City of West Orange

City Hall
2700 Western Avenue
West Orange, TX 77630

City Council
Regular Session
Meeting Minutes

Monday, October 12, 2026	5:00 p.m.	Council Chambers

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Randy Branch	Meritta Kennedy	Jay Odom
Michael Shugart, Sr.	Lanie Brown	

COUNCIL MEMBER ABSENT:
Gail Langton

APPOINTED OFFICIALS PRESENT:

Jon Sherwin	Christopher Leavins	Theresa Van Meter
Mike Stelly	Simmie Gibson	

OTHERS PRESENT:

Jane Branch	Elaine Richard	Cheryl Green
Renee Cross	Debbie Schlicher	Pam Cooper
Amy Bland	Cheryl Ray	Liz Davis
Mary Lou Klinkhammer	Tremaine Wilson	Michael Corbett

Call to Order

Mayor Branch called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. Council Member Shugart gave the invocation followed by the Mayor leading the Pledges of Allegiance to both the United States and Texas flags.

Consent Agenda

Discussion and Possible Action on approval of the minutes of the September 10, 2026 Budget Hearing, the September 10, 2026 Tax Rate Hearing and the September 14, 2026 Council Meeting - A motion was made by Mayor Pro-Tem Kennedy to accept the September 10, 2026 Budget Hearing, the September 10, 2026 Tax Rate Hearing and the September 14, 2026 Council Meeting minutes as presented, with one typographical correction on page one of the Budget Hearing minutes. This motion received a second from Council Member Brown. A vote was cast, with motion passing unanimously.

Staff Reports

Public Works – Jon Sherwin

Mr. Sherwin reported the following activities for the month of September, 2026:

- ***Construction Projects***
  Waste Water Treatment Plant construction is 95% complete and on schedule to complete on November 15, 2026. No date scheduled for ribbon cutting.
- ***Building Official***
  - 9 permits issued
  - 19 permits completed
- ***Sanitation***
  - 13 loads of green waste collected
  - 1 load of C&D to landfill
- ***Animal Control***
  - 80 calls
  - 16 intakes
  - 3 claimed / 0 adopted / 7 rescued
  - 0 court filings
- ***Street***
  - Patching of Streets and driveways
- ***Parks***
  - Mowing

- Debris pickup

- ***Shop***
  - Normal repairs and maintenance of City assets
  - Monthly 30-for-30 – all Police and Fire Vehicles in good working condition

Police Department – Mike Stelly

Chief Stelly reported the following Police Department activities for the month of September, 2026:

- Traffic contacts: 272
- Crashes reported: 7
- Arrests: 50
- Reports: 28
- Calls for service: 427
- Miles driven: 11,029

Code Enforcement
Violations Investigated: 61
Violations filed w/Court: 5

General Administration – City Secretary Theresa Van Meter

Mrs. Van Meter reported that booths were still available for the October 24, 2026 Holiday in the Park festival. She encouraged everyone to come out to the festival and invite others, as well.

Fire Department – Asst. Chief Simmie Gibson

Asst. Chief Gibson reported the following activities for the month of September, 2026:

- Emergency medical service incident: 2
- Motor vehicle accident with injuries: 3
- Service calls: 1
- Dispatched and cancelled enroute: 1
- No incident found upon arrival: 2

Regular Session

Discussion and Possible Action on a request for a variance to Ordinance No. 302-F submitted by Renee Cross to allow for the placement of a manufactured home at 1810 Houston Avenue – Ms. Cross addressed Council, stating that she had a buyer for this property if the requested variance was approved.

She cited the following reasons for Council to grant this variance:

- The property is in Current Flood Zone AE (which is the highest zone for residential dwellings)
- The City is now missing incoming property tax dollars. If the property becomes a residence, property taxes would be generated.
- The lot is now vacant and will produce overgrown grass and rodents.
- The variance request is to permit a brand-new manufactured home to be placed there, which will improve the aesthetic of surrounding neighborhood.

Ms. Cross further explained that she currently has a young couple (with cash in-hand) who wish to buy the property and establish their residence there.

Council Member Brown asked Ms. Cross if she had written permission from all properties abutting this land, as well as those from across the street. Ms. Cross responded that the ordinance only requires "adjacent" property owners to sign off on it, not those from across the street. She added that she had personally gone to the Melancon's home (next door to the property) to ask for their permission. They denied her request.

Mayor Pro-Tem Kennedy stated that she had spoken with Mrs. Melancon earlier that day, who told her that they did not want a manufactured home placed on the property. She also called Mr. Dean Fuller, owner of the rental property to the west side of 1812 Houston. He told her that he had not been contacted, and did not know anything about this.

Council Member Brown then made a motion to approve a variance for issuance of a permit allowing placement of a HUD-Code manufactured home at 1812 Houston with a variance to waive the notification requirements of Ordinance No. 302-F; to allow for a one-time transfer from

the owner with a time-limit of sixty (60) days for completion of sale, transfer and closing. Variance will be good for the life of that structure only. Her motion received a second from Council Member Shugart.

With there being no further discussion, Mayor Branch called for a record vote on this motion:

Council Member Shugart	Aye
Council Member Brown	Aye
Mayor Branch	Nay
Council Member Odom	Nay
Mayor Pro-Tem Kennedy	Nay

Mayor Branch stated that, with the majority vote being "nay," the variance request was denied.

Discussion and Possible Action regarding ongoing noise nuisance *(as defined in Ordinance No. 255)* presented by Elaine Richard and Cheryl Green – Mrs. Richard addressed Council, requesting help with the noise problems coming from 201 Carol Street, behind her home. Mrs. Green then stated that problems began with this property when it became an Airbnb. They have continued now that the house has become a rental. She explained that they have had to call the police numerous times for this problem, with backup having to be requested on one occasion. Whenever the officer arrives, the noise goes down, but as soon as he leaves, it goes right back up. She then requested that the time be changed in the current ordinance from 10:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. She also requested that a clause be added holding someone accountable for the noise – possibly fine the renters or the property owner. Chief Stelly responded that a time had not been established in the ordinance to begin with, as disturbances can happen during the day, as well. He also explained that a third party (the property owner) cannot be held liable for the renters' actions.

Chief Stelly stated that Mrs. Richard or Mrs. Green should file a complaint and then present their case of "reasonable noise." He said the officers could not do that as they were not the affected party.

Mayor Pro-Tem Kennedy asked Chief Stelly if it was not the responsibility of the police department to enforce this ordinance. He responded that they do enforce it, as they file the signed complaint with the court. Mr. Leavins stated that the court would need a complaining witness who would swear to the complaint and that would ultimately result in a charge that would go to the court as a criminal offense. Each separate act would be a separate criminal offense.

Presentation by Debbie Schlicher regarding problem of over-population of cats in the city – Ms. Schlicher addressed Council regarding the problem of over-population of cats in West Orange. She explained that area mobile home parks do not want the cats in their parks to be trapped and removed. Therefore, they just keep breeding. She said they have been working on this problem for a long time, but they need help. She reported that she has found a veterinarian who is willing to help. If the city traps the cats and gets them into the shelter and then gives them a vaccination, within two to three days she will send someone to pick them up. If they are adoptable, they will fix them and adopt them out. However, a lot of these cats are feral and not adoptable.

Ms. Schlicher added that if the neighbors ask for the cats to be fixed and returned to the neighborhood from which they came, they can be returned to the neighborhoods that they are used to.

She commended Ms. Cooper for paying out of her own pocket for many cats to be fixed.

Ms. Schlicher also explained that there are grants to help cover the costs of having these animals fixed. Council Member Brown agreed, adding that she has information on several funding opportunities. Ms. Schlicher stated that donations of money, food and cat litter would be appreciated.

Discussion and Possible Action on approval of a Resolution authorizing the submittal of a Texas Community Development Block Grant application to the Texas Department of Agriculture and committing matching funds, if awarded – A motion was made by Mayor Pro-Tem Kennedy to approve a Resolution authorizing the submittal of a Texas Community Development Block Grant application to the Texas Department of Agriculture and committing matching funds, if awarded. This motion received a second from Council Member Brown. With there being no discussion, a vote was cast with the motion passing unanimously.

Discussion and Possible Action on future development of 1504 Buffalo - Mayor Branch explained that this vacant lot is located on the corner of Buffalo and Quincy Streets. Council Member Brown asked if there were plans for this property. Mayor Branch responded that there

may be someone interested in purchasing the property if the "price was right." Mr. Sherwin explained that we had always been under the impression that this property was reserved for city use. After researching the deed and past minutes, there are actually no restrictions on this property.

Mr. Leavins explained that if the city wishes to dispose of the property, the method of disposition will have to be determined. If sold, it will have to be done either by auction, competitive sealed bid or sell through a broker. It has to be listed for 30-days, after which bids can be considered. It will ultimately have to be presented to Council for vote on further action.

Mayor Branch then made a motion that city staff be authorized to move forward with the disposition and enter into discussions, bringing a broker contract back to Council for further action. Mayor Pro-Tem Kennedy seconded this motion. Council Member Odom questioned if there was a market value for this property, or if it had been appraised. Mr. Sherwin responded that it has not been appraised, but he has researched this through the Appraisal District. The mayor stated that he felt somewhere in the area of $3,000 to $5,000 would be what a lot that size would sell for in West Orange. With there being no further discussion, the mayor called for a vote on the motion, which passed unanimously.

Discussion and Possible Action on authorizing the Public Works Director to advertise and accept bids for the reconstruction of Foreman Road – A motion was made by Mayor Pro-Tem Kennedy to authorize the Public Works Director to advertise and accept bids for the reconstruction of Foreman Road. Council Member Brown seconded this motion. Mr. Sherwin explained that the section of Foreman Road to be reconstructed will be north of the railroad tracks to the service road, with an apron onto Williams Drive of approximately 60' to 80'. He also stated that this will be "phase 1" of this three-phase project. Phase 2 will be Williams Drive and Phase 3 will be Foreman Road south of the railroad tracks to Western Avenue. Plans are to reconstruct with concrete pavement, making this a more industrial, rather than residential, street. With there being no further discussion, Mayor Branch called for a vote on the motion, which passed unanimously.

Discussion and Possible Action on authorizing the City Secretary to advertise and solicit quotes for sanitation services - A motion was made by Council Member Brown to authorize the City Secretary to advertise and solicit quotes for the sanitation services. Mayor Pro-Tem Kennedy seconded this motion. With there being no questions or discussion, the mayor called for a vote on the motion, which passed unanimously.

Discussion and Possible Action on approval of Ordinance No. 499-A, an Ordinance amending the 2026-2027 budget to carry forth and correct items on the Budget Summary Page - Council Member Brown made a motion to approve Ordinance No. 499-A, an Ordinance amending the 2026-2027 budget to carry forth and correct items on the Budget Summary Page. A second to this motion was made by Mayor Pro-Tem Kennedy. With there being no discussion, the mayor called for a vote on the motion, which passed unanimously.

Announcements

Mayor Branch then made note of the following:

- "Holiday in the Park" – Saturday, Oct. 24, 2026
- Council Meeting – Monday, November 9, 2026; 5:00 p.m.

Adjournment

With there being no further business before Council, Mayor Branch adjourned the meeting at 6:04 p.m.

R R Branch
Randy Branch, Mayor

ATTEST:

Theresa Van Meter
Theresa Van Meter, City Secretary

CITY OF WEST ORANGE Corporate SEAL ORANGE COUNTY, TEXAS