

Council Minutes June 28, 2016

§ STATE OF TEXAS

§ COUNTY OF TARRANT

§ CITY OF BEDFORD

The City Council of the City of Bedford, Texas, met in Work Session at 6:00 p.m. and Regular Session at 6:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers of City Hall, 2000 Forest Ridge Drive, on the 28th day of June, 2016 with the following members present:

Roger Fisher	Mayor Pro Tem
Ray Champney	Council
Members Steve Farco	
Dave Gebhart	
Rusty Sartor	

constituting a quorum.

Mayor Griffin and Councilmember Turner were absent from the meeting.

Staff present included:

Roger Gibson	City Manager
Kelli Agan	Assistant City Manager
Stan Lowry	City Attorney
Michael Wells	City Secretary
Natalie Foster	Public Information Officer
Jeff Gibson	Police Chief
Kenny Overstreet	Public Works Director
Maria Redburn	Library Director
Emilio Sanchez	Planning Manager
Bobby Sewell	Interim Fire Chief
Bill Syblon	Economic Development Director
Eric Valdez	Community Services Manager

COUNCIL CHAMBER WORK SESSION

Mayor Pro Tem Fisher called the Work Session to order at 6:00 p.m.

- **Review and discuss items on the regular agenda and consider placing items for approval by consent.**

Council discussed placing the following items on consent: 3, 5, 6, 7 and 8.

Public Works Director Kenny Overstreet presented information regarding Item #5. The City received low interest loans from the Texas Water Development Board for water development projects. The first project consists of Brown Trail from Harwood Road to Eagle Drive, Eagle Drive, Warbler Drive, Wren Court and Blue Jay Court. This location was identified as a high break area and was added to the packet when the City applied for the loan as it needed immediate work. The City received ten sealed bids on June 7, with R&D Burns Brothers submitting the most reasonable, responsible bid for the project. In answer to a question from Council, Mr. Overstreet confirmed that there was a lower bidder but that staff was unable to verify their references. In answer to further questions from

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Council, Mr. Overstreet stated that they try to group these types of water renewal projects in groups that cost approximately \$1M, with seven to eight streets per project in the same location; that some renewal will be behind the curbs and not in the streets themselves; that staff can look at getting assistance from Tarrant County on a mill and overlay of Brown Trail in next year's budget; that 4B is not going to support the entire \$90M in projects, but will support the worst areas; that once the second phase of this area is completed, they will come back and do mill and overlay. Mr. Overstreet further confirmed that the bid amount covers remediation for such items as replacing grass and sprinkler systems. There was discussion on the bid coming in under the average of the bids; the correlation between 4B and overlaying roads; and being as efficient as possible in order to conserve funds and getting maximum productivity.

Mr. Overstreet presented information regarding Item #6, which, like the previous item, is to use State Water Implementation Fund for Texas (SWIFT) funds for three locations with a high number of water main breaks. This includes a 12-inch cast iron line along Commerce Place, which is one of three lines that pass under State Highway 121 and serves the east side of Bedford. When that line breaks, the water volume and pressure to that part of the City is reduced. Along Tibbets Drive, there is an eight-inch cast iron line that affects the traffic flow around the hospital and which has had seven breaks in the last four years. Once the contract is awarded, a meeting will be set up with the hospital to plan emergency routes. In answer to questions from Council, Mr. Overstreet stated that the project will have a 120-day timeframe for completion; that they will not be doing any of the work under the freeway; that part of the Commerce Place line was renewed as part of the highway construction; and that Tibbets Drive will be the priority.

Assistant City Manager Kelli Agan presented information regarding Item #7, which is an interlocal agreement between the City and the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) for the Trinity Railway Express (TRE). Bedford's portion for participation is \$90,456. The TRE is the rail system that connects residents to the airport and the DFW Metroplex, and is utilized by all the cities that line the corridor. It aids in the congestion along the freeway and in meeting the area's federal air quality standards. Bedford's portion is based on a license plate survey conducted in 2014 and part of 2015. Another survey will be conducted the following year so the City's annual payment may fluctuate based upon the results. In answer to questions from Council, Ms. Agan stated that Bedford residents utilize the service as evidenced by the license plate survey of those who park at the stations. In answer to further questions from Council, Ms. Agan confirmed that the City is not legally bound to enter into the agreement but that it allows Bedford to be partners with NCTCOG along with the area cities, as Bedford is the only city that does not currently participate. There was discussion that the Tarrant Regional Transportation Coalition is looking into the "last mile" such as from Bedford to the train stations; the City becoming more aggressive in accommodating citizens by providing transportation; seeing if Catholic Charities, which has taken over Northeast Transportation Services (NETS), might expand their services in the future so they can accommodate "last mile" services to rail stations; and needing more public transportation as the area develops. Ms. Agan confirmed that the TRE, in conjunction with NCTCOG, put license plate readers at station parking lots and came out with an average number of Bedford vehicles; and money from the contributions from NCTCOG was then divided up amongst the eight cities based on the averages.

Mayor Pro Tem Fisher presented information regarding Item #8. He stated that the City's Charter allows the Council to remove Board and Commission members that have become inactive. A certified letter was sent to an individual and returned. Parks and Recreation Board Chairperson Jeannette Cook then recommended that the individual be removed to free up a place on the Board.

- **Presentation on recent Economic Development activities.**

Economic Development Director Bill Syblon presented an update on Economic Development

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activities in the City. He stated it was a strong year for the City at the International Council of Shopping Centers. A lot of meetings were held relevant to future development, and there interactions with potential developers and real estate brokers. At every meeting he received compliments about how the City was one of the best to deal with, which is a reflection of the Council and staff. At the southwest corner of Central Drive and Harwood Road, a Petro's Chili & Chips is going in. The company is based out of Tennessee and this will be their first location in Texas. It is a new franchisee who is taking time with the development of the building, and he is hoping for it to open in late summer. El Pollo Loco on Central Drive will be the first in the DFW Metroplex. It is a west coast concept that is breaking into the market. The Bedford Dialysis Center is constructing a 5,300 square foot facility off of Highway 157. Mr. Syblon discussed a two tenant building, whose major tenant, a national brand, has yet to be announced. The Popeye's at the southwest intersection of Bedford Road and Highway 183 has finally broken ground. He stated that smaller development and redevelopment projects have taken some time to work out as they are remainder pieces from the highway widening. The Department's number one priority has been the vacancy of the former Tom Thumb space and they have put out feelers to a variety of retail sectors, as well as working with the shopping center owner. There has been positive movement in refilling that space per the owner but they are not being specific.

Mayor Pro Tem Fisher adjourned the Work Session at 6:25 p.m.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

To convene in the conference room, if time permits, in compliance with Section 551.001 et. Seq. Texas Government Code, to discuss the following:

- a) Pursuant to Section 551.071(2), consultation with the City Attorney on matters in which the duty of the City Attorney under the Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct of the State Bar of Texas clearly conflicts with Chapter 551 of the Texas Government Code – Sign Ordinance.**

Council convened into Executive Session pursuant to Texas Government Code Section 551.071(2), consultation with the City Attorney on matters in which the duty of the City Attorney under the Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct of the State Bar of Texas clearly conflicts with Chapter 551 of the Texas Government Code – Sign Ordinance at 6:25 p.m.

Council reconvened from Executive Session at 6:51 p.m. Council was unable to finish Executive Session and will convene again at the end of the Regular Session.

REGULAR SESSION

The Regular Session began at 6:57 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER/GENERAL COMMENTS

Mayor Pro Tem Fisher called the meeting to order. He stated that Mayor Griffin and Councilmember Turner were on vacation.

INVOCATION (Pastor Floyd Ellsworth, Oasis Community Worship Center)

Pastor Floyd Ellsworth of Oasis Community Worship Center gave the invocation.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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The Pledge of Allegiance to the flags of the United States and Texas were given.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/UPCOMING EVENTS

Public Information Officer Natalie Foster reported that Bedford 4thFest will be held at the new and improved Boys Ranch Park. The celebration starts at 3:00 p.m. with a ribbon cutting celebration for the completion of Phase One of the park improvements. Twiggy the Water Skiing Squirrel will do a special performance, followed by a ribbon cutting and bubble ceremony. There will be patriotic refreshments and a meet-and-greet with Barkley, the Parks and Recreation mascot. At 4:00 p.m., the 4thFest activities will begin with live music, children activities, a salute to the soldiers, and a fireworks show to conclude the night. In answer to a question from Council, Ms. Foster stated that there will be some parking on-site but the main parking is at the Library, with overflow onto the Old Bedford School.

Mayor Pro Tem Fisher stated that Council is really excited and looking forward to formally opening the first phase of the park and showcasing it on a wonderful holiday for the country.

OPEN FORUM

Nobody chose to speak during Open Forum.

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF ITEMS BY CONSENT

Motioned by Councilmember Champney, seconded by Councilmember Champney, to approve the following items by consent: 3, 5, 6, 7 and 8.

Motion approved 5-0-0. Mayor Pro Tem Fisher declared the motion carried.

COUNCIL RECOGNITION

1. Employee Service Recognition.

The following employees received recognition for dedicated service and commitment to the City of Bedford:

Michael Martin, Police Department - 10 years of service
Cassey Amburn, Fire Department - 10 years of service
Jean Green, Library - 15 years of service
Jerry Watson, Fire Department - 20 years of service
Michael Gardner, Public Works - 30 years of service

2. Proclamation declaring July 2016 as Parks and Recreation Month in the City of Bedford.

Mayor Pro Tem Fisher read a proclamation declaring July 2016 as Parks and Recreation Month in the City of Bedford. Community Services Manager Eric Valdez was present to accept the proclamation.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

3. Consider approval of the following City Council minutes:

- a) June 9, 2016 work session
- b) June 14, 2016 regular

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session This item was approved by

consent. **PERSONS TO BE HEARD**

4. The following individuals have requested to speak to the Council tonight under Persons to be Heard:

a) Roger Smeltzer, 2921 Brown Trail, Suite 145, Bedford, Texas 76021 – Request to speak to Council regarding the sign ordinance.

Mayor Pro Tem Fisher stated that for full disclosure, him and Mr. Smeltzer are friends and had discussed this issue earlier in the day. He thanked Mr. Smeltzer for his service to the City as a broker and gave his thoughts and prayers to him and his wife on the birth of their daughter.

Roger Smeltzer, 2921 Brown Trail, Suite 145, Bedford – Mr. Smeltzer stated that he is a broker with Vision Commercial, whose offices are in Bedford, and a lot of the growth and success of his company is due to the City. There was a movement three years previously to alter the sign regulations and he argued against major changes to commercial real estate signs. There is currently a movement for changes to temporary signage and he was concerned about how the process was approached. He stated it was legitimate that people complained about neon and bright blinking signs; however, just because commercial real estate signage falls within the temporary signage ordinance, does not mean they are included in those complaints. His number one question was whether a pulse had been taken on if the complaints about signage has included commercial real estate signs. He expected that when Council voted on the ordinance in December, that they would have sought the counsel of people in the City in that capacity but none of the owners were invited to speak. He stated that the new ordinance makes Bedford stricter than Southlake. He discussed the reality of what is in cities' sign ordinances and what is enforced, and stated that many cities have a permit fee which are not enforced. Bedford has a distinction that many of its commercial properties are based on the highway and there is no delineation in the ordinance between signage along the highway and signage along arterial streets. He displayed signs that are actively up in the neighboring communities. He did not believe brokers, shopping center or commercial owners were asked for their input. He presented Council a list of 51 owners and brokers, who represent half a billion dollars in real estate in the community, that support not changing the sign ordinance. He discussed issues with wooden skids upon which signs are placed in areas where there is no frontage, TxDOT taking a lot of frontage property from owners, and certain locations without any greenspace who would then not be able to have real estate signs under the new ordinance. He presented several suggestions to Council including leaving the ordinance as is; never removing the ability of owner who do not have appropriate frontage because TxDOT took it; and separating the signage criteria to identify highway visible properties, who pay more taxes and have a different burden because of faster drivers and therefore need larger signs. He stated that a black and white sign was not appropriate for highway signage, and colors and logos are important. Property owners should have the ability to market their properties as they wish and taking signs down to the size in the ordinance will not help fill spaces in the community. Bedford is one of the few communities where he has had to pay a permit fee in the last ten years and the process is antiquated. He asked that if there are going to be permits to make the process easier. He currently has permits from the City that says he can have 4X8 signs but because of the change in the ordinance, he has replaced them with signage that is 30 to 40 percent more expensive. He hoped that the City would listen to the active owners and brokers on how the ordinance affects them. He discussed the new owner of the Bedford Meadows Shopping Center who was told to take a sign down, and stated that it was not business friendly. Banner signs on the highway are permitted to be fifty square feet but cannot be seen at a shopping center 150 to 200 feet from the highway. He stated they should be able to put up larger pieces of marketing material so people can see it.

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There was discussion on the point of the signs being to grab attention; people not being able to see the signs from the freeway; and accessibility, visibility and branding. Mr. Smeltzer stated that Bedford does not have issues getting the obvious businesses but it does have a negative net absorption with retail, and brokers are trying to get anybody they can who will run a good business in the City. There was discussion on if there was research on whether black and white signage was going to help or hurt brokers and owners. Mr. Smeltzer asked how many people legitimately complained about the real estate signs. He stated that the City's codes are enforced more than those in other cities but asked where it crosses the line to not being business friendly. He moved to Bedford ten years ago because of how business friendly the City was. Property owners may not live and are unable to vote in the City but they pay a lot of taxes and provide businesses that pay more taxes. He asked that Council shift the commercial discussion off of the September 1 deadline and have a real discussion with the brokerage and commercial owner community about solving problems and improving the community. In answer to a question from Council regarding what else the City can do under the business friendly moniker to support him as a broker, Mr. Smeltzer stated that they should spend money on an updated Buxton Report as the community has changed since the highway expansion. Further, he stated it is a mistake to just focus on tax incentives as they only benefit the shopping center owners and instead target and deal directly with good quality tenants. He discussed issues with a new concept called an "escape room" that was to go into the City; however, the City's Zoning Ordinance did not acknowledge that use and included it under "amusement," while he saw the use as an office. That meant it had to go through the Specific Use Permit (SUP) process, so the business decided to go to Hurst instead. He did not have an issue with getting a SUP but with how long the process takes, and asked that it be streamlined for unique type situations. There was discussion on the goal of Council being to maintain the quality of the community and aesthetics; what is in the best interest of all concerned parties; statistics or data that demonstrate what effective signage looks like as far as distance, size, font and style; the changes in retail with internet sales; and what is reasonable from the standpoint of what the City wants to accomplish.

In answer to questions from Council, Mr. Smeltzer stated that, speaking for owners and his clients, they want to be in centers and communities that work as hard as they can to market the centers; that depending on the year, 45 to 50 percent of his business comes from signs but his online platform is very extensive; and most other firms will say 75 to 80 percent of their business is from drive-by signs. He cited an example of a location that had a smaller sign with another broker and was listed for six months with no offers; his company listed it for 45 days with a larger four-by-eight sign, and the location is now under contract. Mr. Smeltzer stated that Bedford's two biggest corollary issues are the change of the freeway pattern and retail "suck" from Euless and development on Highway 121. There is a big issue in the City's demographic model and older centers will see a shift to service-based retail. The biggest issue that will limit Bedford long term is the limited increase in rent from improving shopping centers and the City's need to lead with dollars to the owners to push for change. He stated that 30 to 40 percent of his business comes through the internet. He discussed the impression the City can put on to people who potentially want to buy shopping centers and brokers, and with more expensive signs, he has to weigh whether to take a listing or not because he wants to be profitable. The last thing the City wants is having residential agents marketing its commercial properties. The City is going to push back on the brokerage community and regress because the City has worked hard the last several years to be business friendly. He discussed following the lead of other communities that are have shown success and have been proactive with the brokerage community and signage. There was discussion on avoiding indifference to the needs of the business community; a lack of approach to the business community on how the ordinance would impact them; considering the concerns of the business community; pushing for Bedford to be better; how best to make improvements while accommodating the needs of business owners and desires of the citizens; making sure Bedford is seen as business friendly; and making sure Bedford is a vital community for residents and businesses.

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There was discussion that the Sign Ordinance is in place and is scheduled to go into effect September 1; the desire from some members of the Council to make some changes that are on the agenda for a special meeting on July 11; that Executive Session will reconvene after hearing Mr. Smeltzer's presentation; and that no action will take place on the Sign Ordinance at this meeting.

- b) Bill McFadden, 1108 Hialeah Path, Bedford, Texas 76022 - Request to speak to Council regarding vehicles parked on streets, the cellphone ordinance, Code Compliance issues, and obstructing sidewalks with vehicles.**

Mr. McFadden was not present at the meeting.

- c) Roger Gallenstein, 4013 Fairmont Court, Bedford, Texas 76021 – Request to speak to Council regarding the importance of a Destination for Economic Development.**

Roger Gallenstein, 4013 Fairmont Court, Bedford – Mr. Gallenstein stated that he came before Council in July of 2014 about Bedford needing a destination and used the example of the Levitt Pavilion in Arlington. It is one of six, soon to be ten, such locations that host 50 free concerts a year in the community. He stated the idea of a destination comes down to economic development. People come from other places to the Levitt and spend money on food and see other business at which they may want to spend money. He discussed the Bedford Commons and developments in Colleyville and North Richland Hills that lack a destination and have unoccupied business spaces. He stated the City is looking at a cultural area and needs something to drive people to the City to shop at its stores. He discussed projects in Mansfield and Cleburne; and the City having a cultural district and the Bedford Commons but not a destination or unique development to bring people in. In regards to economic development, he was told by the President of the Downtown Arlington Association that the Levitt was the driver for 25 new restaurants since it began. Mr. Gallenstein stated that Bedford will not get a Levitt because there is a distance requirement but does need something for people to come to the City. He invited people to go to the Levitt to get a sense of community. A video was played showcasing the Levitt Pavilion from their website. Mr. Gallenstein stated that the Levitt in Arlington had a format to follow, but the City has to create one from scratch.

Patti Diou, 7005 Crater Lake Drive, Arlington, Texas – Ms. Diou is the Executive Director of the Arlington Levitt Pavilion. She stated that she has served on the Downtown Arlington Management Corporation Board for ten years, and the Board saw the Levitt as the perfect way to build the downtown. Downtown Arlington was previously desolate and described as a cultural wasteland. The City is known for big things like the Rangers, Cowboys and tourism but it wants to be known for building the community. Initially, they hoped the Levitt would attract 500 people but are now disappointed if they do not get crowds of 1,500 to 3,000 people. At a Blood, Sweat and Tears concert, there were 9,000 people in attendance. The Levitt was only built for 3,000 people so they have to shut down the streets in order to accommodate the crowds. The land for the Levitt came from a land swap Arlington did with a nearby church. It was built through a public-private partnership, whereby the City came in with \$6M for the project and the Corporation raised \$1.2M, with the national Levitt Foundation donating \$250,000. After the Levitt was built, it was gifted to Arlington, who owns it and runs it through their parks and recreation department, while the Corporation serves as onsite management. The infrastructure, including the video screen, is the Corporation's. Their initial budget was \$375,000 and is now \$900,000. The only way they can survive is through donors, sponsors and grants, as well as \$150,000 yearly from the national Levitt Foundation. In regards to economic impact, the Corporation has looked at ways to revitalize the downtown, including a dream sculpture, projects done by the Arlington Museum of Art, a multi-family development and a student housing project, the new \$30M Library, a \$49M mixed-use development caddy-corner to the Levitt, and \$13M in pedestrian improvements to Abrams Street. She stated that when the University of Texas at Arlington found out about the Levitt, they moved their developments to that side of the city. The

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whole dynamics of the downtown have changed and the Levitt is included in articles on Arlington along with the Cowboys, Rangers and Six Flags. The previous year, a ticketed concert with Kenny Loggins had 2,200 people from 17 different states and 109 different cities. She advised that before the City builds something like this, to have the money up front in order to avoid debt or it needs to be a good public-private partnership because people would be more bought into it. Approximately 115,00 people attend the 50 free concerts the previous year and Trip Advisor has the Levitt as one of the cool destinations for downtown. The primary reasons the Levitt was put in Arlington was for economic and community development. In answer to questions from Council, Ms. Diou confirmed that Bedford's cultural district is the type of geographic location that could accommodate something like the Levitt and stated that the City would have the opportunity to expand. She further stated that the Arlington Levitt is downtown across from city hall and she wished they were in a bigger park near Cowboys Stadium; that the venue was built based on the small venue in Pasadena and they did not expect it to grow as much as it did; that they will probably never move; that the newer Levitts are required to seat at least 7,000 people; and that she sees venues in other cities not as a competition but as great assets for the whole Metroplex. There was discussion on the cultural district being a catalyst to making Bedford Commons successful; having forward vision and thinking outside the box; the Cultural Commission and a series of new events the City is putting on; understanding the value of the arts; embracing HEB ISD; assets in the City including Arts Council Northeast, Onstage and the Trinity Arts Theater; and funds being available from the Texas Commission on the Arts once a cultural district designation is achieved.

NEW BUSINESS

- 5. Consider a resolution authorizing the City Manager to enter into a contract with R & D Burns Brothers, Inc. in the amount of \$1,140,065 for the Brown Trail/Eagle Drive/Warbler Drive/Wren Court/Blue Jay Court Water System Improvement Project.**

This item was approved by consent.

- 6. Consider a resolution authorizing the City Manager to enter into a contract with MACVAL Associates, LLC, in the amount of \$1,176,060 for the Commerce Place/Tibbets Drive/Scenic Hills Drive/Red Oak Lane Water System Improvements Project.**

This item was approved by consent.

- 7. Consider a resolution authorizing the City Manager to enter into an Interlocal Agreement with the North Central Texas Council of Governments, in the amount of \$90,456, for operation of the Trinity Railway Express commuter rail service.**

This item was approved by consent.

- 8. Consider a resolution removing an inactive member from the Parks and Recreation Board.**

This item was approved by consent.

- 9. Report on most recent meeting of the following Boards and Commissions:**
 - ✓ **Animal Shelter Advisory Board - Councilmember Fisher**

Mayor Pro Tem Fisher reported that the Board will have their quarterly meeting on July 13.

- ✓ **Beautification Commission - Councilmember Turner**

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No report was given.

✓ **Community Affairs Commission - Councilmember Farco**

Councilmember Farco reported that the Commission will not meet in July.

✓ **Cultural Commission - Councilmember Champney**

No report was given.

✓ **Library Advisory Board - Councilmember Farco**

Councilmember Farco reported that the Board will not meet in July.

✓ **Parks and Recreation Board - Councilmember Sartor**

No report was given.

✓ **Teen Court Advisory Board - Councilmember Gebhart**

Councilmember Gebhart reported that the Board will next meet on September 2.

✓ **Senior Citizen Liaison - Councilmember Turner**

No report was given.

10. Council member Reports

Councilmember Farco reported that the City is moving forward with “Experiencing HEB,” which is working with the Mayor, the cities of Hurst, Euless and Bedford, HEB ISD, and the hospital. They are currently putting together a website to promote the activities of all three cities.

11. City Manager/Staff Reports

No report was given.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

To convene in the conference room in compliance with Section 551.001 et. Seq. Texas Government Code, to discuss the following:

- a) **Pursuant to Section 551.071(2), consultation with the City Attorney on matters in which the duty of the City Attorney under the Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct of the State Bar of Texas clearly conflicts with Chapter 551 of the Texas Government Code – Sign Ordinance.**

Council reconvened into Executive Session pursuant to Texas Government Code Section 551.071(2), consultation with the City Attorney on matters in which the duty of the City Attorney under the Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct of the State Bar of Texas clearly conflicts with Chapter 551 of the Texas Government Code – Sign Ordinance at 8:37 p.m.

Council reconvened from Executive Session at 8:52 p.m.

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Any necessary action to be taken as a result of the Executive Session will occur during the Regular Session of the Bedford City Council Meeting.

12. Take any action necessary as a result of the Executive Session.

No action was necessary as a result of the Executive Session.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Pro Tem Fisher adjourned the meeting at 8:54 p.m.

Jim Griffin, Mayor

ATTEST:

Michael Wells, City Secretary