



MINUTES

SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING

August 20, 2009

The City Council of the City of Forest Hill met on the above date at 7:01 p.m. with Mayor Gosey presiding. The following Council Members and officials were present: Council Members Damian Dalcour, Lyndia Thomas, Gerald Joubert, Dulani Masimini, Andrew Sanders, Mayor Pro Tem Mustafa Sami, City Manager David Miller, City Secretary Debra Maness, Fire Chief Pat Ekiss, Acting Public Works Director Roberto Duenes, Interim Police Chief Robert Herbert, Economic Development and Community Relations Director Venus Wehle, Finance Director Clifford Blackwell, III and City Attorney Bonnie Goldstein.

Opening Agenda:

A. Call to Order

With a quorum present, Mayor Gosey called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

B. Invocation

Invocation was delivered by Coach Jimmie L. Sanders.

C. Pledge of Allegiance to Flags

Pledge to the United States and Texas flags were recited.

D. Public Hearing:

1st PUBLIC HEARING

To receive citizens comments on a proposal to increase total tax revenues from properties on the tax roll in the preceding tax year by 1.17 percent. Your individual taxes may increase a greater or lesser rate or even decrease, depending on the change in the taxable value of your property in relations to the change in taxable value of all other property and the tax rate that is adopted.

Mayor Gosey opened the public hearing at 7:04 p.m.

Clifford Blackwell, Finance Director informed the Council and public that this is the first public hearing of two on the proposed tax rate, with the next hearing to be held August 27, 2009. Mr. Blackwell explained that the taxable valuation of City of Forest Hill had declined almost 9%. The City's current tax rate is \$0.95 per \$100 valuation. The proposed rate that was published in the paper is \$1.06 per \$100 valuation. According to state law, the City must calculate an effective tax rate, which is the tax rate that would be require for the City to generate the same amount of money

that it collected this year. The effective tax rate is \$1.047, and is not considered a tax increase. The rate that the City is proposing is \$1.06, and is considered an increase. The average residential value has decreased from \$63,988 to \$53,678; therefore the average resident would not pay more taxes with the increase due to the decline in property value.

Coach Jimmie L. Sanders, 7005 Stonewall Road, Forest Hill, TX 76140, spoke before the Council on the tax rate. He had concerns on whether the citizens of Forest Hill were aware of the tax increase, or the public hearings on the tax increase. He also had concerns about senior citizens, he is 99 years old. He does not have enough information on whether the tax rate should be increased, but feels that it should not have an effect on the senior citizens.

Beckie Hayes, 7317 Woodbridge Drive, Forest Hill Texas, spoke before the Council stating that she felt money should be redistributed instead of raising the taxes, cut back on some things, decrease the wage of employees, so that it does not an effect the citizens of Forest Hill.

Berniece Taylor Johnson, 6509 Melinda Drive, Forest Hill, spoke before the Council stating that she has lived in Forest Hill since 1976, and she does not fit into the criteria to have a tax decrease. She is against the tax increase.

James Overton, 6520 Royal Oaks Drive, Forest Hill, spoke before the Council stating that he is for the tax increase as long as no one gets laid off. He did not want the Council to go into executive session to discuss the tax rate and the citizens not know what was going on.

Jerline Harvey, 3300 Old Hickory Trail, spoke before the Council stating that she has lived in Forest Hill since 1975 and is involved with the Forest Hill Library. She also stated that the Library Board was made aware last year to expect a 13% decrease in sales tax revenue and would like for herself and the citizens of the City of Forest Hill to become knowledgeable about how the City is going to handle the shortfall. She does not want to see any one laid off, especially if it was going to affect the services. She is not in favor of the tax increase.

Charlotte Hogan Price, 3600 Brambleton, Forest Hill, spoke before the Council stating that the economy is in a slump, money is tight. She has lived here since 1977, loves this City, the Community Driven Spirit that the City Manager has brought to the City, but she is against raising taxes.

Pamela Stockton, 3029 Old Hickory Trail, Forest Hill, stated that she is against having employees laid off, and feels that the City should educate the citizens more on the budget.

Bonnie Goldstein, City Attorney informed the citizens present that tax rates and the City's budget would not be discussed in executive session. City Manager informed the public that the proposed budget has 8.5 vacancies that will not be filled, also that this is the second year that the employees would not be getting raises. He also stated that a Connect CTY message would be sent out before the next public hearing on the tax rate and the proposed budget.

With no else to speak Mayor Gosey closed the public hearing at 7:59 p.m.

- E. RECESS INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION** - Pursuant to Section 551.071, Texas Government Code, the Council reserves the right to convene in Executive Session(s) from time to time as deemed necessary during this meeting for any posted agenda item, to receive advice from its

attorney as permitted by law.

1. Pursuant to Section 551.072, Texas Government Code: Deliberation Regarding Real Property:
To deliberate the purchase, exchange, lease, or value of real property.

Lease or purchase of Chase Bank Building located at 3217 California Parkway, Forest Hill, TX 76119

Council recessed into Executive Session at 8:00 p.m.

Council Members Gerald Joubert and Andrew Sanders were excused during Executive Session.

F. Reconvene into regular session.

Council reconvened into regular session at 9:36 p.m.

G. Take any action necessary pursuant to executive session.

Council Member Masimini made the motion to direct the City Attorney and City Manager to move forward as directed in executive session. Seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Sami, which **passed** as follows

Ayes: Council Members Dalcour, Masimini, Mayor Pro Tem Sami and Mayor Gosey

Nays: Council Member Thomas

Absent: Council Members Joubert and Sanders

H. Adjournment

With no further business to discuss, council adjourned at 9:37 p.m.

ATTEST:

APPROVED:

Debra W. Maness, City Secretary

James Gosey, Mayor