

**RICHLAND HILLS CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
AUGUST 26, 2024
MINUTES**

Roll Call:

Council present

Curtis Bergthold, Mayor
Douglas Knowlton, Mayor Pro Tem
Travis Malone, Place 2
Theresa Bledsoe, Place 3
John Skier, Place 4
G.W. Estep, Place 5
Roland Goveas, Place 6

Council absent

Staff present

Candice Edmondson, City Manager
Lindsay Rawlinson, City Secretary
James Donovan, City Attorney

CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION – 5:01 PM

1. **Executive Session:** Pursuant to the Open Meetings Act, Chapter 551, Texas Government Code, Sections 551.071, 551.072, 551.073, 551.074, 551.076, 551.087, 418.183(f) and 418.106(d) & (e). Executive Session may be held, under these exceptions, at any time during the meeting that a need arises for the City Council to seek advice from the City Attorney as to the posted subject matter of this City Council meeting.

None.

2. **FY 2025 Budget Overview: Special Revenue Funds**

City Manager Candice Edmondson presented an overview of the Special Revenue and Debt Service Funds FY 2025 proposed budgets. She advised that the proposed budget is based on an ad valorem tax rate of \$0.518879, which is a 0.73 percent reduction from FY 2024, and includes a proposed three percent pay increase for civilian personnel and a market salary adjustment for public safety personnel. Debt Service is supported by ad valorem taxes.

Ms. Edmondson also provided a listing of Special Revenue Funds including the Court Security Fund, Court Technology Fund, Crime Control and Prevention District Fund, Richland Hills Development Corporation Fund, Oil and Gas Fund, Hotel Occupancy Tax Fund, Capital Improvement Projects Fund, Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Fund, Street Improvement Fund, Vehicle Replacement Fund, Keep Richland Hills Beautiful Fund, Link

Replacement Fund, American Rescue Plan Fund, Emergency Management Fund, and the Strategic Initiative Fund. She advised of the purpose of each fund and projects within the funds included for FY 2025.

Discussion ensued regarding the overall cost of the Glenview Corridor project including the approximately six million dollars in funding from Tarrant County as well as the replacement of the gym floor at The Link.

3. Discuss items listed on tonight's City Council agenda. No action will be taken and each item will be considered during the Regular Session.

7A. Street Improvement Projects

Director of Public Works and Capital Projects Kip Dernovich presented the street improvement projects update and advised that Quality Construction began work on the stormwater portion of the Magnolia Park project on July 22, 2024. Additionally, he advised that illuminated street signs have been approved by TxDOT and installation is expected to be completed by the second week of October 2024.

7B. July Department Reports

Director of Public Works and Capital Projects Kip Dernovich presented the Public Works Department update and advised of issues including the approval of illuminated street signs, 4,950 feet of sewer line cleaned, and 66 potholes were repaired.

Mayor Bergthold adjourned the work session at 6:56 p.m.

REGULAR SESSION – Mayor Bergthold Called to Order – Time 7:01 p.m.

INVOCATION AND PLEDGES OF ALLEGIANCE – Mayor Bergthold

PRESENTATIONS

1A. Employee Service Award

City Manager Candice Edmondson announced the employee service award and expressed congratulations to the following employee on reaching an employment milestone with the City of Richland Hills:

10 Years of Service

Fire Engineer Michael Ferguson

1B. National Payroll Week Proclamation

Mayor Bergthold read a proclamation declaring the week of Labor Day 2024 as “National Payroll Week” in Richland Hills and presented it to City Manager Candice Edmondson.

Both patients received continuing care during transport to the hospital until care was transferred to the hospital staff. Chief Shelley presented A Shift personnel with an award for safely delivering the healthy baby boy.

1C. National Library Card Sign-Up Month Proclamation

Mayor Bergthold read a proclamation declaring September 2024 as “Library Card Sign-Up Month” in Richland Hills and presented it to Library Director Chantele Hancock.

1D. Citizen Appearances/Public Comments

None.

CONSENT AGENDA

2A. Approved minutes from the August 12, 2024 City Council Regular Meeting

2B. Approved Ordinance 1506-24 approving and adopting an amended budget for FY 2024 authorizing an expenditure of \$62,650 to Sunbelt Pools for repair of the Link water feature

2C. Excused the absence of Councilmember Roland Goveas from the August 12, 2024 regular City Council meeting

Motion: Motion was made by Councilmember Malone and seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Knowlton to approve the consent agenda.

Motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

PUBLIC HEARINGS, MEETINGS, AND OTHER RELATED ITEMS

3. None.

ORDINANCES & RESOLUTIONS AND OTHER RELATED ITEMS

4A. Approved Ordinance 1507-24 amending the Municipal Fee Schedule

City Manager Candice Edmondson presented the item to the City Council and advised that Ordinance 1507-24 amends the City’s Municipal Fee Schedule and reviewed the proposed changes. She advised of amended building permit fees, Link membership fees, as well as several fees related to animal services such as vaccination fees, impoundment fees, and sterilization fees.

Motion: Motion was made by Councilmember Goveas and seconded by Councilmember Estep to approve Ordinance 1507-24 amending the Municipal Fee Schedule

Motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

CONTRACTS, AGREEMENTS, BID AWARDS AND OTHER RELATED ITEMS

5. None.

OTHER ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

6A. Approved and adopted the FY 2025 General Government and Public Safety Pay Plans

City Manager Candice Edmondson advised that per the City's adopted Employee Compensation Plan, a market salary survey is to be conducted every two years and the City completed a full market survey in February 2023.

Last year, several of Richland Hills' market cities made adjustments to public safety pay causing compensation for Richland Hills police and fire personnel to fall below the adopted 90 percent market average (40th percentile). Thus, the City completed a market survey this summer focused on public safety compensation. The recommended adjustments to keep all positions at 90 percent market average have been included in the proposed FY 2025 Budget.

The market salary survey adjustments to keep public safety positions at 90 percent market average totaled approximately \$297,891 split between the General Fund and Crime Control Prevention District Funds. Even with some of the pay grade changes on the general government pay plan, those employees remained within range, so no salary adjustments were needed. Both public safety and general government employees have been recommended to receive a 3 percent cost of living adjustment. All market salary and cost of living adjustments are included in the proposed FY 2025 Budget.

Motion: Motion was made by Councilmember Goveas and seconded by Councilmember Estep to approve and adopt the FY 2025 General Government and Public Safety Pay Plans.

Motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

REPORTS & DISCUSSIONS

7A. Street Improvement Projects

Item was discussed during the work session.

7B. July Department Reports

Item was discussed during the work session.

Library Director Chantele Hancock presented the July Library report and presented the Summer Reading Program recap and advised that 125 people participated. Additionally, she discussed several summer programs including The Shark Guy, The Creature Teacher, and Pirates: History vs. Hollywood.

Fire Chief Russell Shelley presented the July Fire Department report and advised of education and training completed by staff and the Joint Police/Fire Honor Guard is making good progress.

7C. Richland Hills EMS Transport Discussion

Fire Chief Russell Shelley presented the item to the City Council and advised of the history of Richland Hills Fire Rescue which began providing ambulance transport services to the community in the early 1970s. In December 2022, the City began the current transport model in partnership with Medstar. This model allows the Richland Hills owned ambulance to be operated when a shift is fully staffed with five people. Medstar became the primary transport ambulance anytime staffing levels dropped below five people which occurs approximately 40 to 50 percent of the month. The fire engine is always staffed with at least three personnel and serves as a first response unit with paramedic level care.

Medstar was formed as a pseudo governmental agency from an EMS Ordinance in cooperation with the City of Fort Worth and has been serving Fort Worth and surrounding cities since 1986. Medstar operated in a surplus status until FY2020 when issues such as COVID-19 and subsidies received changed. Fort Worth expressed concern following a request by Medstar in 2023 for a \$4.2 million subsidy to sustain day to day operations and formed an Ad Hoc Committee to evaluate the entire EMS program in Fort Worth.

In May 2024, the Fort Worth City Council voted to withdraw from the Medstar system and take responsibility for EMS transport. Member cities of the Medstar system were invited to move to Fort Worth for EMS transport with proportional subsidies based on usage. All current member cities have confirmed or tentatively committed to move with Fort Worth away from Medstar and the proposed transition date from Medstar to Fort Worth EMS is July 1, 2025.

Chief Shelley further explained the new proposed system and advised that the Fort Worth Fire Department would take responsibility and administer the new Fort Worth EMS program. Fort Worth currently constitutes nearly 91 percent of the overall system usage and the remaining costs would be shared proportionally by the member cities.

Chief Shelley presented the City Council with two ambulance transport models for consideration. The first option presented was to hire additional staff to allow six firefighters

per shift with five personnel minimum on duty at all times and bring EMS and ambulance transport fully in-house.

The second option presented was to decrease shift staffing to four personnel per shift with three personnel minimum on duty at all times and outsource EMS transports to the City of Fort Worth EMS. An EMS Coordinator/Community Paramedic and Fire Inspector/Investigator positions would be created.

Chief Shelley presented the pros and cons for each option and the overall cost to the City to implement each option.

Discussion ensued regarding each option.

COMMUNITY INTEREST ITEMS

8. Councilmember Estep advised of several upcoming events:

- Friday, August 30, 2024, Color Your Own Book Bag, Public Library, 6:00 p.m.;
- Saturday, August 31, 2024, Cupcakes and Coffee with the Mayor, The Cake Supply Store, 10:00 a.m. to noon;
- Thursday, September 5, 2024, Citizens Police Academy, Police Department;
- Thursday, September 12, 2024,
 - Senior Lunch Bunch and Bingo, The Link, 12:00 to 2:00 p.m.;
 - Tarrant County Food Pantry, The Link parking lot, 5:30 to 7:00 p.m.; and
- Friday, September 20, 2024, Fiesta de Herencia, The Link Plaza, 6:00 to 9:00 p.m.;
- Every Thursday, Coffee Talk, Public Library, 10:00 to 11:30 a.m.

Mayor Pro Tem Knowlton asked for prayers for Councilmember Estep's wife, Lisa.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

9. **Executive Session:** Pursuant to the Open Meetings Act, Chapter 551, Texas Government Code, Sec. 551.071, Sec. 551.072, Sec. 551.073, Sec. 551.074, Sec. 551.076, Sec. 551.087 and Sec. 418.0183 (f) and 418.106 (d) & (e) of the Texas Government Code (Texas Disaster Act).

ADJOURNMENT

10. There being no further business to come before the City Council, Mayor Bergthold declared the meeting adjourned at 8:46 p.m.

ATTEST:

APPROVED:

Lindsay Rawlinson, City Secretary

Curtis Bergthold, Mayor