

Council Minutes September 12, 2023

STATE OF TEXAS §

COUNTY OF TARRANT §

CITY OF BEDFORD §

The City Council of the City of Bedford, Texas, met in Regular Session at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of City Hall, 2000 Forest Ridge Drive, on the 12th day of September, 2023 with the following members present:

Michael Boyter	Mayor
Dan Cogan	Mayor Pro Tem
Nichelle D. Dawkins	Councilmembers
Steve Farco	
Rob Gagliardi	
Amy Sabol	
Rich Steves	

constituting a quorum.

Jimmy Stathatos	City Manager
Caryn Riggs	Assistant City Manager
Andrea Roy	Assistant City Manager
Bryn Meredith	City Attorney
Michael Wells	City Secretary
Hunter Hardeman	Recreation Manager
Meg Jakubik	Strategic Services Manager
Mark Long	Parks and Recreation Director
Brady Olsen	Finance Director
Jeff Williams	Police Chief

REGULAR SESSION

The Regular Session began at 6:00 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER/GENERAL COMMENTS

Mayor Boyter called the meeting to order.

INVOCATION

Councilmember Steves gave the invocation.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Cub Scout Pack 817 Dens 6 and 7 lead the Pledges of Allegiance to the flags of the United States and Texas.

COUNCIL RECOGNITION

- **Employee Service Recognition**

Council Minutes September 12, 2023

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

Bill Mack, Police Department – 25 years of service

PRESENTATIONS

- **Discussion regarding the YMCA.**

Assistant City Manager Caryn Riggs presented an update on the YMCA. She stated she and Parks and Recreation Director Mark Long have been meeting with the YMCA staff every Tuesday morning to discuss the status and cleanliness of The Center as well as any items from social media. She reported on the improvement to the cleanliness of the facility and there are now two cleaning people on staff, one man and one woman, to ensure the locker rooms are being cleaned in a timely and efficient manner. Further, a corridor that was damaged has been repainted. Ms. Riggs reported the membership numbers increased from 3,428 at the end of July to 3,596 members by the end of August. She stated the new director wants to set up regular meetings with people to bring items to her attention. Ms. Riggs stated The Center is operating with a deficit of approximately \$170,000 and that the \$5.00 discount for residents is costing approximately \$140,000. Staff recommends doing a membership drive in the fall and then ending the discount in January 2024, with the current members with the discount being grandfathered.

There was discussion on the initial membership goal of 2,700; reaching a net neutral as far as revenues and expenditures; staff's follow-through with the YMCA; the sunsetting of the residential discount and the grandfathering of members that currently have the discount; that the proposed budget includes the residential discount; and holding quarterly updates on the YMCA.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Tom Culbert, 1925 Charleston Drive, Bedford - Mr. Culbert did not speak on an item on the agenda as required to speak under Public Comments.

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF ITEMS BY CONSENT

City Manager Jimmy Stathatos presented an overview of items on the consent agenda.

Motioned by Councilmember Gagliardi, seconded by Councilmember Dawkins, to approve the following items by consent: 1 and 2.

Motion approved 7-0-0. Mayor Boyter declared the motion carried.

1. **Consider approval of the following City Council minutes:**
 - a) **August 10, 2023 work session**
 - b) **August 22, 2023 regular meeting**

This item was approved by consent.

2. **Consider an ordinance repealing Article IV, "Curfew," of Chapter 82, "Offenses and Miscellaneous Provisions," of the Code of Ordinances, City of Bedford, Texas; providing this ordinance shall be cumulative of all ordinances; providing a severability clause; and establishing an effective date.**

Council Minutes September 12, 2023

This item was approved by consent.

NEW BUSINESS

3. Public hearing on the annual budget for the City of Bedford, Texas for the fiscal period of October 1, 2023 through September 30, 2024; levying taxes for 2023 tax year.

Strategic Services Manager Meg Jakubik presented information on the annual budget. She discussed the City's budget policy cycle; the City's tax rate history, which shows a decline in the debt portion of the rate; trends in General Fund revenue and expenditures; a five-year forecast, which shows the City's fund balance staying above the required 20 percent reserve requirement; and the City's sales tax history, which shows the overall percentage for the year in line with projections. There was discussion on the reasoning for using debt financing to pay for certain capital items. Ms. Jakubik presented information on revenues by fund, expenditures by classification, and revenues and expenditures in the General Fund. She presented information on the Debt Service Fund, including the debt service schedule and the annual funding requirements.

Ms. Jakubik presented information regarding the Street Improvement Economic Development Corporation, including two capital projects. She presented information on the Tourism Fund, and stated there has been a recovery in Hotel Occupancy Tax revenues since the pandemic. She explained that due to payroll issues, personnel expenditures were moved to the General Fund which is being offset by an increase in the transfer to the General Fund. Ms. Jakubik presented information on the Water and Sewer Fund, including revenues and expenditures. She stated staff is recommending rate increases due to increased costs from the Trinity River Authority as well as personnel and capital projects. Ms. Jakubik presented information on the Stormwater Fund, including revenues and expenditures, and stated staff is not recommending any increases to the rate.

Ms. Jakubik presented information on the tax rate calculations, with the current tax rate being \$0.495726 per \$100 valuation, the no-new-revenue rate being \$0.457431 per \$100 valuation, and the voter-approval rate and the one used in the proposed budget as well as the maximum that can be considered being \$0.495726 per \$100 valuation. She presented the impact of the tax rate on the average residential tax bill as well as properties that are newly qualified for the senior tax freeze. She further presented a breakdown of the monthly cost allocation for City services.

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

Nobody chose to speak during the public hearing.

Mayor Boyter closed the public hearing at 6:36 p.m.

4. Public hearing to consider the proposed 2023 tax rate.

Ms. Jakubik stated the City received two comments in favor of the proposed tax rate and one requesting a decrease through a website that provides tax rate information. There was discussion on paying for one-time items through fund balance, while remaining above the 20 percent threshold. There was further discussion on the value of keeping the tax rate the same, including the compensation packages for general and public safety personnel to remain competitive in the market for employees; cybersecurity protections; additional funding for Library programming and events as well as Neighborhood Services remediation efforts; a new Central Fire Station; and Animal Shelter renovations and expansion.

Council Minutes September 12, 2023

Mayor Boyter opened the public hearing at 6:41 p.m.
Nobody chose to speak during the public hearing.

Mayor Boyter closed the public hearing at 6:42 p.m.

- 5. Consider an ordinance adopting the annual budget for the City of Bedford, Texas for the fiscal period of October 1, 2023 through September 30, 2024; providing for intra-fund and/or intra-departmental transfers; providing for investment of idle funds; and declaring an effective date.**

Ms. Jakubik stated staff received no requests to adjust the budget. In response to questions from Council, she stated eliminating the \$5.00 residential membership discount to The Center would not affect the proposed budget.

Motioned by Councilmember Farco, seconded by Councilmember Gagliardi, to approve an ordinance adopting the annual budget for the City of Bedford, Texas for the fiscal period of October 1, 2023 through September 30, 2024; providing for intra-fund and/or intra-departmental transfers; providing for investment of idle funds; and declaring an effective date.

Motion approved 7-0-0. Mayor Boyter declared the motion carried.

- 6. Consider an ordinance levying taxes for the Tax Year 2023 for the City of Bedford, Texas; establishing the Ad Valorem Tax Rate of _____ per one hundred dollars valuation; providing for the apportionment of taxes for interest and sinking and for general operating needs; providing penalties and interest for delinquent taxes; and providing an effective date.**

Ms. Jakubik stated that if Council desires to proceed with the proposed tax rate, it would effectively be an 8.37 percent increase in the tax rate.

Motioned by Mayor Pro Tem Cogan, seconded by Councilmember Farco, that the property tax rate be increased by the adoption of a tax rate of \$0.495726 per \$100 assessed valuation, which is effectively an 8.37 percent increase in the tax rate.

Motion approved 7-0-0. Mayor Boyter declared the motion carried.

- 7. Consider a resolution to ratify the property tax increase as reflected in the FY 2023-2024 City of Bedford Program of Services (Budget).**

Ms. Jakubik stated this item is based on tax revenue and there is a revenue increase with the tax rate that was adopted.

Motioned by Councilmember Sabol, seconded by Councilmember Dawkins, to approve a resolution to ratify the property tax increase as reflected in the FY 2023-2024 City of Bedford Program of Services (Budget).

Motion approved 7-0-0. Mayor Boyter declared the motion carried.

- 8. Consider an ordinance amending the schedule of water rates by amendment of Section 1., Ordinance No. 2022-3351; providing a repealing clause; providing a severability clause; and declaring an effective date.**

Council Minutes September 12, 2023

Ms. Jakubik presented information regarding this item and Item #9. She stated there are increases to the base and volume rates recommended during the budget process and the City's consultant, primarily attributable to the Trinity River Authority but also includes cash funding for capital projects. The average impact on a residential summer bill would be an increase of approximately \$8.75.

Motioned by Councilmember Sabol, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Cogan, to approve an ordinance amending the schedule of water rates by amendment of Section 1., Ordinance No. 2022-3351; providing a repealing clause; providing a severability clause; and declaring an effective date.

Motion approved 7-0-0. Mayor Boyter declared the motion carried.

9. Consider an ordinance amending the schedule of sewer rates by amendment of Section 1., Ordinance No. 2022-3352; providing a repealing clause; providing a severability clause; and declaring an effective date.

Motioned by Councilmember Gagliardi, seconded by Councilmember Steves, to approve an ordinance amending the schedule of sewer rates by amendment of Section 1., Ordinance No. 2022-3352; providing a repealing clause; providing a severability clause; and declaring an effective date.

Motion approved 7-0-0. Mayor Boyter declared the motion carried.

10. Consider an ordinance amending Chapter 2 – Administration, Article IV. – Boards, Commissions and Committees of the Code of Ordinances, City of Bedford, Texas with the addition of Division 6. - Senior Advisory Board.

City Secretary Michael Wells presented information regarding this item. He stated Council at their previous meeting directed staff to draft an ordinance to establish a Senior Advisory Board. The proposed ordinance includes language regarding appointments, meetings, and membership consistent with other boards. The purpose of the Board would be to act as liaison for all senior residents in the City and advise the City Council and staff on ways to enrich and enhance the health and quality of life of seniors in the community; to solicit input and act as public forum for issues that affect seniors in the community; to provide advice based on input received in order improve the programs, policies, and services provided to seniors; to identify barriers of access to seniors in City programs and services; and to form partnerships in the community to educate, inform, and improve the quality of life for seniors. Mr. Wells presented a proposed timeline to call for applications, interviews, and appointments to the Senior Advisory Board as well as the other Boards and Commissions.

Motioned by Councilmember Steves, seconded by Councilmember Dawkins, to approve an ordinance amending Chapter 2 – Administration, Article IV. – Boards, Commissions and Committees of the Code of Ordinances, City of Bedford, Texas with the addition of Division 6. - Senior Advisory Board.

Motion approved 7-0-0. Mayor Boyter declared the motion carried.

11. Mayor/Council Member Reports **a) Announcement from the Mayor**

This item was moved after Item #12.

Council Minutes September 12, 2023

Mayor Boyter stated being Mayor was the most rewarding thing he has ever done, and it was all thanks to the residents, who had a vision for Bedford that it could be capable of doing more for the residents. He stated he was encouraged to run in 2019 when Mayor Griffin stepped down to run for higher office and that it was an honor, and he has been humbled ever since. He stated he and the rest of Council agreed with the vision and set out to move Bedford forward. Council went about bringing change by selecting Jimmy Stathatos as the City Manager, who is the most experienced one Bedford has ever had. Mayor Boyter stated Bedford has new leadership at its highest levels of staff and the personnel drain from public safety was stopped. He stated the new leadership focused on community building, training processes, and restoring integrity.

Mayor Boyter discussed changes and improvements in City operations. He stated employee pay and benefits are better and competitive with other cities. The City's debt rating was upgraded to AA+, debt was refinanced to save millions, and revenue was maximized through Certificates of Deposit and securities. Mayor Boyter stated there is a Chief Financial Officer, not a manager, in charge of the Finance Department. He discussed the elimination of 40 employee positions over the last two years. He stated tax rates started being lowered in 2020 after increases of nine and eight percent the previous two years, with a reduction of \$5 million in expenditures last year. The vehicle fleet was replaced, and new ways were found to finance street repairs, with 62 repairs being done in 2023 and several major thoroughfares being repaved. The City worked with Tarrant County to redo Brown Trail and to widen Cheek-Sparger Road. Mayor Boyter stated the Council just approved funding the City's first drainage survey in decades. The Public Works Department is about to start six projects using low-cost loans through the State Water Implementation Fund for Texas. The Cummings Water Tower was cleaned and repaired. A Capital Improvement Plan was developed to anticipate large expenses and money has been invested in ambulances, fire trucks, and heavy equipment.

Mayor Boyter discussed improvements to City facilities, including the issuance of bonds for a new Central Fire Station, a fire training tower and facility, the purchase and refurbishment of a senior center, and the remodel of the Animal Shelter, with no increase in taxes. He discussed the possibility of paying for a new City Hall with cash in the future. He stated the Bedford Commons project was about to become a reality and discussed the creation of the Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone to finance the infrastructure for the project with no new taxes. He stated the City hired a third-party consultant to review and rewrite the City's Master Plan. Mayor Boyter discussed Rock Island Auctions relocating to Bedford from out of state, which would equate to millions in revenue and tourism. He stated the Planning and Zoning Commission was overhauled with like-minded community leaders who understand what the residents want for the City's business climate.

Mayor Boyter discussed code enforcement, including the overhaul of staff, and upgrading of ordinances, including that the City has been stricter with offenders, taking some to court, and shutting down chronic offenders. He discussed bringing back the City's signature events and the City conducting more family-friendly activities through the Library and the Cultural Arts Manager. He discussed the process of creating a performance arts center to take advantage of entertainment opportunities and fill a niche that does not currently exist in the area. He stated the City built a Miracle park at Central Drive to serve physically challenged children, partnered with Sparkling Ice on a musical pocket playground, and partnered with the Nancy Lieberman Foundation on a dream court. Mayor Boyter stated the City completed the development, construction, and opening of Generations Park at Boys Ranch and The Center on time and under budget. Work has begun on the design and engineering to add outdoor tennis and pickleball courts and possibly a new skate park as well as expanding the disc golf course with the help of a Texas Parks and Wildlife grant. He stated the City partnered with the YMCA to manage The Center to get the benefit of their expertise while saving hundreds of thousands of taxpayer dollars.

Council Minutes September 12, 2023

He discussed the award-winning Communications Division and increased communication with residents through social media, mailers, and the new website.

Mayor Boyter stated there is now a City Council that works together to fix problems. He stated it used to pain him to hear people outside of Bedford make fun of its poor streets, personnel and departmental issues, and the discord between elected official and staff. He felt no city could hold a candle to what has been accomplished in the previous few years. He stated it was an honor to be Mayor the last four years and that moving Bedford forward was the residents' vision. He stated they have built an organization dedicated to listening, communicating, addressing problems, and growing the City. He felt the problem with politics is that too many people run for the wrong reason and those who get elected stay beyond their effectiveness, and the purpose of running for office should be to fix problems and not just hang around to be a part of the in-crowd. Mayor Boyter felt that as the budget is being approved, it is a good time for him to step aside and let others pick up the mantle.

Mayor Boyter thanked those who came before that laid the foundation for their efforts, including former members of Council with whom he worked. He thanked staff for always being there and making him proud to be head of such a wonderful organization. He thanked Lisa for helping him to become "Mayor Mike". Finally, he thanked the residents who motivated him to move Bedford forward. He stated being Mayor was the most rewarding and satisfying thing he has ever done. He further stated he was proud in the recognition of all the City's accomplishments over the past four years and in knowing that a new foundation had been established for Bedford's future.

Mayor Boyter announced that he would resign as mayor of the City of Bedford effective at the close of business September 13th, 2023. He thanked everybody for letting him be a part of the history of Bedford and stated he was eternally grateful for the opportunity to pay it forward.

12. City Manager/Staff Reports

This item was moved prior to Item #11.

City Manager Jimmy Stathatos reported that a "Tenant Bill of Rights" webpage was added to the City's website.

a) Update on Beats and Eats Festival

Recreation Manager Huner Hardeman presented an update on the Beats and Eats Festival. There were an estimated 12,000 to 15,000 attendees at the event, as well as 50 attendees and participants at the car show. There were 14 food and 28 business vendors, which generated revenue of over \$15,000 in booth vendor fees. Amenities included shade tents, cooling stations, a kid zone, and a vendor and food market. He discussed traffic logistics, including shuttles to and from Pennington Field and increased directional signage based on feedback from FourthFest. He presented information on the sponsors for the events, and stated there was approximately \$36,000 in cash from sponsors and approximately \$5,000 for in-kind services. He thanked the citizens, Council, and staff for the event and discussed positive feedback from attendees.

Parks and Recreation Manager Mark Long stated he had not run an event the size and scope of Beats and Eats and it go as smoothly as it did. He stated it was a credit to the team the City Manager put in place. He thanked the Council and citizens for their support.

Council Minutes September 12, 2023

EXECUTIVE SESSION

- a) Pursuant to Section 551.074. to deliberate the appointment, employment, evaluation, reassignment, duties, discipline, or dismissal of a public officer or employee – Mayor**

Council convened into Executive Session pursuant to Section 551.074. to deliberate the appointment, employment, evaluation, reassignment, duties, discipline, or dismissal of a public officer or employee – Mayor, at 7:16 p.m.

Council reconvened from Executive Session at 7:49 p.m.

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

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

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Boyter adjourned the meeting at 7:50 p.m.

Dan Cogan, Mayor Pro Tem

ATTEST:

Michael Wells, City Secretary