



**THE STATE OF TEXAS §
CITY OF BROWNSVILLE §
COUNTY OF CAMERON §**

MINUTES of a **Regular Meeting** of the City Commission of the City of Brownsville, Texas, held on **Tuesday, July 7, 2026**, at **5:00 p.m.** at the **City Commission Chambers**, located at **1001 East Elizabeth Street** and via **Webex Teleconference Meeting** by logging on at:

<https://brownsvilletx.webex.com/brownsvilletx/j.php?MTID=mb0f8d1240d8f166059ae34c036f78f88>

The following City Commission members were present:

JOHN COWEN, JR.	Mayor
COMMISSIONERS:	
NURITH GALONSKY	At-Large “B”
BRYAN L. MARTINEZ	District 1
LINDA C. MACIAS	District 2
GUSTAVO DE LEÓN	District 3
PEDRO E. CARDENAS	District 4

The following City Commission members were absent:

TINO VILLARREAL	At-Large “A”
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The following staff members were present:

ALAN GUARD	City Manager
FELIX SAUCEDA	Deputy City Manager/Chief of Police
WILL TREVINO	City Attorney
JENNIFER AVENDANO	First Assistant City Attorney
MARINA ZOLEZZI	Interim Assistant City Manager
EFREN TRUJILLO	Interim Chief of Staff
MAYRA A. RIOS	City Secretary

The following staff members were absent:

DOROTEO GARCIA	Deputy City Manager
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CALL TO ORDER

a) ROLL CALL

A quorum being present, Mayra Rios, City Secretary, read the call to order to consider the matters as posted and filed for the record in the Office of the City Secretary pursuant to the Texas Open Meetings Act.

Mayor John Cowen, Jr., called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

Mayor John Cowen, Jr., Commissioner Bryan L. Martinez, Commissioner Gustavo De Leon, and Commissioner Pedro Cardenas.

At 05:01 p.m., Commissioner Linda C. Macias attended the meeting in person.

At 05:06 p.m., Commissioner Nurith Galonsky attended the meeting in person.

b) INVOCATION

Alicia Justilian delivered the invocation.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAGS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND STATE OF TEXAS

The Pledge of Allegiance to the United States Flag and the Texas Flag was led by Member of the Troop 11 Larry Jokl, Mayor and City Commission.

PROCLAMATION(S)

1) Recognizing "Parks and Recreation Month" (Commissioner G. De Leon; Commissioner B. Martinez)

Commissioner Linda C. Macias recognizes and commends the Parks and Recreation Department for its vital role in enhancing residents' quality of life through the management of parks, trails, recreational facilities, and inclusive programming that promotes health, community connection, and long-term equitable growth.

2) Recognizing "The Brownsville Fire Department" (Commissioner G. De Leon; Commissioner B. Martinez)

Commissioner Gustavo De Leon recognizes and commends the Brownsville Fire Department for its exceptional courage, professionalism, and dedication demonstrated during the two major fire emergencies on June 15, 2026, exemplifying the highest standards of public safety and service to the community.

3) Recognizing the "Brownsville Dynamite Volleyball Club" (Commissioner N. Galonsky; Mayor J. Cowen)

Commissioner Nurith Galonsky recognizes and commends the Brownsville Dynamite Volleyball Club 13 and Up Team for their outstanding dedication, exemplary sportsmanship, and championship achievement during the 2025–2026 season, proudly representing the community and bringing honor to the City of Brownsville.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Antinio Caldwell, 3130 Creekwood Dr. Brownsville, Texas, requests the City Commission of Brownsville to prioritize animal welfare by investing in staffing, resources, and modern facilities to address the city's growing animal service needs and strengthen public health, safety, and community well-being.

Yolanda Speece, 305 W. Madison St., Brownsville, Texas, addressed the Commission regarding concerns related to the City of Brownsville's meeting procedures.

Rose Applegate, 134 Bates St, Brownsville, Texas, expressed neighborhood concerns regarding delayed brush and junk collection, increased towing-vehicle traffic affecting safety on narrow residential streets, and the need for clear communication on when these issues will be addressed.

Diablo Velez, 1254 E. Tyler St., Brownsville, Texas, addressed the Commission to express concerns regarding local and federal government regulations.

PRESENTATION(S)

1) Review and Comparison of Organizational Culture Assessment Results: 2024 vs. 2025

Perla Cepeda, Chief People Officer for Organizational Development and Human Resources, presented a comprehensive update on the City of Brownsville's ongoing culture, engagement, and workforce-development initiatives spanning from 2018 through 2026. She outlined the progression from early organizational needs assessments to the implementation of full culture evaluations, noting substantial increases in employee engagement across all levels between 2024 and 2025. Cepeda emphasized key improvements in compensation, benefits, employee wellness, leadership training, accountability practices, and professional development opportunities, all designed to strengthen the City's position as an employer of choice and support its One City philosophy focused on building an inclusive, high-performing workplace.

Members of the City Commission expressed appreciation for the Human Resources team's dedication and highlighted the positive impact these initiatives have had across the organization's 1,300 employees. Commissioners praised the administration's commitment to investing in people, reinforcing workplace excellence, and maintaining a supportive culture where employees feel valued and engaged. They reaffirmed their continued support for HR's efforts and recognized the collaborative momentum that has contributed to improved engagement, stronger leadership effectiveness, and a work environment rooted in service, accountability, and community pride.

CITY MANAGER UPDATE(S)

1) Brownsville Chamber of Commerce DC Fly-In: Federal Engagement and Advocacy Update

Esmeralda Villarreal, Chief Executive Officer of the Brownsville Chamber of Commerce, provided an update on the 2026 Washington, D.C. Fly-In, emphasizing that the initiative is designed to ensure Brownsville's presence and influence in national decision-making spaces. She highlighted the Chamber's long-standing role in representing more than 500 businesses and noted recent milestones, including the return to the Texas Capitol and the Chamber's first federal advocacy trip. Villarreal explained that the goal moving forward is to establish a sustained culture of advocacy, strengthen relationships with federal stakeholders, and align the business community, local

government, education, healthcare, and regional partners under a shared federal agenda that supports long-term competitiveness.

She thanked the mayor and commissioners for their early support and invited them to continue partnering with the Chamber by helping reach businesses across all districts and encouraging participation in the federal priorities survey. Ms. Villarreal reiterated that economic development begins with long-term collaboration and strategic engagement, not just ribbon-cuttings, and affirmed the Chamber's commitment to representing Brownsville where key decisions are made. Additional remarks from Chamber leadership and commissioners underscored the positive outcomes of the Washington trip, including federal funding awarded to the Brownsville airport, and expressed continued support for the upcoming 2026 Fly-In.

Mark Hutcheson, Chair of the Government and International Trade Committee, offered closing remarks, thanking the mayor and commissioners and expressing confidence that, with continued support, the Chamber will surpass its goals for 2026.

Commissioners also expressed appreciation for the Chamber's work, noting the visible impact of the fly-in, including federal funding awarded to the Brownsville airport. They reiterated their support for the upcoming trip and for ongoing efforts to strengthen Brownsville's advocacy at the state and federal levels.

2) Recognizing the Office of the City Secretary for receiving the 2026 Achievement of Excellence Award from the Texas Municipal Clerks Association (TMCA).

Alan Guard City Manager recognized the Office of the City Secretary for earning the prestigious Texas Municipal Clerks Association (TMCA) Achievement of Excellence Award, a statewide honor granted to municipal clerk offices demonstrating outstanding performance in statutory compliance, transparency, records management, elections administration, innovation, professional development, and effective municipal operations.

Mayra Rios City Secretary thanked the Mayor, City Commission, and leadership staff for recognizing the Office of the City Secretary, noting that the achievement reflects the dedication and professionalism of the entire team across the Legislative Services, Vital Statistics, and Records and Information Management divisions; she emphasized the office's commitment to transparency, accountability, and excellence in serving elected officials, city departments, and residents, and expressed sincere appreciation for her team's daily integrity, hard work, and support that make this recognition possible.

3) Recognizing the Communications & Marketing Department and BrownsvilleTV for receiving the 2026 Texas Association of Municipal Information Officers (TAMIO) Award.

Alan Guard City Manager recognized and congratulated Manny Chacón and the Communications and Marketing Department, including Brownsville TV, for earning three Texas Association of Municipal Information Officers (TAMIO) Awards, highlighting excellence in municipal communications, video production, event coverage, and public information campaigns; he noted that these honors reflect the City's strong commitment to transparency, civic engagement, and high-quality storytelling across multiple platforms.

Manuel Chacon Communications and Marketing Director expressed gratitude to the Mayor, City Commission, and leadership team, commended his staff for their hard work in demanding field conditions, and acknowledged the department's ongoing dedication to serving the community through social media, television, digital media, news writing, and other communication channels, concluding with appreciation for the team members whose efforts help share Brownsville's story.

CONSENT AGENDA ITEM(S)

- 1) Consideration and **ACTION** to reject proposals for RFP No.101-26-ODHR-RFP For Temporary Staffing Services. (Procurement Department)
- 2) Consideration and **ACTION** to approve the quote/proposal submitted by SHI Government Solutions, Inc. for Rubrik data protection, backup, disaster recovery, cybersecurity resilience, and Microsoft 365 data protection services, in the amount of \$158,288.15, as budgeted, under proposed Contract No. 289-26-IT-CP. (Information Technology Department)
- 3) Consideration and **ACTION** to approve the Supportive Services Program allocation for Round 2 under the U. S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) HOME American Rescue Plan (ARP) program. (Grants and Community Development)
- 4) Consideration and **ACTION** to authorize an Interlocal Agreement between the City of Brownsville and TxDOT for the installation and reimbursement for the operation and maintenance of the traffic signals within a municipality. (Engineering and Public Works Department)
- 5) Consideration and **ACTION** to approve the proposal submitted by Roadway Asset Services, LLC (RAS), in the amount of \$276,366, as budgeted, for Pavement Management Services, under proposed Contract No. 298-26-EPW-CP, for a term of nine months. (Engineering and Public Works Department)
- 6) Consideration and **ACTION** to authorize contracts with Ceballos Lawn Care and NVS Corporate Services for Contract No. 135-26-HLH-RFP, Mowing Services for Vacant Lot, in an estimated amount of \$55,000 annually per vendor, for a term of two (2) years with one (1) optional one-year renewal. (Health, Wellness & Animal Services)
- 7) Consideration and **ACTION** to authorize a contract with Noble Texas Builders, LLC in the amount of \$457,709.00 for Contract No. 257-26-PRK-CP, for a term of 2.5 months (approximately 75 calendar days), for improvements at Morningside Park and Brownsville Sports Park for the Parks and Recreation Department. (Parks and Recreation Department)
- 8) Consideration and **ACTION** on **Resolution Number 2026-108** to accept the recommendation of the Brownsville Fire Department and authorize the appointment of Assistant Chief Ismael Gamboa to the Cameron County Emergency Communication District (CCECD) Board of Directors. (Fire Department)
- 9) Consideration and **ACTION** to approve **Resolution Number 2026-094** approving and entering into a multi use agreement between the city of Brownsville and the Texas Department of Transportation (TXDOT) to improve five bus stops with monopoles located along the state right of way. (Brownsville Metro)
- 10) Consideration and **ACTION** to approve **Resolution Number 2026-098** designating an officer or employee to calculate the No-New-Revenue Tax Rate, Voter-Approval Tax Rate, and De Minimis Rate, if applicable, in accordance with section 26.04 of the Texas Tax Code for the Fiscal Year 2027 budget. (Financial Services)
- 11) Consideration and **ACTION** to discuss and approve **Resolution Number 2026-099** expressing official intent to reimburse with tax-exempt obligation proceeds costs associated with certain capital improvements. (Financial Services Department)
- 12) Consideration and **ACTION** on **Resolution Number 2026-103** authorizing preparation of an updated Service and Assessment Plan (SAP) for the Paseo De La Resaca Lighting and Landscaping Maintenance Public Improvement District (PID); calling for and authorizing the publication of a Notice of Public Hearing regarding the updated SAP and levy of the PID assessments under Chapter 311, Texas Tax Code, and such other matters related thereto. (Paseo De La Resaca PID Board)
- 13) Consideration and **APPROVAL** on **SECOND** and **FINAL READING** of **Ordinance Number 2026-1806**, to annex into the City of Brownsville boundary limits, a property described as a 47.27-acre tract being Lot 1, Block 202, El Jardin Resubdivision, according to the map or plat thereof recorded in Volume 4, Page 48, Map Records of Cameron County, Texas, save and except all that

part or portion thereof conveyed to the County of Cameron in deed dated November 18, 1993, recorded in Volume 2658, Page 181, Official Records of Cameron County, Texas, located on South Dakota Avenue, Brownsville, Texas 78521, as shown in Exhibit "A". (Planning & Redevelopment Department)

- 14) Consideration and **APPROVAL** on **SECOND** and **FINAL READING** of **Ordinance Number 235-2026-009**, to rezone from Commercial Corridor (CC) to Residential Estate (RE) to allow a single-family residence for 2.64 acres out of 5.0 acres out of the Baldauf 10.88-acre tract out of the C.B. Hamlet 47.9-acre tract, Share 12, El Jardin Subdivision, Cameron County, Texas, located at 32 Fish Hatchery Road, Brownsville, Texas 78520, as shown in Exhibit "A". (District 4) (Planning & Redevelopment Department)
- 15) Consideration and **APPROVAL** on **SECOND** and **FINAL READING** of **Ordinance Number 235-2026-010**, to rezone from Residential Single-Family (R-1) to Residential Suburban (R-2) to allow a duplex for Lot 4, Block 4, McKenzie Estates Subdivision, Cameron County, Texas, located at 995 North Iowa Road, Brownsville, Texas 78521, as shown in Exhibit "A". (District 2) (Planning & Redevelopment Department)
- 16) Consideration and **APPROVAL** on **SECOND** and **FINAL READING** of **Ordinance Number 235-2026-011-S**, to request a Specific Use Permit (SUP) in a Commercial Corridor (CC) zoning district to allow an event center for Lot 2, Block 1, Juan Garza Subdivision Replat, Cameron County, Texas, located at 4810 Boca Chica Boulevard, Brownsville, Texas 78521, as shown in Exhibit "A". (District 1) (Planning & Redevelopment Department)

Motion: Motion was made by Commissioner Bryan L. Martinez seconded by Commissioner Pedro Cardenas to approve consent agenda items 1 through 16. The vote was cast 4 for, 0 against. [Villarreal, Galonsky and De Leon absent] The motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARING(S)

- 1) **Public Hearing and ACTION on FIRST READING on Ordinance Number 2026-1809 designating a +/- 1,021.48 acre area located in Cameron County, Texas, as a tax increment reinvestment zone; describing the boundaries of the zone; creating a board of directors for the zone; providing for an effective date and a termination date for the zone; naming the zone the "Estrella Reinvestment Zone Number Six, City of Brownsville"; establishing a tax increment fund; and containing other findings and provisions related thereto. (City Manager's Office)**

Jeffrey Earl initiated the public hearing for the proposed Tax Reinvestment Zone (TRZ) No. 6 associated with Project Austral, a master-planned community north of the toll road and west of the Battlefield Park, featuring approximately 898 acres of single-family, multifamily, and executive-level housing, as well as commercial space, schools, parks, and more than 30 miles of trails, with an anticipated taxable value exceeding \$2 billion at full buildout.

Will Treviño City Attorney clarified that, because this TRZ is petition-initiated, state law requires the board composition to include representatives from the property owner, the county, and legislative offices, noting that the ordinance establishes these appointments and that all subsequent actions will still return to the City Commission for approval before the Commission moved forward with action on the item.

Brief discussion among the City Commission and City staff.

Mayor John Cowen Jr. opened the public hearing.

There were no speakers.

Motion: Motion made by Commissioner Pedro Cardenas, seconded by Commissioner Linda C. Macias to close the public hearing. The vote was cast 4 for, 0 against. [Villarreal, Galonsky and De Leon absent] The motion carried unanimously.

Motion: Motion made by Commissioner Bryan L. Martinez, seconded by Commissioner Pedro Cardenas to approved first reading on Ordinance 2026-1809. The vote was cast 5 for, 0 against. [Villarreal and Galonsky absent] The motion carried unanimously.

2) Public Hearing and ACTION on FIRST READING on Ordinance Number 2026-1810 designating a +/- 804.13 acre area located in Cameron County, Texas, as a tax increment reinvestment zone; describing the boundaries of the zone; creating a board of directors for the zone; providing for an effective date and a termination date for the zone; naming the zone the "Greater Brownsville Tech District Reinvestment Zone Number Five, City of Brownsville"; establishing a tax increment fund; and containing other findings and provisions related thereto. (City Manager's Office)

Ben Peña, Chairman of the Greater Brownsville EDC, introduced the first reading of the ordinance establishing Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone (TIRZ) No. 5, emphasizing that the long-planned development is projected to generate approximately \$1.6 billion in taxable value, create high-paying jobs, and support advanced manufacturing growth in Brownsville.

Jeffrey Earl added that the EDC, as a City-created agency focused on job creation and investment, is partnering with Cameron County to deliver major infrastructure improvements necessary for developing the 800-acre site, including extensive earthwork and a required substation. He noted that the TIRZ enables the project's viability by offsetting substantial upfront costs, with long-term benefits including taxable value, sales tax, personal property tax, and increased utility revenue.

Brief discussion among the City Commission and City staff.

Mayor John Cowen Jr. opened the public hearing.

There were no speakers.

Motion: Motion made by Commissioner Bryan L. Martinez, seconded by Commissioner Pedro Cardenas to close the public hearing. The vote was cast 5 for, 0 against. [Villarreal and Galonsky absent] The motion carried unanimously.

Motion: Motion made by Commissioner Pedro Cardenas, seconded by Commissioner Bryan L. Martinez to approved first reading on Ordinance 2026-1810. The vote was cast 5 for, 0 against. [Villarreal and Galonsky absent] The motion carried unanimously.

ITEMS FOR INDIVIDUAL CONSIDERATION(S)

1) Consideration and APPROVAL on SECOND and FINAL READING on Ordinance Number 2026-1807 amending Chapter 66, Municipal Court, providing for municipal court civil jurisdiction to enforce health and safety and nuisance abatement ordinances; authorizing the issuance of search and seizure warrants; providing for concurrent jurisdiction; creating a court of record, and other matters pertaining thereto. (Office of the City Attorney; Municipal Court)

Will Treviño City Attorney explained that the proposed ordinance would establish the Municipal Court as a court of record, allowing concurrent jurisdiction with the district court and improving the efficiency of case handling.

Judge Rene De Coss expressed appreciation for the support from the City Manager, city leadership, and the City Attorney's Office, noting that creating a court of record has long been needed to expand jurisdiction, provide greater finality in court decisions, reduce merit-based appeals, and expedite case resolution for both residents and the City's enforcement of ordinances. He emphasized that this change will help alleviate backlogs affecting other courts and voiced his full support for the ordinance, thanking the Commission for its continued collaboration and commitment to improving municipal court operations.

Motion: Motion made by Commissioner Bryan L. Martinez, seconded by Commissioner Pedro Cardenas to approved second and final reading for Ordinance Number 2026-1807 The vote was cast 5 for, 0 against. [Villarreal and Galonsky absent] The motion carried unanimously.

2) Consideration and ACTION on the following proposed Charter amendments for the Special Election to be held on November 3, 2026. (Charter Review Committee/ Office of the City Secretary/ Office of the City Attorney):

- a) Amending Charter Art. V., Administrative Provisions, Section 13 – Compensation (Address Mayor and City Commissioner's compensation)
- b) Amending Charter Art. V., Administrative Provisions, to add 21-B. - Office of the City Secretary (Creating the office)
- c) Amending Charter Art. V., Administrative Provisions, to add 21-C. - Office of the City Auditor (Creating the office)
- d) Amending Charter Art. V., Administrative Provisions, Section 28A. Audit and oversight committee (Increasing the membership and general clean-up)
- e) Amending Charter Art. V., Administrative Provisions, to add Section 35, Municipal Campaign Finance (Requiring Commission to set by ordinance)
- f) Amending Charter Art. V., Administrative Provisions, to modify Section 4. - Qualifications. (Adding tax delinquency or other liability due to City as a bar to holding office)
- g) Amending Charter Art. V., Administrative Provisions, Section 3. - Vacancies (Adding automatic triggers for forfeiting office)
- h) Amending Charter Art. V., Administrative Provisions, Section 3. - Vacancies (Adding discretionary triggers for forfeiting office)
- i) Amending Charter Art. V., Administrative Provisions, to add Section 35, Code of Ethics; Ethics Advisory Commission (Requiring Commission to create and adopt rules by ordinance)
- j) Amending Charter Art. VII., General Provisions, to add Section 3-A, - The Initiative (Adding initiative petition procedures for citizens)
- k) Amending Charter Art. VII., General Provisions, to add Section 3-B, - Referendum (Adding referendum procedures for citizens)
- l) Amending the Charter Art. V., Administrative Provisions, to add Section 22-B, Merit Hiring (Adding Merit principle hiring to City Charter)
- m) Amending the Charter Art. I through VII, except Art. VI, Utilities Board, to revise or eliminate provisions that have been superseded by state law and to update or eliminate archaic language

Will Treviño City Attorney presented a comprehensive report to the mayor and city commission summarizing the work of the Charter Review Committee. The committee had been tasked with

reviewing campaign finance rules, proposing updates to the city charter, addressing overdue changes related to the Audit & Oversight Committee, and evaluating elected-official compensation. To complete these responsibilities, it held five public hearings between May and June.

The committee recommended adopting compensation caps of \$50,000 for city commissioners and \$62,500 for the mayor. The intent was to preserve voter control and avoid automatic salary changes tied to median household income, while leaving room for the commission to modify these ceilings before placing them on the ballot.

Mr. Treviño next explained that although the charter references the city secretary, it does not formally establish the office. The committee recommended adding a provision to formally create the Office of the City Secretary and to clarify that the city commission should appoint and remove the city secretary after consultation or recommendation from the city manager. This structure is consistent with other Texas cities and aligns with state law requirements for municipal clerks.

He then outlined proposals to codify the Office of the City Auditor. Under the current system, the auditor is selected by the citizen Audit & Oversight Committee, with salary approved by the commission. The committee recommends shifting appointment and removal authority to the city commission while maintaining operational reporting lines to the Audit & Oversight Committee. Additionally, the Audit & Oversight Committee would expand from five to seven members, with each commissioner appointing one member. The committee sought to retain the ability to engage external auditors, subject to available budget.

Regarding campaign finance regulations, Treviño explained that the committee did not support locking specific contribution limits into the charter. Instead, it recommended requiring the city commission to maintain a campaign finance ordinance with disclosure requirements and contribution and spending limits that comply with state and federal law. This approach gives future commissions flexibility to adjust limits as legal standards evolve, avoiding issues like those seen in other cities, where voter-approved limits were later invalidated in court.

Mr. Treviño reviewed recommended candidate qualifications, including disqualification for delinquent personal taxes or personal debts owed to the city and for felony convictions while in office. These standards reflect qualifications upheld in other Texas cities and mirror requirements applied to municipal board appointments.

The committee also proposed adding automatic and discretionary forfeiture provisions to supplement the existing recall process. Automatic forfeiture would occur if an officeholder lost required qualifications, failed residency requirements, was convicted of a felony, accumulated excessive absences, or violated ethics-related financial interest rules. Discretionary forfeiture would apply when an official is convicted of a non-felony offense possibly involving moral turpitude. In such cases, the city attorney would petition a district court to determine whether the offense meets that standard. If it does, the commission would be required to call a recall election at the next available election date without needing a citizen petition. Any official removed through recall, conviction, or court order would thereafter be permanently barred from holding office in Brownsville.

Commissioner Bryan L. Martinez asked the city attorney for a legal opinion on whether the Ethics Advisory Commission currently adequate structure, legal parameters, and ordinance support has to fulfill the responsibilities implied by the proposed charter amendment. He expressed discomfort with granting additional authority to a commission he believes is still lacking organizational stability.

Following a brief break due to loss of quorum, the question was revisited.

Mayor John Cowen asked for clarification of the phrase “prohibited personal financial interest provisions” and how such violations are currently handled.

Mr. Treviño explained that the phrase refers to Article V, Section 4 of the charter, which prohibits elected officials and employees from having financial interests in city contracts or sales. He noted that while the restriction exists, the city currently has no designated body—aside from the Ethics Advisory Commission—to formally determine violations.

Mr. Treviño explained that the committee, after reviewing how other municipalities handle such matters, recommended empowering the Ethics Advisory Commission to make those determinations.

Addressing Commissioner Martinez's concerns, Mr. Treviño acknowledged that the Ethics Advisory Commission had operational weaknesses in the past, particularly with respect to notice requirements. He noted that revisions to Chapter 38 of the ethics code are underway, supported by a nearly full slate of commission members. He emphasized that the proposed charter amendment would strengthen the commission's permanence and accountability by requiring the existence of an ethics board and conflict-of-interest and disclosure ordinances. These requirements mirror model charter language and would prevent future commissions from dismantling the ethics framework. Citizens could pursue legal remedies, such as mandamus, if the city failed to comply.

Mr. Treviño continued by explaining additional committee recommendations based on an AI-assisted comparative analysis with model charters. These included establishing a citizen initiative process for proposing ordinances, creating a referendum process allowing citizens to challenge recently adopted ordinances (with exceptions for critical areas such as zoning, taxes, public safety, bonding, or salary ordinances), and adding merit-based hiring rules for non-civil-service employees. The merit hiring provision would require city positions to be filled based on examinations, licensure, experience, or comparable evidence of competence, with personnel policies adopted by the commission upon recommendation from the city manager.

Mr. Treviño described a "catch-all" cleanup amendment to update Articles I through VII of the charter—excluding the section concerning PUB—to remove archaic language and eliminate provisions superseded by state law. He noted that the charter still contains outdated material from early 20th-century adoption processes, as well as obsolete districting language and other preempted items.

Mayra Rios City Secretary reported that the city secretary's office is still reviewing the petition submitted on June 24. The petition, containing approximately 8,000 signatures, is being evaluated using a statistical sampling method permitted under state law for petitions exceeding 1,000 signatures. The office is reviewing a random 25% sample—2,049 signatures—generated by a third-party consultant to ensure impartiality. The election office team has been conducting the review for 19 days and expects to complete analysis soon. After reviewing the sample, the data will be forwarded to the consultant for final analysis.

Ms. Rios noted that the timing of the petition review affects the commission's ability to call a November election. If Ground Texas meets the signature threshold, the city must place its proposition on the ballot. If it does not, the commission may table second reading of the charter amendment ordinance and instead plan for a May election. She explained that Ground Texas could legally challenge a determination of insufficiency through mandamus, potentially impacting election timing.

Mr. Treviño concluded by outlining the anticipated timeline: first reading of the election-calling ordinance on July 21, final reading on August 4, and an August 17 deadline to order the November election. He confirmed that every proposed charter amendment had been reviewed and recommended by the Charter Review Committee.

Mr. Treviño requested that the commission proceed through the propositions individually and vote on each one. This meeting was not a public hearing; public input would occur during the formal election-calling process.

Motion: Motion made by Commissioner Bryan L. Martinez, seconded by Commissioner Pedro Cardenas to approved proposition "a". The vote was cast 4 for, 1 against. [De Leon against] [Villarreal and Galonsky absent] The motion carried.

Motion: Motion made by Commissioner Pedro Cardenas, seconded by Commissioner Bryan L. Martinez to approved proposition "b". The vote was cast 5 for, 0 against. [Villarreal and Galonsky absent] The motion carried unanimously.

Motion: Motion made by Commissioner Pedro Cardenas, seconded by Commissioner Bryan L. Martinez to approved proposition “c”. The vote was cast 5 for, 0 against. [Villarreal and Galonsky absent] The motion carried unanimously.

Motion: Motion made by Commissioner Bryan L. Martinez, seconded by Commissioner Pedro Cardenas to approved proposition “d”. The vote was cast 5 for, 0 against. [Villarreal and Galonsky absent] The motion carried unanimously.

Motion: Motion made by Commissioner Bryan L. Martinez, seconded by Commissioner Pedro Cardenas to approved proposition “e”. The vote was cast 5 for, 0 against. [Villarreal and Galonsky absent] The motion carried unanimously.

Motion: Motion made by Commissioner Linda C. Macias, seconded by Mayor Jhon Cowen Jr. to approved proposition “i”. The vote was cast 5 for, 0 against. [Villarreal and Galonsky absent] The motion carried unanimously.

Motion: Motion made by Commissioner Bryan L. Martinez, seconded by Commissioner Pedro Cardenas to approved proposition “j”. The vote was cast 5 for, 0 against. [Villarreal and Galonsky absent] The motion carried unanimously.

Motion: Motion made by Commissioner Bryan L. Martinez, seconded by Commissioner Pedro Cardenas to approved proposition “k”. The vote was cast 5 for, 0 against. [Villarreal and Galonsky absent] The motion carried unanimously.

Motion: Motion made by Bryan L. Martinez, seconded by Commissioner Pedro Cardenas to approved proposition “l”. The vote was cast 5 for, 0 against. [Villarreal and Galonsky absent] The motion carried unanimously.

Motion: Motion made by Commissioner Pedro Cardenas, seconded by Commissioner Bryan L. Martinez to approved proposition “m”. The vote was cast 5 for, 0 against. [Villarreal and Galonsky absent] The motion carried unanimously.

Charter amendment items f, g, and h were not voted on, and the commission decided not to proceed with them.

BOARD APPOINTMENT(S)

- 1) **Consideration and ACTION on Resolution Number 2026-076C to appoint or reappoint members to the Brownsville Border Film Commission. (Convention and Visitors Bureau Department)**

Motion: Motion made by Commissioner Pedro Cardenas seconded by Commissioner Bryan L. Martinez, to appoint **Eddie Perez**, as a member of the Brownsville Border Film Commission. The vote was cast 5 for, 0 against. [Villarreal and Galonsky absent] The motion carried unanimously.

- 2) **Consideration and ACTION on Resolution Number 2026-083C to appoint or reappoint members to the Paseo De La Resaca Lighting and Landscaping Maintenance District Service Plan Board (PASEO). (Office of the City Secretary)**

The appointment for Commissioner Gustavo De Leon was tabled for the next City Commission meeting.

- 3) **Consideration and ACTION on Resolution Number 2026-084 to appoint or reappoint members to the Brownsville Public Library System Advisory Board. (Library)**

Motion: Motion made by Commissioner Linda C. Macias seconded by Commissioner Bryan L. Martinez, to appoint **Rosalinda Williams**, as a member of the Brownsville Public Library System Advisory Board. The vote was cast 5 for, 0 against. [Villarreal and Galonsky absent] The motion carried unanimously.

4) Consideration and ACTION on Resolution Number 2026-100 to appoint or reappoint members to the Transit Advisory Committee (TAC). (Brownsville Metro Department)

The appointment for Commissioner Gustavo De Leon was tabled for the next City Commission meeting.

5) Consideration and ACTION on Resolution Number 2026-101 for the removal and appointment of the members to the Building & Standards Commission. (Planning & Redevelopment Department)

6) Consideration and ACTION on Resolution Number 2026-102 for the removal and appointment of the members to the Board of Adjustment. (Planning & Redevelopment Department)

Motion: Motion made by Commissioner Pedro Cardenas, seconded by Commissioner Linda C. Macias, to appoint **Tony Izaguirre** as an alternate member to the Building & Standards Commission and the Board of Adjustment. The vote was cast 5 for, 0 against. [Villarreal and Galonsky absent] The motion carried unanimously.

Motion: Motion made by Commissioner Bryan L. Martinez, seconded by Commissioner Linda C. Macias, to appoint **Luis Melendez** as an alternate member to the Building & Standards Commission and the Board of Adjustment. The vote was cast 5 for, 0 against. [Villarreal and Galonsky absent] The motion carried unanimously.

Motion: Motion made by Commissioner Gustavo De Leon, seconded by Commissioner Bryan L. Martinez, to appoint **Eduardo Garrido** as an alternate member to the Building & Standards Commission and the Board of Adjustment. The vote was cast 5 for, 0 against. [Villarreal and Galonsky absent] The motion carried unanimously.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion: Motion made by Commissioner Pedro Cardenas, seconded by Commissioner Linda C. Macias to convene into Executive Session at 7:27 p.m. The vote was cast 5 for, 0 against. [Villarreal and Galonsky absent] The motion carried unanimously.

- 1) Closed session pursuant to Tex. Gov't. Code Sections 551.071 (Consultation with Attorney), 551.072 (Real Property Deliberation), and 551.087 (Economic Development Deliberation) related to Project Egypt. (Office of the City Attorney/ City Manager's Office)**
- 2) Closed session pursuant to Tex. Gov't. Code Sections 551.071 (Consultation with Attorney), 551.072 (Real Property Deliberation), and 551.087 (Economic Development Deliberation) related to Project Headquarters. (Office of the City Attorney/ City Manager's Office)**
- 3) Closed session pursuant to Tex. Gov't. Code Sections 551.071 (Consultation with Attorney), 551.072 (Real Property Deliberation), and 551.087 (Economic Development Deliberation) related to Project Marketsquare. (Office of the City Attorney/ City Manager's Office)**
- 4) Closed session pursuant to Tex. Gov't. Code Sections 551.071 (Consultation with Attorney), 551.072 (Real Property Deliberation), and 551.087 (Economic Development Deliberation) related to Project Romeo. (Office of the City Attorney/ City Manager's Office)**

- 5) Closed session pursuant to Tex. Gov't. Code Sections 551.071 (Consultation with Attorney) and 551.087 (Economic Development Deliberation) related to Solid Waste Services. (Office of the City Attorney/ City Manager's Office)
- 6) Closed session pursuant to Tex. Gov't. Code Section 551.071 (Consultation with Attorney, including Contemplated or Pending Litigation) related to: Fire Truck Price-Fixing Litigation. (Office of the City Attorney/ City Manager's Office)
- 7) Closed session pursuant to Tex. Gov't. Code Section 551.071 (Consultation with Attorney, including Contemplated or Pending Litigation) related to: Midtown Entertainment District enforcement. (Office of the City Attorney/ City Manager's Office)
- 8) Closed session pursuant to Tex. Gov't. Code Section 551.071 (Consultation with Attorney, including Contemplated or Pending Litigation and/or Settlement Offer) related to CCAD Property ID 30393. (Office of the City Attorney/ City Manager's Office)

All items scheduled for discussion in the Executive Session were addressed, and a certified agenda was maintained.

Upon the conclusion of the Executive Session, Mayor John Cowen Jr. reconvened the Regular Meeting at 8:58 pm.

POSSIBLE ACTION ON ANY ITEM(S) AS DISCUSSED IN EXECUTIVE SESSION

- 1) **Consideration and ACTION, if any, related to Resolution Number 2026-104 on Project Egypt. (Office of the City Attorney/ City Manager's Office)**

Motion: Motion made by Commissioner Bryan L. Martinez seconded by Commissioner Gustavo De Leon to approved Resolution Number 2026-104. The vote was cast 4 for, 0 against. [Villarreal, Galonsky and Macias absent] The motion carried unanimously.

- 2) **Consideration and ACTION, if any, related to Resolution Number 2026-107 on Project Headquarters. (Office of the City Attorney/ City Manager's Office)**

Motion: Motion made by Commissioner Bryan L. Martinez seconded by Commissioner Pedro Cardenas to approved Resolution Number 2026-107. The vote was cast 5 for, 0 against. [Villarreal, Galonsky absent] The motion carried unanimously.

- 3) **Consideration and ACTION, if any, related to Resolution Number 2026-106 on Project Marketsquare. (Office of the City Attorney/ City Manager's Office)**

Motion: Motion made by Commissioner Bryan L. Martinez seconded by Commissioner Pedro Cardenas to approved Resolution Number 2026-106. The vote was cast 5 for, 0 against. [Villarreal, Galonsky absent] The motion carried unanimously.

- 4) **Consideration and ACTION, if any, related to Resolution Number 2026-105 on Project Romeo. (Office of the City Attorney/ City Manager's Office)**

Motion: Motion made by Commissioner Bryan L. Martinez seconded by Commissioner Pedro Cardenas to approved Resolution Number 2026-108. The vote was cast 5 for, 0 against. [Villarreal, Galonsky absent] The motion carried unanimously.

5) Consideration and ACTION, if any, related to Fire Truck Price-Fixing Litigation. (Office of the City Attorney/ City Manager's Office)

No Action.

6) Consideration and ACTION, if any, related to Midtown Entertainment District enforcement. (Office of the City Attorney/ City Manager's Office)

Motion: Motion made by Commissioner Bryan L. Martinez seconded by Commissioner Pedro Cardenas to proceed as discussed in executive session. The vote was cast 5 for, 0 against. [Villarreal, Galonsky absent] The motion carried unanimously.

7) Consideration and ACTION, if any, related to CCAD Property ID 30393. (Office of the City Attorney/ City Manager's Office)

No Action.

Mayra Rios City Secretary noted for the record that Commissioner Gustavo De Leon recused himself on this item.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Commission, upon duly made motion the meeting adjourned at 9:01 p.m.

Approved 21st day of July, 2026.

John Cowen Jr.

**John Cowen, Jr.
Mayor**

ATTEST:

Mayra A. Rios

**Mayra A. Rios
City Secretary**

*Respectfully submitted by:
Blanca E. Gonzalez,
Administrative Assistant, MPA, TRMC
Office of the City Secretary*



CERTIFICATE *of* SIGNATURE

REF. NUMBER
QQCHU-HRQDF-FZNV5-MGO2T

DOCUMENT COMPLETED BY ALL PARTIES ON
22 JUL 2026 19:41:47
UTC

SIGNER

JOHN COWEN JR.

EMAIL
JOHN.COWEN@BROWNSVILLETX.GOV

TIMESTAMP

SENT
22 JUL 2026 01:36:24

VIEWED
22 JUL 2026 18:14:14

SIGNED
22 JUL 2026 18:14:39

SIGNATURE



IP ADDRESS
71.41.254.47

LOCATION
SAN ANTONIO, UNITED STATES

RECIPIENT VERIFICATION

EMAIL VERIFIED
22 JUL 2026 18:14:14

MAYRA RIOS

EMAIL
MAYRA.RIOS@BROWNSVILLETX.GOV

SENT
22 JUL 2026 01:36:24

VIEWED
22 JUL 2026 19:39:01

SIGNED
22 JUL 2026 19:41:47



IP ADDRESS
216.194.176.166

LOCATION
BROWNSVILLE, UNITED STATES

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