

## Council Minutes August 23, 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 23rd day of August, 2016 with the following members present:**

Jim Griffin	Mayor
Steve Farco	Council Members
Roger Fisher	
Dave Gebhart	
Rusty Sartor	
Roy W. Turner	

constituting a quorum.

Councilmember Champney was absent from the meeting.

Staff present included:

Roger Gibson	City Manager
Kelli Agan	Assistant City Manager
Stan Lowry	City Attorney
Michael Wells	City Secretary
Cliff Blackwell	Administrative Services Director
Gary Clopton	Information Technology Manager
Natalie Foster	Public Information Officer
Jeff Gibson	Police Chief
Wendy Hartnett	Special Events Manager
Don Henderson	Parks Superintendent
Russell Hines	Building Official
Meg Jakubik	Strategic Services Manager
Jill McAdams	Human Resources Director
Kenny Overstreet	Public Works Director
Maria Redburn	Library Director
Emilio Sanchez	Planning Manager
Bobby Sewell	Interim Fire Chief
Eric Valdez	Community Services Manager

### **COUNCIL CHAMBER WORK SESSION**

Mayor Griffin 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: 4, 8, 10, 11, 12 and 13, with Item #9 being pulled from the agenda.

Parks Superintendent Don Henderson presented information regarding Item #8, which is a contract with the City of Fort Worth for household hazardous waste. Residents can go to the Customer Service Department and pick up a voucher at no cost and take their household hazardous waste chemicals such

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as fertilizer, bug spray, ammonia and paint, to Fort Worth's facility on Bridge Street for proper disposal.

Mr. Henderson presented information regarding Item #10, which is a contract with TruGreen for spraying for weed abatement. In answer to questions from Council, Mr. Henderson stated that it is cheaper to contract out the service as opposed to doing it in-house; that they do four sprayings a year, with one in spring and fall, and two in the summer; that the company will spray all medians, City facilities and parks; and that it is a yearly contract.

Special Events Manager Wendy Hartnett presented information regarding Item #11. It is a request to purchase a mobile Stageline SL50 stage, which would be part of the infrastructure for all of City events. The current stage is cumbersome, is difficult to move and has no branding. The new stage has the ability to be "wrapped," similar to the animal adoption trailer. The stage folds out and it takes two people half an hour to set up on hydraulics. It comes with basic sound, lights and four sound wings. The new stage will allow the City to brand itself at such events as Twilight Thursday and ArtsFest, and to help out with sponsorship for other community events. There was discussion on the \$9,000 in transportation charges; staff negotiating to reduce that fee; looking at a third party for delivery; and the current stage being used at a recent art event. Ms. Hartnett stated that Stageline is the industry standard for stages and its versatility exceeds any other local stages. In answer to questions from Council, she stated that it is a bit smaller than the current FourthFest stage; that funding will be out of the Tourism Funding, which comes from the hotel/motel tax; that there are safety issues with the current stage, including it sinking during a Twilight Thursday event; and that the new stage will have the flexibility to allow bands to play even with a light rain. Council directed staff to negotiate better transportation costs.

Community Services Manager Eric Valdez presented information on Item #12, which is a standard agreement with the Bedford-Eules Soccer Association (BESA) to have access to the soccer fields at Meadow Park, Stormie Jones and Boys Ranch for the duration of the next year. There has been an agreement with BESA for the last 25 years and as part of the agreement, BESA will be able use the Stormie Jones soccer fields for a reduced rate of \$40.00 a night for their competitive training. There was discussion on the possibility of the president of BESA coming to speak on this item later during the regular session.

- **Report on the 2016 City of Bedford Fourth Fest.**

Special Events Manager Wendy Hartnett presented a report on 2016 City of Bedford Fourth Fest. The goals of the event are to provide an event for the community, to foster economic growth, to encourage citizen involvement, and to produce a phenomenal event of which the City can be proud. This year, the event incorporated the ribbon cutting for Phase I of the Boys Ranch, as well as activities such as a walk around the lake, giveaways at the pavilion, and "Twiggy the Water Skiing Squirrel." The ribbon cutting allowed several avenues to advertise, such as shirts. There were major layout revisions, including using the Senior Center for the VIPs and opening up the space. She discussed the financial history of the event, including \$12,000 in additional costs this year for the ribbon cutting celebration. Revenue was up \$33,000 and cost recovery remained static at approximately 25 percent. She discussed the size of the shells for the fireworks show, which were reduced to the three inch shells and impacted the visibility of the show in some neighborhoods. The shuttle was eliminated and \$13,000 was brought in from parking on-site and at the Library. She considered not having a shuttle a success in that neither the on-site parking or that at the Library were filled, so they were able to accommodate the amount of people that could safely fit into the park. A future challenge includes the next phase of the Boys Ranch and how it will affect FourthFest and other events in the park.

Mayor Griffin adjourned the Work Session at 6:22 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:**

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- a) Pursuant to Section 551.087, deliberation regarding economic development negotiations relative to Block 1, Lot 1 Mobil Addition-Bedford.
- b) Pursuant to Section 551.087, deliberation regarding economic development negotiations relative to Bedford Commons.

Council convened into Executive Session pursuant to Texas Government Code Section 551.087, deliberation regarding economic development negotiations relative to Block 1, Lot 1 Mobil Addition-Bedford; and Section 551.087, deliberation regarding economic development negotiations relative to Bedford Commons, at 6:23 p.m.

Council reconvened from Executive Session at 6:52 p.m.

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.

### **REGULAR SESSION**

The Regular Session began at 6:58 p.m.

### **CALL TO ORDER/GENERAL COMMENTS**

Mayor Griffin called the meeting to order. He stated that Councilmember Champney recently had surgery and his thoughts and prayers are with him.

### **INVOCATION (Dr. Timothy Pierce, Woodland Heights Baptist Church)**

Dr. Timothy Pierce of Woodland Heights Baptist Church gave the invocation.

### **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

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 BluesFest will run Friday, September 2 through Sunday, September 4, 2016. There are still spots available for barbecue teams that want to compete in the Kansas City Sanctioned contest, as well as the amateur grillers for the Backyard Barbecue competition. WFAA Channel 8 news will be featuring BluesFest live on air at the "Party on the Plaza" at Victory Park in Dallas from 5:00 a.m. to 7:00 a.m. on Friday, September 2, 2016. Favorite barbecue teams and local BluesFest artists will be attending, donuts and coffee will be served, and free general admission tickets will be given away.

Ms. Foster gave an update on the minor construction at the east overlook in the Boys Ranch park. It remains closed, but people have access to the temporary walkway. Crews will be pouring concrete in next few days and the estimated completion date is the end of the week.

### **OPEN FORUM**

Nobody chose to speak during Open Forum.

### **CONSIDER APPROVAL OF ITEMS BY CONSENT**

Motioned by Councilmember Sartor, seconded by Councilmember Gebhart, to approve the following items by consent: 4, 8, 10, 11, 12 and 13, with Item #9 being pulled from the agenda.

Motion approved 6-0-0. Mayor Griffin declared the motion carried.

### **COUNCIL RECOGNITION**

#### **1. Mayor's Summer Reading Club participant recognition.**

Maria Redburn discussed the Summer Reading Club and that children are awarded for different levels of reading. Those that read a minimum of 2,500 minutes can attend the Mayor's party. Unfortunately, some children's invitations were returned after the party. The following children were recognized: Tyler Cramer, who read 3,108 minutes; Peyton Hosey, who read 2,570 minutes; and Catryna Little, who read 2,800 minutes.

#### **2. Employee Service recognition**

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

Amy Smith, Police Department -10 years of service  
Linda Cook, Police Department - 10 years of service  
Nathan Noble, Police Department - 10 years of service  
Joshua Starkey, Fire Department -10 years of service  
Joseph Sisco, Fire Department - 20 years of service

#### **3. Proclamation proclaiming September 2016 as Blood Cancer Awareness Month in the City of Bedford.**

Nobody was able to attend to accept the proclamation. It will be mailed to North Texas Chapter of the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society.

### **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

#### **4. Consider approval of the following City Council minutes:**

- a) August 5, 2016 work session
- b) August 9, 2016 regular meeting

This item was approved by consent.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### **5. Public hearing and consider an ordinance to rezone Tract 7G, Abstract 860, William H Jasper Survey, and Lot 3R, Block 1, Crossroad East Addition, located at 209 & 401 N. Industrial Boulevard, Bedford, Texas from L/SUP Light Commercial/Specific Use Permit to amended L/SUP Light Commercial/Specific Use Permit, specific to Section 3.2.C.4.d, Community Garden of the City of Bedford Zoning Ordinance, allowing for Scott Sheppard and 6 Stones Mission Network/First Baptist Church Euless to increase and expand their community garden amenities. The property is generally located west of Industrial Boulevard and north of Airport Freeway. (PZ-SUP-2016-50024)**

Planning Manager Emilio Sanchez presented information regarding this item, which is a request for 6Stones Mission Network to amend their Specific Use Permit (SUP) for their community garden at 209 and 401 North Industrial Drive. The garden has prospered and there is a long waiting list for people to come out and tend a plot. 6Stones would like to make the garden the northern Tarrant County Master Gardener's facility. The original SUP was only for the community garden and the applicant would like to add an amplified sound system and to hold more events for the general public. As this was moving beyond the scope of the community garden, there was a need to amend the SUP. The Planning and

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Zoning Commission recommended approval of this item at their July 28, 2016 meeting. The Comprehensive Land Use Plan has the land as commercial, so there is no conflict.

Mayor Griffin opened the public hearing at 7:18 p.m.

Nobody chose to speak during the public hearing.

Mayor Griffin closed the public hearing at 7:18 p.m.

There was discussion that the community garden is a very well-utilized resource but that it may be underutilized in the services it provides to the City; gardening being taught at the garden; half of the harvested crops going to the 6Stone's Food Bank; more things the City can do at the garden; and the positive benefits of the garden to the City.

Motioned by Councilmember Gebhart, seconded by Councilmember Turner, to approve an ordinance to rezone Tract 7G, Abstract 860, William H Jasper Survey, and Lot 3R, Block 1, Crossroad East Addition, located at 209 & 401 N. Industrial Boulevard, Bedford, Texas from L/SUP Light Commercial/Specific Use Permit to amended L/SUP Light Commercial/Specific Use Permit, specific to Section 3.2.C.4.d, Community Garden of the City of Bedford Zoning Ordinance, allowing for Scott Sheppard and 6 Stones Mission Network/First Baptist Church Euless to increase and expand their community garden amenities. The property is generally located west of Industrial Boulevard and north of Airport Freeway. (PZ-SUP-2016-50024)

Motion approved 6-0-0. Mayor Griffin declared the motion carried.

### **6. Public hearing on the annual budget for the City of Bedford, Texas for the fiscal period of October 1, 2016 through September 30, 2017; levying taxes for 2016 tax year.**

Strategic Services Manager Meg Jakubik presented information on the annual budget. The City is required to hold a public hearing on the budget prior to its adoption, scheduled for a special meeting on September 14, 2016. There will also be two public hearings on the tax rate prior to the adoption of the tax rate at the September 14, 2016 special meeting. The budget strategy focused on Council goals; maintenance concerns; staffing levels, recruitment and retention; new efficiency improvements; program expansions; and equipment/inventory purchases. Assumptions included conservative sales tax growth, as the City lost a major sales tax generating company, which primarily affected 4B; an employee compensation program in order for the City to stay competitive in the market to retain employees; fee increases on water and sewer for the pass-through of increases from the Trinity River Authority; and an evaluation of stormwater fees. In regard to costs of services, the City's population is estimated at 49,151, and 230,000 people per weekday travel on Airport Freeway, which was a different figure than was reported at the Budget Work Session. Further, an estimated 66,150 people attend City events and festivals. The total operating budget is \$69,349,538. Ms. Jakubik discussed the different services provided to residents including Police, Fire, Public Works, Recreation, and the Library, as well as behind-the-scenes services such as Facility Maintenance. The average taxable home value is \$168,609 and the proposed tax rate as part of the budget is \$0.476509 per \$100 valuation. Council can consider any rate up to the current tax rate. At the proposed rate, the cost on the average taxable home in the City is just over \$800 a year.

Ms. Jakubik stated that General Fund revenues and expenditures are virtually equal, while the Tourism Fund has a money left over, which will go into fund balance. A surplus is being projected in the Water/Sewer Fund in order to rebuild working capital to have funds available when the unexpected occurs. The 4B Fund is budgeted to go significantly into its fund balance, but will meet all of its reserve requirements. Many other funds are moving money into maintenance funds in order to build capital for larger scale purchases. The Consumer Price Index is projected to be up slightly from the previous year and has averaged a 1.28 percent increase over the previous five years. The Municipal Price Index shows to be flat from the previous year but has averaged a one percent yearly increase over the previous five years. In regard to the value of a dollar over time, a dollar in 2000 is now worth \$0.73. As an example, the cost of a Tahoe went from \$34,684 in 2000 to \$47,600 in 2015; however, with inflation, it effectively

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costs \$65,205. The General Fund is the largest source of revenue at 47 percent, followed by the Water/Sewer Fund, and then by smaller funds, many of which are restricted on how they can be used. In regard to expenditures, the largest portion is Public Works, followed by the Police and Fire Departments. In looking at classification, the largest portion is personnel at 42.4 percent; just looking at the General Fund, it is 78 percent. This is followed by contractual services, of which water purchases and sewer treatment are technically part of, but are separated out to give a clearer picture of where the money is going.

Ms. Jakubik presented information on the General Fund. Taxable values saw a record increase of 11.7 percent. The average market value increased approximately \$30,000 and the average net taxable value increased approximately \$17,000. A history of the tax rate shows an inverse relation to taxable values. The City has held their tax rate flat the previous three years and the proposed tax rate for the budget as presented is a decrease from the current tax rate. The overlapping tax rate shows the City's portion to be just under 20 percent, with the largest share being the School District at 54.3 percent. A few neighboring cities are holding their same tax rate, while many are proposing to reduce their rate. Bedford's current tax rate is \$0.494830 per \$100 valuation, the effective tax rate is \$0.448258 and the rollback rate, which is the rate used in the revenue calculations as presented, is \$0.476509 per \$100 valuation. A comparison of the current tax rate and the proposed tax rate shows a decrease in the debt portion of 11.6 percent and an increase in the maintenance and operations portion of 1.5 percent. A comparison with neighboring cities shows that Bedford is in the middle of neighboring cities when it comes to number of employees per 1,000 residents but comes in last in per capita spending at \$1,300.

Ms. Jakubik presented information regarding the Debt Service Fund and stated the City continues to pay more debt than it issues each year. There are some increases in Water and Sewer debt with the issuance of State Water Implementation Fund for Texas (SWIFT) debt to replace water infrastructure. In answer to questions from Council, she stated the graph shows what the payoff would be if no more debt was issued and that it does not include the proposed tax note. She presented information regarding the Stormwater Utility Fund. For the first time in 15 years, the City is looking at reevaluating the rates. The current rates are \$3.50 per month for residents and \$3.00 per month for seniors. The rates for commercial properties are based on the size of the lot and the amount of impervious surface, which is then multiplied by the \$3.50 residential rate. Staff is recommending an increase of \$0.50 in all the rates and a stormwater model will be completed prior to Council's formal adoption of a rate. Ms. Jakubik discussed Special Revenue Funds. The City is looking at technology updates such as electronic ticket writers and a firewall appliance replacement; replacing the flooring in the Library meeting room; program enhancements such as the College Gridiron Football Showcase and a full-day ArtsFest event; additional staffing for the Old Bedford School; and an updated economic development retail study.

Ms. Jakubik stated that the proposed tax rate is \$0.476509 per \$100 valuation and the Council has the ability to consider up to the current tax rate. There was discussion that the Council had not set a tax rate at the previous meeting, but the not-to-exceed rate.

Mayor Griffin opened the public hearing at 7:37 p.m.

Kim Brown, 3748 Ashford Drive, Bedford – Ms. Brown stated that she fully understands the budget process as she spent 33 years with a major telecommunication's company, including 17 years in putting together budgets and five-year strategic plans. This included asking tough questions of departments and having the responsibility of bringing budgets for approval by executive management. She also had to deal with budget issues and constraints in her time with the compliance department. She has spoken previously to Council regarding budgets. She currently volunteers at both the Police and Fire Departments and leads two groups of volunteers that support those organizations. She felt she has the unique opportunity and perspective on what goes on in those departments and what their needs are. She thanked City staff and the City Manager for putting the budget on the website. She was struck by how the City is still trying to put money aside in maintenance funds to deal with facility issues. She stated it was a reflection of past budgets and keeping a low tax rate, but by not putting those funds in place, the City was not dealing with facility issues on a proactive basis. She applauded the City Manager and staff for working over the last couple of years to put those funds in place. Personnel issues and costs have had to be dealt

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with on a very tight basis. Personnel makes up most of budget and the needs of the employees need to be weighed with the needs of the City. She felt the employees have suffered long enough with little or no Cost of Living Adjustments (COLA) and/or market adjustments except in the last two fiscal years and the proposed budget. There was an article in the August 14, 2016 Star-Telegram addressing salary levels of police officers across the Metroplex and Bedford did not make the list of cities being compared. Taking information on the City's website about what police officers make, Bedford would have ranked 28 out of 29 cities for those with less than two years of experience, and 23 out of 29 for those with more than two years of experience. The cities of Euless and Hurst pay \$9,608 and \$18,300 more respectively in the starting salary for officers. She stated that even though Bedford will never see as much business property and sales tax revenue generated as Hurst has with the Northeast Mall and Euless has with Glade Parks, the City should still pay a competitive annual salary if it expects to hire and keep highly-trained individuals. She surmised that the exact same comparison if done with the Fire Department would yield the same disappointing results. She further surmised that other employees in the City, when compared to their peers, would be found to be sorely behind. She stated that the proposed step plan for Police and Fire funded in the budget needs to be funded in future years as the City cannot afford to get behind. The City has gotten to the point it has to play catch-up to provide competitive salaries for all City employees. She hoped a strategic plan is being developed and maintained to keep salaries competitive with similar cities. She urged Council to address as many supplementals that can be justified as necessary to improve and maintain effective work functions. She further urged Council to keep the same tax rate as the previous three years to continue the progress of bringing the City back, in order to attract and keep businesses and qualified employees.

Lisa McMillan, 2321 Caldwell Drive, Bedford – Ms. McMillan stated that she been a resident for 25 years and has served on the Parks and Recreation Board for 13 years. In her role on the Board, she has seen first-hand the hard work Parks and Recreation staff has done to make the most out of every dollar in the budget to make the parks great. Over the last few years, the City has done a good job in trying to build up the parks, but are coming from further behind its sister cities. The budget does a good job in terms of making the most of what the City has, but it needs to go further. She was really appalled by the newspaper article discussed earlier as Bedford was not even listed and she did the same calculations. She stated the problem is the City gets entry-level employees who get a few years of experience and then go to other cities, so Bedford loses that knowledge and money spent training those officers. The City needs to raise the pay of personnel to be competitive in the market, so it does not lose trained staff in Police, Fire and other areas. The tax rate in Hurst is going from \$0.61 to \$0.58 even though they generate a lot of sales tax from the mall, and their property tax rate is still higher than Bedford. Euless has the development on either side of Highway 121 and sales tax from the rental cars at the airport but their property tax rate is staying at \$0.46, just below Bedford's rate. Those cities have more money to spend on their personnel, parks, facilities, and street improvements. She stated the budget needs to be looked at holistically and it is not just about the property tax rate. She thought the City needs to stay with the current tax rate and do more in the budget. The City has had to dig out of the hole from the tax rollback and staff and Council have done a good job in building up the City little-by-little. She stated that the City needs to keep moving forward to make Bedford a better place to live for everybody.

Charles Orea, 3009 Willow Lane, Bedford – Mr. Orea stated he was really shocked when he read the newspaper that the proposed rate for Bedford was \$0.49, though he recognized that the budget was based on \$0.47. Given that figure, the City is proposing an 11.8 percent property tax increase on citizens. Things in the economy are not particularly good, as the Gross Domestic Product is only about one percent. The CPI and MCI are at 1.05 percent and 1.28 percent, but the City is increasing property taxes by 11.8 percent. There needs to be some restraint put into the budget. He felt the City does need to collect more revenue and he thought it showed a reasonable number when looking at the other sources of revenue for the General Fund, which by his calculations came to approximately four percent and included such things as fines and fees. If that was applied to the area of the increase to property the tax rate the previous year, by his calculations, it comes to a tax rate of approximately \$0.464, which would give sufficient revenue to deal with issues that need to be dealt with, while exercising restraint so the citizens are not adversely affected. An 11.8 percent increase would represent an increase of approximately \$350 on a tax bill last year of \$3,000. He asked Council to consider the needs of the City and citizens when they pass the tax rate. The allocation of resources in the budget seems to favor bureaucracy at the expense of citizens.

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There is an 11.5 percent increase in the General Government budget, with a 75 percent increase for Council, which is significant even when dealing with a smaller dollar amount. There is an increase of 11 percent in Economic Development, a nine percent increase in the Fire Department, a 5.5 percent increase in the Police Department, and a 3.5 percent increase in Support Services. Services that the citizens enjoy, such as Community Services and Public Works, only have increases of two percent and 0.6 percent respectively. He stated that by following the numbers, the Council is emphasizing the bureaucracy rather than the citizens.

Mayor Griffin closed the public hearing at 7:54 p.m.

### **7. Public hearing to consider the proposed 2016 tax rate.**

Ms. Jakubik presented information on this item during her previous presentation.

Mayor Griffin opened the public hearing at 7:54 p.m.

Tom Culbert, 925 Charleston Drive, Bedford – Mr. Culbert stated that he has been a resident for 43 years. The Council has ignored the increase in property evaluation of 11 percent. By keeping the same rate, the City has gained 11 percent on property taxes. While the Council thinks they are going flat, they are actually increasing the amount of income the City is taking in.

Imogene Mecaskey, 328 Elisha Court, Bedford – Ms. Mecaskey stated she has been a resident since 1974, a realtor for 46 years in the City, and has lived at her address since 1989. That year, she paid \$130,000 for the house, which she completely remodeled and that has stayed the same all these years. Her tax value increased from \$170,000 in 2015 to \$182,000. With the values in the entire City having increased, there is no need to raise the tax rate. She thought the City should stay the same because she wants to stay in Bedford.

Charles Orea, 3009 Willow Lane, Bedford – Mr. Orea stated he has been a resident for 35 years. He believed the tax rate, even the \$0.47 rate, is excessive. He invited members of the Council to spend some time with him on how things can be reduced. He has looked at the budget and a reduction of the tax rate to \$0.464 would be appropriate.

Lisa McMillan, 2321 Caldwell Drive, Bedford – Ms. McMillan stated that one of the reasons she came to the meeting is people like her that are happy to move forward and are fine with an increase in taxes by keeping the tax rate the same, stay home, while people with concerns come to Council meetings. The market value of her house increased by 26 percent; however, the State limits the increase one pays to ten percent a year. The market value of her house is \$296,000 but she would only pay taxes on \$258,000. The previous year, she paid \$1,163 in City taxes and if the City keeps the same tax rate, she would pay \$1,279, an increase of \$116 for the year, or \$9.69 a month. Keeping the tax rate the same would allow the City to buy more equipment for public safety officers, fix streets and maintain parks. She discussed the senior tax freeze and cited an example of a senior's house with a taxable value of \$173,000 that, if they were under 65, would have paid \$867 in taxes; however, with the freeze and exemptions, they only paid \$421. She knew that there are seniors in the community that are on fixed incomes, but their taxes are frozen and will not go up, and people like her are picking up that burden to fund City services. She is happy to do that because she wants to see the City grow and get better. She encouraged the Council to maintain the \$0.49 tax rate. In reference to a previous speaker, she stated that absolute dollars needed to be looked at, not percentages. The City needs the Economic Development Department to grow and bring in new companies, jobs and hotels to generate new sales tax in order to drop down the property tax rate in the future.

Mayor Griffin closed the public hearing at 8:03 p.m.

Ms. Jakubik stated that the second public hearing on the tax rate will be held on September 6, 2016, with the vote on the tax rate being September 14, 2016.

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Councilmember Fisher discussed the comparison between dollars and percentages, and that percentages are not always an accurate reflection of the situation on the ground. The Star-Telegram article did not do the City any favors, as the Council did not set a tax rate but the maximum tax rate, and the article was written in a way that was unfair to the situation actually happening. He discussed added expenses including almost \$1M in employee health care, workers' compensation premiums, pay raises for the Police and Fire Departments in the step plan, and pay raises for everybody else. A penny on the tax rate equals \$300,000. When Council votes on a tax rate, and if it is left the same rate, it is not an increase in the rate, only the amount one may pay. He supports fairly paying employees and public safety, and whatever is needed to get it competitive. He stated that he does not support the budget as it includes \$1M in short-term debt, which is to fund things the City needs such as an ambulance, in-car cameras and body cameras for the Police Department, vehicles for Parks, and equipment for the Information Technology Department. These are capital items the City needs to operate, but the City could pay cash for them if it keeps the current tax rate. He discussed a death spiral of debt and that the tax note is built on a false premise. He stated that the City should not issue short term debt to get the tax rate lower.

Mayor Griffin stated that at the budget work session, six Councilmembers did not see the tax note as being that detrimental and that the debt rate is going down two cents.

Councilmember Turner stated that he supports the budget and it one of the best he has seen. It is well thought out and well-reasoned, and takes into consideration many aspects of what the City needs and where the City is going. He stated the City has lived on the edge for many years and has been scared to raise taxes to provide for what it needs. The City has suffered, including in the Police and Fire Departments, and that alone pushes him to support the current rate. By dropping to the proposed tax rate, the raises that are so desperately needed can be funded for one year but not beyond that. By keeping the current rate, the tax rate is not going up, just the revenue from the taxes for the specific purpose of paying Police and Fire what they deserve. At the current rate, the average house value of \$168,000 would pay an increase of \$31 a year. He stated that a previous speaker under the public hearing left out the Police and Fire Departments as being a citizen benefit. He would hate to see the City go through another rollback situation and it does not need the trauma. People need to be reasonable and look at the situation, particularly Police and Fire pay. The tax note is a commonly used technique in other cities, with no adverse effects on the City's debt rating. The note would be used to purchase needed items that have more than a five-year life span. He supports the \$0.495 tax rate.

Councilmember Farco stated that the starting salary for Police and Fire is \$47,000. An officer with one year of experience can go to another city for \$65,000. There is an officer that has been working for the City for 30 years making \$67,000 a year. It costs \$100,000 a year to fully put a police officer into service and \$106,000 to put a firefighter through training. In the Fire Department, they have to backfill that position with overtime to get them up to speed. He stated services are being asked for, but the City is not willing to pay for them. He asked if it is better to pay employees upfront to keep them or continually train them for other cities. In the Public Works Department, an employee starts at \$30,000 a year and after two years, they can go to another city for four dollars an hour more. Other cities have said that Bedford is the best training facility. He stated that the tax rate has not been raised in five years and in regard to property values, he asked if one is to sell their house, do they not want the values to go up. Health care costs continue to increase and the City needs to take care of the employees. He is supportive of the budget and keeping the tax rate the same and preparing for the future. The City has three frozen positions in the Police Department, a need for an additional firefighter, and a need for five additional positions in Public Works.

Councilmember Sartor stated when he had to call 911 for his wife, the Fire Department personnel were professional, well-trained and caring. It was sad Bedford was not on the list in the Star-Telegram article and that the City would have ranked 28 out of 29 if it did. The \$31 increase on the average house would allow the City to support first responders, and provide staff with some pay increases that will put the City in a better position than today. He is concerned about looking at the budget in a vacuum and that it needs to be projected out several years. If Council votes on the budget as proposed, the step plan can be funded, but he is concerned about funding the step plan increases in years to come. He supports keeping the

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current tax rate to help the staff and first responders. He stated that the City is frugal with the monies it has to spend.

Councilmember Gebhart stated that the Council needs to be honest and that if a tax rate is set above the effective rate, the Council is raising taxes. Cities are not immune to inflationary pressures and it would be great to set the rate to the effective rate, if the City's expenses were the same as the previous year. He stated that he does not trust the information regarding the CPI and that he guarantees that people's expense has gone up greater than a couple of percentage points. He is encouraged by the amount of work put in by staff to prepare the budget and they have taken the direction from Council to shore up benefits and pay for first responders and staff, which has lagged behind other cities. When facing these cost increases, it is hard to find ways to trim off those costs, such as eliminating car allowances and professional memberships. He discussed that he does not agree to giving money to a private charity in the budget. He welcomes whatever input he can get but he fears it is going to take more than just shaving off some items to come with rate that is quite so low. He does not believe Council can achieve the goals it has set by reducing the rate to that extent. He is not convinced that the tax rate needs to be kept the same in the long term and the balance needs to be considered, which staff has done by recommending the rollback rate. The budget is a conservative plan that follows Council's goals to keep the pay shored up and put public safety on a step plan to stay competitive. There is a lot to consider and Council needs to hear more feedback from residents. He urged people to not dissolve into acrimony and to recognize that costs go up and the City needs to do what it needs to do to mitigate that. There are a specific set of goals for the City to achieve, including providing for public services and to set a rate so pay is competitive and to mitigate the turnover problem. He is hesitant to keep the current rate; though he personally would pay a little more, he is hesitant to make that as a blanket decision for everyone.

Councilmember Fisher stated that this is his fifth or sixth budget and it has been the hardest one. Houses are selling in Bedford such that there is less than one percent of housing available. Going through the year, having success, a hot housing market, and a good city to live in plummets the tax rate. Taking in the exact same amount of revenue as the previous year is fine; however, costs for running the City have gone through the roof and there is no way that costs are going to decrease the following year. He discussed employee costs, including the step plan in the Police and Fire Departments and the rest of staff getting something. He discussed the debt chart presented by Ms. Jakubik and stated that it has looked the same as the previous five years, which is what he was talking about in regard to the debt death spiral. Cities are creatures of habit, and once it does something it will do it again either because it is convenient or out of necessity. He guaranteed if Council passed the budget that includes the \$1M in short-term debt, it will pass another \$1M in short term debt the following years. He stated that a budget can be passed that is balanced and does everything Council wants to do without issuing that debt, with the only risk being a rollback election. The capital projects in the note are not gigantic numbers and can be paid for in cash if the tax rate is left alone. He stated the benefit for what 6Stones does in the community far outweighs any dollar the City puts into it. When the Library and Phase 1 of the Boys Ranch were built, residents were told the projects would cost them money and they voted to approve them; however, those costs were not added to the tax rate but were built into the budget. He stated that he is not sure the budget is conservative when it includes \$1M in short-term debt

- 8. Consider a resolution authorizing the City Manager to enter into an interlocal agreement with the City of Fort Worth in the amount of \$47.00 per voucher to allow for the collection and disposal of household hazardous waste for Bedford households at the permanent collection site from October 1, 2016 to September 30, 2017.**

This item was approved by consent.

- 9. Consider a resolution authorizing the City Manager to enter into a contract for City-wide mowing services with Vidascares in the amount of \$194,775.**

This item pulled from the agenda by consent.

- 10. Consider a resolution authorizing the City Manager to enter into a contract with TruGreen to provide chemical application for all City of Bedford parks and municipal facilities in the amount of \$33,312.**

This item was approved by consent.

- 11. Consider a resolution authorizing the City Manager to purchase a Stageline SL50 stage, equipment and accessories in the amount of \$99,867.**

This item was approved by consent.

- 12. Consider a resolution authorizing the City Manager to enter into a one-year lease agreement with the Bedford Eules Soccer Association for the purpose of conducting practices and games at the Meadow Park, Stormie Jones Park and Boys Ranch soccer fields.**

This item was approved by consent.

- 13. Consider a resolution authorizing the City Manager to enter into a lease agreement with Planet Kidz, Inc. for the purpose of holding the Fun Time Live Program at the Boys Ranch Activity Center.**

This item was approved by consent.

- 14. Consider a resolution authorizing a letter of understanding with the Texas Health Harris Methodist Hospital HEB for a donation to the Intensive Care Unit Expansion Project.**

Councilmember Fisher stated that he had a conflict of interest with this item and left the Council Chamber before the discussion.

Ms. Jakubik stated this item is the result of presentation to Council on July 11, 2016 regarding the expansion of the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) at Harris Methodist Hospital HEB. Because of the expanding need for services and the need for a state-of-the-art ICU, the hospital requested a contribution from the cities of Hurst, Eules and Bedford of \$10,000 each for funding the ICU due to the benefits to the community. The item is a letter of agreement between Bedford and the hospital committing to those funds and the contribution would be paid out of current year surplus.

Motioned by Councilmember Turner, seconded by Councilmember Farco, to approve a resolution authorizing a letter of understanding with the Texas Health Harris Methodist Hospital HEB for a donation to the Intensive Care Unit Expansion Project.

Motion approved 4-1-0. Mayor Griffin declared the motion carried.

Voting in favor of the motion: Mayor Griffin, Councilmember Sartor, Councilmember Farco and Councilmember Turner.

Voting in opposition to the motion: Councilmember Gebhart

- 15. Report on most recent meeting of the following Boards and Commissions:**

✓ **Animal Shelter Advisory Board - Councilmember Fisher**

Councilmember Fisher stated that it was not a good couple of weeks for the City in the Star-Telegram. He gave a tip-of-the-hat to the Animal Control staff and the Animal Shelter for the job they do, which is not easy or fun; however, they do it, love it and are passionate about it. They are continually plagued by a certain group of people that will not let them do their jobs. He wanted to state publicly that they do a fine job and he appreciates them. The statistics for the Animal Shelter are on-line.

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### ✓ **Beautification Commission - Councilmember Turner**

Councilmember Turner reported that the Commission last met on August 15, 2016 and they are planning for future projects, including a shred event on October 8, 2016. The community garden had a positive report on the amount of food collected, half of which is passed out to underprivileged people in area. The next meeting will be on September 19, 2016.

### ✓ **Community Affairs Commission - Councilmember Farco**

Councilmember Farco reported that the Commission met the previous Thursday and there was a lively discussion and a lot of things were accomplished. A residential outreach meeting is scheduled for September 22, 2016 at the Old Bedford School.

### ✓ **Cultural Commission - Councilmember Champney**

No report was given.

### ✓ **Investment Committee – Councilmember Turner**

Councilmember Turner reported that the City is getting an average of 50 basis points, which takes into account the \$30M in SWIFT funds. Overall the City is getting 57 basis points on the City funds and 62 basis points on the SWIFT funds. These numbers are good considering the current financial environment and when the City's primary concerns for investments are safety and liquidity.

### ✓ **Library Advisory Board - Councilmember Farco**

Councilmember Farco reported that the Library is replacing its computers and the new Koha system will launch on October 3, 2016.

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

Councilmember Sartor recognized Board Members Randy Newby and Lisa McMillan in the audience and stated they have a passion for making the parks better than what they are. The Board meets on the first Thursday of the month.

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

Councilmember Gebhart reported that the Board will resume meetings on September 1, 2016 at 6:00 p.m. at City Hall; however, he will not be able to attend as he will be celebrating his 26th wedding anniversary.

### ✓ **Senior Citizen Liaison - Councilmember Turner**

Councilmember Turner reported that he met with Senior Center Manager Cathy Haskell on August 16, 2016. In comparison with the previous year, the average monthly memberships have increased from 700 to 755, average monthly attendance has increased from 2,224 to 2,360, the number of program offered has increased from 1,357 to 1,461, and the number of seminars and special programs has increased from 15 to 42. The Senior Center is in an active phase.

## **16. Council member Reports**

Councilmember Fisher discussed the flooding in Louisiana. He spent time there the previous weekend helping out some family members. The people there do not need food or water, but need time and money. Eighty percent of the people in the flooded areas do not have flood insurance and lost everything. There was a time he could not find three family members since there was no cell service and just intermittent internet. He did everything he could, including talking to parish presidents and firefighter associations to

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find those family members. He then thought about going through the amateur radio club, who are always prepared in an emergency, and he called Butch Lindsey with the Police Department and gave him the information on his family. Officer Lindsay stopped what he was doing and got on the radios and though the family members were eventually found through social media, the experience reiterated how important the service is in a disaster. It meant a lot to him and his family that Officer Lindsay on his time off to help them. He thanked the amateur radio operators in the City for the service they provide and thanked Officer Lindsey for going the extra mile.

Councilmember Farco thanked staff for working on the budget, and appreciated staff working side-by-side because they do more with less than other cities, and do it with a smile. They have great attitudes, look outside the box, and do not complain. Having worked in business, the Council does have to look at the future and take it into account, which staff has done. He stated Bedford is not a rural community but in the center of the Metroplex with prime real estate, and needs to move forward. Every member of staff comes to work to do the best job they can to make the City better.

Councilmember Sartor stated that he appreciates all the hard work done by staff and that they are awesome.

### **17. City Manager/Staff Reports**

City Manager Roger Gibson encouraged people to go to the City's website where information is posted related to City procedures and precautions residents can take on mosquito issues. The City follows the County's model focusing more on larvicide than adulticide. Larvicide takes care of the problem before they become adults and is much more effective. Adulticide is used in spot areas and when there is a need to address certain problems that could not be taken care of with larvicide. In calendar years 2013 and 2014, over 10,000 mosquitoes were trapped in Bedford and 77 tested positive for West Nile Virus (WNV). In the last two calendar years, 3,500 mosquitoes have been trapped in Bedford and 17 tested positive for WNV. He stated that these are effective results, and Public Works Director Kenny Overstreet and Environmental Specialist Jerry Laverty work closely with Nina Pham with Tarrant County Public Health. Mr. Laverty and Ms. Pham have a video presentation on the City's website.

Mr. Gibson stated that the lights on monument signs in front of City Hall are blue as a message of support to law enforcement. The Police and Fire Departments know and are appreciative of the support they receive from the community.

### **18. Take any action necessary as a result of the Executive Session.**

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

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Mayor Griffin adjourned the meeting at 8:58 p.m.

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Jim Griffin, Mayor

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ATTEST:

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Michael Wells, City Secretary