

Minutes
Special Meeting
July 14, 2009

On this 14th day of July 2009, at 7:00 p.m., the City Council of the City of Devine convened in a Special Meeting, the same being opened to the public at their regular meeting place, thereof at City Hall, 303 S. Teel Drive, Devine, Texas. Notice of said meeting having been prescribed in Chapter 551, Government Code and Vernon's Texas Codes, Annotated, and the following members thereof, being present:

Mayor Jerry Beck
Alderman Frank Cortez, III
Alderman Hal Lance
Alderwoman Marina Antu

Absent being Alderman John Ramirez and Alderman David Espinosa; thus, constituting a quorum.

Personnel Present: Dora V. Rodriguez, Interim City Administrator/City Secretary; Ofilia Pedroza, Assistant City Secretary; Nancy Pepper, City Treasurer; and Billy Grote, Director of Public Works.

Others present: Sandy Herrera - Devine News; and James LaCombe - Medina Valley Times.

Mayor Jerry Beck, presiding, declared the meeting opened.

The first order of business was the Budget Workshop.

PUBLIC WORKS:

Mayor Beck's opening comment was that he would like to see if we can lower taxes. He said this would be his goal. Looking at Public Works, he said their budget looked good; he stated that they have done well and it is considerably less than last year's. Interim City Administrator Dora V. Rodriguez commented that we still have bond money and this has helped Public Works a lot with their budget because they've been able to use that bond money on a lot of major repairs. She stated we still have \$1 Million, but once that runs out, they won't have that cushion anymore.

Accountant Nancy Pepper pointed out to Council's attention that when looking at the bottom line figures for the Sewer and Water accounts, there are several figures that aren't in there yet and won't be in there until our Financial Advisor, Phil Sagebiel, gives us the actual figures. She explained it's kind of like a paper figure that has to be there; she went on to explain in detail how it affects the budget.

Accountant Nancy Pepper told Council that these figures are all very preliminary. She told Council the departments need to get direction from Council as to whether they're doing a good job, or if we need to look at other areas to cut more. She suggested that Council not look at any payroll figures for now until we can do it all together; she stated that the payroll figures that are in there right now are the current figures. She has; however, already plugged in a figure of \$75,000.00 for the new city

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administrator position and that's because it is broken across all of the funds, so if it looks like the salaries are up, a lot of it may be because of the city administrator's salary.

Accountant Nancy Pepper also mentioned that right now we have no idea what the new insurance rates are going to be, so the figures that you see are what we are currently paying. Also, in a lot of areas, the electricity is down in almost all of the departments. She said Uniforms and Laundry will stay the same because the contract is not up until next year.

With the approval of the new audit firm, we'll also save some money.

Engineering is also done in several departments, depending on what jobs City Engineer Raul Garcia is doing. A lot of his jobs are paid with Bond Money.

Street:

- The street department is the training ground for new employees. Right now there is one vacancy in the street department.
- The street department does not take a split on the city administrator's salary.
- Street labor is down quite a bit
- Salaries are including the vacant positions, so if we fill a position it's not going to increase the budget unless they come in higher than what we put in the budget.
- Street Maintenance was brought down to \$100,000. This will be Council's call on whether they want it to stay there, go up, or go down. Previously, we had it at \$120,000. Alderman Cortez said \$100,000 is fine for now. What he would really like to see is \$120,000 but he will look at it later.
- Billy mentioned that on Gutierrez Street, Superintendent of Public Works Ismael Carrillo was given the wrong measurements; he was only given half the length of it, so the cost doubled for that street.
- The roller machine broke down and just got fixed.
- These figures will change by next budget workshop because we've paid out close to \$25,000 to \$30,000.

Gas

- Gas is down a lot.
- Gas Department has one vacancy.
- The only salary figure that may change is in the Gas Department because we're trying to find someone who is more experienced in Gas to be able to replace Daniel Palma who retired.
- We really don't have a Gas Department right now; it's just Ismael Carrillo and Rufino Vega.
- Interim City Administrator Dora V. Rodriguez also mentioned that she, along with Director of Public Works Billy Grote and Superintendent of Public Works Ismael Carrillo, met with Mr. J.J. King of West Texas Gas, Inc. regarding our gas system. They are very interested in buying out our entire gas system, and are currently working on giving us a proposal. They

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will be taking into the consideration all of the new radio reads that we purchased recently. West Texas Gas services 25 other cities, including Natalia. Billy and Ismael think it's a good idea. They are well aware of the Enterprise Project. They would also be willing to work out something on the summer rates for the customers. Council discussed that if this were to go through, we wouldn't have to worry about the Enterprise Pipeline or creating the line item for that matter. This will definitely get rid of a lot of headaches, and it would also take care of the vacancy in the Gas Department. Financial Advisor Phil Sagebiel likes the idea also since the Gas Department never really made a lot of money. Interim City Administrator Dora V. Rodriguez also mentioned to Mr. King that CPS was also interested in partnering with us on our Gas System but they had to put a freeze on it due to the economy.

Sewer

- Sewer Samples – This line item had to be increased because it keeps going up. One thing that Director of Public Works Billy Grote does not have a lot of control over is the testing of the sewer samples. These are done every week at the sewer plant.
- Currently have one vacancy – Daniel Carrillo retired.

Water

- Everything looked okay with the Water Department.

Airport

- Maintenance Labor – Was increased to \$1,500 because of the fact that Public Works is having to do more work at the Airport.
- City Attorney Tom Cate is working on the changes to the airport leases.
- We want to finish the Airport remediation first before doing the remediation at the Well Yard.

Codes

- There are a lot of decreases in the Codes Department.
- The only thing Code Compliance Officer Darrell Rawlings is requesting is for his hard drive to be replaced. He has so much software on his computer that it really slows down his computer.
- Council wants to look at figures for both: (1) replacing the hard drive and (2) getting a new computer – we need to get prices.
- They had wanted to get a stand for their laptop which they use in the truck when making their rounds, but it wasn't in their budget; they were looking at \$500 approximately. They want to work on getting the computer upgraded first before getting the laptop stand.

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Interim City Administrator Dora V. Rodriguez told Council that Director of Public Works Billy Grote and Superintendent of Public Works Ismael Carrillo worked really hard on trimming their budget. And, we probably have another two years of Bond Money.

Accountant Nancy Pepper informed City Council that most departments are down because they are all cutting down on their budgets.

Council decided to schedule the next budget workshop on July 28th; there will not be one on Tuesday, July 21st since the regular meeting has a lengthy agenda. At the next budget workshop, we will be looking at the Library, Community Center and Police Department.

Alderman Lance inquired about the maintenance of the fire hydrants. Council held discussion. First we need to wait due to the water restrictions. They felt we should've put a line item for this in the budget. According to City Engineer Raul Garcia, we're looking at a cost of approximately \$2,000 to \$4,000. Interim City Administrator Dora V. Rodriguez will contact Mark McLIney of Southwest Securities to find out if we are able to pay for this with the Bond Money.

The second order of business was the Executive Session: Pursuant to Provision of the Open Meeting Law §551.071 through §551.076, §551.086, §551.087 Texas Government Code, (Consultation with Attorney, Deliberation Regarding Real Property, Deliberation Regarding Prospective Gift or Donation, Deliberation regarding Economic Development Negotiations and Personnel Matters).

- a. §551.074 – Personnel Matters – City Administrator Position

At 8:00 p.m., Mayor Beck announced to the public that the Council would go into a Closed Session. At 8:25 p.m., Closed Session was opened to the public.

No action was taken.

The third order of business was to Reconvene into Regular Session and Consider Action, if any, on items discussed in Executive Session.

No action was taken.

There being no further action to come before the governing body, Alderman Cortez motioned to adjourn the meeting.

Mayor

City Secretary