



**CITY OF HEDWIG VILLAGE, TEXAS
SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL MEETING
PUBLIC HEARING
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2016
6:30 P.M. - 955 PINEY POINT ROAD**

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Brian Muecke called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Present: Mayor Brian Muecke

City Councilmembers:

William Johnson

Carrol McGinnis

Barry Putterman

Bob Wiener

Lane Standley, Building Official

Lisa Modisette, Assistant City Secretary

Absent: Matt Woodruff, Councilmember

Kelly Johnson, City Administrator/City Secretary-Treasurer

David Gott, Police Chief

Alan Petrov, City Attorney

2. PUBLIC HEARING

Public hearing was opened at 6:32 p.m.

- A. The purpose of the public hearing is to receive and consider input and comments regarding the tax rate of \$0.252500/\$100 valuation that has been proposed.

Mayor Muecke explained the budget process and the PowerPoint presentation. He stated two budgets were created. One budget has no tax rate increase and the other budget has an increased tax rate to fund infrastructure. Councilmembers voted unanimously for the budget with the tax increase.

Russ Hankins, 806 Saybrook, called Kelly Johnson, City Administrator, and asked which councilmember made the motion to raise the tax rate. He was told Barry Putterman with a vote of five to zero. He stated he cannot remember a "No" vote in the past three years. He stated Hunters Creek, Piney Point, and Bunker Hall are maintaining their tax rate while Spring Valley lowered their tax rate slightly. Hedwig Village is proposing a tax increase of five cents. He stated Hedwig Village use to be the leader; the city has the business districts. The other village residents shop in our city. He stated Spring Valley tried to promote their business area but business would not move into that city. Spring Valley has not recovered yet. He asked if Councilmember Putterman makes the decisions, others

might as well not come to meetings, just send a proxy vote. He stated a motion is made and all votes are "yes". He stated council scheduled a public hearing at the same time as the Houston Texans play New England. He questioned if this would provide much public information. He reminded council they are elected to represent the residents. He stated council needs to rescind the proposed tax rate increase and examine the budget. He suggested looking closely at each budget line item. He stated this is council's obligation.

Sue Speck, 11751 Cawdor Way, stated she has lived in Hedwig Village for 28 years. She said her home has flooded twice, she knows what it's like to have a flooded home. She stated she has been involved in city government and drainage issues since 1995. She stated she was Mayor of Hedwig Village for 14 years and was a member of the city's Streets and Drainage Committee during that time. She stated during her time on council and as Mayor the city worked on streets and drainage projects and the budget to fund them. She stated she was Mayor when the city began the initial Hunters Branch Drainage Project and reminded council of that challenge. She stated she is familiar with 20 years' worth of drainage studies undertaken by the city. Her opinion is that another detailed, expensive drainage study is unnecessary because it would be repetitive and would not offer any new information as to causes or solutions, particularly on the west side of the city. The city engineer has worked closely with the city during these 20 years concerning drainage issues. She stated she reviewed her personal records and compiled a detailed timeline listing notes, studies, and drainage work during the period of 1997 through May 2015. Copies of the timeline were given to each Councilmember, Mayor, and a copy for the city's record. She stated she is still reviewing her personal notes and will supplement the timeline, as needed, to assist the city in locating the various studies already completed. She stated her timeline should serve as a basis for opposition to the expenditure of funds for any new study. She stated she was not against drainage projects but she is opposed to spend significant funds on a study that has already been done. She suggested the city do a minor review of studies in-house not to exceed \$10,000. She is opposed to the collection of additional taxpayer funds to be held for future projects. She stated there were currently no viable projects that would be developed in the immediate future. She stated collection of funds for future use cannot legally be restricted for drainage projects. She stated the previous studies and drainage projects completed during the previous 14 years were done without a significant property tax increase. She stated she is opposed to the increase of property tax above the rollback rate. She also opposes the collection of funds for unspecified projects.

Phil Taggart stated he would like more detail on where the money would be spent.

Anne Retzler, 913 Magdalene, is opposed to spending money on another study and opposed to the tax increase. She suggested the city work with City of Houston and Harris County to improve downstream.

Melissa Cook, 11410 Dunbeath, is not opposed to collection of funds with intent. She stated the city does have a flooding problem. Several houses on her street have flooded. She stated the city has not done anything on drainage or communicated with residents in

the last 17 months. She stated she moved from Hunters Creek to Hedwig Village because of the tax rate. She asked why the city could not use the studies the city already has to address the flooding and drainage issues. She stated the money spent on the decorative street poles could have been used for drainage instead.

Michael Shebay, 11703 Woodsage, asked if raising the permits fees would be a better solution to funding the drainage issues caused by a larger footprint for the new homes being built in Hedwig Village. He asked why the city could not do the drainage work over a longer period of time.

Tom Speck, 11751 Cawdor Way, stated he was, in theory, not against the tax increase in order to fund known drainage projects to solve known issues. He stated he was opposed to a tax increase mechanism in the 2017 Proposed Budget. He understands the anxiety of having your home flood. His house has flooded twice. He stated city government has the responsibility to manage city funds based not on emotions, but what is in the best interest for the entire city in a financially prudent manner. He stated the city has partnered with other entities in the past 20 years for drainage studies and the city should review those studies first. He stated the city could pay for an update at a significantly lower cost. He stated city council and the city engineer is aware of where the water comes from and where the water goes as well as the downstream flow legal restrictions and governmental jurisdictional issues. He stated those facts have not changed. He stated it was fiscally irresponsible to collect funds with no viable drainage projects on the horizon. He stated the process should follow the concept used in the past. First identify a project and then get all the intergovernmental approvals. Next get a reasonable cost estimate and present the project to the residents with the benefits and associated costs. Lastly funding should come from long term debt so the citizens would be assured that any tax increase would be for a specific purpose. He asked council to re-consider the tax increase.

Shirley Rouse, 714 Glen Echo, stated she grew up in Hedwig Village and moved back in 2001. She stated her mother is a 50 year resident on Woodsage. She stated the city has a large commercial area and real estate values are healthy due to a low tax rate, the outstanding police department, and excellent schools. She is opposed to a sizable tax increase. She stated the city should be able to operate with the lower tax rate and the healthy sales tax revenue. She stated money could be saved in the budget. She stated council should be prudent with taxpayer funds.

John Niemann, 6 Robinwood, a 13 year resident, asked if council can issue bonds. He stated the city should figure out the projects and issue a bond.

Len Walker, 802 Lochtyne Way, stated he was opposed to the tax increase.

Gene Walker, 802 Lochtyne Way, stated he is a 30 plus years resident and is opposed to the tax increase.

Frank Hinnant, 11402 Holidan Way, a 47 year resident, stated he is opposed to the tax increase based on what he has heard at the drainage committee meetings, of which he is a

member. He said the condition of Soldier's Creek is atrocious, he said there is too much foliage. He stated during Hurricane Ike he and neighbors cleared debris from Soldier's Creek. The water receded from the street once the debris was removed. He stated the city should pay a landscaping crew to keep Soldier's Creek clear.

Don Mayhall, 835 Merridel, a resident since 1959. He stated he opposes the tax increase. He said he has heard nothing at the meeting to warrant the increase. He stated Harris County Flood Control District (HCFCD) does not maintain Soldiers' Creek. He suggested partnering with HCFCD to maintain Soldier's Creek.

Public hearing was closed at 7:41 p.m.

3. DISCUSSION REGARDING THE PROPOSED FY 2017 BUDGET

Mayor Muecke stated the proposed tax increase would be \$0.0417. He stated the drainage issues will require millions of dollars to fix over a period of time. He agreed with residents that councilmembers cannot restrict the use of the funds generated from the proposed tax increase to drainage issues only, nor could council bind future councilmembers in the use of these funds. He stated the estimated budget surplus for fiscal year 2016 is \$21,000; he feels the city is budgeting prudently. He stated he supports the pay increase of 3.5% for police and city staff.

Mayor Muecke stated Jeff Cannon, City Engineer, proposed a timeline for the drainage study that will have five steps. Mr. Cannon is currently working on the first step. He stated that in approximately three months the city could have data to determine a cost benefit analysis and determine which project, if any, the city will begin working on. After a project is decided on, the engineers will determine the cost.

Councilmember McGinnis stated drainage was the major issue during the election early in 2016. He stated the city engineers will use previous drainage studies from various sources in the process of creating a current study for the city. He stated the last city-wide drainage study was completed in 1997.

Councilmember McGinnis introduced the Drainage Committee members

Councilmember McGinnis – Chairperson
Councilmember Johnson
Frank Hinnant
Harlan Bergen
Larry Gibson

He stated the members on the committee are a good geographic representation of the city.

Councilmember McGinnis stated drainage is important but there are no easy fixes to the issues. He said the city may be able to work in partnership with neighboring entities.

Councilmember McGinnis stated the drainage study may not cost the city \$275,000, that amount was just the maximum the city could spend on a drainage study. He stated the study will be used to identify potential projects. The drainage study may take six to seven months to complete but may be done sooner.

Several members of the audience spoke in regards to available funds from other sources, such as the METRO funds the city receives monthly, that could be used on drainage.

Mayor Muecke stated council will not engage in discussion during the open meeting. The public hearing portion is now closed.

Mayor Muecke discussed the process to adopt the budget and tax rate. He also discussed the rollback process. He said the city first proposes a tax rate and then schedules three public hearings for feedback from the residents. After the public hearings council then considers the feedback and holds a Special Council Meeting to adopt the budget and tax rate for Fiscal Year 2017. He stated the tax rate could be any rate not to exceed the rate published in the paper. If the adopted tax rate is higher than the rollback rate, the residents could petition the city for a rollback election to bring the tax rate down to the rollback rate of \$0.182201.

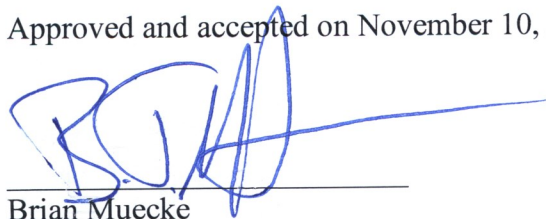
4. ADJOURNMENT

Councilmember Wiener moved, Councilmember Woodruff seconded, to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 p.m.

Councilmembers Johnson, McGinnis, Putterman, and Wiener voted "Aye", "Noes" none.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Approved and accepted on November 10, 2016.



Brian Muecke
Mayor

ATTEST:



Lisa Modisette
Assistant City Secretary