

**SEPTEMBER 19, 2024**

## Tax Rate Hearing - 9/19/2024

### Comments

- **Mayor Mitchell**- States that City has always chosen the no-new tax rate
- **Councilman Merendino**- States if the value of the house goes up, that makes the tax rate go down.
- **Mayor Mitchell**- States that we can go up or stay the same
- **Councilman Merendino**- States that the City can do the max amount without the citizens voting on it. States that the people he has talked to, don't want their taxes going up.
- **Stephanie Cramer**- States that if the City decides to increase the rates this year, it is a one-time deal.
- **Mayor Mitchell**- States that if the City decides to increase, it will increase everyone's tax rate by \$150/year
- **Councilman Wright**- Suggests keeping the tax rate the same. States that if the City chooses to go with the 0.130980 rate, then other things will have to come out of the budget to even everything out.
- **Resident**- Asks why the tax rate is being brought up
- **Mayor Mitchell**- States that the state mandates that it is an annual thing that must be done.
- **Dru Montgomery**- States that the no-new revenue would handcuff the City
- **Councilman Merendino**- States that as the vacant homes get occupied, it will bring the City more revenue
- **Councilman Clayton**- Asks Councilman Merendino to explain how not going with the no new revenue, what type of revenue it has brought the City in the past?
- **Councilman Merendino**- States that 30 years ago, the City didn't collect taxes, it ran off of the franchise fee
- **Stephanie Cramer**- States that due to the inflation that the Country is experiencing, it doesn't compare to how it was even 5 years ago
- **Councilman Clayton**- States that the normal generator for a City around the world is generated by taxes
- **Cathy Crane**- asks how long the City has been in a deficit
- **Charley Cramer**- States that taxes, water and community development is the revenue for the City. States that it would be good if there is a way to bring a tax break to the citizens that have been here for 30 + years
- **Stephanie Cramer**- Asks how we don't know how many vacant houses the City has
- **Heather Steelman**- States that there has been movement on some of the vacant homes since the City has started issuing violations.
- **Mayor**- States that she has been working on LOMA's for some of the vacant homes to bring them into zone X.
- **Sabrenna Crain**- explains that it will only move the structure into X, not the property
- **Councilman Merendino**- Makes a motion to choose the no-new revenue tax rate of 0.125141
- **Councilman Watson seconded**
- **Roger Mannette**- States that we can't count on the vacant homes being repaired
- **Councilman Clayton**- asks what the fear is of raising the tax rate

- **Mr. Godfrey-** that money isn't spent properly
- **Councilman Clayton-** Asks the residents to give the new Council a chance to make sure that the funds are used correctly
- **Mr. Godfrey-** asks if the rate is raised, how will that affect the residents. Will they be able to afford the increase?
- **Councilman Emmons-** States that like the budget, the tax rate is just a guesstimate and not on actual.
  - **Consideration/Discussion/Approval of tax rate- M/M/2/C- Councilman Merendino/Councilman Watson-** New tax rate of 0.130980

**Notice of a Regular Meeting Minutes  
CITY OF BEVIL OAKS, TEXAS**

September 19, 2024

1. **Call to Order 6:30**
2. **Pledge of Allegiance/Invocation**
  - a. The United States Flag
  - b. The Texas state flag: *"Honor the Texas flag; I pledge allegiance to thee, Texas, one state under God, one and indivisible."*
3. **Roll Call- All Present**
4. **Conflict of Interest Statement- None**
5. **Citizen Comments (3 minutes each) –** An opportunity for the citizens to address Council on agenda items or concerns not on the agenda – those wishing to speak must complete the comment card, present the comment card to the City Secretary prior to the beginning of the meeting, and observe a 3-minute time limit
  - **Taz-** States that he would like to clear the air for the car show. States that he did the car show for the community, not to put money in his pocket. States that any money that was made during the car show, was to be donated to the City. States that he is -\$1,200. States that he would be willing to talk to anyone that has any questions about the car show. States that he hopes in the years to come that he will be able to donate money to the City
  - **Mrs. Scroggins-** States that there has been a lot of things that have been done throughout the City within the past few months. States that the car show and the movie the night before was the best event that has been done within the past few months. States that they quit counting attendance at 80 people for the movie. Thanks, Councilman Clayton, for the screen for the movie. States that the movie was a \$0 cost. States that they received nothing but good reports from the car show.
6. **Presentation**
  - a. **Milton Bertollo/Charles E. Reed & Associates- 2023 Audit**
    - States that the audited financial statements were applicable. States that the City has recovered nicely from the devastation that it has experience since he started working for the City when Hurricane Rita hit.
    - **Mayor Mitchell-** asks if the lease payment listed in the budget is the printer?
    - **Milton Bertolio-** Yes
    - **Councilman Wright-** What is a budget amendment

- **Milton Bertollo-** States that if there is money that needs to be spent unexpectedly, a budget amendment would need to be requested. If the item is listed in the budget, it doesn't have to be brought back to the Council for a vote

**7. Review/Approve Consent Items-M/M/2/C- Councilman Emmons/Councilman Merendino- *Approved- Unanimous***

- Financial Reports City of Bevil Oaks**
- Financial Report Public Works**
- Utility Innovations Report**
- Previous Meeting Minutes**
- Previously presented 2023 Audit**

**8. Review/Action Items**

**a. Consideration/Discussion/Approval of 2024-2025 General Operating Budget**

**M/M/2/C- Councilman Wright/Councilman Emmons- *Approved with revisions- Unanimous***

- **Councilman Wright-** States that there are 2 ways to correct the deficit. We can cut costs or increase the revenue. Suggests cuts that could be made to the budget.
- **Councilman Emmons-** States that there are contractors that are working in the City, but they are not pulling permits. This is costing the City revenue.
- **Councilman Merendino-** States that he has a bid from the lawn maintenance contractor for landscaping at the entrance of Sweetgum of \$500, landscaping at the office for \$1,000, \$1,500 for the landscaping at the Civic Center.
- **Mayor Mitchell-** States that if Councilman Thibodeaux needs a larger budget for an event, he can come to Council with his budget for the event and ask for approval.
- **Councilman Thibodeaux-** States that the event budget has been set in place for a long time. The \$20,000 budget that is in place, was suggested by Councilman Merendino a few years ago. States that he did buy an abundance of shirts. Goes over plan to recoup the City's funds for the shirts that didn't sale.
- **Councilman Watson-** Suggests that he brings the events to the Council for approval and so that Council can critic the events with him.
- **Councilman Thibodeaux-** States that he doesn't mind doing that. States that he appreciates the idea.
- **Councilman Wright-** States that he thinks that the car show was great for the City
- **Mr. Godfrey-** States that he agrees that the car show was a big hit. States that he thinks that the car show will continue to grow over the years.
- **Discussion over budget**

**b. Consideration/Discussion/Approval of 2024-2025 Public Works Budget- *moved to discuss later in the meeting since there were***

**c. Consideration/Discussion/Approval of Grant Administrator for the RCP grant based off the recommendation of the review committee M/M/2/C- Councilman**

**Merendino/Councilman Emmons- Approved- Payne Empowerment for City's grant administrator for the RCP grant**

- **Heather Steelman-** States that the committee went over all the proposals
- d. Consideration/Discussion/Approval of Grant Administrator for the TxCDBG- TDA grant based off the recommendation of the review committee- Payne empowerment grant admin. M/M/2/C- Councilman Merendino/Councilman Emmons-Approved- All but Councilman Wright voted yes.**
- e. Consideration/Discussion/Approval of Engineer for the TxCDBG-TDA grant based off the recommendation of the review committee. M/M/2/C- Councilman Merendino/Councilman Emmons- Approved- Unanimous**
- f. Consideration/Discussion/Approval of rescinding resolution for City spending policy Council- M/M/2/C- Councilman Merendino/Councilman Thibodeaux- Approved with revisions of taking out # 5 on the resolution- Unanimous**
  - **Mayor Mitchell-** States that the resolution is rescinding the spending for spending limits for the Council. This does not include budgeted items.
  - **Councilman Merendino-** Suggest taking out number 5 because it contradicts the other item of taking expenditures to Council.
- **Consideration/Discussion/Approval of 2024 tax rate after consideration of comments, if any. Received at previous hearing on proposed tax rate. M/M/2/C- Councilman Merendino/Councilman Watson- New tax rate of 0.130980- Approved- Unanimous**
- g. (B.) Consideration/Discussion/Approval of 2024-2025 Public Works Budget- Councilman Clayton/Councilman Wright- Approved- Unanimous**
  - **Councilman Wright-** States that there is a typo on the copy of the budget that is in the packet.

## **9. Discussion**

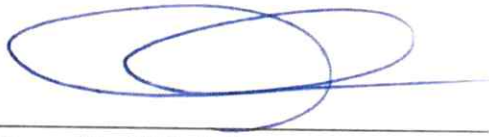
- a. Discussion of repair on the roof @ the Event Center.**
  - **Councilman Thibodeaux-** States that he isn't sure if the companies that he received bid from are listed in the Smart buy program. States that he wasn't aware that they had to be listed in the program to work for the City. Bid from American roofing- \$24,183.17, Bid from M&M Roofing- \$25,878, Bid from Coastal Roofing- \$39,846.83
  - **Councilman Merendino-** asks if it can be done in house
  - **Councilman Thibodeaux-** There isn't a warranty if the maintenance department does it
- b. Discussion of Community Development spending recap.**
  - **Councilman Thibodeaux-** Goes over the budget for the car show. States that there was a donation from Coastal Roofing for the trophies. States that Kirksey's has been great with the donation of things as well. States that the City bought the shirts for \$3,200. With the donations that were received, the City's cost for the event was \$2,275.25. States that the sales for the shirts were all cashless.
  - **Councilman Merendino-** asks how the 50/50 raffle went



- **Councilman Thibodeaux**- there was \$350 made and split between camp iron bluff and the winner of the raffle.
- **Councilman Merendino**- states that the resolution for the City spending policy states that a Council member may not spend more than \$2,500 without Council approval.
- **Councilman Thibodeaux**- States that he did bring it to Council.
- **Mayor Mitchell**- States that Councilman Thibodeaux did have the expenses for the car show in his report, but it was not brought to Council for a vote.
- **Councilman Wright**- states that there were some mistakes that were made, but there was a lot of positives that came from the car show.
- **Councilman Merendino**- states that he spoke with Taz after the car show and suggested that for the next car show it be rented out by Taz.
- **Mayor Mitchell**- States that she has spoken to Taz about doing a car show for Christmas and instead of a fee, they bring a toy and deliver it to the kids in the City. States that the kids in Bevil Oaks haven't been given anything in a few years
- **Councilman Thibodeaux**- states that he has been contacted about doing a chef choice cook off as well.

c. **Discussion** of designating a Councilman over the roads and drainage. **No discussion**

**10. Adjourn Meeting @ 9:00 pm - Councilman Clayton/Councilman Emmons**



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Mayor Cheri Mitchell

Attest:   
City Secretary, Jeff Thibodeaux