CITY OF COOPER
CITY COUNCIL MEETING – REGULAR
OCTOBER 13, 2026 – 5:30 PM

MEMBERS PRESENT: DARREN BRADDY; MAYOR, DAVID PHILLIPS VIA ZOOM, SCOTTY DEATHERAGE, LINDA BARNES, DIANE STEGALL VIA ZOOM AND PATRICK WILLIAMS

CITY ATTORNEY: JAY GARRETT

OTHERS: EMILY HOWSE, ARAEL LABRA, CHARLES RUTLEDGE, AMBER NORRIS, TANNER CRUTCHER DUANE SPRAGUE AND TREY OATS

AGENDA ITEM #1
Darren Braddy called the meeting to order and Darren also voiced the prayer.

AGNEDA ITEM #2
There were no public comments.

AGENDA ITEM #3
Scotty Deatherage made the motion to approve the September 14, 2026 regular meeting minutes and the September 28, 2026 special meeting and executive session minutes as written. Linda Barnes seconded. Vote unanimous.

AGENDA ITEM #4
Mayor Darren Braddy welcomed Tanner Crutcher to present the Regional FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) for bunker gear. Tanner Crutcher presented an overview of the Regional Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) award for which the City of Cooper serves as the host applicant. The project totals $888,000, consisting of $807,272.72 in federal funding and $80,727.28 in required local matching funds, to purchase 185 sets of structural firefighting personal protective equipment (PPE) for 14 participating fire departments.
Tanner explained that this is the fourth regional award received across four grant cycles. The first award, hosted by Hopkins County, funded portable and mobile radios. The second, hosted by the City of Sulphur Springs, included self-contained breathing apparatus for the Enloe, East Delta, and Klondike Volunteer Fire Departments. The third, hosted by the City of Commerce, funded wildland firefighting gear. The current award, hosted by the City of Cooper, funds structural firefighting PPE.
The required local match includes $2,618.16 for Cooper, $4,363.60 for East Delta, and $4,363.60 for Klondike, totaling $11,345.36 for those departments. The remaining $69,381.92 represents the local match associated with participating departments in Hopkins County.
Tanner Crutcher reported that FEMA confirmed on October 13, 2026, that although the program generally operates on a reimbursement basis, the City may request an advance of grant funds. Upon receipt of advanced funds, the City would have 30 days to expend those

funds to pay an invoice for eligible equipment purchased within the approved scope of the grant.
Tanner Crutcher further reported that procurement must comply with the applicable requirements of Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations (2 CFR). State-recognized competitive procurement contracts may be used, provided the procurement meets the applicable federal requirements. As host applicant, the City of Cooper will be responsible for administering procurement and submitting required progress and status reports.
The City received notification of the award on September 22, 2026, and has 30 days from that notification to accept the grant, establishing an acceptance deadline of October 22, 2026.
Linda Barnes made the motion to accept the Regional FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG). Patrick Williams seconded. Vote unanimous.

AGENDA ITEM #5
Mayor Darren Braddy presented the item of the Texas Emergency Services Retirement System (TESRS) updated cost proposal. Mayor Braddy asked City Secretary, Emily Howse to explain. Emily Howse stated that, in 2022, Tanner Crutcher had brought the proposal of doing away with the minimal retirement benefits for the Volunteer Firemen, which consisted of a water allowance and a telephone allowance and implementing a real retirement plan for the Volunteer Firemen. Emily stated that monies had been set aside since 2022 and in that time the number of Volunteers had decreased therefore the cost to fund was lower than originally stated. Emily stated that with the current budgeted amount (2026-2027 budget) of $40,000, only $7,081.50 in addition to the $65,000.00 previously budgeted along with the $Donation funds in the amount of $39,331.55 was needed to buy back 10 years of service for a total of $111,413.05, for the Volunteer Firemen, leaving $32,918.50 available for other purposes.
Tanner Crutcher presented an overview of the Texas Emergency Services Retirement System (TESRS) and the proposed buyback of eligible prior volunteer service; an initiative previously offered for consideration in 2022. He explained that the buyback would allow eligible service performed before the department's participation in TESRS to be recognized under the system, subject to TESRS approval and payment of the required cost.
Crutcher reported that under the department's previous retirement arrangement, volunteers could retire after 20 years of service and receive a pension of $16.99 per month, with no increase for additional years served. He explained that TESRS provides a defined retirement benefit based on qualified service credit and contributions made by the participating entity on the member's behalf.
Under TESRS, members become fully vested after 15 years of qualified service credit and may begin receiving retirement benefits at age 55, subject to the system's eligibility requirements.
Crutcher also discussed the potential value of retirement service credit for volunteers participating in the department's recruit program who later pursue employment with a fire department. He discussed that qualifying service could be recognized toward retirement eligibility under another system, including the TMRS.

Linda Barnes made the motion to approve the ten (10) year buy back from TESRS for the Cooper Volunteer Firemen in the amount of $111,413.05. Scotty Deatherage seconded. Vote unanimous.

AGENDA ITEM #6
Mayor Darren Braddy presented to the council the item of amending Ordinance #02-11-20 with Ordinance #01-10-26, requiring mobile venders to show proof of state licensing. Linda Barnes made the motion to read Ordinance #01-10-26 by caption. David Phillips seconded. Vote unanimous. City Attorney, Jay Garrett, read:

ORDINANCE #01-10-26

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COOPER, TEXAS, AMENDING ORDINANCE NO. 02-11-20 RELATING TO THE REGULATION OF MOBILE VENDORS WITHIN THE CORPORATE LIMITS OF THE CITY OF COOPER; REQUIRING MOBILE FOOD VENDORS TO PROVIDE PROOF OF VALID STATE LICENSING ISSUED BY THE TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF STATE HEALTH SERVICES; PROVIDING FOR COMPLIANCE WITH APPLICABLE STATE LAWS; PROVIDING A SEVERABILITY CLAUSE; PROVIDING A REPEALER CLAUSE; AND ESTABLISHING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Scotty Deatherage made the motion to approve Ordinance #01-10-26 requiring mobile vendors to show proof of state licensing. Patrick Williams seconded. Vote unanimous.

AGENDA ITEM #7
Mayor Darren Braddy presented to the council the item of authorizing signatories for all of the city bank accounts at First National Bank with the impending retirement of Emily Howse. Mayor Braddy stated that, in his opinion, Leslie Blankenship was the person who needed to be authorized along with himself and Linda Barnes. David Phillips made the motion to read Resolution #01-10-26 by caption. Scotty Deatherage seconded. Vote unanimous. City Attorney, Jay Garrett, read:

RESOLUTION #01-10-26

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COOPER, TEXAS, AUTHORIZING DESIGNATED PERSONS TO DEPOSIT AND WITHDRAW MONIES ON DEPOSIT WITH THE FIRST NATIONAL BANK IN COOPER ON ALL ACCOUNTS; AND SETTING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS, the City of Cooper, Texas has monies on deposit with The First National Bank in Cooper which EMILY HOWSE has held signature authority; and

WHEREAS, the impending retirement of EMILY HOWSE necessitates her removal and the authorization of designated City officials to have authority to deposit and withdraw funds from such Bank and the City Council is authorized to grant such authorization;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COOPER, TEXAS:

SECTION 1. EMILY HOWSE is removed as an authorized signatory. The following persons are authorized to make deposits and withdrawals and issue orders in connection with the City of Cooper monies on deposit with The First National Bank in Cooper standing in the name of all accounts held by the City of Cooper:

DARREN BRADDY
LINDA BARNES
LESLIE BLANKENSHIP

SECTION 2. This Resolution shall be in full force and effect immediately upon its passage and approval.

SECTION 3. That if any section, provision, subsection, paragraph, sentence, clause, phrase, or word in this Resolution or application thereof to any person or circumstance is held invalid by any court of competent jurisdiction, such holdings shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of this Resolution, and the City Council of the City of Cooper, Texas hereby declares it would have enacted such remaining portions, despite such invalidity.

PASSED AND APPROVED, this the 13th day of October, 2026.

David Phillips made the motion to approve Resolution #01-10-26 authorizing the removal of Emily Howse as a signatory from all city accounts at First National Bank and adding Leslie Blankenship along with Darren Braddy and Linda Barnes. Patrick Williams seconded. Vote unanimous.

Emily Howse stated "This is my last council meeting and I am no longer responsible but I am available for help when needed". David Phillips congratulated Emily on her service to the city.

AGENDA ITEM #8

Mayor Darren Braddy introduced Arael Labra with WRA to present the item of Resolution #02-10-26 authorizing a one-time variance for Cooper ISD building code on the new High School/Jr High School project.

Arael Labra presented the code research on each specific addition.

Cooper ISD Superintendent Amber Norris gave an overview of what the school is requesting.

WRA and Cooper ISD, presented the request for a one-time, project-specific variance (Resolution #02-10-26) from certain automatic fire sprinkler requirements. The project includes three additions to the existing Junior High and High School buildings, each separated from the existing buildings by a 2-hour fire wall designed per IBC Section 706. Each addition is under 12,000 square feet with an occupant load under 300 and, evaluated independently, does not trigger the sprinkler requirements of IBC Section 903.2.3 for Group E occupancies. The variance would allow the additions to proceed without requiring the existing campus to be retrofitted with automatic sprinklers solely because of the additions' effect on the existing buildings' allowable area and frontage. The storm shelter will be sprinkler-protected, and the fire riser will be sized for two future connections.

Scotty Deatherage made the motion to read Resolution #02-10-26 by caption. Patrick Williams seconded. Vote unanimous. City Attorney, Jay Garrett, read:

CITY OF COOPER, TEXAS
RESOLUTION # 02-10-26

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COOPER, TEXAS, GRANTING A ONE-TIME, PROJECT-SPECIFIC VARIANCE FROM CERTAIN AUTOMATIC FIRE SPRINKLER REQUIREMENTS OF THE APPLICABLE BUILDING CODE FOR THE COOPER INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOL/JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL EXPANSION PROJECT; ESTABLISHING CONDITIONS FOR SAID VARIANCE; PROVIDING THAT THE VARIANCE SHALL NOT CONSTITUTE A GENERAL WAIVER OR AMENDMENT OF THE CITY'S BUILDING CODES; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Linda Barnes made the motion to approve Resolution #02-10-26 authorizing a one-time variance for Cooper ISD building code on the new High School/Jr High School project. Diane Stegall seconded. Vote unanimous.

AGENDA ITEM #9
Mayor Darren Braddy updated the council on the Frankie McKinney house.

AGENDA ITEM #10
Mayor Darren Braddy updated the council on the city happenings.

AGENDA ITEM #11
Monthly budget reports were reviewed.

AGENDA ITEM #12
Accounts paid were reviewed.

AGENDA ITEM #13
Linda Barnes made the motion to adjourn. Patrick Williams seconded. Vote unanimous.

TIME: 6:20 PM

APPROVED:

DARREN BRADDY, MAYOR
CITY OF COOPER

ATTEST:

EMILY HOWSE
CITY SECRETARY