

Minutes
Special Meeting/Budget Workshop
August 1, 2023

On this 1st day of August, 2023 at 6:04 p.m., the City Council of the City of Devine convened in a Special Meeting and Budget Workshop, 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 Butch Cook
Alderwoman Debbie Randall
Alderman Rufino Vega
Alderman Josh Ritchey
Alderman Michael Hernandez
Alderwoman Stacy Pyron

Thus, constituting a quorum.

Personnel present: Dora V. Rodriguez, Interim City Administrator/City Secretary; Kandy L. Benavides, Chief of Police; Christopher Andrews, Police Lieutenant; Pete Sanchez, Director of Public Works; Simon Davila, Superintendent of Public Works; Vickie Pumphrey, Airport Manager; Debra Dubose, Head Librarian; and Alma Rios-Flores, Municipal Court Clerk.

Others present: None.

Mayor Cook presiding, declared the meeting open.

The first order of business was to discuss and consider Adopting an Ordinance establishing an Ad Valorem Tax Freeze for residential homestead property owners of the City of Devine, Texas who are disabled or sixty-five (65) years of age or older and their spouses who qualify; providing that the total amount of ad valorem taxes imposed on that homestead by the City of Devine, Texas may not be increased while it remains the residential homestead of the individual that is disabled or sixty-five (65) years of age or older or their spouse who qualifies; adopting provisions as specified in Texas Tax Code Section 11.261; authorizing and directing the City Secretary of the City of Devine, Texas to forward a certified copy of same to the Medina County Appraisal District; providing for a severability clause; and, providing when this ordinance shall become effective.

This ordinance was originally adopted on June 20, 2023. Alderman Ritchey wanted the ordinance re-worded to include that the resident could only receive the tax freeze if they lived in and owned the property prior to their 65th birthday. There was discussion between the Council that our City Attorney, Tom Cate, had advised that the City could not make that stipulation, as we could only follow state statute. It could be construed as discrimination. Dora V. Rodriguez, Interim City Administrator/City Secretary, added that the Medina County Chief Appraiser had also advised the ordinance has to follow the state law. Alderman Ritchey stated that he has not been given the actual law to show him this was not allowed.

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Motion made by Alderwoman Randall, seconded by Alderman Hernandez to leave the ordinance as it reads.

Ayes	--	Four - Alderwomen Pyron, Randall Aldermen Vega, Hernandez
Nays	--	One – Alderman Ritchey

Motion Carried.

The second order of business was to discuss and consider Revising Council Meeting Procedures – requested by Alderwoman Randall, District 5.

Mayor Cook originally requested this item for the July 18, 2023 meeting; however, due to time constraints, it was tabled at that time.

- Mayor Cook would like to change the procedure to read that agenda item requests' cut-off to be two (2) Fridays prior to a Tuesday meeting. Agenda and packet to be forwarded to the Council on the Wednesday prior to the meeting. The agenda to be posted on the Friday prior to the meeting, as it is currently. Example: Meeting date 8/15/23, request cut off would be 8/4/23, Agenda & Packet to be sent to the Council on 8/9/23; the agenda to be posted 8/11/23. This would give Council more time to research and be prepared for the meeting.
- Mayor Cook wanted the Council to think about having two (2) Regular meetings per month, instead of one. It would hopefully lessen the number of Special Meetings to be called.
- Alderman Ritchey asked for the entire Council Packet to be posted on the city website to alleviate so many public information requests after the meeting.
- For COUNCIL MEETING PROCEDURES FOR THE CITY OF DEVINE, TEXAS, Alderwoman Randall wanted to change the wording for A.1. & A.2., from City Hall to read "Community Center", where the meetings are currently held.
- Alderwoman Randall feels an update is required where the agenda is posted; therefore, the first paragraph for B.1. needs to have Security State Bank and Security Bank removed and replaced with "City Website". It should read: The posting of the agenda will be at the following places: City Hall Bulletin Board, United States Post Office, Driscoll Public Library and on the City Website. She also requested to add a sentence to the end of the second paragraph as follows: Each Council Member shall be allowed up to three (3) agenda item requests for a regular meeting that cannot be denied, postponed or labeled for information item. Also on the third paragraph: Remove wording: "However, the council may receive items as informational."

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- Alderwoman Randall asked to change C.4. Last sentence – to remove wording: “Any group of five (5) or more shall appoint one (1) person to address the council.” Also, first paragraph under G.2. – Last sentence: Remove wording: “If five or more citizens wish to address the council on any single agenda item, those citizens are advised to select spokespersons to present their case.” She feels that all attendees should be able to voice their own individual words, not as a group.
- Alderman Ritchey thought possibly to have Council make the decision, meeting by meeting, for a time limit for each person to speak. Mayor Cook feels it should be at the discretion of the Mayor.
- For DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES MAYOR/COUNCIL, Alderwoman Randall suggested that for C.6., the last sentence should read. “Council Members should direct all requests for information to the City Administrator with a copy being sent to the Mayor.” She felt that instead of asking the Mayor for the information and the Mayor then having City Administrator send the information, it would give a more timely response.
- Mayor Cook asked the Interim City Administrator to forward any information requested by one council person to be sent to all council people.

More discussion regarding changes on the Procedures, and Duties & Responsibilities will take place in a future meeting to see what or how the City Council votes them to read.

No action was taken.

The third order of business was an Executive Session: Pursuant to Provision of the Open Meeting Law Texas Government Code.

- §551.074 – Personnel Matters – Discuss and consider City Administrator Issues.

At 7:15 p.m., Mayor Cook announced to the public that the Council would go into a Closed Session.

At 8:11 p.m., Closed Session was opened to the public.

No action was taken.

The fourth order of business was to RECONVENE into Regular Session and consider action, if any, on items discussed in Executive Session.

Motion made by Alderwoman Randall, seconded by Alderman Vega to terminate advertising for the City Administrator position until September 18, 2023.

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Ayes	--	Four - Alderwomen Pyron, Randall Aldermen Vega, Hernandez
Nays	--	One – Alderman Ritchey

Motion Carried.

The fifth order of business was the Budget Workshop.

Many budget topics were discussed, as follows:

- Alderman Ritchey stated the Devine medium income is \$33,478. Each Council member makes \$1,949.16/ year. He suggests that no City employee make more than 2 times the medium income (\$66,956), except department heads to make no more than 2.5 times the medium income (\$83,695). He suggests for the City Administrator to make no more than 3 times the medium income (\$100,434), and No Pay for City Council members.
- Alderwoman Randall suggested that department heads be allowed to decide percentage of raise for each of their employees to be between 4% to 6%. Better performers are to be compensated more than the poorer performers.
- Mayor Cook proposed the minimum wage for the City to be \$17.00 per hour.
- For employees who receive certifications, currently they receive \$.50 per hour raise. Alderwoman Randall suggested we give \$1.00 per hour raise for certifications.
- The Devine Police Department is requesting two (2) new police cars and one (1) truck. The cost to city after grants would be approximately \$43,000. They are also requesting \$6,200 for two (2) new desks and three (3) new chairs. They are also requesting new body armor at \$36,000 for all officers, due to age of current armor (7 years).
- Alderman Ritchey proposed that the one Police Tahoe that would be auctioned off, due to mileage, could be given to the Airport as a courtesy car.
- The Library is requesting more pay for employees. That is most important to that Department Head.
- Council requested Airport Manager to obtain quote for shade covering for the fuel farm by next meeting.

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- Alderwoman Randall asked that the City obtain quotes for repairs needed for Hangars 8, 8A & 10 so the Council will know what to budget. Mayor Cook advised that the Airport Advisory Board will make their suggestions to the Council in the next two weeks, which will give us plenty of time to obtain the necessary numbers for budget.
- Water/Sewer must have a new office building to work out of. Alderman Ritchey suggested a metal storage container that should cost under \$3,000 and would be about 400 square foot. Director of Public Works Pete Sanchez has looked at a 1,400 square foot prefab building that is approximately \$60,000 and a metal building that is approximately \$150,000.
- Alderman Vega would like to see streets, water tower replaced, water storage tank replaced and a new City Hall building.
- Alderman Hernandez is requesting curbs for a couple of neighborhoods due to flooding issues.
- Stacey would like to see streets repaired, the water pipe project completed and more street lights throughout the City.
- Mayor Cook would like the City to be able to get another Carrizo well, which we have already applied for a grant for a new well.
- Alderman Ritchey would like to see a new water tower located in District 2.

More discussions on the budget will take place in future meetings.

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

Ayes	--	All
Nays	--	None

Motion Carried.

Mayor

City Secretary