

Minutes
Special Meeting/Budget Workshop
August 8, 2023

On this 8th day of August, 2023 at 6:02 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 Josh Ritchey
Alderman Michael Hernandez
Alderwoman Stacey Pyron

Absent being Alderman Rufino Vega; thus, constituting a quorum.

Personnel present: Dora V. Rodriguez, Interim City Administrator/City Secretary; Pete Sanchez, Director of Public Works; Simon Davila, Superintendent of Public Works; James Evans, IT; and Alma Rios-Flores, Municipal Court Clerk.

Others present: Anton Riecher and K.K. Calame, Devine News; Johnette Dixon, Medina County Chief Appraiser; Melissa Lutz, Medina County Tax Assessor-Collector on teleconference; and Nancy Saathoff of Devine, Texas.

Mayor Cook presiding, declared the meeting open.

The first order of business was to discuss and consider review of:

No-New Revenue Tax Rate.

Voter-Approval Tax Rate.

No-New Revenue Maintenance & Operations (M&O) Rate.

De Minimis Rate.

Unused Increment Rate.

Current Tax Rate: \$.004913

No New Revenue Tax Rate: \$.005553

Voter Approval Tax Rate: \$.005589 (highest rate before adopting voter approval at an election)

De Minimis Tax Rate: \$.007695 (This is automatic election rate)

There was confusion on the amount the Disabled/Under 65-year-old Tax Freeze would affect our revenue amount. Before the Council decided to approve the Tax Freeze, the Tax Office advised that we would see revenue lowered by approximately \$26,000. In reality, it is reflecting much more. There was much discussion from Johnette Dixon, Medina County Chief Appraiser and Melissa Lutz, Medina County Tax Assessor-Collector with the Council regarding possible tax base and revenue for the City of Devine. The reasoning for not knowing what the actual tax base or revenue will be, is that there are still 1,500 protests open on the property tax assessments with outcomes unknown.

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More discussion on this topic will be continued at the next meeting.

No action was taken.

The second order of business was to Review of 2023 Appraisal Roll Certified by Medina County Appraisal District.

Council had discussed this item in the previous agenda item. More discussion on this topic will be continued at the next meeting.

No action was taken.

The third order of business was the Budget Workshop.

Dora V. Rodriguez, Interim City Administrator/City Secretary wanted the Council to understand that the Capital Outlay was updated to indicate that the Devine Police Department will only be asking for two (2) new vehicles. The cost of the portable building for Water/Sewer will be split between the Water, Sewer, Parks & Streets departments. Public Works decided the building was more important than obtaining new trucks this year.

Other items on the budget discussed were:

- Alderman Ritchey wondered if the one Tahoe could go to the airport and the other to go to Public Works.
- Alderwoman Randall had plugged in the lesser amount of revenue from property taxes \$1,086,283 and found that we would be at a \$58,542 deficit and then adding the \$130,000 capital outlay, it would equal to a \$188,542 deficit. Alderwoman Randall advised she had heard all the comments from the public hearings on the bonds this past April, and not one person said raise my taxes. It is her opinion that we should remain at the current tax rate of \$.004913 and live within our means. This would mean that employee raises would probably have to be lowered from the 4% - 6% formula and go to a 2% - 4% formula. The City may not be able to obtain both police vehicles. The city may need to cut a few other extras in this first draft of the budget.
- Alderman Ritchey inquired with Public Works regarding when was the last time the department was fully staffed? Could the City cut two (2) positions and this would save some salary funds that are vacant at the moment?
- Mayor Cook wanted to make it clear that his opinion during the public hearings was that no one wanted the tax rate hikes for the reasons of the bond, not necessarily no tax rate increase for maintaining city services. The city will have to increase the tax rate to maintain our city services. Public works needs the vacant positions and should not be cutting them out. Alderman Hernandez did say that if positions are vacant, the City is saving money; however, we need to budget in case we are able to hire qualified people. Pete Sanchez, Director of Public Works, stated that we need those positions especially while the water pipe replacement project is going on.

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- Alderman Hernandez wondered if the City could contract outside help to handle the maintenance of the parks? This would help out the Public Works Department.
- Dora V. Rodriguez, Interim City Administrator/City Secretary, advised that the shade cover for the fuel farm at the airport will be done in-house and under this year's budget
- Dora V. Rodriguez, Interim City Administrator/City Secretary, also wanted the Council to know that Republic Services will be raising the rates by 4%.
- Dora Rodriguez, Interim City Administrator, is still awaiting Workers Comp and lawyer fee numbers that need to be added to the budget.
- More discussion to follow on each line item as to why the City expects to bring in less or more for certain departments.
- James Evans, our Internet Technician, was present at the meeting and went over the IT Contract with the Council.

The fourth item of business was Informational Items.

- Mayor Cook advised the Council that he had a meeting with Danny Lawler, County Commissioner, about the Burnt Boot Creek clean-up project. Mr. Lawler thinks it will take approximately one (1) week to complete. The County will require some labor assistance from Devine Public Works. In lieu of cash payment for the County labor, the City of Devine will exchange county labor for water/sewer costs from the city. The same exchange would be the same for street work done by the County. According to Mr. Lawler the cost per mile for street supplies was \$81,000 this year for a county project. With the current budget, that would give us 3.25 miles of repairing streets.
- Mayor Cook will be attending the next DISD School Board meeting on August 21, 2023 to discuss the land the city needs to obtain from DISD for the water storage tank requiring replacement.
- Alderwoman Randall informed the Council of the current happenings from the Devine Chamber of Commerce. The music talent is almost completely booked for the Cactus Festival. The storage room in the community center has been cleaned out except the desk, small file cabinet and bookcase. New banners designed by Chamber of Commerce will soon arrive and be placed on the city streets where the Holiday banners usually are placed.
- Alderman Ritchey would like for Council to thank all the volunteers in the city for all the boards they sit on and charities they volunteer for. The Council needs to inspire more people to get involved.
- Alderman Ritchey wanted to advise that the City could obtain a Soccer/Youth Program grant, since we have no soccer. Mayor Cook advised that we have Devine Youth Sports. It was stated by Mayor Cook, some cities have Park Directors and recreation programs. Devine does not.
- Alderman Ritchey also wanted the City to possibly look into a shooting range grant and build the range, open and run it.

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- Alderman Hernandez asked how we could make sure City Hall is more secure after the incident that happened last week. Mayor Cook suggested speaking with the Police Department.

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	--	Four - Aldermen Hernandez, Ritchey Alderwomen Pyron, Randall
Nays	--	None
Absent	--	One - Alderman Vega

Motion Carried.

Mayor

City Secretary