

DEE MARGO
MAYOR

TOMMY GONZALEZ
CITY MANAGER



CITY COUNCIL
PETER SVARZBEIN, DISTRICT 1
ALEXSANDRA ANNELLO, DISTRICT 2
CASSANDRA HERNANDEZ, DISTRICT 3
SAM MORGAN, DISTRICT 4
ISABEL SALCIDO, DISTRICT 5
CLAUDIA ORDAZ PEREZ, DISTRICT 6
HENRY RIVERA, DISTRICT 7
CISSY LIZARRAGA, DISTRICT 8

**SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
CITY HALL, 300 N. CAMPBELL
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
August 8, 2019
9:00 AM**

ROLL CALL

The City Council met at the above place and date. Meeting was called to order at 9:19 a.m. Mayor Dee Margo present and presiding and the following Council Members answered roll call: Peter Svarzbein, Alexsandra Annello, Cassandra Hernandez, Sam Morgan, Isabel Salcido, Henry Rivera, and Cissy Lizarraga. Claudia Ordaz Perez requested to be excused.

AGENDA

1. Briefing from Police Chief Greg Allen and Fire Chief Mario D'Agostino regarding the active shooter incident on August 3, 2019, at 7101 Gateway Boulevard West.

Mr. Tommy Gonzalez, City Manager, introduced the item and informed Council that various cities who have experienced similar incidents have reached out with their support. He stated that a team from the City of Las Vegas in El Paso assisting.

Mr. Gonzalez also mentioned that counseling assistance would be available to City employees and Council members and he emphasized the importance of seeking help if needed.

Police Chief Greg Allen touched on a few details from the incident and provided information on the status of the investigation and the scene. He explained that the National FBI Forensics Team was assisting and estimated that it would take about 20 days to complete.

Chief Mario D'Agostino briefed Council on additional details and on the status of the Family Assistance Center. He explained it would take between 10 to 12 to transition to a resiliency center. Chief D'Agostino informed Council that a Memorial was scheduled for Wednesday, August 14, 2019 at Southwest University Ballpark.

Ms. Tracy Jerome, Managing Director of Museums and Cultural Affairs, Libraries and Tourism, went into further detail about the free Memorial service.

Mr. Gonzalez explained that the Mayor's Office was reaching out to officials from Ciudad Juarez to extend an invitation. He stated that the Memorial would be all-inclusive to

encompass surrounding communities.

Representative Svarzbein asked how the information was disseminated on the day of the incident.

Mr. Gonzalez replied that the information was being sent out in real time as it was being received.

Chief Allen explained that the Police Department was inundated with calls including some containing inaccurate information.

Representative Svarzbein stated that it was important to have accurate information.

Chief Allen stated that it is hard to contain the spread of inaccurate information due to social media. He explained that the Department was dealing with the situation as it transpired and commended a police officer who had only been on the job for six months for his tremendous response.

Mr. Gonzalez stated that many of the police officers that responded to the scene exhibited heroic actions.

Representative Svarzbein asked about the scope of the investigation and the responsible authority.

Chief Allen explained that the investigation would meet federal guidelines for seeking capital punishment and stated that there had been constant communication with the FBI, U.S. State Attorney, and the District Attorney.

Representative Svarzbein asked about an incident involving an armed person in the downtown area reported on social media.

Chief Allen explained that the person was identified as having legal possession of his weapon.

Representative Svarzbein thanked the Police and Fire Departments for their efforts.

Representative Annello asked if security would be increased and about details surrounding the arrest of the suspect in the mass shooting.

Chief Allen replied with an explanation.

Representative Annello stated that members of the community were getting a busy signal from calls to 911.

Mr. Gonzalez replied that the system was flooded with calls and stated that the fall back number would be 311.

Representative Hernandez thanked Chiefs Allen and D'Agostino and asked how members of the public should respond to individuals exercising their right to open carry. She also requested a briefing on the rules surrounding open carry laws.

Mr. Gonzalez explained that he would work with the City Attorney's office to put together a briefing for City Council.

Chief Allen explained that if a person is within their rights they need to proceed with caution to make sure no violations occur.

Representative Morgan explained he has received an abundance of calls and thought it would be a good idea to release a public service announcement on State laws related to open and concealed carry. He stated that people's rights could not be taken away due to fear.

Representative Rivera stated that his office has received nothing but praise regarding the response by the Police and Fire Departments.

Representative Lizarraga thanked the Police and Fire Departments and asked who would be prosecute in the case.

Chief Allen replied that the U.S. State attorney would be the main prosecutor.

Representative Svarzbein commented that police officers responded with humanity and that media coverage indicated that we are all in this together.

Mayor Margo stated that we will continue to be a safe City and thanked the El Paso Independent School District for setting up a staging area.

Mr. Gonzalez explained that a broadcast e-mail was sent out to all City employees and Council containing information on where they could go for assistance. He encouraged people needing assistance to seek help.

Chief D'Agostino stated that the counselors at the Center have a lot of experience and asked the media and everyone to help spread the word about the Family Assistance Center.

Representative Svarzbein asked if parking at the Center would be free.

Chief D'Agostino affirmed.

Representative Salcido also thanked the Police and Fire Departments.

NO ACTION was taken on this item.

2.

ORDINANCE 018959

The City Clerk read an Ordinance entitled: **AN EMERGENCY ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF EL PASO, TEXAS EXTENDING THE LOCAL DISASTER DECLARATION RESULTING FROM AN ACTIVE SHOOTER INCIDENT ON AUGUST 3, 2019.**

Mayor Margo provided information about future meetings with State delegation to discuss any legislation that might be needed because of this incident.

Mr. Tommy Gonzalez, City Manager, commented on the importance of obtaining money from the state.

Ms. Lupe Martinez, Assistant City Attorney, and Ms. Anna Schumacher, Assistant City Attorney, went over the Local Disaster Declaration issued on August 4, 2019,

Motion duly made by Representative Rivera, seconded by Representative Annello, and carried that the Ordinance be **ADOPTED**.

Whereupon the Mayor ordered that a vote be taken on the passage and adoption of the Ordinance which when so done resulted as follows:

AYES: Representatives Svarzbein, Annello, Hernandez, Morgan, Salcido, Rivera, and Lizarraga

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Mayor Pro Tempore Ordaz Perez

3. **Discussion and action to direct the City Manager and staff to research an ordinance regarding security measures of commercial establishments.**

Mr. Tommy Gonzalez, City Manager, discussed the possibility of an ordinance containing guidelines for increasing security at establishments.

Police Chief Greg Allen agreed with Mr. Gonzalez's recommendations and offered additional comments.

Mayor Margo explained the need for further research on this topic.

Mr. Gonzalez agreed and explained that they would involve all stakeholders.

Representative Rivera said he hopes businesses will improve their camera systems.

Mr. Gonzalez stated that technology and police presence are equally important.

Chief Allen stated that camera footage is often poor when investigating shoplifters.

Representative Svarzbein commented on the possibility of defining requirements for square footage and entrances relating to surveillance at businesses.

Mr. Gonzalez replied that staff would reach out to the State and Federal agencies for information and added that additional revenue streams would be required.

Motion made Representative Rivera, seconded Representative Svarzbein, and unanimously carried to **DIRECT** the City Manager and staff to research an ordinance regarding security measures of commercial establishments.

AYES: Representatives Svarzbein, Annello, Hernandez, Morgan, Salcido, Rivera, and Lizarraga

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Mayor Pro Tempore Ordaz Perez

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ADJOURN

Motion made by Representative Lizarraga, seconded by Representative Rivera, and unanimously carried to **ADJOURN** this meeting at 10:29 a.m.

AYES: Representatives Svarzbein, Annello, Hernandez, Morgan, Salcido, Rivera, and Lizarraga

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Mayor Pro Tempore Ordaz Perez

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APPROVED AS TO CONTENT:

Laura D. Prine, City Clerk