



City of Farmers Branch Meeting Minutes City Council

Farmers Branch City Hall
13000 Wm Dodson Pkwy
Farmers Branch, Texas
75234

Tuesday, August 9, 2022

12:00 PM

Council Chambers

Work Session began August 9, 2022 at 12:00 p.m. and continued through August 10, 2022.

Present: 6 - Mayor Robert Dye, Mayor Pro Tem David Merritt, Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Traci Williams, Council Member Omar Roman, Council Member Michael Driskill, Council Member Richard Jackson

Staff: 17 - Interim City Manager John Land, Assistant City Manager Ben Williamson, City Secretary Stacy Henderson, Finance Director Sherrelle Evans-Jones, Police Chief David Hale, Acting Fire Chief Daniel Latimer, Director of Parks and Recreation Michael Mashburn, Arts and Nature Tourism Manager Maria Minter, Director of Public Works Marc Bentley, Human Resources Director Brian Beasley, Director of Economic Development and Planning Allison Cook, Deputy Director of Planning Surupa Sen, Deputy Director of Neighborhood Services Leo Bonanno, Deputy Director of Fleet and Facilities Tom Higgs, Technical Operations Manager Steven Schweigert, Director of Sustainability and Public Health Shane Davis, Director of Communications Jeff Brady

CALL TO ORDER - WORK SESSION (12 P.M.)

Mayor Dye called the Budget Work Session meeting to order at 12:00 p.m.

A.1 Discuss and review the City's financial status, revenues, expenditures, projects, balances, financial trends, capital projects, fixed assets, and other items related the 2022-23 Fiscal Year Budget.

Mayor Dye thanked Director of Finance Sherrelle Evans-Jones and the Finance team for their work on the proposed fiscal year 22-23 budget.

Interim City Manager John Land provided an introduction and overview of fiscal year 2021-22 highlights. Assistant City Manager Ben Williamson reviewed critical business outcomes and major initiatives for 2023.

Director of Finance Sherrelle Evans-Jones introduced Marti Shew with Hilltop Securities who provided an overview of the City's financial rating and credit analysis, reviewed the City's AAA rating received from Standard and Poor's, how the rating process was conducted, how the City's rating assists with obtaining general obligation bonds, and the rating methodology. The City Council discussed with Ms. Shew the City's fund balance policy, and if the policy needed to be reviewed and updated based on the City's AAA rating.

Ms. Evans-Jones provided a financial update and reviewed the City's General Fund balance, Enterprise Fund balance, Hotel/Motel Fund, Stormwater Utility Fund, and the City's investment portfolio. Ms. Jones provided an overview of key dates for the budget review and adoption, she noted the proposed budget maintains the current tax rate of 58.9 cents and provides a proposed targeted relief to residents through a one-time, annual base rate water decrease. Ms. Evans-Jones also noted that the proposed budget provided for an increased property tax exemption to \$100,000 for property owners over 65 and disabled persons, and the proposal to convert the City's retirement plan to 20 years. Ms. Evans-Jones discussed key changes in General Fund expenditures related to the Police Department with an increase of 21.1 percent, an increase to the Fire Department budget by 12.6 percent, an increase to the Parks and Recreation Department budget by 5.3 percent, an increase to the Sustainability Department by 9 percent, and all other departments for a total of 4 percent.

The Council had questions regarding stormwater revenue, tax-payer water rate reduction, and revenue summaries. Ms. Evans-Jones and Interim City Manager John Land addressed all questions.

The City Council recessed for a break at 1:45 p.m. and reconvened at 2:00 p.m.

Police Chief Mer Hale gave a presentation discussing calls for service and response times, trends related to an increase in motor vehicle thefts and theft of motor vehicle parts, and population growth. Chief Hale discussed an overall increase in the Police Department's proposed budget of \$1,986,400 related to a cost increase for NTECC services, sworn officer and police officer position funding, vehicle replacement and maintenance, and mental health and technology upgrades.

The City Council discussed with Chief Hale how the additional officers proposed would be utilized, and how additional officers would be patrolling the streets. The City Council also discussed the technology services offered by NTECC and the increased maintenance costs.

Acting Fire Chief Daniel Latimer provided an overview of the Fire Department's 2021-22 accomplishments, strategic plan goals for 2023, call run volumes, personnel expenses, and initiatives for 2023.

Human Resources Director Brian Beasley provided an overview of compensation and benefits by department, current openings and requested additions, attraction and retention strategies, proposed merit recommendation of 4.5 percent for City staff, a 7 percent market increase for public safety, and moving to a 20-year retirement plan.

Council Member Jackson asked for the cost difference if the City offered between 8 or 10 percent above market for public safety personnel. Mr. Beasley did not have that information available, but would provide to the Council. Council Member Jackson noted that the budget workbook reflects staffing levels from 2010 and asked that current trends be used dating back no later than five years.

Mayor Pro Tem Merritt asked for the total staffing breakdown of full-time and contractual employees. Mr. Beasley noted that there were 475 full-time employees and he would provide the number of contractual employees to the Council.

The City Council recessed for a break at 4:00 p.m. and reconvened at 4:16 p.m.

Director of Parks and Recreation Michael Mashburn provided an overview of projects upcoming in 22/23 that included the future enhancements to John F. Burke Nature Preserve, Mercer Park, Joya, Phase II of the Recreation Center, Montgomery Park, and the outdoor hockey rink conversion. Mr. Mashburn discussed potential projects and noted that this year was the highest grossing year ever for the Parks Department.

Mayor Dye and the Council thanked the Parks Department for their work and success for all the parks and events over the last six years.

Arts and Nature Tourism Manager Maria Minter reviewed the arts engagement efforts for 2022 and upcoming events for 2023.

Director of Public Works Marc Bentley provided an overview of capital improvement projects, the street improvement program, utility replacement and improvements, inflow and infiltration reductions, along with the new EPA lead and copper program, smart city initiatives that include smart meters, Farmers Branch Creek updates, and the request for one additional full-time Traffic Technician employee.

Mr. Bentley reviewed with the Council duties of the Traffic Technician and the smart meter program, the accuracy of current meters, and when the smart meters were to be installed the usage would be accurately reflected. The need for replacement of the existing meters was due to parts no longer being available.

Mr. Bentley discussed with Mayor Pro Tem Merritt the new EPA lead and copper program. Mr. Bentley discussed the 1,151,000 feet of water lines in the City of which 52 percent were cast iron. Mayor Pro Tem Merritt wanted to ensure that future discussions occurred so that the City could prepare for future funding of this program.

The City Council adjourned for the day at 5:09 p.m.

Wednesday, August 10, 2022

Mayor Dye called the Budget Workshop meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

Director of Finance Sherrelle Evans-Jones reviewed with the Council public safety funding noting that should the above market rate be increased from 7 percent to 8 percent, there would be an increase of approximately \$183,000. Ms. Evans-Jones explained that the compensation range for merit increases was between 0 and 6 percent based on performance and was prorated depending on when the merit adjustment is made.

Ms. Evans-Jones also discussed the cost breakdown associated with the increase for NTECC explaining that in 2021/22 budgeted expenses related to AutoCAD and radios were paid from different funds. Funding for computer-aided dispatch and radio system funds were also discussed. Council Member Roman asked what the cost savings would be should dispatchers be moved to a separate location off-site. Mr. Beasley stated he would get the information and provide to the Council. Council Member Roman wanted to ensure that the personnel costs associated with NTECC of \$128,450 were going directly to the dispatchers and not to administration staff. Interim City Manager John Land explained that the City does not get involved in the day to day operations, or have access to that information, but does serve as a sitting member on the board for oversight.

Director of Economic Development and Planning Allison Cook gave an overview of the Station Area discussing upcoming projects that included the Dallas Stars project, multi-family projects, and demolition of the Jett Street building. Ms. Cook then discussed the creation of proposed TIF #5 for the east side, potential projects, proposed boundaries and TIF requirements.

Ms. Cook stated she would get the Council additional information on the creation of TIF #5. The City Council was interested in moving forward with creation of this TIF.

Assistant City Manager Ben Williamson presented information for the Community Services Department discussing revenue from building permits, main expenditures, third-party plan review, and upcoming projects. Mr. Williamson discussed short-term rentals, monthly activity reports that were reviewed and monitored, and steps taken when multiple violations occurred.

Deputy Director of Neighborhood Services Leo Bonanno discussed animal services items related to animal intakes, discharges and surgeries, upcoming renovations and improvements to the Animal Shelter, along with wildlife education courses being offered to the public. Mr. Bonanno then reviewed Code Enforcement programs, the number of cases processed, and top violations found. He discussed shared programs with the Fire Department, Police Department, and Building Inspectors involving fire inspections at apartment complexes, fence inspections, and inoperable vehicles in the street. Mr. Bonanno requested another position be considered for his department to assist with multi-family inspections and various other services offered by the department.

Council Member Jackson noted several suggestions that included: 1) Recommending the property at the southeast corner of Josey Lane and Dennis for the Achieve Code Excellence (ACE) program, as they recently updated their landscaping; 2) as part of the strategic vision for the Animal Shelter, evaluate the need for an addition to alleviate confined space in the building as the city expands; 3) provide additional automated features to FBTX Connect allowing for a singular point of contact rather than multiple options; 4) would like licenses obtained for the approximately 250 short term rental properties that were not currently licensed.

Deputy Director of Fleet and Facilities Tom Higgs gave an overview of key performance measures for fleet management, facilities management and the central warehouse.

The City Council recessed for lunch at 11:56 p.m. and reconvened at 1:00 p.m.

Information and Technology Technical Operations Manager Steven Schweigert gave an overview of the City's technology infrastructure data centers, and the enterprise system that include outside vendors such as GIS, Laserfiche and Energov. Building security and cybersecurity were also discussed.

Director of Sustainability and Public Health Shane Davis discussed departmental programs and services, sustainability plans, electric vehicle infrastructure, renewable energy, and water conservation.

The City Council discussed with Mr. Davis safe areas for bike paths and where bike lanes could be added. Council Member Jackson asked that bike path markers on Valley View Lane be pressure washed as they had faded. The Council also discussed adding bike paths on the west side of the City to create more connectivity throughout the City. Funds associated with the Trails Master Plan were discussed and targeted projects for 2023.

Director of Communications Jeff Brady discussed additions to the Communications budget that included a contract position for a City Website Administrator and Social Media Manager. Other programs were discussed that included volunteers that will be ambassadors for their neighborhood and assist with getting information out. Mr. Brady showed a video of the solar farm production.

The City Council discussed encouraging social media platforms throughout the City to have a cohesive appearance. The Council also discussed coordinating events on the calendar through FBTX Connect.

Ms. Evans-Jones reviewed with the City Council the proposed water and sewer rebate that offered every resident a one-time reduction to their water bill as opposed to a tax rate reduction.

The Council discussed how the rebate would not apply to residents residing within apartments, as they did not pay property tax. The Council also discussed how the rebate would not apply to businesses. The Council also asked that information regarding the rebate be included in communications to our residents as well as what happens to the budget should the tax rate be lowered.

The overall consensus from the Council was to maintain the proposed tax rate of 58.9 cents.

The City Council discussed the Neighborhood Investment Program with the following suggested items:

- Invest in neighborhoods, including stop signs, slowing traffic, increased police presence on the streets, and improving sidewalks and medians.
- Improve lighting around the Valwood area, and decrease cut through traffic in neighborhoods near the Valwood area

The City Council discussed if the City should take over median maintenance in the Mercer Crossing neighborhoods due to lack of maintenance with some funding being provided by the homeowner's association. It was the consensus of the Council not to get involved in homeowner's association responsibilities.

The City Council discussed median improvements throughout the City, noting that there were no funds allocated for median improvements. Interim City Manager John Land noted that \$50,000 had been earmarked for neighborhood improvements in the Neighborhood Partnership Program in Economic Development. The City Council also discussed using funds towards lighting or entrance medians.

Council agreed to complete work on the Comprehensive Plan, conduct traffic studies to find the problem areas, and then dedicate funding once more information was obtained. The Council was of the consensus to earmark the \$50,000 towards neighborhood improvements.

The City Council discussed contracts for service and home rehabilitation, funding needed for the Senior Repair Program, Metrocrest Services, and the Farmers Branch Chamber of Commerce totaling \$350,000. The Council also discussed allocating funds to bringing public safety personnel to above market from 7 percent to 10 percent.

The City Council provided direction to staff to determine if an additional \$1 million could be funded in the budget; \$350,000 for social service programs, and the remaining towards public safety above market funding.

The City Council determined that meeting on Thursday, August 11, 2022 was not needed.

ADJOURNMENT

This meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

Approved by: _____

Mayor Robert C. Dye

Signed by: _____

Stacy Henderson, City Secretary

