

**Minutes**  
**Special Meeting/Public Hearing**  
**September 30, 2022**

On this 30<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2022, at 6:00 p.m., the City Council of the City of Devine convened in a Special Meeting, the same being opened to the public at their regular meeting place, thereof, at the Dr. George S. Woods Community Center, 200 E. Hondo Avenue, Devine, Texas. Notice of said Meeting having been prescribed in Chapter 551, Government Code, and Vernon's Texas Codes, Annotated, and the following members being present:

Mayor Cory Thompson  
Alderman David Espinosa  
Alderwoman Debbie Randall  
Alderman Rufino Vega  
Alderwoman Angela Pichardo  
Alderman Josh Ritchey

Thus, constituting a quorum.

Personnel present: Dora V. Rodriguez, Interim City Administrator/City Secretary; and Denise Duffy, City Accountant.

Others present: Anton Riecher, Devine News.

Mayor Thompson, presiding, declared the meeting open.

The first order of business was a Public Hearing on the Proposed Budget for FY 2022-2023.

At 6:01 p.m., Mayor Thompson announced that the Public Hearing was open for comments.

At 6:01 p.m., hearing no comments from the public, Mayor Thompson closed the Public Hearing.

The second order of business was a Public Hearing on the Proposed Tax Rate for FY 2022-2023.

At 6:02 p.m., Mayor Thompson announced that the Public Hearing was open.

At 6:02 p.m., hearing no comments from the public, Mayor Thompson closed the Public Hearing.

The third order of business was to discuss and consider Amending the Current Budget for FY 2021-2022.

Alderman Ritchey and Alderwoman Pichardo had questions on the budget but Interim City Administrator/City Secretary Dora V. Rodriguez explained that we are on the Amended Budget, not the new budget. She explained that this is the current budget which Council adopted last September 2021 that we need to amend before moving on to the new budget.

Council then held discussion on the surplus of \$741,717.

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Motion by Alderman Ritchey, seconded by Alderwoman Pichardo to approve to amend the Current Budget for FY 2021-2022.

Amended Budget FY 2021-2022 attached as Exhibit A.

Ayes	--	All
Nays	--	None

Motion carried.

The fourth order of business was to discuss and consider Adopting Budget for FY 2022-2023.

Interim City Administrator/City Secretary Dora V. Rodriguez informed Council of the following changes under the New Budget for 2022-2023:

- \$599,462 AMRF – We received the money in our bank account on September 26, 2022 so we had to take it out of the new budget. This is giving us a deficit of \$529,476 in Sewer & Water.
- Water Fund – Edward’s Aquifer Fee – Increase from \$2.75 to \$2.85 due to invoice increase.
- General Fund – Bay Rentals – Increase by \$25.
- General Fund – Republic – 2% Increase.
- General Fund/Sewer & Water – We met with AT&T and they will be helping us on cutting costs.
- Newsletter – Going Digital – Staff will be handing out to customers, emailing to customers, emailing to Mayor & Council, putting on Library Facebook and on Website. This will save the City \$6,000.

Alderwoman Randall thanked Interim City Administrator/City Secretary Dora V. Rodriguez and her staff for presenting the best budget ever in the past four years. She said there was better communication, and Council got what they needed. Aldermen Espinosa and Vega agreed that it was a great team effort.

Alderman Ritchey stated that he’s still not happy with the budget but added that he very much appreciated the staff working on every nook and cranny with his tough questions and appreciated that they’re still working with AT&T on trying to save every dollar we can save.

Alderwoman Pichardo talked about individuals bringing things to her attention regarding impropriety issues which pertained to spending money on the budget. She said she hoped that these are not valid issues but wants this to be looked into, and for this reason she disagrees with the budget. Mayor Thompson added that if any of the rumors are proved to be true, then Council will act on it.

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Motion by Alderwoman Randall, seconded by Alderman Espinosa to adopt the Budget for FY 2022-2023.

Budget FY 2022-2023 attached as Exhibit B.

Ayes	--	Three – Alderwoman Randall Aldermen Espinosa, Vega
Nays	--	Two – Alderman Ritchey Alderwoman Pichardo

Motion carried.

The fifth order of business was to discuss and consider Adopting an Ordinance establishing the Budget beginning October 1, 2022, and ending September 30, 2023, appropriating funds for the operation of the General Fund, Water Fund, and Sinking Fund to pay interest and principal due on all city indebtedness.

Motion by Alderwoman Randall, seconded by Alderman Vega to adopt Ordinance 9-22A establishing the Budget beginning October 1, 2022, and ending September 30, 2023, appropriating funds for the operation of the General Fund, Water Fund, and Sinking Fund to pay interest and principal due on all city indebtedness.

Ordinance attached as Exhibit C.

Ayes	--	All
Nays	--	None

Motion carried.

The sixth order of business was to discuss and consider adopting Tax Rate.

Alderman Espinosa talked about taking a step backwards by lowering the tax rate from \$.5298 to \$.4913. He felt that it's going to be hard on the City and the taxpayers, and said he does not support this tax rate. Alderman Ritchey talked about his opposition to increasing the tax rate and putting money into businesses that do not generate a revenue. He said the streets are lacking improvements. Alderwoman Pichardo agreed with Alderman Espinosa and stated that our roads are bad and we need to devote more to infrastructure; she believes that we need to come up with a happy medium.

Mayor Thompson stated that we do have a \$322,000 surplus. Alderman Espinosa said he understands but is concerned if something major were to happen.

Alderwoman Randall commented that she couldn't understand why Council couldn't have come up with these concerns six weeks ago and why they waited until the final hour. She stated that for any changes we want now, the ladies are literally going to have to go back to re-structure the entire budget within a few hours tonight.

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An impassioned discussion was held between Council members.

Interim City Administrator/City Secretary Dora V. Rodriguez pointed out to Council that they already adopted the Budget which had a rate of \$.4913. She told Council that even though we had some “nays” in the motion, the Budget was approved. Mayor Thompson agreed and stated that this is what Alderwoman Randall is trying to point out. Interim City Administrator/City Secretary Dora V. Rodriguez informed Council that it’s critical that we stick with the budget calendar and meet those deadlines. She said there are legalities and there’s no going back. Council reluctantly understood.

Motion by Alderman Vega, seconded by Alderwoman Randall to adopt the 2022 Tax Rate of \$.4913.

Ayes	--	Four – Alderwomen Randall, Pichardo Aldermen Vega, Espinosa
Nays	--	One – Alderman Ritchey

Motion carried.

The seventh order of business was to discuss and consider adopting an Ordinance levying ad valorem taxes for use and support of the municipal government of the City of Devine for the 2022-2023 Fiscal Year; providing for appointing each levy for the specific purposes; and providing when taxes shall become due when same shall become delinquent if not paid with \$.4913 on each \$100.00 valuation of property for the maintenance and support of the general government (General Fund).

Motion by Alderman Vega, seconded by Alderwoman Randall to adopt Ordinance 9-22B for a Tax Rate of \$.4913 on each \$100.00 valuation of property; for the maintenance and support of the General Fund, \$.3964 on each valuation of property; and for the Interest and Sinking Fund, \$.0949 on each \$100.00 valuation of property, for the 2022-2023 Fiscal Year.

Ordinance attached as Exhibit D.

Ayes	--	All
Nays	--	None

Motion carried.

The eighth order of business was to discuss and consider for Council to restrict fund balance of \$236,111 to be committed for Street Maintenance.

Mayor Thompson explained that this is the carry-over fund balance from the current budget that we approved last year which we did not use this current year for street maintenance. It is being carried-over strictly for this reason – for street maintenance.

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Interim City Administrator/City Secretary Dora V. Rodriguez informed Council that this is the way the Auditors wanted it worded on the agenda, so when they do their audit and read the minutes, they will see this and be able to do their journal entry. She explained that it will be on a line item that will be restricted for street maintenance.

Motion by Alderman Ritchey, seconded by Alderwoman Pichardo to restrict fund balance of \$236,111 to be committed for Street Maintenance.

Ayes	--	All
Nays	--	None

Motion carried.

There being no further business to come before the governing body, motion made by Alderwoman Pichardo, seconded by Alderman Vega to adjourn meeting.

Ayes	--	All
Nays	--	None

Motion carried.

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Mayor

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City Secretary