

**RICHLAND HILLS CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
AUGUST 2, 2016
MINUTES**

Roll Call:

Council present:

Bill Agan, Mayor
Roland Goveas, Place 1
Allison Barrette, Place 2
Robert DeSoto, Place 3
Beverly Williams, Place 4 (Arrived 6:04 p.m.)
Edward Lopez, Mayor pro-tem

Council Absent:

Staff

Eric Strong, City Manager
Cathy Bourg, City Secretary
Betsy Elam, City Attorney

REGULAR SESSION – Mayor Agan Called to Order – Time 5:30 p.m.

Invocation – Mayor Agan

Pledge of Allegiance – Led by Councilmember DeSoto

PRESENTATIONS

1A. Citizen Appearances/Public Comments

Citizen Appearances/Public Comments

(Citizens who have signed a card to speak to the City Council will be heard at this time. In compliance with the Texas Open Meetings Act, unless the subject matter of the presentation is on the agenda, the city staff and City Council members are prevented from discussion of the subject and may respond only with statements of factual information or existing city policy. Public comment will not be taken on items that the Council has previously considered in a public hearing.)

Eric Strong, City Manager presented the rules of decorum.

Bobbie McCorkle, 2748 Spruce Park, Richland Hills made comments regarding the construction in parks. She feels the work should be done while children are in school.

John Skier, 7016 Park Place, Richland Hills made comments regarding the July 19th Town Hall. He thought the information that was provided was great, but wished the information from the Town Hall would have been provided before the vote. Mr. Skier also made comments regarding enhancements being made to item 4B before approval.

Travis Malone, 2641 Mimosa Park, Richland Hills made comments in support of item 4B. He feels we were lied to by the FWTA and encourage citizens to vote no to staying in the FWTA.

1B. Presentation on Utility Bills

Eric Strong, City Manager gave the following presentation regarding Utility Bill.

Staff frequently receives questions about residential utility bills and what drives the amount residents pay for utilities. While the utility bill is commonly referred to as a "water bill", it is really comprised of charges for the following services:

- Water Service
- Wastewater Service
- Garbage Service
- Drainage Improvements and Maintenance

It is also important to understand that the utility fund is supposed to be a self-sufficient fund. That means that it is supposed to be able to recover all of the necessary costs through user fees, without being subsidized by any tax revenue.

The major expenses in the utility fund include the following:

- Debt Payments for past utility improvements
- Charges for water purchase and wastewater disposal
- Personnel to maintain the utility infrastructure
- Operating supplies for day to day functions
- Administrative services for management of the utility department
- Garbage pickup for payments to a third part for trash collection

Each of these categories are explained in more detail below.

Debt Payments: From 2007 to 2015, more than \$20 million worth of projects have been completed and financed using debt through utility fund. This was done in order to make necessary improvements to the drainage facilities, water lines and wastewater system and lines. Completed projects include, but are not limited to: Matthews Drainage, Upper Hardisty Drainage, Kingsbury Drainage, a new Lift Station, and the replacement of more than 5,000 feet of wastewater line.

The result of the \$20 million in projects that we have completed is that we pay approximately \$1,250,000 per year to repay the debt for those projects.

Charges for Water and Wastewater: Richland Hills purchases treated water from the City of Fort Worth. Fort Worth also treats all of our wastewater. This is done because we do not have a water treatment plant or wastewater treatment plant. Most cities in Tarrant County are in the same situation, and as such they pay another entity for water and wastewater. These are costs that we don't control. Fort Worth dictates how much we pay per 1,000 gallons consumed. Currently, we pay just over \$1 million per year to the City of Fort Worth for these services.

Personnel: Richland Hills employs several people in order to maintain and repair the drainage channels, water lines and wastewater lines. Our current cost for employees that work directly and exclusively in the utility department is approximately \$1 million per year. This includes both salaries and benefits for the employees.

Operating Expenses: In order to maintain the infrastructure, we have the need for various materials, equipment and supplies. This includes things like vehicles, gasoline, pipe, clamps. Our total annual cost for these types of items is approximately \$540,000.

Administrative Services: There are several employees that work in the utility fund at times, but are not exclusive the utility fund; they also work in other departments. Some examples of these types of employees are the City Manager, Director of Neighborhood Services, City Secretary and some street employees. That's not an all-inclusive list, just a sampling. Since the utility fund is supposed to be completely self-sufficient, best-practices in government is that the utility fund "pays" the general fund for the time and materials that these employees expend dealing with utility fund issues. This is done through transfers throughout the year. The current amount that is transferred from the utility fund to the general fund is approximately \$500,000 per year. In previous years, this number was well over \$1,500,000; however, the city has made a conscience effort to reduce this amount in order to ensure that the utility fund is not subsidizing the general fund.

Garbage Pickup: The current rate for residential garbage pickup is \$11.09 per month per household. When compared to Bedford, Colleyville, Euless, Grapevine, Hurst, Haltom City, North Richland Hills and Southlake, Richland Hills has the lowest residential rate for garbage.

Summary: Richland Hills has approximately 3,250 active water accounts. When you add up all the categories listed above (except garbage), our total expenses are approximately \$4.4 million per year. In order to cover all of the above expenses and the garbage fee, we need to average approximately \$124 per bill per month to break even. Obviously some bills are higher, and some are lower. The variations are largely due to the amount of water used. However, the "fixed costs" that can't be changed at this point include the debt, garbage and Fort Worth fees. Those categories alone require an average monthly bill of \$70.73. That does not factor in the people and supplies necessary to run the day to day operations of the system. While we have more control over those costs, they are still essential to providing services and any significant changes would require reductions in service levels to compensate.

CONSENT AGENDA

2A. Approval of minutes from the July 19, 2016 Regular City Council meeting

Motion: Motion was made by Councilmember Lopez, and seconded by Councilmember DeSoto to approve the consent agenda.

Motion carried by a vote of 4-0. Councilmember Williams absent.

PUBLIC HEARINGS, MEETINGS, AND OTHER RELATED ITEMS

3A. None at this time.

ORDINANCES & RESOLUTIONS AND OTHER RELATED ITEMS

4A. Resolution 470-16 supporting, recognizing, and honoring the service of law enforcement officers.

Eric Strong, City Manager presented Resolution 470-16.

RESOLUTION SUPPORTING, RECOGNIZING, AND HONORING THE SERVICE OF LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS

WHEREAS, recent events throughout our nation have demonstrated a disregard for the lives and safety of law enforcement officers;

WHEREAS, the men and women of our nation's law enforcement agencies wear their uniforms with honor, dedication, and integrity as they protect and serve their communities they were sworn to protect; and,

WHEREAS, these uniforms have made them targets by those who seek to kill or injure law enforcement officers simply because of their profession and commitment to duty; and

WHEREAS, it is incumbent upon public officials and law abiding citizens to proactively support our law enforcement officers who regularly face threats of violence and danger, as they seek to protect our communities; and,

WHEREAS, in light of current events around our nation, we as citizens should stand together to show support and respect for the men and women in law enforcement, and recognize that the vast majority of law enforcement personnel protecting and serving our communities are examples of honesty and integrity in their personal and professional lives; and

WHEREAS, the Richland Hills police department consistently shows a level of commitment and dedication to serving the entire community fairly and justly and recognizes the importance of their job and the value of all life.

Now, therefore, be it resolved that the City of Richland Hills City Council, strongly condemns the acts of violence committed against law enforcement, and supports the men and women who serve the city of Richland Hills and law enforcement officers nationwide.

Chief Childress, on behalf of all Officers of the Police Department expressed gratitude for the recognition and resolution of support.

Motion: Motion was made by Councilmember Lopez, and seconded by Councilmember DeSoto to approve.

Motion carried by a vote of 4-0. Councilmember Williams absent.

4B. Resolution 471-16 regarding relationship with the Fort Worth Transportation Authority (FWTA).

Eric Strong, City Manager presented Resolution 471-16.

A RESOLUTION OF THE RICHLAND HILLS CITY COUNCIL REQUESTING THAT
THE TEXAS STATE LEGISLATURE CONSIDER COMPREHENSIVE
IMPROVEMENTS TO THE TRANSPORTATION CODE AS IT RELATES TO
REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITIES

WHEREAS, the City of Richland Hills has been a member of the Fort Worth Transportation Authority (FWTA) since 1992; and

WHEREAS, in recent years, several efforts have been made by Richland Hills to improve the relationship between the FWTA and Richland Hills; and

WHEREAS, those efforts have included multiple resolutions that have encouraged and requested communication and coordination of efforts between Richland Hills and the FWTA; and

WHEREAS, Richland Hills has received no acknowledgement of the resolutions from the FWTA, nor has Richland Hills seen any increased efforts to communicate or coordinate with Richland Hills on important initiatives and services provided in Richland Hills; and

WHEREAS, any recent communication from the FWTA to the City of Richland Hills has primarily been to inform Richland Hills of adverse actions towards Richland Hills, and

WHEREAS, these adverse actions have included: the change in legislation that facilitated the removal of a Richland Hills resident from the FWTA Board of Directors, the removal of the 24 year rebate for street improvements that has historically been provided to all member cities and the removal and reduction of services provided to Richland Hills residents; and

WHEREAS, the City of Richland Hills recognizes that being a member of the FWTA provides Richland Hills with no assurances of services continuing; and

WHEREAS, the transportation code allows member cities a relationship with the Transportation Authority, but does not provide for a contract or require any stipulated levels of service; and

WHEREAS, the relationship provided by the Transportation Code cedes all decisions, power and influence to the Transportation Authority and the residents of Richland Hills are strictly at the mercy of the Transportation Authority to receive whichever services the Authority decides to provide; and

WHEREAS, several non-member cities have recently contracted with the FWTA for defined services at a defined price; and

WHEREAS, the FWTA cannot arbitrarily and without notice alter the terms of contracts that it has with non-member cities in the same manner that it does with member cities; and

WHEREAS, the City of Richland Hills disagrees with the flaw in the Transportation Code that allows for a more defined and equitable relationship to exist between the FWTA and non-member cities than the relationship that exists between the FWTA and member cities; and

WHEREAS, historically, the relationship between the FWTA and Richland Hills has resulted in inaccurate information being provided to Richland Hills regarding ridership and usage by Richland Hills residents; and

WHEREAS, the City of Richland Hills led the effort to modify legislation in the 2015 legislative session to fix some of these problems with the Transportation Code; and

WHEREAS, one of the problems that was addressed allowed for increased membership on the FWTA Board of Directors in order to provide a potential spot for Richland Hills residents once again; and

WHEREAS, despite once again having a Richland Hills resident as a member of the Board of Directors, decisions by the FWTA which significantly damage the residents of Richland Hills are being made without board knowledge, thereby negating the benefit of having a resident serve as a member of the Board of Directors and undermining the intent of the law; and

WHEREAS, Richland Hills seeks an equitable and fair partnership between the FWTA and Richland Hills; and

WHEREAS, a relationship that is fair and equitable should require that the FWTA acknowledge both the benefit provided to the citizens as well as the damage done to city infrastructure based on their vehicles traffic patterns; and

WHEREAS, historically the FWTA has acknowledged this damage and made efforts to share revenues in order to remedy the problems caused by their vehicles; and

WHEREAS, the FWTA has decided to no longer acknowledge or take responsibility for the damage being done to infrastructure funded by the tax payers served by the FWTA and has shifted the burden to repair these problems entirely to Richland Hills, resulting in a larger burden being placed on residents by way of the need for additional tax funds to be expended to repair these problems.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY OF RICHLAND HILLS AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1: The City Council of Richland Hills respectfully requests that the Texas State House of Representatives and the Texas Senate consider legislation that modifies the Transportation Code and turns an inequitable relationship into an equitable partnership for all involved.

Bobbie McCorkle made comments for the need of public transportation for seniors.

Motion: Motion was made by Councilmember Lopez, and seconded by Councilmember Williams to approve Resolution 471-16, requesting that the Texas State Legislature consider comprehensive improvements to the Transportation Code as it relates to the Regional Transportation Authorities.

Motion carried by a vote of 5-0.

CONTRACTS, AGREEMENTS, BID AWARDS AND OTHER RELATED ITEMS

5A. None at this time.

OTHER ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

6A. None at this time.

REPORTS & DISCUSSIONS

7A. None at this time.

8. COMMUNITY INTEREST ITEMS

- Library's Summer Reading Club End of Summer Carnival was held July 27th and was a great success.
- Bulk Waste Collection – August 15th

- Lunch Bunch – August 12th

9. **Executive Session: Pursuant to the Open Meetings Act, Chapter 551, Texas Government Code, Sec. 551.071, Sec. 551.072, Sec. 551.073, Sec. 551.074, Sec. 551.076, Sec. 551.087 and Sec. 418.0183 (f) and 418.106 (d) & (e) of the Texas Government Code (Texas Disaster Act).**

None at this time.

10. **A motion was made by Councilmember Lopez, and seconded by Councilmember Barrette to adjourn. Motion passed 5-0.**

There being no further business to come before the City Council, Mayor Agan declared the meeting adjourned at 6:20 p.m.

ATTEST

APPROVED

Cathy Bourg, City Secretary

Bill Agan, Mayor