

PRESS RELEASE
CITY OF COLEMAN
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
October 21, 2019

At its October 17, 2019 regular meeting, the City Council of the City of Coleman, Texas approved an ordinance to provide for the direction, organization and staffing of the City of Coleman Police Department. The ordinance was recommended by Dan Santee, Special Legal Counsel hired by the City of Coleman to review the City Charter and conduct an operational assessment of the Coleman Police Department this past Summer. The ordinance was recommended to address conflicting provisions in the City's Charter and its Code of Ordinances and to fill in gaps not addressed in the City's Charter. Key elements of the ordinance are as follows: (a) Clarifying that the City Council is empowered to establish and maintain a police department and to provide for its direction, organization and staffing, including setting the salaries of the members of the Department; (b) Specifying qualifications of the Police Chief position, including meeting the minimum licensing standards, experience and certifications and prohibiting the holding of any law enforcement related off-duty employment outside the City limits and/or the City's extra-territorial jurisdiction; (c) Establishing minimum qualifications for all Police Department personnel; (d) Establishing and specifying the duties of the Police Chief, including establishing comprehensive operational policies of the Police Department that comply with best practices as recommended by the Texas Police Chiefs Association and/or the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement; and (e) Authorizing the Police Department to participate in mutual aid with other jurisdictions. The ordinance was passed on first reading at the City Council's September 26, 2019 special called meeting. The City Council delayed adoption of the final ordinance until its October 17 meeting to address some of the concerns expressed by Police Chief Anthony Smith. One of the concerns raised by the Police Chief was the prohibition of off-duty law enforcement work by the Chief. The City Council amended the ordinance to only prohibit off-duty law enforcement work by the Police Chief outside the City limits and ETJ of the City. This amendment was consistent with the Personnel Policies for the Police Department for all other police officers of the City, which prohibit off-duty law enforcement work outside the City limits of Coleman.

Mayor Tommy Sloan stated: "As I have stated, it is the City Council's goal to ensure that the Coleman Police Department is the best that it can be in providing law enforcement protection for the citizens of Coleman. This ordinance was recommended by our Special Legal Counsel, and the City Council unanimously approved it, because it establishes and specifies certain minimum qualifications, duties and practices for our Police Department that will, if followed, make the Coleman Police Department, a better law enforcement agency for the citizens of Coleman. The City Council wants to ensure accountability for all its departments, including the Police Department, and to utilize all of the City's law enforcement personnel and resources for the benefit of local taxpayers. The City Council felt very strongly, and each of the City Council members expressed that in the Council meeting, that the Chief of Police needs to limit his off-duty law enforcement work to the City of Coleman and its surrounding area to ensure that Coleman maintains a visible police presence and that the Police Department is being properly managed."

Tommy Sloan, Mayor