



**RECORD OF WORKSHOP
WESLACO CITY COMMISSION
TUESDAY, JULY 21, 2026**

On the 21st day of July 2026 at 4:30 p.m., the City Commission of the City of Weslaco, Texas convened in a Workshop in the Legislative Chamber Room located at 255 S. Kansas Avenue with the following members present:

PRESENT:	Mayor	Adrian Gonzalez
	Mayor Pro Tem	Pete Garcia Jr.
	Commissioner	Letty Lopez
	Commissioner	Josh Pedraza
	Commissioner	JP Rodriguez (via zoom)
	Commissioner	Israel Gonzalez Jr.

ABSENT:	Commissioner	Adrian Farias
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STAFF PRESENT:	Omar Rodriguez	Asst. City Manager
	Aida Vega	Deputy City Secretary
	Benjamin Castillo	City Attorney

Also present: Antonio Lopez, Asst. City Manager/Fire Chief, Rosie Cavazos, Finance Director, Rebekah De La Fuente, Planning & Code Enforcement Director, Peter Hermida, City Engineer, Ted Walensky, Captain Police Dept., David Arce, Utilities Director, Nick Castillo, Public Works Director, Marco A. Ortiz, Sanitation Director, Eddie Serna, Parks & Recreation Director, Maricarmen Garcia, Asst. Library Director, Rick Mendoza, IT Director, Celine Pardo, Municipal Court, Luz Galindo and other staff members.

I. CALL TO ORDER

A. Certification of Public Notice.

Mayor Gonzalez called the meeting to order and certified the public notice of the meeting as properly posted Wednesday, July 15, 2026.

B. Roll Call.

Aida Vega, Deputy City Secretary, conducted roll call to show attendees.

II. NEW BUSINESS

A. Discussion and presentation on Drainage Ditch maintenance. (Staffed by Public Works Department.)

Nick Castillo, Public Works Director, presented on the city's drainage ditch maintenance operations and previewed a short video. He stated there is 28 ditches totaling approximately 22.18 miles —as well as nearly 39 acres of retention and drainage areas (RDFs) across various subdivisions. He explained that each ditch is dredged at least once per year, with a full cycle taking

approximately 43 to 44 weeks citywide. Separate from dredging, mowing of the ditches is performed quarterly using two tractors equipped with batwing and slope mowers. The city's equipment inventory includes one long-reach excavator city owned), one wheeled excavator, and two slope mowers.

A before-and-after photo of the Latino Club ditch was presented as an example of a thoroughly dredged channel, which took approximately three weeks to complete and noted by the time a ditch is fully cleaned, early re-growth has already begun, and it will be approximately 40 weeks before crews return for another thorough dredging.

Mayor Gonzalez acknowledged that maintenance operations are conducted year-round, not just in response to storm events, and expressed the need for the Media Department to more consistently document and communicate the city's ongoing maintenance work to the public, noting that crews had faced unfair criticism following the June rain event. Mayor Pro Tem Garcia Jr. raised the importance of reinstating monthly reporting of ditch maintenance activities to the Drainage Committee and the full Commission. Nick Castillo stated ditch activity is already reflected in weekly reports submitted each Wednesday to management.

Omar Rodriguez explained that the city can only maintain ditch and rights-of-way that are physically accessible. In numerous locations throughout the city, fencing, storage sheds, RV parks, and other encroachments — many predating current ordinances — prevent equipment access to one or both sides of a ditch. He referenced a recent inter-agency meeting attended by the Mayor, city management, department heads, the county drainage district, irrigation district, and TxDOT, at which this shared challenge was discussed. Omar Rodriguez stated that the drainage district declines to clean ditches when access is blocked on one side, compounding the problem.

Benjamin Castillo, City Attorney, explained that encroachments on city right-of-way must be addressed through Code Enforcement and, if necessary, through Municipal Court, either by ordering the property owner to remove the encroachment or by authorizing an abatement with a lien placed against the property and acknowledged this is a lengthy process.

Mayor Gonzalez stressed the importance of clearly communicating to affected property owners that resolving drainage problems may require the removal of fencing or structures built within the easement. Staff noted in some cases, fill dirt may need to be added to ditches to restore proper elevation and flow and that illegal dumping of brush and debris contributes significantly to ditch obstruction, and that post-rain cleanup is a separate and recurring necessity beyond the regular maintenance cycle.

B. Discussion and presentation on Fireworks in city limits. (Staffed by Fire Department.)

Omar Rodriguez begun the discussion by explaining why the item was placed on the agenda: following the July 4th holiday, the city received numerous complaints regarding the placement of fireworks stands and a perceived lack of enforcement. He clarified that the city currently has no

ordinance regulating fireworks — neither sales nor use within city limits — and that enforcement authority is limited entirely to applicable state law. He noted that a proposed ordinance appears later on the regular commission meeting agenda, and that this workshop presentation was intended to be informational and to generate policy direction.

Mike Sweeny, Fire Marshal, Joe Pedraza, Asst. Code Enforcement Director, presented the current regulatory landscape and a proposed ordinance. Mike Sweeny explained that the city once had a fireworks ordinance, but that it was inadvertently not codified during the codification process around 2006–2008 and that previous city legal counsel had advised that the ordinance could not simply be re-added to the codified code after the fact, which is why it was never restored.

Joe Pedraza explained that fireworks vendors are currently processed as general vendors under the city's vendor ordinance. For the July 4th period, nine stands operated inside city limits. Code Enforcement and the Fire Marshal's Office conduct safety inspections of each stand, verifying compliance with state requirements: a person 18 or older must be present 24/7, a fire extinguisher must be on-site, both exits must be accessible, no-smoking signs must be posted, and a valid state fire marshal permit must be displayed. Stands are not permitted to open until these requirements are met. Commissioner Gonzalez questioned if revenues are received. Rosie Cavazos, Finance Director, stated fireworks vendors are required to register as sales tax vendors and reported only approximately \$1,000 in sales tax revenue attributable to fireworks for the last fiscal year, due in part to the occurrence of cash transactions.

Mike Sweeny stated the proposed ordinance would constitute a complete ban on the sale, storage, and use of all consumer-grade fireworks (classified as 1.3G) within city limits. He acknowledged enforcement of the use prohibition would be practically impossible at scale, noting that the ordinance's primary purpose would be public safety awareness and providing a legal basis for action in an exceptionally bad case.

Antonio Lopez, Asst. City Manager/Fire Chief, stated taken into consideration in proposing the ordinance was that structures fires attributable to fireworks have occurred in the city, including two homes heavily damaged as well as EMS calls involving hand and facial injuries from fireworks ignition. He characterized the ordinance draft as a starting point for discussion, not a final product.

Mayor Gonzalez expressed that while fireworks are inherently dangerous, banning their use citywide would be nearly unenforceable given the city's population, and suggested that a more practical approach such as regulating where sales stands may be located, such as establishing minimum distances from gas stations and residential areas — might be more effective and suggested that requiring permits and maintaining a known list of stand locations would improve oversight.

Mayor Pro Tem Garcia Jr. raised the possibility of taking the matter to the voters via a ballot proposition, rather than having the Commission unilaterally adopt an ordinance. Commissioner Lopez and Mayor Gonzalez voiced that would have enforcement issues. Joe Pedraza said the

commission can put into place the requirements regulating the fireworks. Commissioner Rodriguez (participating remotely via Zoom) asked whether the ordinance would ban all fireworks or only certain types and was informed that the proposed draft would ban all consumer-grade (1.3G) fireworks — sales, storage, and use — without exception.

Commissioner Pedraza expressed consideration to those residents, particularly veterans experiencing PTSD and pet owners, who had contacted the city with strong complaints about firework use. However, he acknowledged the distinction between regulating sales and regulating use, noting that prohibiting sales within city limits would not prevent residents from purchasing fireworks nearby and bringing them back.

Omar Rodriguez recommended giving commissioners additional time to consider the proposal and directing staff to research what conditions and regulations similar cities have adopted, particularly regarding retail placement rules for vendors and looking at state regulations for enforcement. He proposed returning with a more thorough set of options at a follow-up workshop in approximately 30 days. Mike Sweeny stated there were nine official holidays where the sales of fireworks are permitted for celebrations by the State.

At 5:19 p.m. Commissioner Pedraza seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Garcia Jr. moved to convene the workshop into Executive Session. The motion carried unanimously; Mayor Gonzalez was present and voting.

III. EXECUTIVE SESSION

A. Personnel — Discussion regarding the goals, objectives, and evaluation of the City Manager for the City of Weslaco as authorized by Section §551.074 of the Texas Government Code.

B. Legal Consultation — Consultation with the City Attorney regarding Liquid Environmental as authorized by Section §551.071 of the Texas Government Code.

C. Real Property — Discussion and consultation regarding the sale, purchase, exchange, lease or value of property located at Westgate and 18th Street legally described as being South 12.79 acres of land, more or less of Farm Tract 666, Block 164, West Tract Subdivision, Weslaco, Hidalgo County, Texas as authorized by Section §551.072 of the Texas Government Code.

At 5:33 p.m. Mayor Gonzalez stated the City Commission had completed its Executive Session and reconvened the workshop as open to the public and entertained a motion for adjournment.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Lopez seconded by Commissioner Gonzalez Jr. moved to adjourn the workshop meeting of July 21, 2026 at 5:33 p.m. The motion carried unanimously; Mayor Gonzalez was present and voting.

CITY OF WESLACO

Adrian Gonzalez, **MAYOR**

ATTEST:

Norma A. Cantu, **CITY SECRETARY**