

**BRYAN CITY COUNCIL
MINUTES OF WORKSHOP MEETING
AUGUST 4, 2015**

A workshop meeting of the Bryan City Council was held on Tuesday, August 4, 2015, in the Council Chambers of the Bryan Municipal Building, a notice of said meeting having been posted at least 72 hours in advance in accordance with Section 551, Texas Government Code. Mayor Jason Bienski and Councilmembers Rafael Peña, Greg Owens, Mike Southerland, Art Hughes and Chuck Konderla were present. Councilmember Al Saenz joined the meeting at 2:40 p.m. City Manager Kean Register, City Attorney Janis Hampton and City Secretary Mary Lynne Stratta were in attendance.

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 2:05 p.m.

2. PRESENTATION BY STAFF REGARDING PROPOSED FISCAL YEAR 2016 BUDGET AND TAX RATE UPDATE

Chief Finance Officer Joe Hegwood provided an update regarding the proposed Fiscal Year 2016 budget. He advised finalized property valuations had been received indicating a 6.1 percent increase over the previous year's property valuations. Of that, 2.9 percent represented new construction. He recommended maintaining the current tax rate of \$0.62999 per \$100 valuation. He advised the proposed budget had been revised to include the costs for one additional code enforcement position as requested by Council at the last proposed budget presentation. A discussion followed about the long range impact of adopting the effective tax rate (the tax rate needed to bring in the same amount of property tax revenue as the prior year) versus the current tax rate. Mr. Hegwood cautioned the adoption of the effective tax rate would have a substantial impact on the fund balance in subsequent years. Mr. Register advised the tax rate could be cut, but the City would not be able to complete many of the projects the Council had requested. He reminded Council that at the last budget workshop, he had indicated the plan was to spend down the reserve fund about \$5 million. He also cautioned that maintaining a healthy fund balance of around 100 days allowed the City to obtain better credit ratings from the rating agencies, resulting in lower interest rates on bonds sold for capital projects, thereby saving taxpayers money. Mr. Hegwood outlined the budget and tax rate calendars.

3. PRESENTATION BY STAFF REGARDING CODE OF ORDINANCES RELATIVE TO FIRE DETECTION

Fire Chief Randy McGregor and Fire Marshal Marc McFeron provided information about a request to study a possible ordinance to require central reporting smoke detectors in commercial buildings over a certain age. They provided information indicating this requirement would be very costly for the owners of older commercial structures. It was stated requiring all commercial buildings to have monitored fire alarms would require many costly upgrades to current businesses, adding the current code requires these devices based on occupancy, use and size. It was also reported no other city in Texas had this requirement. Chief McGregor then spoke about the changes implemented in departmental procedures and equipment upgrades since the Knights of Columbus Hall fire. Mr. Register reminded Council the City was hiring additional firefighters every year to bring staffing to four personnel per truck. He advised revenues would need to continue to exceed expenses in order to be able to complete this staffing increase within the fire department. Chief McGregor added that in terms of safety of fire personnel, increasing staffing to four per truck was the most important action.

4. PRESENTATION BY BRYAN-COLLEGE STATION CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU (CVB) REGARDING INCREASED FUNDING

CVB President Shannon Overby introduced members of the CVB Board and hotel operators that were present. She provided the mission and history of the CVB. She discussed the hotel occupancy tax (HOT) grant administration program. She also advised the CVB had begun a rebranding process. Mrs. Overby reported in calendar year 2015, hotel occupancy was down 13.1 percent, while revenue per available room was down 9.5 percent. She said hotel room supply was up 9.2 percent while demand was down 5.1 percent. She said more hotels had been built and the recent oil/gas boom was over. She advised total business was down and spread over more hotels. Mrs. Overby said the CVB was requesting a 101 percent increase in funding from the City of Bryan for the next fiscal year, from \$238,440 this fiscal year to a requested \$481,963. She said the CVB was planning a new marketing strategy for 2016 and was leading the charge with Easterwood Airport for marketing dollars to generate more air traffic and flights to more destinations. She advised they were requesting \$50,000 for Easterwood Airport advertising. Mrs. Overby then answered questions about House Bill 3629 and the use of HOT funds for new facilities and facility expansion. Mrs. Overby promised that in two years' time, the community would see an upswing in tourism dollars spent in the community. She reported the Texas Reds Festival does not apply through the HOT grant application since it may not meet the minimum room night requirement, but the CVB would be happy to have Texas Reds submit an application and the CVB assist with tracking room nights, if that was the Council's desire. Discussion followed about the difficulties in tracking festival goers' hotel stays versus conventions and events where the participants stay in identified room blocks. She said the CVB does advise inquirers about the availability of Coulter Airfield for private aircraft. Mrs. Overby reported Brazos County contributes \$25,000 per year to the CVB and College Station contributed \$1.3 million this year, with a request for \$1.9 million from College Station next fiscal year. The preferred access agreement with Texas A&M University was mentioned.

5. DISCUSSION REGARDING CONSENT/STATUTORY AGENDA ITEMS FOR REGULAR MEETING OF AUGUST 4, 2015

Council briefly discussed agenda items 11 b and 11 d of the consent/statutory agenda for the regular meeting of August 4, 2015. No action was taken.

6. ADJOURN

Without objection, the meeting adjourned at 3:42 p.m.

City Secretary Mary Lynne Stratta

Mayor Jason P. Bienski