

**MINUTES
ELGIN CITY COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING
TUESDAY, AUGUST 22, 2017
CITY ANNEX COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 310 NORTH MAIN STREET**

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Chris Cannon called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Chris Cannon, Mayor

Juan Gonzalez, Mayor Pro Tem

Susie Arreaga, Council Member

Jessica Bega, Council Member

Mary Penson, Council Member

Daniel Lopez, Council Member

Phillip Thomas, Council Member

Sue Brashar, Council Member

Neil Beyer, Council Member

Staff: Thomas L. Mattis, City Manager

Chris Bratton, Police Chief

Buck LaQuey, Finance Director

Barbara Wilson, Director

Doug Prinz, Utilities Director

Gary Cooke, Planning Director

Amy Miller, Community Development Director

Mayor Cannon stated all members were present and certified that there was a quorum.

INVOCATION

Council Member Thomas gave the invocation

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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PUBLIC COMMENT

Mayor Cannon opened the Public Comment at 7:02 p.m.

Lynn Cottle spoke and stated she had concerns regarding the motto “Elgin first”, which she likes, but stated that now there are jaunts going into Austin and doesn’t understand taking people out of Elgin to spend their money somewhere else. She stated these trips are free and that she felt that there should be a charge and the Friends of the Parks should be handling this and not the city departments. She stated she was also concerned with a freeze put on positions and those positions represent the security of this town. She stated that Elgin had the lowest pay in the area which is why we get Police Officers out of school and with no experience. She stated that in order to get the best and better pay the Council support was needed and recommended they all attend a Citizen’s Police Academy class which was very informative.

Joe Cottle spoke and stated his perspective was from a person who has served as a Police Officer at another Police Department as well as here in Elgin. He stated there were some good officers here who had served for a long time and that some of the problems with a small department like Elgin’s was that there was no way to advance so the only thing is to look forward to is that the city will give pay raises. He stated Elgin also had the best trained and educated department around in this area. He stated that now with the Chief of Police retiring there would be an opportunity to move people up inside the department. He asked that the Council just give some thought regarding people that have been here a long time.

With no one else wishing to speak, Mayor Cannon closed the Public Comment at 7:11 p.m.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Review and discussion of the proposed FY2017-18 City of Elgin Annual Budget as presented by the City Manager; including but not limited to the possible discussion of any and all city departments, staffing, services, programs, taxes, fees, utility rates, and funding related thereto.

City Manager Thomas Mattis stated that he had presented the budget at last week’s meeting giving everyone a chance to review it and that he had met with Council Member Arreaga to discuss some items but that he did not have a presentation tonight. He stated although this budget was proposed at maintaining the existing tax rate by our system by state law it amounts to what we have to describe a tax increase that sets us on a compliance path. He stated that if they voted tonight to support maintaining the existing tax rate, a vote would be needed tonight to authorize the process, and to take an ad in the paper that would say how everyone specifically voted. He stated that did not mean they were adopting the tax rate but that there is a sequence of hearings, and authorizing two public hearings are required.

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He stated that if they didn't adopt authorizing the Public Hearings tonight, there was still time to do so. If the hearings were authorized then it would be advertised in the paper and the first Public Hearing would be on the first regular meeting in September, the second on the 12th, with adoption on the 19th.

Mayor Cannon stated that after the budget presentation last week, this week was to have a discussion after giving everyone a chance to review the budget and opened up the floor for discussion on both items 1 and 2.

Mayor Pro Tem Gonzalez asked about the tax rate and how much was the city trying to raise by raising the taxes. City Manager Thomas Mattis answered that about \$400,000 is what we the city is gaining from the growth and re-valuation. Mayor Cannon stated that the city is not proposing to raise the rate. Mr. Mattis replied that yes they were keeping the rate the same, but the valuations went up, so it had to be declared as a tax increase because you are taking in more money under the law you have to say it is a tax increase. He stated that if a person's valuation did not change the city taxes would not go up, but the city tax always got lost in the mix with the school tax. Council Member Thomas stated that the city did that last year where they kept the tax rate the same but had to publish it as an increase because values went up.

Mayor Pro Tem Gonzalez asked about an item on page 12 regarding public safety. He stated that last year projected was \$5669 and this year is \$185,753 and asked what he was looking at. Mr. Mattis replied that was a case where track expenditures in a different way, the biggest part of that being salaries that go to fund school resource officers and he did not think that was a proper reflection of the city's expense to put that in operations. He stated he put that number to reflect what the city does for the ESD, schools and boot camp program and that he tried to make Police operations reflect that this is what the city is spending on law enforcement. He stated that last year expenditures were not tracked that way, which is why police operations look lower this year.

Council Member Arreaga asked if that was the case for the Library and Mr. Mattis replied that yes it was the same thing, reassignment of the costs, same staff same operation.

Council Member Penson asked if tonight they would be discussing the funding support for the Emergency Services. Mayor Cannon replied that yes, just the overall budget could be discussed. Council Member Penson stated that last year the Council did not agree to waive the \$34,500 and she would like to see that it was not waived this year either. Council Member Brashar stated that they are the Emergency Services District, the city dispatches for them and they get revenue from our taxes and part of the money they get from the taxes should fund the position. Council Member Thomas stated that long term as the city continues to grow at some point there is going to be somewhat of a merger with the Fire Department and the city needed to think about how that

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could be as smooth of a transition as possible. He stated that \$34,000 in the great scheme of things was not a huge amount and maybe in doing that discussion was needed in their responsibilities that they have with traffic because those are things the city has to have, and as the city grows the city will have to pay more for things like that. Mayor Cannons stated that was how he looked at it and that it would be a credit taken out of the budget, and if passed the city wouldn't be getting that money but there still would be a charge for dispatching and then zeroed out.

Council Member Penson moved to direct staff to not waive the \$34,500. to the city from the ESD. Council Member Brashar seconds the motion. Council Member Penson votes yes, Council Member Bega votes yes, Council Member Lopez votes yes, Council Member Thomas votes no, Council Member Beyer votes yes, Council Member Brashar votes yes, Council Member Arreaga votes yes, Mayor Pro Tem votes no, Mayor Cannon votes no. Motion carried 6-3.

Council Member Bega stated she wanted to acknowledge the speakers from tonight's Citizen's Comments period supporting advancement in the Police Department. She stated she also wanted to say that this year would be a little different because the city was in conservative mode. She stated that regarding the police operations there were a number of positions to fill as she understood it, with someone responding that there was two positions. She stated that unlike last year they were not looking to recommend creating new positions she wanted confirmation on that. She stated she supported the idea of promoting from within not only in Police but staff as well and maybe next year the city would be in a better situation and might be a fair assessment of where staff is across the board.

2. Consider authorization for advertisement of the proposed ad valorem tax rate for the City of Elgin for the FY17-18 Annual Budget of \$.656916/\$100

Council Member Brashar moved to authorize advertisement of the ad valorem tax rate for the fiscal year 17-18 of \$.656916/\$100 valuation. Council Member Penson seconds the motion. Council Member Brashar votes yes, Council Member Arreaga votes yes, Mayor Pro Tem Gonzalez vote yes, Mayor Cannon votes yes, Council Member Penson votes yes, Council Member Bega votes yes, Council Member Lopez votes yes, Council Member Thomas votes yes, Council Member Beyer votes yes. Motion carried unanimously 9-0.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

City Manager Thomas Mattis asked if another meeting would be needed before the September 6th meeting and it was decided to have a meeting on the 12th and 19th.

He also reminded everyone about the TML Conference and that the City Secretary would rsvp to any invitations that came to the city.

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He updated the Council on the Flea Market issue and stated he met with Ms. Krebs and with the Friends of the Library. He stated he thought that an agreement would be on the September 5th agenda.

Chef Bratton reminded everyone about the hurricane building strength and we could get a lot of rain and asked that everyone be careful this weekend.

Mayor Cannon announced that Bastrop County wanted to hold a county wide voter registration drive with the City of Smithville participating and asked Elgin to participate.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Cannon adjourned the City Council meeting at 8:20 p.m.

APPROVED



CHRIS CANNON, MAYOR

ATTEST:



AMELIA SANCHEZ

City Secretary