

**Minutes
Special Meeting
February 2, 2023**

On this 2nd day of February, 2023, 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 the Dr. George S. Woods Community Center, 200 E. Hondo Avenue, Devine, Texas 78016. 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; Denise Duffy, City Accountant; Tom Cate, City Attorney; Raul Garcia, Jr. (J.R.), City Attorney; Rob Flores, Director of Public Works/Emergency Management Coordinator; and Pete Sanchez, Field Operations Supervisor.

Others Present: K. K. Calame and Anton Riecher, with Devine News; and Ryan Cunningham with SAMCO Capital.

Mayor Thompson, presiding, declared the meeting open.

The sole order of business was to discuss and consider for the Council to move forward with a Bond Election and to select projects.

Council reviewed a proposed bond projects list:

- Drainage Projects – Burnt Boot Creek Channelization; Colonial Parkway to Libold Drainage; Crouch/Windy Knoll Drainage; and Airport Drainage.
- City Wide Street/Curb Projects – City wide replacement of roads to our city spec and the addition of curbs.
- City Wide Sidewalk Projects – City wide sidewalks on both sides of the streets. This does not include the State sidewalks.
- Interpark Loop-New Streets Projects – This is the I-35 project on our land behind Triple-C and QT.
- Multipurpose Sidewalks Projects – This is an alternative walking/jogging/biking route that would essentially run from District 3 all the way to District 5.
- Sports Complex Project (does not include land) – At least 2 baseball fields and associated items (fencing, seating, concession booth, scoreboards, bathrooms, etc.); at least 2 multi-use football/soccer fields; pool with attached splashpad; and some parking/parking lot.

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Mayor Thompson began with an overview and told Council that the total price of the projects is at \$91.73 Million but after calculating in the interest and figuring the payments, we are looking at \$148 Million. He explained that if we were to do the total \$148 Million, that would be a tax burden of approximately \$33,000 for every single person living in the City of Devine, which is a tax rate in excess of \$3.00 per \$100 valuation. According to Mayor Thompson, thankfully the State of Texas has said that regardless of what the people want or are willing to vote for, we cannot exceed \$1 per \$100 valuation. This means that we can only actually do about \$15 to \$20 Million worth of projects in addition to our current tax rate which is \$.4913. Therefore, not all of the projects brought to Council can be put on the bond. The bond repayment will be for 20 years with the increased tax rate. He explained that if we max out our tax rate now, we will not be able to approach any tax hikes or any new bonds for the next 20 years unless our town grows exponentially so as to offset the tax burden for the citizens. Mayor Thompson told Council that this worries him because many things have been talked about at the Council table including things like building a new City Hall and Community Center, downtown revitalization projects to name a few, in addition to our bond list.

Mayor Thompson then gave a talk on exponential growth and compared the City of Devine with other neighboring towns. Mayor Thompson also pointed out that if we were to have a tax rate at \$.8343 per \$100 valuation, Devine would have a tax rate many times higher than some neighboring towns or parts of San Antonio and even some parts of Dallas or Houston areas. He said the only city in the San Antonio area that would have a similar tax rate to us would be Poteet.

Mr. Ryan Cunningham, representative of SAMCO Capital, addressed Council and explained the bond repayment. He also advised against the City raising the rate all the way to \$1 per \$100 valuation.

Alderwoman Pichardo stated that she feels that the Sports Complex should be put on the bond. She feels it is essential for the children and community. She stated that the revenue made from the complex could pay for itself. Mayor Thompson added that the complex would require the City to budget approximately \$200,000 to \$250,000 for personnel and maintenance yearly. But, we would need to find land to place this complex on, and that would be an extra cost.

Alderman Ritchey feels that the sidewalk project should be on the bond.

Alderman Espinosa stated that the Sports Complex would be nice; however, he feels that our drainage issues need to be addressed before anything else.

City Engineer J. R. Garcia Jr. agreed that drainage is the first issue that needs to be considered because with the system that we have right now (without curbs), water goes wherever it wants to go, and it floods properties and people's houses. He explained that we can set the curb heights so that everything slopes down towards the street and the street collects the water and pushes it out. This way we monitor everything from right-of-way to right-of-way.

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City Engineer J.R. Garcia Jr. also talked to Council about an underground drainage system, as in the case of Colonial Parkway. He told Council that every street has its capacity. He explained that the water exceeds its street capacity based on the height of the curb, based on the slope, and based on the crown. Once the water exceeds that amount, that's the point at which we need an underground drainage system. The drainage would be directed towards Burnt Boot Creek.

Council held discussion on the different areas of the drainage projects, and talked about different examples.

Mr. Cunningham advised Council that the City can also do drainage with a Certificate of Obligation. He explained that drainage and streets are looked at as "needs" and not "wants." He said civic centers and sports complexes are more of a bond issue. However, he said there's nothing ever wrong with putting it out to the voters.

Alderman Vega spoke about the Interpark Loop-New Streets Project on bringing in businesses. Mayor Thompson mentioned possibly getting a loan through TIRZ. He stated that we may not need to place this on a bond because we do have other options. He discussed needing to have a TIRZ meeting and getting with Mr. Lance Elliot, our TIRZ consultant, to work with us.

Council held discussion

According to Alderwoman Randall, the voters need to have a choice; we need to decide on what project they can vote on. Mayor Thompson stated that if we cannot make a decision at the Council table, we need to put it out to the voters.

After discussion, Alderwoman Pichardo made a motion to place the Sports Complex on the bond election so that the citizens can vote. Motion died due to lack of a second.

Motion by Alderman Espinosa, seconded by Alderman Vega to place the drainage project on the bond election.

Ayes	--	Four – Aldermen Espinosa, Vega Alderwomen Pichardo, Randall
Nays	--	None
Abstain	--	One – Alderman Ritchey

Motion carried.

Council held discussion after the motion to have a Special Meeting. They decided on February 13, 2023 at 6:00 p.m., and bring this back before Council.

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

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Ayes	--	All
Nays	--	None

Motion carried.

Mayor

City Secretary