

Council Minutes August 30, 2011

STATE OF TEXAS §

COUNTY OF TARRANT §

CITY OF BEDFORD §

The City Council of the City of Bedford, Texas, met in Special Session at 6:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers of City Hall, 2000 Forest Ridge Drive, on the 30th day of August, 2011 with the following members present:

Jim Story
Chris Brown
Ray Champney
Roger Fisher
Jim Griffin
Roy Savage
Roy W. Turner

Mayor
Council Members

constituting a quorum.

Staff present included:

Beverly Griffith
David Miller
Stan Lowry
Michael Wells
Cliff Blackwell
Bill Cooper
Roger Gibson
John Kubala
Jill McAdams
Mirenda McQuagge-Walden
Maria Redburn
Bill Syblon
James Tindell

City Manager
Deputy City Manager
City Attorney
City Secretary
Director of Administrative Services
Information Services Director
Police Chief
Public Works Director
Human Resources Director
Managing Director of Community Services
Library Manager
Development Director
Fire Chief

SPECIAL SESSION 6:30 P.M.

The Special Session began at 6:30 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER/GENERAL COMMENTS

Mayor Story called the meeting to order.

COUNCIL RECOGNITION

- 1. Proclamation recognizing September 11, 2011 as “Stop and Remember – 9/11 National Moment of Remembrance” in the City of Bedford.**

Mayor Story read a proclamation recognizing September 11, 2011 as “Stop and Remember – 9/11 National Moment of Remembrance” in the City of Bedford. Police Chief Roger Gibson and Fire Chief James Tindell were on hand to accept the proclamation.

NEW BUSINESS

2. Second public hearing to consider the proposed 2011 tax rate.

City Manager Beverly Griffith stated that this is the second public hearing on the proposed tax rate. There was an extensive presentation at the last Council meeting. Council will be considering a rate not to exceed \$0.504329 to fund next year's budget. The current tax rate is \$0.491609, so this will represent a 1.2 cent increase. The effective tax rate is \$0.494387.

Mayor Story opened the public hearing at 6:35 p.m.

Bill Ellis, 1004 Monterrey Street – Mr. Ellis wanted to proclaim Emergency Preparedness Month. He stated that it appears the City expects to cover its excess of expenses or the decrease in properties available by increasing the property tax, which is obtained from the residents based on the value of their property. Though the tax increase is not significant, it is being used as an appearance to solve an upcoming calamity. However, an increase in property taxes will have no affect on solving the calamity. Increasing taxes is not a solution to a declining economy; the positive effects government can have are in reducing government costs and taxes. Of the three surrounding cities, Bedford will be the most likely to suffer with no mall or airport. One way to reduce government costs is to combine as many mini-cities as possible. There is no rainy day fund or if there is one, it will be disappearing soon. The true purpose of government is to protect the citizenry of that city. The private sector is what makes the city grow, not the government. It is time to contemplate various alternatives to solve the potential problems that are on the horizon. A strong private sector depends on a strong and successful free market. The government is a socialistic body that arbitrarily assigns wages and benefits and there is no test to determine those. Instead of protecting the citizenry, an emphasis has been placed on how to spend taxes to have well paid and benefited employees. Costs need to be reduced and the Council should start now so it will not be as devastating as it would be if it had to be done at the last minute.

Michael Bond, 2607 Cummings Drive – Mr. Bond stated that on the notice for the public hearing for potentially raising the property tax rate that for 2010, the average home value was \$145,011 while in 2011 it is \$145,765; therefore, the average home value is rising. He only sees a proposal to increase the tax rate but none to reduce or keep it the same. He requests that Council look into a proposal to keep the tax rate the same, since lowering it may not be feasible. He applauded Council for keeping the tax rate the same from 2005-2008 but there has been a rise in the rate by 17 cents since 2000, which is an increase to his taxes of \$188 per year.

Mayor Story closed the public hearing at 7:13 p.m.

3. Discussion and possible Council direction regarding the impact of S.B. 100 on Municipal Elections.

City Secretary Michael Wells updated Council on discussions with Tarrant County regarding elections in May of 2012. At a meeting on August 24, 2011, Tarrant County Elections did confirm that they would be able to contract with the entities for elections in May of 2012. There would be increased costs due to extra staff and overhead. They also stated that they were reexamining the changes in the number and locations of voting day polling places and would work with each city on an individual basis. They could not confirm that they could continue to contract for elections in even-numbered years after 2012, so the entities will still need to examine their choices. Mr. Wells stated that he would keep the Council updated and plans on meeting with Hurst, Euless and the School District.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Story adjourned the meeting at 7:20 p.m.

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Jim Story, Mayor

ATTEST:

Michael Wells, City Secretary