Garrett from NewGen Strategies was introduced to provide details on proposed rate changes within the utility fund. This includes a 3.48% increase in the base water rate, with specific increases in charges per gallon for both water and sewer services. These adjustments aim to address the funding needs for infrastructure investments and ensure sustainable operations.
- The proposal included a \$1 monthly increase in residential garbage rates and a 5% increase in commercial garbage rates. This is intended to cover costs more equitably and address the financial requirements for waste management services across the city.

Mr. Garrett presented details on the proposed utility rate changes during the meeting. Mr. Garrett, who had previously conducted a rate study update for the city in 2024, outlined the necessity for a 9.5% rate increase on water and wastewater services. This increase is driven by several factors, including rising operational costs associated with the Brazosport Water Authority, which forecasts an 8.7-8.9% increase over the next five years. Additionally, the need to finance debt for ongoing and future capital improvements plays a role in the proposed rate hike. Mr. Garrett emphasized the city's strategy to avoid rate shock by proposing incremental increases each year, aligning with strategic planning to manage the anticipated costs of projects, such as the \$200,000,000 lift station, and the overall \$69,000,000 capital plan through 2030.

Mr. Garrett's presentation included detailed financial projections, providing comparisons of current and proposed rates and their impact on a typical household that consumes 5,000 gallons of water. Under the proposed rates, a typical residential water and wastewater bill would increase by \$7.23, bringing it to \$83.70, a move necessary to ensure financial sustainability while maintaining adequate fund balances and supporting debt service coverage. Mr. Garrett assured council members that these projections are conservative, aiming to stabilize the city's financial health without depending on unpredictable elements or market changes.

Councilmembers expressed concerns about the increase but acknowledged the unavoidable need to invest in critical infrastructure. Mr. Garrett also noted other considerations, such as potential shifts in rate design or customer base segmentation, which could be explored in future discussions to improve revenue recovery. However, these were not recommended for immediate implementation with the upcoming \$20,000,000 issuance, highlighting the complexity and need for thorough community engagement before making such changes.

Councilmember Schooler asked for information on the primary factors driving the differences in water rates between Lake Jackson and other municipalities. While concerns were raised regarding the proposed rate increases, council members agreed on the imperative need for continued investment in infrastructure enhancements.

Mr. Mundo also presented highlights from other funds, including the 4B sales tax, hotel/motel fund, and capital projects. He noted a potential grant opportunity for Oyster Creek cleaning that may require a future budget amendment.

Mr. Mundo noted the upcoming workshop on Saturday, July 19th, where these items will be discussed in detail. Providing the council with a proposed budget document will allow them a couple of weeks to review.

NEW BUSINESS UPDATES

Mr. Mia provided the updates. Only two new businesses, Fatburger and Round Table Pizza, and Take 5 Oil Change.

STAFF UPDATES

a. City Manager

- Roll-off update – staff would like to go out for bid and get pricing.
- Saturday Budget Workshop – July 19th @ 8:00 a.m.

b. City meeting action item summary

- Bring back the 2nd reading for the school zone ordinance.
- Send a copy of the slides to the council.

ITEMS OF COMMUNITY INTEREST

- Councilmember Seth mentioned the great fireworks show.
- Mayor Roznovsky asked Asst. Chief Sidebottom for an overview of the Texas floods. Asst. Chief Sidebottom stated that help has been extended, and they are waiting for a call to respond.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

These minutes were approved on July 21, 2025.

Sally Villarreal, City Secretary

Gerald Roznovsky, Mayor