

Brenham City Council Minutes

A special budget workshop of the Brenham City Council was held on July 25, 2019 beginning at 9:00 a.m. in the Brenham City Hall, Conference Room 2-A, at 200 W. Vulcan Street, Brenham, Texas.

Members present:

Mayor Milton Y. Tate, Jr.
Mayor Pro Tem Andrew Ebel
Councilmember Susan Cantey
Councilmember Adonna Saunders
Councilmember Keith Herring
Councilmember Clint Kolby

Members absent:

Councilmember Albert Wright

Others present:

City Manager James Fisher, Deputy City Secretary I Kacey Weiss, Assistant City Manager – Chief Financial Officer Carolyn Miller, Comptroller Stacy Hardy, Human Resources Director Susan Nienstedt, Strategic Budget Officer Debbie Gaffey, Budget Manager Kaci Konieczny, Director of Tourism and Marketing Jennifer Eckermann, Melinda Gordon, Fire Chief Ricky Boeker, Police Chief Allwin Barrow, Public Works Director Dane Rau, Assistant City Manager of Public Utilities Lowell Ogle, Development Services Director Stephanie Doland, and Kevin Schmidt

Citizens present:

None

Media Present:

None

1. Call Meeting to Order

2. FY 2019-20 Proposed Budget Discussions

Mayor Milton Tate opened the meeting and City Manager James Fisher welcomed the Council. Fisher explained that based on maintaining the current tax rate of \$0.5170 and including the electric and water rate increases, the average residential increase for citizens would be \$197.52 per year or \$16.46 per month. Fisher advised that these amounts are based on the city keeping sanitation. Fisher stated that staff is undecided about the sanitation operations at this time and will be doing a Request For Proposal (RFP) in August. Fisher noted that final valuations have not been certified so the final tax rate is not known at this time.

Public Works Director Dane Rau stated that the city is losing a large amount of money with the recycling center as there is not a market for recyclables at this time. Rau noted that once the RFP's are obtained, staff would be better able to evaluate the sanitation department.

Strategic Budget Officer Debbie Gaffey discussed total new proposed debt in the FY20 budget. This includes:

- 20-Year Certificate of Obligation
 - Tax-backed \$3,450,000 and in I&S Rate for General Fund
 - Tax-backed (pass-through) \$1,000,000 for BCDC
 - Revenue-backed \$2,050,000 for Water/Wastewater Funds
- 3-7 Year Short-Term Notes or Capital-Leases for Vehicles/Equipment
 - Tax-backed (counts against 17.5% debt limits) up to \$1,000,000 in VERF
 - Revenue-backed
 - Up to \$730,000 in Drainage Fund (For drainage equipment)
 - Up to \$900,000 in Sanitation Fund (If we keep all business lines)
 - “Up to” means we may purchase part with excess cash reserves if available

Fisher pointed out the upcoming important Council meeting dates. These include:

- August
 - Thursday, August 1 – record vote on tax rate
 - Wednesday, August 14 – 1st public hearing on tax increase (noon)
- September
 - Thursday, September 5 – 2nd public hearing on tax increase
 - Monday, September 16 – public hearing on budget; ratification of property tax increase; 1st reading of ordinances to adopt tax rate and budget – record vote taken (8:30 a.m.)
 - Thursday, September 19 – 2nd reading of ordinances to adopt the tax rate and budget – record vote taken

Fisher thanked the Council for always taking care of the employees and thanked everyone for their time in working on the budget. Fisher stated that Communication and Public Relations Manager Melinda Gordon would be informing the citizens via social media about the

budget and tax information. Fisher also stated that if any Councilmember has questions or concerns from the citizens, to please let staff know and they would help address them.

Human Resources Manager Susan Nienstedt gave everyone a handout regarding employee group medical coverage. Nienstedt explained that on June 24, 2019, staff met with the Audit Committee to discuss the results of the RFP process for employee coverage. Nienstedt advised that at that time, staff presented the recommendation of staying with TML Group Health Benefits Pool with significant savings. Nienstedt noted that the new coverage would be in effect as of October 1st.

The meeting was adjourned.

Milton Y. Tate, Jr.

Mayor

Kacey Weiss, TRMC

Deputy City Secretary



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