



STATE OF TEXAS
COUNTY OF FORT BEND
CITY OF RICHMOND

The City Commission for the City of Richmond, Texas met in Special Session at 600 Morton Street on August 24, 2021, at 4:30 p.m.

Mayor Becky Haas proceeded to call the meeting to order at 4:31p.m. The meeting was broadcast via video conference call. All members of the public may participate in the meeting and via video conference call.

A quorum was present, with the following members in attendance:

Becky Haas, Mayor
Terry Gaul, Commissioner P1
Barry Beard, Commissioner P2
Carl Drozd, Commissioner P3
Alex BeMent, Commissioner P4
Terri Vela, City Manager
Howard Christian, Assistant City Manager "ACM"
Gary Smith, City Attorney
Laura Scarlato, City Secretary

Agenda item A2, Public Comments were opened and there were no citizens signed up to speak therefore the agenda item was closed.

Agenda item A3, Review and consider taking action on Ordinance No. 2021-17, Amending Water, Sewer, Surface Water Rates and Solid Waste Charges. City Manager Terri Vela introduced the item and reviewed the proposed increase in rates for Water at 5%, Wastewater at 5% and the Surface Water at 11%. These rates are trending behind what was recommended by a study a few years ago. The City is recommending these increases to pursue being in line with where the rates need to be. Commissioner Beard stated the rates should be reviewed on an annual basis. Commissioner Gaul made the motion to approve Ordinance No. 2021-17, repealing City of Richmond Ordinance No. 2019-13; Establishing Water, Wastewater, Surface Water and Solid Waste service rates for the City of Richmond, and ordering other matters relative to rendering Water, Wastewater, Surface Water, and Solid Waste Service; Providing a Repealer Clause; Providing a severability clause, and providing an effective date. Commissioner Beard seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimous.

Agenda item A4, Review and discuss Fire Protection Fee Analysis. Finance Director Justin Alderete addressed this agenda item that was requested by Commissioner Gaul.

The cost-of-service analysis was performed to determine if the City was equitably recovering cost for fire protection services provided to MUDs within Richmond's ETJ. Staff normalized the costs using equivalent single-family connections as the basis to perform the comparative analysis. Two conclusions were reached: (1) the in-city customer pays more for fire protection services than the District customer based on the method of calculation and (2) The County now pays \$350,000 for fire protection services provided by Richmond in unincorporated areas, a number that has declined significantly in recent years. Commissioner Beard mentioned the need for a ladder truck that is necessary to serve the County buildings and other additional costs. Finance Director Alderete stated the new developments within the City were projected with expected units of 1,005, but these are already reflected in the analysis. Commissioner Drozd inquired if the "in-kind" or mutual aid was captured in the study to which the response was no. Commissioner Gaul inquired if there is a period for renegotiation of the agreements to which it was stated the Districts can always be approached. There was a lengthy discussion of the per month cost of service for the City and the Districts and what affects that rate moving up and/or down. Commissioner Gaul requested that additional work be performed to (1) identify which MUDs are paying a disproportionately low fee, and which agreements offer the most room to improve fee consistency, (2) determine what the County's "fair share" is for the fire protection services they receive from Richmond, and (3) provide the Commission with a recommended strategy to improve consistency in the fees paid by parties outside the City for fire protection services provided by Richmond.

Agenda A5. Review and discuss FY 2021-22 Annual Budget Workshop to discuss any changes to the Budget. Finance Director Alderete provided the background stating an extensive salary survey was completed. The employees are the City's No. 1 asset and strives to provide competitive wages which allows the City to attract a quality workforce. The Fire Department needs to replace a fire apparatus which requires an 18-month lead time to design and build. These costs will be included in the future debt issue for developer reimbursement as values come onto the tax roll. There was a discussion of the amount of funds citizens are protesting for their property values and when it can be expected to have those adjusted totals. Commissioner Gaul stated that the entire property value is reflected in the total when only a portion is being protested. City Manager Vela added additional comments regarding the salary survey. Job descriptions were reviewed and positions that were growth limited. Commissioner Beard stated that a culture has been created that people like to work for the City, and it can be attributed to the City Manager. Commissioner Drozd stated as the City grows, and technology changes positions may be shifted around which needs to be planned for. City Manager Vela described the procedure of how the budget process is implemented. Meetings are held with each department head to determine the needs and the final review is with the Finance Director and City Manager. The City currently has 179 full time employees. A budget amendment, if needed is built into the process. No action was taken for this item.

Mayor Haas stated the Subsidence District is unfair, nonfunded mandate on the City. This is another layer of government attached to the City providing no advantage to anyone except the Fort Bend Subsidence District. This opened up a conversation which concerns the Mayor and Commissioners. City Manager Vela stated that the District is one of two in world, and it is unfair to the City when the science has not been provided to back up the mandate. Commissioner Beard and BeMent stated the City should join forces with other cities and push back. Commissioner Gaul inquired as to other cities that are not part of the District. City Manager Vela stated the City would need to find a water source in 2023-2024. Currently the City has been creative in managing the requirements with take or pay agreements with the City reselling the water. All agreed, a united push back would be the favorable route.

Before the meeting was adjourned, City Manager provided the total amount under review with the appraisal district being \$14.707 million in response to an earlier question.

A6. Adjournment.

With no further business to discuss, Mayor Haas declared the meeting adjourned at 5:32 p.m.

APPROVED:



Rebecca K. Haas, Mayor

Attest:

Laura Scarlato, City Secretary