

**Minutes**  
**Special Meeting/Budget Workshop**  
**July 25, 2023**

On this 25<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2023 at 6:10 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 Butch Cook  
Aldерwoman Debbie Randall  
Alderman Rufino Vega  
Alderman Josh Ritchey  
Alderman Michael Hernandez  
Aldерwoman Stacy Pyron

Thus, constituting a quorum.

Personnel present: Dora V. Rodriguez, Interim City Administrator/City Secretary; Tom Cate, City Attorney; Pete Sanchez, Director of Public Works; and Alma Rios-Flores, Municipal Court Clerk.

Others present: Anton Riecher & KK Calame, Devine News; Brian Navarro, Ron Richards, Sandra Richards, Devine Golf Group; Jerry Lee Stevens, and Melissa Stevens of Devine, Texas.

Mayor Cook presiding, declared the meeting open.

Mayor Cook requested a motion to move Agenda Item 4: Discuss and consider request made by Devine Golf Group on the new/repair of air conditioner to be moved to the first order of business.

Motion made by Alderman Ritchey, seconded by Alderman Vega to move Agenda Item 4 to the first order of business.

Ayes	--	All
Nays	--	None

Motion Carried.

The first order of business was to discuss and consider request made by Devine Golf Group on the new/repair of air conditioner.

Brian Navarro and Ron Richards, with Devine Golf Group, came before Council to advise that the attic fan system approved last week will begin installation on Thursday, July 27, 2023. The Devine Golf Group is in the process of getting a quote on an interior fan with thermostat to install to see if that works, instead of a new air conditioner. The plan is to blow the warm air out the window. No pricing was available to discuss. The Devine Golf Group will come back at another meeting with the quote and more discussion.

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Alderman Ritchey asked the Devine Golf Group what future financial assistance for repairs may be necessary. Mr. Navarro stated there is an outside building that needs repair and one that leaks. Alderman Ritchey inquired if a pump went out, what type of cost would be expected. Mr. Navarro advised that it could be possibly \$40,000, however, it would be an updated version to be automated with a sprinkler system. Mr. Richards told Council to remember that there are two pumps.

No Action was taken.

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

- §551.074 – Personnel Matters — Consider Employment/Contract for Deck Shaver, Jr.

Alderwoman Randall appealed the action to go into Executive Session.

Motion made by Alderman Randall, seconded by Alderman Ritchey to have the discussion in open session to discuss Mr. Shaver's employment to show full transparency to our residents that we represent.

Ayes	--	All
Nays	--	None

Motion Carried.

Mayor Cook began the discussion by advising that the Council had hired Mr. Shaver for the City Administrator position. He told Council that Mr. Shaver came to City Hall yesterday, Monday, July 24, 2023 and remained the work day. This morning, Mr. Shaver sent notification that he was rescinding his acceptance of the position due to pressing family matters. Mayor Cook shared with Council that after a phone discussion today with Mr. Shaver, the decision was not anything to do with the City or our employees, and it was truly a family matter. Mr. Shaver commended our dedicated staff, and he was very apologetic.

Alderwoman Randall stated to Council that since Mr. Shaver did work for the one day, she felt the City should compensate him for it, even though the contract had not been signed yet. Mayor Cook stated that Mr. Shaver working was done by his own choice. There was more discussion regarding why Mr. Shaver came to work on Monday. Alderwoman Randall said the fact is that Mr. Shaver did work the one day, and she did not want the City having repercussions down the road because the City didn't pay him for working. City Attorney, Tom Cate, assured Council that if they wished to compensate Mr. Shaver, they could.

Motion made by Alderman Ritchey, seconded by Alderwoman Randall to have the Mayor and Interim City Administrator reach out to Mr. Shaver to inquire if he wants compensation and, if he does, the City can then obtain the forms from Mr. Shaver so compensation can be provided.

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Ayes	--	All
Nays	--	None

Motion Carried.

The third order of business was the Budget Workshop.

Alderman Ritchey started the conversation stating that it seems the Council is not focusing on our tax dollars in one direction or a particular goal. Mayor Cook indicated he wanted to hear from each Council person as to what direction they wanted for each district, and then all of Council could discuss the items and work them into the budget if possible. The Council needs to set priorities for the entire City. Council needs to determine the wants and needs of the City and then decide on the tax rate to get us where we want to be or get to.

Mayor Cook asked Dora V. Rodriguez, Interim City Administrator/City Secretary, about the tax rate information and property tax information from the County Assessor's office. She told Council that we will have that information by August 8<sup>th</sup>, which goes along with the Budget Calendar. The rough draft of the budget the Council received for today did not have the "wish list" funding from departments, nor the actual tax revenue or estimated sales tax input to the budget, as Ms. Rodriguez thought this would be completed by Mr. Shaver. It will be inputted for our meeting next week.

Some of the items discussed for the budget were:

- The Mayor would like to see where we are with the collaboration with the County to start the Burnt Boot Creek project. He will need to contact County Commissioner Danny Lawler, and see if there are some numbers available to get into this budget.
- Alderman Ritchey suggested that we do not want to grow the number of new houses, as it puts more demand on our water facility. He wants to figure a way to justify the cost of new streets when our revenue stream is not growing. He wants to attract business here, not necessarily big box store type businesses.
- Alderwoman Randall brought up the property by I-35 (TIRZ Property). She would like Mr. Elliott to come assist the City with how to start the roads, water, sewer, and gas line installation this year. If the City started the project and starts getting buyers, etc., that increases property tax revenue and sales tax.
- Alderman Ritchey would like the City to do something with the entrances of our city. Example at 132 & Colonial Parkway. It looks a mess.
- Alderman Ritchey would like to get some streets completed.
- Alderman Ritchey wondered if we could hire a consultant to come in and advise what to do with some of the structures in town to either stabilize them or make them look better.

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- Mayor Cook brought up that he would like to increase the salaries of our lower paid employees to retain them. The City needs to have them vested in our City. At this time we have 3 openings in Public Works, two (2) in Water and one (1) for Parks. Council held discussion regarding three (3) possible pay hikes for the employees. Currently if Public Works employees get a certification, they receive a \$.50/hour raise. Discussion of \$1.00/hour raise may be budgeted.
- Public Works will require new equipment. At the moment they need two (2) mowers. They are asking that since the Parks & Recreation budget has maintenance money still in the budget, could Public Works purchase one (1) mower with that now. There is approximately \$7,200 not being used. Discussion was held.
- Alderman Ritchey advised that the Police Department is a source of little revenue at this time. City Attorney Tom Cate stated that according to the size of our city, we should have a minimum of 10.3 police officers. Devine has 11 officers. Josh wondered if we could require the officers to have a minimum of contacts per month. It was stated that is considered a quota and, by state law, we cannot set quotas.
- Alderwoman Randall opened the conversation regarding the airport budget. In order to make the yearly payment on the Certificates of Obligation, the City needs to generate enough revenue on the hangar and land leases to cover the loan. At this moment in time, the City generates \$46,215 on the leases. If the City could get Hangars 8, 8A & 10 repaired and rented, using the rough numbers plugged in (8 & 8A @ \$300/month & #10 at \$2,500/month) the City's revenue would be \$83,415 which would cover the yearly payment. This suggests that the Certificates of Obligation can be paid if the City can get them all completed and rented. This year the payment is \$82,685. Dora V. Rodriguez, Interim City Administrator/City Secretary advised that next year's payment is \$82,162.
- Another budget section discussed was Water & Sewer overall. According to the numbers at the moment, the City will be looking at a very large deficit this coming year. The City raised water rates back in 2019 due to the water line replacement project. At that time, the Council promised the residents the rates would not be raised for another 4-5 years. We are at the 4-year mark and, unfortunately, the City is at the point that rates need to be raised. Alderwoman Randall put together some numbers attempting not to make the residents suffer who actually have reduced their usage. This rate increase would only affect usage over 10,000 gallons per month and 1" meters and larger. It is a 2% increase. Both Aldermen Hernandez and Ritchey commented that maybe we should do a 5% raise.

At 7:46 p.m., Mayor Cook announced Council would be taking a short break.

At 7:54 p.m., Council reconvened.

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- Mayor Cook suggested that at the next meeting we will have the “wish list” from the department heads. Alderman Vega suggested that the Department heads attend the meeting in case the Council has some questions on their wish lists. Dora V. Rodriguez, Interim City Administrator/City Secretary, said that could be accomplished. Next meeting will be Tuesday, August 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Interim City Administrator/City Secretary Dora V. Rodriguez advised Council that Director of Public Works Pete Sanchez attended a Water meeting tonight. He informed Council that the Edwards Aquifer Authority has announced that the area is now under Stage 4 water restrictions. Director of Public Works Pete Sanchez will be getting a flier together for the residents to advise them of this and that the City must reduce water usage by 40% now.
- Mayor Cook asked Dora V. Rodriguez, Interim City Administrator/City Secretary, if she would forward the applications for City Administrator, as they come in, to the Council, and they could reply with their thoughts if an interview would be good on each applicant. Maybe we could speed the process up to obtain a City Administrator. Ms. Rodriguez will email each Alderperson the applicant’s information as she receives them.

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

Ayes	--	All
Nays	--	None

Motion Carried.

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Mayor

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City Secretary