

The Bandera PROPHEET

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Bandera City Council recap

Council members discuss termination policy review; grant application process successfully completed, making city eligible for millions

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During their regular meeting last week, Bandera City Council members accepted the resignation of City Secretary Jill Shelton, which will be effective Jan. 21. Shelton has accepted a position elsewhere, a representative said.

In other business, council members voted three to one to keep an appeal process in place, allowing a terminated employee to file an appeal for council review.

“I feel that it is a process that you can go through with TWC (the Texas Workforce Commission),” Council Member Jerry Russe said, who was the lone nay vote.

Its removal recommended by the city attorney, the appeal process was adopted in 2017 as recourse for employees who felt they were unjustly reprimanded or fired. Since its implementation, two terminations have been overturned.

Council Members Toni Kunz and Darcy Hasty said they both trust the current administration, but believe the appeal process could help quell rumors that a termination was personal.

“In a small town, it’s difficult to fire someone, and there are going to be issues,” Kunz said. “We haven’t been running smoothly and professionally long enough for me to feel comfortable taking it off the books... Today’s administration is capable of handling this. Yesterday it

was not. Employees were not handled fairly, and wrong decisions were made.”

Council Member Rebeca Gibson concurred, however she said she was confident with the current management.

“Previously we did not have a very trusted leader in that role. I would feel comfortable removing this and letting the wheel work,” Gibson said. City Administrator David Jordan said before an employee is terminated, numerous boxes must be checked off, including conversations with human resources, the department head and legal council.

The department head’s recommendation is heavily considered, Jordan said, and the personnel manual is reviewed to determine whether any infraction violated policy, as well as to what extent the punishment should be. Jordan also said he takes into consideration the employee’s work history, acknowledging their job is their livelihood.

“This person is a human,” Jordan said. “Multiple conversations take place and a lot of homework is done.”

Finally, the city has successfully met the grant submission deadline for the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program’s consideration for two cycles of separate funding, and the Economic Development Association Grant program, making the city eligible to receive millions of dollars in grant money for the land acquisition and the relocation/rebuild of the waste water treatment plant. As a last resort, the city will consider a low interest loan from the Texas Water Development Board, a portion of which could be eligible for grant forgiveness.

“It was one of my top priorities to secure as much funding as possible for the waste water treatment plant when I came on board as city administrator,” Jordan said.

The city is mandated by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality to move the plant. The estimated target to complete the project is \$15 million.