



City of Hawkins
City Council Minutes
April 15, 2024



On this day April 15, 2024, at 6:00 pm, Mayor Debbie Rushing called a Regular City Council Meeting to order with council members Greg Branson, Eric Maloy, Eleta Taylor, Clara Kay, and Chuck Richoz. The department heads were Norma Hallmark, Mike Maberry, Bucky Elkins, Mandy Thomas, and Interim Police Chief Eric Tuma.

Jeff Karlson gave the invocation.

U.S. Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mayor Debbie Rushing.

Mayor Debbie Rushing gave an update on the Cybersecurity Incident. “On April 1, 2024, someone not a government employee was allowed on Mayor’s Computer in the Mayor’s office at City Hall. A couple of hours later, I Debbie Rushing, was sworn in as Mayor and out of safety for the citizens, I, Debbie Rushing, called in the City of Hawkins Information Technology person. He came the next day (April 2, 2024) and gave a list of things that were put on the computer or done to the computer. On the next day (April 3, 2024) City Secretary reported the cybersecurity incident to Texas Municipal League which thankfully the City of Hawkins coverage is good. On April 4, 2024, we called the Texas Municipal League, and they jumped in very quickly. I do want to thank some city employees that just were thinking quickly too. With that being said, the meeting started with Cybersecurity forensics team, and cybersecurity attorneys, and those were all things we had to have meetings and still having meetings. They are waiting to see what the Texas Rangers find. The Texas Rangers came and spoke with Mayor Debbie Rushing on April 12, 2024, and the Texas Rangers did take some hardware with them as well. As of today (April 15, 2024), Texas Rangers allowed us to know that the Department of Public Safety Cybersecurity Crimes Unit has taken over the case. I, Debbie Rushing, do not know the extent of anything right now. We are day to day speaking with one another. So, we had to change the way we run the city. Computers have been shut down. The Water Department is taking cash, check, and money orders. We can’t use a computer and it’s 2024 but I will say as of today (April 15, 2024) Department Public Safety Cybersecurity Crimes has taken the case over. The Texas Municipal Cybersecurity Forensics will take over from there. That is pretty much all I know. If you have any questions, please ask.”

Citizens of the community were at the meeting to ask questions about the Cybersecurity Incidents and the burned building at 114 N. Beulah St. Hawkins, Tx 75765.

Councilmember Clara Kay made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda which consists of minutes from the March 18, 2024, Regular City Council Meeting. Councilmember Eric Maloy seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Councilmember Greg Branson made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda which consists of the Financial Reports. Councilmember Eric Maloy seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Steve Higdon spoke for Colleen Sheil to discuss the Greater Hawkins Veterans Memorial Golf Tournament.



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Councilmember Eric Maloy made a motion to approve a mobile home permit at Private Road 155 Bridges. Councilmember Chuck Richoz seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Councilmember Greg Branson withdrew the Resolution No. R-2024-1504 Project of the Hawkins Community Development Corporation, Regarding the Acquisition of Land Value at \$38,000 (purchase price \$28,000) and those Projected-Related Expenditures in furthermore of the Project.

Councilmember Eric Maloy made a motion on the upcoming ordering and purchasing of the New Fire Truck. Councilmember Eleta Taylor seconded the motion. Councilmembers Greg Branson, Eleta Taylor, Eric Maloy, and Clara Kay for the motion. Councilmember Chuck Richoz voted no for the motion.

Councilmember Greg Branson made a motion to approve the Departmental Monthly Reports. Councilmember Clara Kay seconded the motion. The motion carried.

No action taken on extending the Spending Freeze.

Councilmember Greg Branson made a motion to take no action on hiring Eric Tuma as Police Chief for the next 6 months. Councilmember Eric Maloy seconded the motion. Councilmember Clara Kay abstained from voting. Councilmembers Greg Branson and Eric Maloy voted for the motion. Councilmembers Chuck Richoz and Eleta Taylor voted against the motion. Mayor Debbie Rushing broke the tie vote and voted for the motion, and the motion passed.

Councilmember Clara Kay made a motion to table hiring Kayla Sartor as Sergeant upon completion of background check until the next City Council Meeting on May 20, 2024. Councilmember Greg Branson seconded the motion. Councilmembers Greg Branson, Eleta Taylor, Eric Maloy and Clara Kay voted to table the motion. Councilmember Chuck Richoz voted not to table the motion. The motion passed.

Mayor Debbie Rushing let the citizens on the speaking list discuss items on the agenda.

Citizen Glyndia Lane asked Councilmember Chuck Richoz, “ How did all this get started? Who made the decision to who signed the contract and allowed this man to go mess the city up and all thousands of dollars it cost us?

Citizen Bob Wenger asked about the water bills. He will pay the same as last month’s bills and then adjust it later, so the city will not lose any money.

Mayor Debbie Rushing stated,” I would like to commend the ladies at the City Hall, they have the best attitudes with wants going on. They are working with pencil and paper.” I asked,” just be patient with us.”

Shahaub Tefreshinejad asked the Mayor Debbie Rushing, “I have one question, when you made the blatant acquisitions. When the authorities ask for a device, why in the hell do you refuse to give it to them and take it into evidence, as I read on social media?



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Mayor Debbie Rushing stated, "Once you left the mayor's office, then I was told what happened, it was put in the cage and hidden. So, when the Texas Rangers came to get it. The Texas Rangers took it out of the cage, and they have it as evidence. Mayor Debbie Rushing refused to give it to Hawkins Police Department to put into their evidence room, which is less safe than the cage."

Citizen Cindy Douthitt stated the authorities didn't ask for it at that time then 4 days later they asked for the evidence. We already secured it before the authorities asked for it.

Mayor Debbie Rushing said to Shahaub Tefreshinejad, "You do realize this is because of you and it's blowing my mind you're asking these questions."

Councilmember Chuck Richoz states, "Its because of me, I suspect being accused with out being named because I did a cybersecurity audit on the computer in the mayor's office and since that time."

"As Mayor I can't make these decisions without council approval," per Mayor Debbie Rushing. 'If your spending money that is true," per Councilmember Chuck Richoz.

Mayor Debbie Rushing said, "No, I'm the Mayor and I have no power. I'm here to serve the community and the council is my boss. If we were in the council and voted no on something, I would really like to do it, and council votes no, then don't do it. You are aware of that."

Councilmember Chuck Richoz states, "I'm aware of that, and there are a couple of points I would like to make here; The cybersecurity audit that we tabled in the last meeting was for \$ 7500 dollars that was the cybersecurity audit we tabled. Now the one that I'm accused of cyber hacking the city computers were Shahaub agreed that it would be no cost to the city, and he volunteered."

Citizen Glyndia Lane stated, "that it really cost us a lot of money."

Councilmember Chuck Richoz said, "No because we did not touch any of the Water Department or any other computers in the City of Hawkins except for the Mayor's office. I cannot be held responsible for any of these things. I cannot be held responsible for these actions that I did not touch the computer."

Mayor Debbie Rushing said, "Chuck do you realize that if you touch one computer in the City Hall, they all talk to each other. So, you can go from Mayor's computer to the water department computer because they are in the same building. You can go to the City Secretary; they share wires and talk to one another. Right.

Councilmember Chuck Richoz said, "Yes, Local area network."

Mayor Debbie Rushing stated, "So it does affect the Water Department's computer and City Secretary's computer as well."

Councilmember Chuck Richoz said, "No, we did not touch the computer in the water department. So, the reaction is not something we anticipated or responsible for these charges by the water department that you know."



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Mayor Debbie Rushing asked Councilmember Chuck Richoz, “Why is the water department shut down?”

Councilmember Chuck Richoz said, “Well that was your decision I guess.”

Mayor Debbie Rushing said, “The Texas Municipal League told me to shut down the computers based on what they found on the computer.”

Councilmember Chuck Richoz stated, “TML, DIR, and others need to do this forensic study on the computers and figure out whether or not this was brought about by my cybersecurity or not.”

“What else would it be? What happened on the mayor’s computer that day? Nothing.” said Mayor Debbie Rushing.

“I am saying that we need to allow audit of the computer to completion, if I am responsible. I would be happy to say I am responsible, but I don’t think I am any of these charges above.” Said Councilmember Chuck Richoz.

Mayor Debbie Rushing stated, “Access to the mayor’s computer by a citizen, you are responsible for that. So, you’re saying that Shahaub is responsible for everything else.”

Councilmember Chuck Richoz replied, “No, I’m not saying that. The action you took was independent from, and I undertook for cybersecurity audit. Now if you shut down the water department and worded the paper all this kind of things has nothing to do with me until such time as Texas Municipal League or the auditor of Cybersecurity tell me or charge me with some kind of felony.”

Citizen Norma Oglesby asked Councilmember Chuck Richoz, “Who is we? Who is we decide? There was not a city council meeting for you to make that decision. So, who is we you keep talking about?”

Councilmember Chuck Richoz said, “Alright, it was my decision.”

Citizen Norma Oglesby told Councilmember Chuck Richoz, “You should not make that decision without Council approval.”

Councilmember Chuck Richoz said, “That is your position. I disagree with that.”

Mayor Debbie Rushing said, “It is a policy.”

Councilmember Chuck Richoz said, “I don’t think it is a policy.”

Mayor Debbie Rushing stated, “There is no way that the mayor has that much power to ignore what the city council wants, then go do what I want.”

Councilmember Chuck Richoz said, “I understand that.”

Citizen Cindy Douthitt told Councilmember Chuck Richoz, “You were told no contract.”



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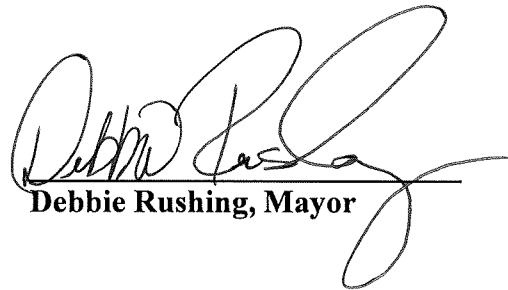
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Councilmember Chuck Richoz said, "I was not told no contract. It was not the contract that was tabled was different than the contract for no charge to the city that we did."

Citizen Cindy Douthitt stated, "Mandy read the minutes from March 18, 2024, City Council Meeting. The council decision was to get 3 bids to be interviewed, no action was taken at that time, and goes on to the next meeting. She (Mandy Thomas) read the minutes Chuck at the first of the meeting. You should never have entered into the contract because the Council has not had time to interview anyone else. The motion was passed to do so. Put a woo Hoo on it man. Don't jump with both feet into it."

Mayor Debbie Rushing wrapped up the cybersecurity incident discussion from the citizens.

Councilmember Greg Branson made a motion to adjourn the meeting; Councilmember Eric Maloy seconded the motion. The motion carried.



Debbie Rushing, Mayor

Attest:



Mandy Thomas, City Secretary