

**ROCKDALE CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING**

Present:**Councilmembers:**

John King, Mayor
Belinda Hillhouse
Lin Perry, Mayor Pro-Tem
Michelle Larkin (❖ remote)
Brett Boren
Denise Wallace

City Staff:

Barbara Holly, City Manager
Terry Blanchard, City Secretary
Roxanne Proudley, Finance Director
Jerald Brunson, Public Works Director
Jerry Meadors, Police Chief
Ben Blanchard, Planning Technician
Jim Gibson, MDD Executive Director

Absent:

Scott Starnes

Call to Order and announce a Quorum is Present

With a quorum of the Council members present, the Regular Meeting of the Rockdale City Council was called to order by Mayor King at 5:33 p.m., September 13, 2021, at City Hall, 505 W. Cameron Ave, Rockdale, Texas

Pledge of Allegiance**Citizen Communications**

Dr. Monzingo (RISD Superintendent) expressed a need for better communication between the City and the school. The school district needs immediate information when there are issues with the water or road closures. Chief Meadors spoke about the CodeRED system that is available for public notifications. Citizens need to sign up for notifications through Milam County.

5A. Consent Agenda Approvals:

1. Minutes of regular meeting on August 9, 2021
2. City bills paid
3. Investment report
4. Tax collection report
5. Fund report
6. Library Report
7. Municipal Court Report
8. Police Department Report
9. Code Enforcement Report – Police Dept
10. Building & Code Enforcement Report – Admin/Dev Svc
11. Animal Control Report
12. Public Works Department Reports
13. Hotel Tax Fund Report

MOTION: Upon a motion made by Councilmember Larkin and a second by Councilmember Perry, the Council voted five (5) for and none (0) opposed to approve the consent agenda as presented. Motion carried.

6A. Consider and take any necessary action on the first reading of an ordinance adopting the annual budget for the City of Rockdale beginning October 1, 2021 through September 30, 2022

MOTION BY RECORD VOTE: Upon a motion made by Councilmember Larkin and a second by Councilmember Wallace, the Council voted five (5) for and none (0) opposed to approve the ordinance as presented. Motion carried.

6B. Consider and take any necessary action on the first reading of an ordinance ratifying the property tax revenue increase reflected in the FY 2021-22 budget

MOTION BY RECORD VOTE: Upon a motion made by Councilmember Perry and a second by Councilmember Hillhouse, the Council voted five (5) for and none (0) opposed to approve the ordinance as presented. Motion carried.

- 6C. Consider and take any necessary action on the first reading of an ordinance for the levying of an Ad Valorem tax upon the real, personal and mixed properties in the City of Rockdale, Texas for the year 2021, an occupation tax equal to one half the state levy, and split payment option for payment**

MOTION BY RECORD VOTE: Upon a motion made by Councilmember Larkin and a second by Councilmember Perry, the Council voted five (5) for and none (0) opposed to approve the ordinance as presented, adopting the City of Rockdale 2021-22 ad valorem tax rate of \$0.9067 per \$100 assessed valuation, the debt service portion being \$0.2244 per \$100 assessed valuation and the maintenance and operations portion being \$0.6823 per \$100 assessed valuation. Motion carried.

- 6D. Consider and take any necessary action on the first reading of an ordinance amending the Appendix A of the City's Code of Ordinances, the Fee Schedule, Article A2.000 Utility Rates and Charges, by amending the fees charged for Section A2.002 Monthly Water and Wastewater Charges; amending and repealing conflicting ordinances; providing a severability clause; providing an effective date and an open meetings clause**

MOTION: Upon a motion made by Councilmember Perry and a second by Councilmember Hillhouse, the Council voted five (5) for and none (0) opposed to approve the ordinance as presented. Motion carried.

- 7A. Consider and take any necessary action on a resolution approving the appraisal roll taxable value of \$248,876,931 with tax levy of \$2,256,567 for the year 2021**

MOTION: Upon a motion made by Councilmember Larkin and a second by Councilmember Hillhouse, the Council voted five (5) for and none (0) opposed to approve the resolution as presented. Motion carried.

- 7B. Consider and take any necessary action on a resolution adopting the City of Rockdale Investment Policy and Strategies**

MOTION: Upon a motion made by Councilmember Hillhouse and a second by Councilmember Wallace, the Council voted five (5) for and none (0) opposed to approve the resolution as presented. Motion carried.

- 8A. Consider and take any necessary action on a request to speak before Council submitted by Herbert Vaughan, Fire Chief, regarding ambulance service and response**

Herbert Vaughan stated there are issues with long response times and no ambulances available. They are working with AMR on issues and making progress, but there is a long way to go. Councilmember Perry stated that the City needs to know ahead of time if there is an ambulance shortage for our area. Fire Chief Vaughan informed Council that Dr. House is working with the RVFD to assist in emergency situations.

Mayor King moved item 8J to allow for continued discussion regarding ambulance services.

- 8J. Receive a report from AMR and take any necessary action regarding ambulance service**

Byron Sedlacek with AMR explained that paramedic schools have been shut down due to COVID. This limits the number of available personnel and creates a staffing problem. AMR is proposing to use the following options to improve customer service: Nurse Navigator, TeleHealth, and a pay increase to attract/retain paramedics and EMTs.

MOTION: Upon a motion made by Councilmember Hillhouse and a second by Councilmember Larkin, the Council voted five (5) for and none (0) opposed to create a committee of representatives from the Police Department, Fire Department, Mayor, and City Manager to negotiate with AMR and Milam County Coalition for changes in the AMR contract. Motion carried.

- 8B. Consider and take any necessary action on a recommendation from the Planning & Zoning Commission for a short form subdivision request submitted by Jeffrey Springer for property located at David A. Thompson Survey, Abstract 398, being a part of a called 24.503 acre tract**

(Vol. 746, Pg. 375 – ORMCT) (property known as 1325 S Hwy 77 – Property ID 69592), Milam County, Texas into Lot 1 (2.080 acres)

Planning & Zoning recommends approval with modifications.

MOTION: Upon a motion made by Councilmember Perry and a second by Councilmember Boren, the Council voted five (5) for and none (0) opposed to approve the request pending requirements outlined by P&Z being met. Motion carried.

8C. Consider and take any necessary action on authorizing the city manager to make necessary transfers between funds to provide for a balanced budget for the 2020-21 fiscal year and to provide a report to Council regarding said transfers at the regular meeting in November

MOTION: Upon a motion made by Councilmember Larkin and a second by Councilmember Hillhouse, the Council voted five (5) for and none (0) opposed to authorize the city manager to make necessary transfers and report back to Council in November. Motion carried.

8D. Consider and take any necessary action to approve an Interlocal Agreement with the Rockdale MDD detailing employment duties and responsibilities for each entity

MOTION: Upon a motion made by Councilmember Larkin and a second by Councilmember Hillhouse, the Council voted five (5) for and none (0) opposed to approve the ILA as presented. Motion carried.

8E. Consider and take any necessary action on the process for proposal award of a Solid Waste Collection Services contract to begin January 1, 2022

Barbara Holly stated the site visits were made to each company that submitted a proposal. Texas Disposal had the best customer service reviews, the highest prices, and a 20% franchise fee. BIG/BVR had good customer service reviews, the lowest prices, and a 5% franchise fee. Waste Connection was mid-range on pricing. Councilmember Larkin was impressed with TDS having a designated representative to monitor and assist with troubleshooting for each city.

Company holidays were equal with Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day being their only official days off. BVR stated that they were negotiable on the franchise fee percentage and would go up to 20%. Since the franchise fees were not a specific item in the RFP, they used an average percentage with their proposal. Barbara Holly stated that award amount is budget neutral for the City. Any cost increases would be handled with a fee schedule amendment with increased costs passed along to the citizens. Councilmember Perry stated that the Council would be doing a disservice to the citizens if they selected the most expensive service when there was another viable option available.

MOTION: Upon a motion made by Councilmember Perry and a second by Councilmember Wallace, the Council voted four (4) for and one (1) opposed to accept terms and conditions with BVR to begin contract on January 1, 2022 and authorize the city manager to negotiate terms for open items. Voting for the motion were Hillhouse, Boren, Perry, and Wallace. Voting against was Larkin. Motion carried.

8F. Consider and take any necessary action on appointments to the Rockdale Municipal Development District Board of Directors

MOTION: Upon a motion made by Councilmember Hillhouse and a second by Councilmember Wallace, the Council voted five (5) for and none (0) opposed to appoint Allan Miller. Motion carried.

MOTION: Upon a motion made by Councilmember Hillhouse and a second by Councilmember Wallace, the Council voted four (4) for and one (1) opposed to reappoint John King. Voting for the motion were Hillhouse, Boren, Larkin, and Wallace. Voting against was Perry. Motion carried.

MOTION: Upon a motion made by Councilmember Perry and a second by Councilmember Boren, the Council voted two (2) for and three (3) opposed to appoint Paul Dixon. Voting for the motion were Boren and Perry. Voting against were Hillhouse, Larkin, and Wallace. Motion failed.

MOTION: Upon a motion made by Councilmember Perry and a second by Councilmember Boren, the Council voted two (2) for and three (3) opposed to appoint Carolyn Cooper. Voting for the motion were Boren and Perry. Voting against were Hillhouse, Larkin, and Wallace. Motion failed.

MOTION: Upon a motion made by Councilmember Hillhouse and a second by Councilmember Wallace, the Council voted five (5) for and none (0) opposed to postpone final nomination until the next meeting. Motion carried.

8G. Consider and take any necessary action regarding murals for City parks

MOTION: Upon a motion made by Councilmember Perry and a second by Councilmember Hillhouse, the Council voted five (5) for and none (0) opposed to approve the city manager's decision to allow a mural at Veteran's Park. Motion carried.

8H. Consider and take any necessary action on a recommendation from the city manager regarding a request submitted by the Rockdale Historical Society for funding from the Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT) fund to provide services as the Weekend Visitor Center for FY 2021-22

City manager Holly recommends delaying decision on this request until the Depot reopens. Item postponed.

8I. Consider and take any necessary action on a recommendation from the city manager regarding a Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT) fund request submitted by the Vision Historic Preservation Foundation for funding from the hotel occupancy tax fund for a music series of events to provide ongoing exposure of the 1895 Project and to cultivate an Arts & Entertainment District in Rockdale (event dates are December 2021; February 2022; and April 2022)


Curah Beard gave a brief summary. Since this is a new event, the city manager recommends funding the first event and reviewing the outcome prior to authorizing funds for future events. In a show of community support, BVR volunteered to donate \$8,000 for one of the music series events.

MOTION: Upon a motion made by Councilmember Hillhouse and a second by Councilmember Boren, the Council voted four (4) for and none (0) opposed with one (1) abstention to fund the first event in the amount of \$8,000 to be paid in advance. Councilmember Perry abstained. Motion carried.

Adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

These minutes approved on the 11th day of October, 2021.

ATTEST:



Terry Blanchard, TRMC
City Secretary

APPROVED:



John E. King, Mayor