

**RICHLAND HILLS CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
AUGUST 28, 2023
MINUTES**

Roll Call:

Council present

Edward Lopez, Mayor
G.W. Estep, Mayor Pro Tem
Douglas Knowlton, Place 1
Travis Malone, Place 2
Theresa Bledsoe, Place 3
Javier Alvarez, Place 4
Roland Goveas, Place 6

Council absent

Staff present

Candice Edmondson, City Manager
Lindsay Rawlinson, City Secretary
James Donovan, City Attorney

CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION – 6:01 PM

1. **Executive Session:** Pursuant to the Open Meetings Act, Chapter 551, Texas Government Code, Sections 551.071, 551.072, 551.073, 551.074, 551.076, 551.087, 418.183(f) and 418.106(d) & (e). Executive Session may be held, under these exceptions, at any time during the meeting that a need arises for the City Council to seek advice from the City Attorney as to the posted subject matter of this City Council meeting.

None.

2. **FY 2024 Budget Overview: Special Revenue Funds**

City Manager Candice Edmondson presented an overview of the Special Revenue and Debt Service Funds FY 2024 proposed budgets. She advised that the proposed budget is based on an ad valorem tax rate of \$0.522689, which is a three percent reduction from FY 2023, and includes a proposed three percent pay increase for civilian personnel and a STEP (three percent) pay increase for public safety personnel. Debt Service is supported by ad valorem taxes.

Ms. Edmondson also provided a listing of Special Revenue Funds including the Court Security Fund, Court Technology Fund, Crime Control and Prevention District Fund, Richland Hills Development Corporation Fund, Oil and Gas Fund, Hotel Occupancy Tax Fund, Capital Improvement Projects Fund, Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Fund, Street Improvement Fund, Vehicle Replacement Fund, Keep Richland Hills Beautiful Fund, Link

Replacement Fund, American Rescue Plan Fund, Emergency Management Fund, and the Strategic Initiative Fund. She advised of the purpose of each fund and projects within the funds included for FY 2024.

- 3. Discuss items listed on tonight’s City Council agenda. No action will be taken and each item will be considered during the Regular Session.**

None.

Mayor Lopez adjourned the work session at 7:11 p.m.

REGULAR SESSION – Mayor Lopez Called to Order – Time 7:11 p.m.

INVOCATION AND PLEDGES OF ALLEGIANCE – Councilmember Knowlton

PRESENTATIONS

1A. Library Card Sign-Up Month Proclamation

Mayor Lopez read a proclamation declaring September 2023 as “Library Card Sign-Up Month” in Richland Hills and presented it to Library Director Chantele Hancock.

1B. Distinguished Budget Presentation Award

Mayor Lopez presented the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award to City Manager Candice Edmondson on behalf of former Finance Director Patricia Albrecht who retired in May 2023.

1C. Citizen Appearances/Public Comments

None.

City Manager Candice Edmondson introduced Oncor Area Manager Scott Baumbach who recently became the Oncor representative for Richland Hills.

Mr. Baumbach expressed his appreciation to the City Council and City staff for welcoming him.

CONSENT AGENDA

2A. Approved minutes from the August 14, 2023 City Council Regular Meeting

2B. Approved Resolution 580-23 establishing the Strategic Initiative Fund and setting guidelines for annual transfers

2C. Approved Resolution 581-23 establishing a maximum annual subsidy from the General Fund to the Link Fund, establishing the Link Capital Replacement Fund and setting guidelines for annual transfers

2D. Approved Resolution 582-23 amending City Council Rules of Procedure

2E. Approved First Amendment to an Interlocal Agreement between the City of Fort Worth and the City of Richland Hills for participation in the Environmental Collection Center Household Hazardous Waste Program

Motion: Motion was made by Councilmember Malone and seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Estep to approve the consent agenda.

Motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

PUBLIC HEARINGS, MEETINGS, AND OTHER RELATED ITEMS

3. None.

ORDINANCES & RESOLUTIONS AND OTHER RELATED ITEMS

4A. Approved Ordinance 1479-23 amending the Code of Ordinances of the City of Richland Hills, Article IV, "Solicitors, Canvassers and Handbill Distribution" of Chapter 18 "Businesses"

Police Chief Kimberly Sylvester presented the item to the City Council and advised that the Ordinance 1479-23 amends Article IV of Chapter 18 of the Code of Ordinances related to Solicitors, Canvassers, and Handbill Distribution. She advised of several changes including changing the administrator of the program from the City Secretary to the Chief of Police as well as an updated permitting process and soliciting hours.

Discussion ensued regarding notifying residents of the changes, residents calling dispatch to report issues with solicitors, and the City maintaining a list of permitted solicitors.

Motion: Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Estep and seconded by Councilmember Knowlton to approve Ordinance 1479-23 amending the Code of Ordinances of the City of Richland Hills, Article IV, "Solicitors, Canvassers and Handbill Distribution" of Chapter 18 "Businesses."

Motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

4B. Approved Ordinance 1480-23 amending the Municipal Fee Schedule

City Manager Candice Edmondson presented the item to the City Council and advised that Ordinance 1480-23 amends the City's Municipal Fee Schedule and reviewed the

proposed changes. She advised of fees related to Agenda Item 4A as well as a new annual fire inspection fee and supplies such as USB drives and earbuds available for purchase at the Library. Additionally, Ms. Edmondson advised of an error in previously approved drainage fees and confirmed that the monthly drainage fee has again been set to \$8.00 per month.

Motion: Motion was made by Councilmember Goveas and seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Estep to approve Ordinance 1480-23 amending the Municipal Fee Schedule

Motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

CONTRACTS, AGREEMENTS, BID AWARDS AND OTHER RELATED ITEMS

5. None.

OTHER ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

6A. Approved reallocation of available project funds to additional improvements at the Animal Services Center

City Manager Candice Edmondson advised that in the FY 2023 budget, City Council approved funding for improvements at the Animal Services Center. An allocation of \$460,000 was included in the Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Fund for building and drainage improvements and \$215,000 was included in the Strategic Initiative Fund (SIF) for parking lot improvements.

The Animal Center drainage and parking lot improvements were designed together and bid with the Latham drainage channel improvements for cost-saving measures. C Green Scaping LP provided a bid in the amount of \$336,586 which City Council approved on June 26, 2023. The total cost for grading, drainage and parking lot improvements, including general items, at the Animal Services Center is \$207,245. Grading and drainage improvements total \$102,478 and parking lot improvements total \$104,767.

Once the grading, drainage and parking lot improvements are complete, \$156,997 will remain in the TIF Fund Animal Center project budget and \$66,254 in the SIF Fund Animal Center Parking Lot project budget.

As part of the FY 2024 budget process, staff is recommending a few additional improvements at the Animal Center for an overall cost of \$127,000 that were not part of the original scope of work including:

- \$82,000 – installation of synthetic turf to enhance sanitation and improve the condition of the outdoor dog runs completed by Synthetic Grass Pros off through Buy-Board contract #641-21

- \$30,000 – replacement of the exterior perimeter fence with a new 8-foot cedar fence
- \$10,000 – installation of new landscaping
- \$5,000 – installation of shade screening for outdoor dog runs

Discussion ensued regarding the useful life of the synthetic turf.

Motion: Motion was made by Councilmember Bledsoe and seconded by Councilmember Knowlton to approve the reallocation of available project funds to include installation of synthetic turf and shade screening in the outdoor dog runs, installation of new landscaping and replacement of perimeter fencing in the amount of \$127,000, and approval of installation of synthetic turf by Synthetic Grass Pros through Buy-Board contract #641-21.

Motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

6B. Approved amended Employee Compensation Plan and adoption of the FY 2024 Civilian and Public Safety Pay Plans

City Manager Candice Edmondson advised that per the City’s adopted Employee Compensation Plan, a market salary survey is to be conducted every two years. The City completed a market survey this spring and any recommended adjustments to keep positions at 90 percent market average have been included in the proposed FY 2024 Budget.

Prior to beginning the market survey, the City amended its labor market to remove cities that were no longer comparable or competitive to Richland Hills and add cities that have similar budgets, services and communities. The market salary survey adjustments to keep positions at 90 percent market average totaled approximately \$145,000. Employees not receiving a market adjustment have been recommended to receive a 3 percent cost of living adjustment.

Discussion ensued regarding staffing levels.

Motion: Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Estep and seconded by Councilmember Goveas to approve amended Employee Compensation Plan and adoption of the FY 2024 Civilian and Public Safety Pay Plans.

Motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

REPORTS & DISCUSSIONS

7A. Street Improvement Update

Director of Public Works and Capital Projects Kip Dernovich presented the street improvement update and advised that work on Dover Lane is scheduled for completion

by September 28, 2023. He provided an update on road projects on Magnolia Park and the intersection of Handley Ederville Road and Burns. Additionally, he advised of a flood insurance discount for residents within the floodplain.

7B. School Resource Officer Positions

Police Chief Kimberly Sylvester advised that during the 88th Legislative Session, HB 3 added to the Education Code a requirement that school districts employ a security officer for each campus effective September 1, 2023. This can be accomplished through armed-security officers, a school marshal, guardian program or by agreement with the local police department.

Birdville Independent School District has evaluated the options to comply with this mandate and feels that the best option for the safety and security of their staff and students is to continue the use of School Resource Officers (SRO) through partnership with the local police departments.

The Police Chiefs from North Richland Hills, Haltom City, Watauga, and Richland Hills recently met with BISD administration to discuss this mandate, and all agreed that the School Resource Officer program is the most beneficial and effective way to fulfill this new mandate. The school district and police departments have worked together to develop a temporary program that will meet the requirements until funding can be approved and additional officers hired.

The FY 2024 proposed budget already includes funding for a second SRO position, which had been previously funded and approved by BISD. With the HB 3 requirement, Richland Hills will need to hire an additional SRO to cover the other elementary campus for a total of three SROs. This would have the Richland Hills Police Department providing security at Richland Middle School, Jack C Binion Elementary, and Cheney Hills Elementary. In addition, the department will supplement security at Mullendore Elementary with on-duty staff while the campus is temporarily located in Richland Hills for the next two years.

As outlined in the City's current agreement with BISD, the school district pays 65 percent of the salary, benefits and equipment for the SRO position and the City covers the remaining 35 percent of personnel costs. This agreement would apply to the additional SRO positions when added.

The other partner cities employ a supervisor level position to be the primary point of contact with the school district and oversee the SRO program. With the expansion of the SRO program and oversight of two additional officers, staff recommends making one of the SRO positions a Sergeant position to provide the proper level of oversight and support to the district. The Sergeant would be an active SRO and be assigned to one of the campuses as their primary site. BISD will contribute 65 percent towards the salary, benefits and equipment of the supervisory position.

7C. July Department Reports

Library Director Chantele Hancock provided a brief recap of the Summer Reading Program.

Director of Parks and Recreation Jason Brown provided a brief recap of the 4th of July event and activities at The Link.

COMMUNITY INTEREST ITEMS

8. Mayor Pro Tem Estep advised of several upcoming events:

- Thursday, August 31, 2023, Senior Synergy Expo, Amon G. Carter Exhibit Hall, 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.;
- Monday, September 4, 2023, City facilities including The Link will be closed for Labor Day;
- Tuesday, September 12, 2023, Richland Hills Literary Club, Public Library, 6:30 p.m.;
- Thursday, September 14, 2023,
 - Senior Lunch Bunch and Bingo, The Link, 12:00 to 2:00 p.m.;
 - Tarrant County Food Pantry, The Link parking lot, 5:30 to 7:00 p.m.; and
- Friday, September 15, 2023, Fiesta de Herencia, The Link Plaza, 6:00 to 9:00 p.m.;
- Solar Eclipse September, celebrating the October 16 solar eclipse, Public Library;
- Every Thursday, Coffee Talk, Public Library, 10:00 to 11:30 a.m.;

EXECUTIVE SESSION

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).

1. Section 551.071: Consultation with Attorney
 1. Auto Repair Businesses

Motion: Motion was made by Councilmember Knowlton and seconded by Councilmember Malone to adjourn into Executive Session at 9:25 p.m.

Motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

Mayor Lopez reconvened into open session at 10:02 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

10. A motion was made by Councilmember Knowlton and seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Estep to adjourn.

Motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

There being no further business to come before the City Council, Mayor Lopez declared the meeting adjourned at 10:02 p.m.

ATTEST:

APPROVED:

Lindsay Rawlinson, City Secretary

Edward Lopez, Mayor