



**CITY OF LA MARQUE
SPECIAL MEETING OF CITY COUNCIL
MINUTES
of
September 7, 2021**

Minutes of Special City Council meeting held in the Council Chambers, 1109 Bayou Road, La Marque, Texas as well as via teleconference - ZOOM on Monday, September 7, 2021, beginning at 6:00 p.m.:

(1) CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Mayor Bell called the Special meeting to order at 6:08 p.m.

(2) ROLL CALL

Keith Bell	Mayor
Kimberley Yancy	Councilmember District A
Joe Compian	Mayor-Pro-Tem District B
Michael Carlson	Councilmember District C
Casey Mc Auliffe	Councilmember District D (via ZOOM)

OTHER STAFF

Chaise Cary	Interim City Manager
Gus Knebel	Interim City Attorney (MillsShirley)
Robin Eldridge	City Clerk

(3) INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Bell gave the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance

(4) CITIZENS PARTICIPATION

(5) PUBLIC HEARING

- a. Conduct **FIRST** Public Hearing to hear public input regarding the FY 2021-2022 Proposed Budget

Mayor Bell closed the Special meeting and opened the Public Hearing 6:13 p.m.

Finance Director S. Kou began the discussion with asking Council's direction as to how to proceed with an item of the leasing of fourteen fleet vehicles that was discussed during the budget workshops. It appears that there could soon be a

shortage of electronic chips, and this could put the city in jeopardy of even being able to obtain these vehicles, of whether there will be enough vehicles that can meet the supply and demand. She asked for direction as to whether she should go ahead and lock the city into a certain price range now with the city's ability to sell at a higher rate in the future.

Councilmember Mc Auliffe said she was in favor of moving ahead now for this timing issue to be locked into a certain price.

Councilmember Carlson also was in favor of moving ahead now for this timing issue to be locked into a certain price.

Councilmember Yancy asked about looking at other options, contacting GM directly or having the city's contact person through the middle person (Enterprise) contact them in order to be locked into the price without having to pay anything up front. It was clarified that the city doesn't pay anything until after the budget is adopted, in the new budget year. Encouraged the City Manager to look into H-GAC program for the vehicles'

Mayor Pro-Tem Compian reminded all that the city got into a Fleet Program Agreement with Enterprise several years ago. He is not in favor of changing anything about the process at this time. He said that he had asked for more information or the agreement between the city and Enterprise during the budget workshops.

Mayor Bell reiterated the savings if the city were still able to acquire these vehicles at all due to the supply and demand. But he still was unsure the best way to go about this. He thanked the Finance Director for bringing this forward to Council. It was asked whether the fourteen vehicles would last another year if the vehicles were not available or if the chips were not available. To which the Interim City Manager said that they would last another year without having to be replaced.

Councilmember Carlson changed his opinion and wanted to hold off on making any changes in lieu of what the Finance Director had brought forth. No formal guidance was given.

There were no comments from citizens

Mayor Bell closed the Public Hearing at 6:38 p.m.

(6) NEW BUSINESS

- a. Discussion/possible action regarding adopting Ordinance No. **O-2021-0015**, making appropriations for the support of the City of La Marque for the fiscal year beginning October 1, 2021, and ending September 30, 2022, appropriating money

to a sinking fund to pay interest and principal due on the City's indebtedness; and adopting the annual budget for the City of La Marque for 2021-22 fiscal year

** Councilmember Carlson made a motion to adopt Ordinance No. O-2021-0015 on the FIRST reading.

** Councilmember Yancy seconded. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

- b. Discussion/possible action regarding adopting Ordinance No. **O-2021-0016**, levying ad valorem taxes for use and operation of the municipal government of the City of La Marque, Texas for the 2021 tax year; providing for apportioning each levy for specific purposes; and providing when taxes shall become due and when same shall become delinquent if not paid

Discussion included what effect Senate Bill 2 has on municipalities. Finance Director Ms. Kou explained that the tax rate was set at .557064 these numbers being the ones before the effect of Senate Bill 2 came into effect. After receiving the numbers from the Tax Assessor Cheryl Johnson Office, a rollback rate turns out to be .477076, since the .557064 rate is higher than the voter approval rate, the taxpayers have the right to petition to rollback to this amount (.477076), and Senate Bill 2 allows for this. The only thing that has changed is the revenue, which the city has no control over, this comes from the Galveston County Appraisal District. The city is not proposing a tax rate increase. The City is proposing the same rate as in the past few years. If a petition is submitted and it is caused to have a rollback election called, the tax rate would roll back to (.477076). The difference in the two rates, calculates out to \$993,577.00, that the city would have to cut from the proposed budget.

Mayor Bell said that information he received from Ms. Johnsons Office was that the city could possibly be able to get this rate up to .490519; based on estimated freeze revenue (over 65 or disabled) and any new improvements.

Finance Director said that this has already been calculated into these numbers.

Councilmember Mc Auliffe said that she has not changed her mind on the proposed tax rate from the previous discussions. "We just have to be prepared. If we are being as forefront as possible and the fact that we are not proposing a tax increase and what services would need to cut, we have to be optimistic about it."

Most cities only have one tax rate public hearing, this city is conducting three public hearings.

Mayor Bell stated, "We will do whatever the majority of the citizens of the city want this Council to do. Having said that, if we go below the .557064 rate," then he asked for the Finance Director to outline what this would entail: "Councils budget for the volunteers expense; upgrade of the two assistant city manager positions; the Mental Therapist Contractor; the Dispatchers pay increase; the

training and promotion budget for the Fire Department; the Deputy Chief for the Police Department; the ID Officer for the PD (1/2 year); Narcotic Officer for PD (1/2 year); the two Street Crime Police Officers (1/2 year); and the canine dog.

Mayor Bell continued, "If we go to .47, it will have a devastating impact on our ability to keep the city safe. If we go below .55 it will have a devastating effect on public safety; if we go below .55, we are working counterproductive to our Police and Fire Departments; if we go below .55, we are working against our Police Department; if we go below .55, we can't say anything about crime in our city; this is about public safety. We can do whatever you want to do though."

All of Council agreed that they would do what the citizens wanted, but also reminded that these public forums are the place to hear from citizens and listen to the professionals and staff who have provided information to them and base their decisions on that. And that if some of the citizens proceed with a petition, that the council would still defend the tax rate staying the same at .557064.

** Mayor Pro-Tem Compian read the legal verbiage required "I move that the property tax rate be increased by the adoption of a tax rate of 0.550764 which is effectively a 16.97 percent increase in the tax rate."

** Councilmember Carlson seconded. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

Mayor Bell clarified "When your evaluation increases, when CAD (Central Appraisal District) gives you an increase in your property evaluation, even though the tax rate stays the same, the amount of tax revenue increases, so this is why this is in here, nothing more nothing less. We have not increased the tax rate, but more taxes are generate because we have more houses and CAD has raised your evaluation."

FOR __5__ AGAINST __0__

- c. Discussion/possible action regarding adopting Ordinance No. **O-2021-0017**, amending Appendix A, Schedule of Fees and Charges of the Code of Ordinances, City of La Marque, Texas by amending prescribed solid waste collection charges

Finance Director Ms. Kou explained that as per our contract until the contract is ended, there will be an annual 3% rate increase (garbage/recycling).

** Councilmember Carlson made a motion to adopt Ordinance No. O-2021-0017 on the FIRST reading.

** Councilmember Mc Auliffe seconded. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

(7) EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mayor closed the Special meeting at 7:17 p.m. and went into an executive session

1. Section 551.071 (Consultation with Attorney)

Mayor Bell reconvened the Special meeting at 8:43 p.m.

There was no action taken from the Executive Session

(8) REQUESTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councilmember Mc Auliffe had nothing

Councilmember Carlson reminded all of Saturday being September 11 and to keep all that were lost in their thoughts d prayers

Councilmember Yancy announced that Friday is the football game between La Marque and Hitchcock; Saturday is "Service Day" meet at Queen of Peace Church for a clean-up day. Announced that recent violence in her district (A) has prompted her to call a meeting among the convenience store owners to bring solutions to the table and will be looking into games rooms close to the schools.

Mayor Pro-Tem Compian said that the gathering will begin at 7:30 at City Hall for the Clean-up. Sincerely thanked the surrounding communities for their help assisted with other entities in the distribution and donations that recently were sent to victims of the hurricane that affected Louisiana.

Mayor Bell requested a managerial audit by the City Attorney. Announced that the Council will continue to move forward, regardless of those who are trying to undermine the city.

(9) ADJOURNMENT

****** Councilmember Carlson made a motion to adjourn the Special meeting at 8:56 p.m.

****** Councilmember Yancy seconded. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

This unofficial copy of the minutes from the above meeting are posted for convenience only. Executed or certified copies of the minutes can be requested by contacting the City Clerk.
