

**RICHLAND HILLS CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
SEPTEMBER 23, 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.
 1. Section 551.074: Deliberation regarding Personnel Matters
 - a) Board and Commission Appointments

Motion: Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Knowlton and seconded by Councilmember Skier to adjourn into Executive Session at 6:04 p.m.

Motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

Mayor Bergthold reconvened into open session at 6:18 p.m. with no action taken.

2. 75th Anniversary Committee Update

75th Anniversary Committee Member Jennifer Hartzke provided a brief overview of the timeline, objectives, and goals of the Committee and stated that the Richland Hills 75th Anniversary will be honored through signage, activities, events and celebrations in 2025. The objective is to celebrate and shine a light on the history, community and people of Richland Hills and the culminating celebration will be held September 27, 2025.

- 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 illuminated street signs have been approved by TxDOT and installation is expected to be completed by the second week of October 2024. He provided additional updates regarding fencing installed and pothole repairs.

Mayor Bergthold adjourned the work session at 6:51 p.m.

REGULAR SESSION – Mayor Bergthold Called to Order – Time 7:00 p.m.

INVOCATION AND PLEDGES OF ALLEGIANCE – Citizen Ray Stilwell

PRESENTATIONS

1A. Texas Night Out Proclamation

Mayor Bergthold read a proclamation declaring Tuesday, October 1, 2024 as "Texas Night Out" in Richland Hills and presented it to Assistant City Manager/Police Chief Kimberly Sylvester.

Chief Sylvester presented an overview of block parties planned throughout the City.

1B. Code Compliance Month Proclamation

Mayor Bergthold read a proclamation declaring October 2024 as "Code Compliance Month" in Richland Hills and presented it to Community Compliance Manager Kay Fisk.

1C. National Community Planning Month Proclamation

Mayor Bergthold read a proclamation declaring October 2024 as "National Community Planning Month" in Richland Hills and presented it to Director of Planning and Development Services JP Ducay.

1D. Fire Prevention Week Proclamation

Mayor Bergthold read a proclamation declaring October 6 – 12, 2024 as "Fire Prevention Week" in Richland Hills and presented it to Fire Chief Russell Shelley.

1D. Citizen Appearances/Public Comments

Rusty Craine, 2918 Elm Park Drive, Richland Hills, requested assistance from citizens to find the oldest pecan tree in Richland Hills.

Jared Henry, JJ's Hotdogs, 7206 Latham Drive, Richland Hills, expressed his appreciation to the City Council and residents for their support of his business located at City Marketplace.

George Simba, 6601 Reeves Street, Richland Hills, expressed concern regarding the City changing and neighbors not knowing each other as well. He requested the Code Compliance Department reach out to renters in the community who may not be aware of laws regarding keeping their property maintained.

CONSENT AGENDA

2A. Approved minutes from the September 9, 2024 City Council Regular Meeting

2B. Excused the absence of Councilmember Roland Goveas from the September 9, 2024 regular City Council meeting

2C. Approved an Interlocal Agreement with the cities of Richland Hills, North Richland Hills and Watauga establishing the terms of the Northeast Tarrant Teen Court (NETTC) for a two-year term beginning October 1, 2024

2D. Approved Resolution 604-24 approving the City of Richland Hills Investment Policy and Investment Strategies

Motion: Motion was made by Councilmember Malone and seconded by Councilmember Skier to approve the consent agenda.

Motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

PUBLIC HEARINGS, MEETINGS, AND OTHER RELATED ITEMS

3A. Approved Ordinance 1508-24 approving and adopting an amended budget for Fiscal Year 2024 PUBLIC HEARING

City Manager Candice Edmondson advised that on September 25, 2023, the City Council adopted the Fiscal Year 2023-2024 (FY 2024) Budget. During FY 2024, there were revenue and expenditure/transfer items that occurred that necessitate an amendment to the total budgeted General Fund, Utility Fund, Capital Projects Fund, Vehicle Replacement Fund, and Crime Control Prevention District Fund revenues and expenditures/transfers and the Hotel Occupancy Tax Fund revenues. In the Drainage Utility Fund, Richland Hills Development Corporation Fund, and Strategic Initiative Fund

there is no change to the total adopted budget only revisions within fund line-item budget amounts. The Exhibit in Ordinance 1508-24 details every amendment.

Mayor Bergthold opened the public hearing at 7:29 p.m. and asked to hear from any proponents followed by opponents of the budget.

Hearing none, Mayor Bergthold closed the public hearing at 7:29 p.m.

Motion: Motion was made by Councilmember Estep and seconded by Councilmember Goveas to approve Ordinance 1508-24 approving and adopting an amended budget for Fiscal Year 2024.

Motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

ORDINANCES & RESOLUTIONS AND OTHER RELATED ITEMS

4A. Approved Ordinance 1509-24 approving and adopting the Fiscal Year 2025 Budget and Multi-Year Capital Improvement Program

City Manager Candice Edmondson presented the item to the City Council and advised that the budget summarizes the plan of municipal operations and capital projects for the fiscal year that begins October 1, 2024. The proposed budget was presented in detail during City Council Work Sessions on August 12 and August 26, and a public hearing was held on September 9, 2024. The proposed budget consists of 19 different funds. The FY 2025 Budget includes estimated revenues at \$25,650,591 and expenditures (including transfers) of \$29,311,414, which is a 0.04 percent decrease in revenues and a 3.63 percent decrease in expenditures over the FY 2024 Adopted Budget. The FY 2025 budget is based off a recommended tax rate of \$0.522689 which is \$0.00381 cents lower than the current tax rate.

The proposed FY 2025 Budget includes funding for Council and resident priorities identified in the citizen survey, strategic plan and previous budget discussions. Those priorities include:

- Updated Comprehensive Plan
- Grant research & writing
- Continued website enhancements
- Street improvements
- Retain high quality workforce
- Infrastructure improvements & maintenance
- Link maintenance/enhancements
- Project management (contract services)
- City park and open space enhancements

Motion: Motion was made by Councilmember Goveas and seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Knowlton to approve Ordinance 1509-24 approving and adopting the Fiscal Year 2025 Budget and Multi-Year Capital Improvement Program.

Motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

4B. Approved Ordinance 1510-24 setting and approving the Fiscal Year 2025 Tax Rate

City Manager Candice Edmondson advised that at the August 12, 2024 Council meeting, she presented the proposed FY 2025 General Fund Budget that included a proposed ad valorem tax rate of \$0.518879 per hundred dollars of valuation. Additionally, Council approved the Fiscal Year 2025 /Tax Year 2024 Certified Tax Roll and reviewed the 2024 Tax Rate Calculation Worksheet. Per the 2024 Tax Rate Calculation Worksheet, the calculated No-New-Revenue Rate (formerly known as the Effective Tax Rate) is \$0.514251/\$100.

As the proposed tax rate of \$0.518879 is greater than the No-New-Revenue Rate of \$0.514251, a public hearing was required prior to tax rate adoption. The tax rate public hearing was held on September 9, 2024.

The proposed FY 2025 ad valorem tax rate is lower than the current FY 2024 ad valorem tax rate of \$0.522689 by \$0.00381 cents. The FY 2025 allocation of the tax rate is \$0.349414 for Operations and Maintenance that funds General Fund operations and \$0.157236 for Interest and Sinking that funds debt service payments, for a total ad valorem tax rate of \$0.518879.

Motion: Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Knowlton and seconded by Councilmember Skier to approve Ordinance 1510-24 and that the property tax rate be increased by the adoption of a tax rate of \$0.518879 which is effectively a 0.9% increase in the tax rate.

Motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

CONTRACTS, AGREEMENTS, BID AWARDS AND OTHER RELATED ITEMS

5A. Approved contract renewal with Nico's Landscape LLC for citywide landscape services in the amount of \$205,737 and authorize City Manager to sign contract

Director of Parks and Recreation Eric Valdez presented the item to the City Council and advised that in September 2023, the City Council approved a contract with Nico's Landscape LLC for landscaping services throughout the City.

The initial contract terms were for 12 months with the option to extend the contract for up to an additional four one-year renewals. This action would serve as the first of four possible renewals.

Discussion ensued regarding overall landscape maintenance and replacing trees.

Motion: Motion was made by Councilmember Malone and seconded by Councilmember Goveas to approve contract renewal for citywide landscape services for an additional year with Nico's Landscape LLC in the amount of \$205,737 and authorize City Manager to sign contract.

Motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

5B. Approved bid award to JAN-PRO of Dallas/Fort Worth for janitorial services at city facilities in the amount of \$100,000 and authorize City Manager to sign contract

Fire Chief Russell Shelley presented the item to the City Council and advised that a Request for Proposal was issued for janitorial services at City facilities. A bid opening was held August 27, 2024, with 11 companies submitting bids. JAN-PRO of Dallas/Fort Worth was identified as the recommended vendor to provide these services in FY 2025. The included services cover all necessary cleaning for daily operations and events hosted at The Link, cleaning at the Animal Services Center, and nightly cleaning at City Hall. City facilities not serviced by JAN-PRO will be serviced by the city's custodian. JAN-PRO also provided rates for periodic special cleaning services such as carpet cleaning, tile floor scrubbing, disinfecting and day porter services.

Staff recommends awarding the contract for \$100,000 to include the quoted bid amount of \$82,388 to provide regular cleaning services at The Link, Animal Services Center and City Hall as well as funding for special cleaning and day porter services as needed.

Motion: Motion was made by Councilmember Malone and seconded by Councilmember Goveas to approve bid award to JAN-PRO of Dallas/Fort Worth for janitorial services at city facilities in the amount of \$100,000 and authorize City Manager to sign contract.

The vote was as follows:

For: Mayor Bergthold, Mayor Pro Tem Knowlton, and
Councilmembers Malone, Skier, Estep and Goveas
Against: Councilmember Bledsoe

Motion carried by a vote of 6-1.

OTHER ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**6A. Ratified vote approving the Fiscal Year 2025 Budget and Tax Rate**

City Manager Candice Edmondson advised that per Texas Government Code Section 102.007(c), the City Council is required to ratify the vote adopting the FY 2025 Budget since it will raise more revenue from property taxes than the previous year. Under this item, City Council will vote to ratify the property tax increase reflected in the budget.

Motion: Motion was made by Councilmember Skier and seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Knowlton to ratify the vote approving the Fiscal Year 2025 Budget and Tax Rate

Motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

6B. Approved ambulance transport options for future Richland Hills EMS service

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.

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 indicated they intend to join the Fort Worth EMS system beginning July 1, 2025.

With the dissolution of Medstar Mobile Healthcare, Richland Hills will no longer have a mutual aid agreement for back-up ambulance transport services. The City continues to face staffing challenges making it more difficult to keep five personnel on duty, which is required to operate both the ambulance and fire engine. To effectively run an ambulance transport service, the City of Richland Hills will need to consider hiring additional firefighters/paramedics or partner with an agency for ambulance transport.

In August, staff presented two ambulance transport options for the City Council to consider. The first option was to increase Fire Department staffing by one person per shift (three total personnel) to always staff the Fire Department ambulance with two qualified personnel. The second option was to eliminate the Fire Department ambulance service and enter into an agreement with the City of Fort Worth to provide ambulance transport service. The second model also includes transitioning two current positions into new roles within Fire Administration and eliminating a currently vacant firefighter position.

The two altered positions would provide enhanced community paramedic and fire inspection services to the Richland Hills community.

The cost to hire three additional employees in the Fire Department with all equipment, uniforms, etc. is approximately \$325,000. The cost to contract with the City of Fort Worth for ambulance transport is \$27,786 for the last quarter of FY 2025 (July – September). The cost to make the interim transition to Medstar Mobile Healthcare is \$8,000 per month. The anticipated fee Richland Hills would pay to participate in the Fort Worth EMS system in FY 2026 is \$129,541.

Discussion ensued regarding the merits and feasibility of both options.

Motion: Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Knowlton and seconded by Councilmember Bledsoe to hire three additional firefighters/paramedics to fully staff the Fire Department ambulance.

The vote was as follows:

For: Mayor Pro Tem Knowlton and Councilmember Bledsoe

Against: Mayor Bergthold, Councilmembers Malone, Skier, Estep and Goveas

Motion failed with a vote of 2-5.

Motion: Motion was made by Councilmember Goveas and seconded by Councilmember Estep to begin the process to transition ambulance transport to the Medstar and Fort Worth EMS systems.

The vote was as follows:

For: Mayor Bergthold, Councilmembers Malone, Skier, Estep and Goveas

Against: Mayor Pro Tem Knowlton and Councilmember Bledsoe

Motion passed by a vote of 5-2.

6C. Approved appointments to Boards and Commissions

City Secretary Lindsay Rawlinson advised that in accordance with Chapter 10 of the Richland Hills Code of Ordinances, the City Council shall review and make appointments to the City's boards and commissions in September with two-year terms to commence beginning in October.

Four of the City's boards have places with terms expiring in 2024: Animal Shelter Advisory Board, Planning and Zoning Commission, Richland Hills Development Corporation, and Zoning Board of Adjustment.

Motion: Motion was made by Councilmember Estep and seconded by Councilmember Goveas to make the following appointments to the City's boards and commissions for a two-year term:

Name	Board	Place
Victoria Sutherland	Animal Shelter Advisory Board	2
Lee Turnage	Animal Shelter Advisory Board	4
Jenny Clark	Animal Shelter Advisory Board	Alternate 1
Michael Wilson, Chair	Planning and Zoning Commission	2
Mary Witt	Planning and Zoning Commission	4
Keith Albee	Planning and Zoning Commission	Alternate 1
Ray Stilwell	Planning and Zoning Commission	Alternate 2
Curtis Bergthold, Chair	Richland Hills Development Corporation	1
Travis Malone	Richland Hills Development Corporation	2
GW Estep	Richland Hills Development Corporation	3
Douglas Knowlton	Richland Hills Development Corporation	4
Allison Barger	Richland Hills Development Corporation	5
Ray Stilwell	Richland Hills Development Corporation	6
Jorge Cisneros	Richland Hills Development Corporation	7
Jorge Cisneros	Zoning Board of Adjustment	1
Edward Lopez	Zoning Board of Adjustment	2
Ashly Schilling	Zoning Board of Adjustment	3
Donald Acker, Chair	Zoning Board of Adjustment	4
Lisa Skier	Zoning Board of Adjustment	5
Joyce Fiaccone	Zoning Board of Adjustment	Alternate 1
Melissa Scheuttig	Zoning Board of Adjustment	Alternate 2
Mike Witt	Zoning Board of Adjustment	Alternate 3
Rachel Konopka	Zoning Board of Adjustment	Alternate 4

Motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

REPORTS & DISCUSSIONS

7A. Street Improvement Projects

Item was discussed during the work session.

7B. Baker Landing Parking Discussion

Director of Planning and Development Services JP Ducay presented the item to the City Council and advised the residents of the Baker Landing housing development have expressed frustration regarding the development's parking availability. The final approved plans provided 69 single-family residential lots, 45 of the lots offering three parking spots

(one car garage and two car driveways) and the remaining 24 lots offering four parking spots (two car garage and two car driveways). Although each lot offers a minimum of three parking spots, there are no alternative parking options for guests and/or owners with additional vehicles. Additionally, the interior streets within the development are all considered fire lanes and no on-street parking is allowed. According to DR Horton, roughly 90 percent of the residences built have been sold and more than 50 residences are already occupied.

In July 2024, staff began receiving complaints from residents regarding the lack of available parking and some began receiving tickets for parking along Ash Park, where parking is prohibited, or along internal roads in the development which are designated as fire lanes.

Mr. Ducay presented different options available including amending the City's Parking Ordinance to allow for a total of 21 parallel parking spaces along Ash Park Drive and Latham Drive. Other options included utilizing nearby City owned property to allow for the installation of approximately 15 parking spaces or reconfiguring property within the Baker Landing Development for additional parking.

Discussion ensued regarding the options presented and working closely with DR Horton for an acceptable solution.

Sparkle Harris, 3231 Hampton Drive, Richland Hills, expressed frustration at the parking issues and stated that her property has a total of two parking spaces, not three, and parking spaces would require anyone coming to her home to walk by 16 houses before arriving at her home. Additionally, she expressed frustration at the police department issuing parking tickets.

Jenny Clark, 6973 Hardisty Street, Richland Hills, advised that she had concerns about this issue when the development was initially discussed and inquired if parking along Baker Boulevard is a possibility.

Monica Gjino, 3230 Hampton Drive, Richland Hills, inquired about the necessary space for a residential street to not be considered a fire lane.

Chief Russell Shelley advised that generally a street needs to be 31 feet curb to curb and Hampton Drive is 24 feet across.

Martha Messier, 3224 Hampton Drive, Richland Hills, advised that she is only able to fit one vehicle on her driveway and expressed concerns about potential safety issues when parking late at night.

Alexandra Snyder, 3208 Hampton Drive, requested that the police department discontinue issuing tickets for vehicles overhanging the sidewalk while this issue is being addressed and expressed concern regarding having guests visit her home.

7C. August Department Reports

Director of Planning and Development Services JP Ducay presented the Development Services update and advised that infrastructure has been completed and conditionally accepted at the Richland Crossing Development and provided an update regarding the Baker Boulevard and Crites Street residential lots and the Feel Great Car Wash to be located at 7026 Boulevard 26.

Director of Parks and Recreation Eric Valdez presented the Parks Department update and provided updates regarding the improvements at Kate Baker Park, The Link attendance and membership, and upcoming events.

Police Chief Kimberly Sylvester and Captain Scott Russell presented the Police Department and Community Compliance update and advised of recent staff updates, training completed, and monthly statistics.

COMMUNITY INTEREST ITEMS

8. Councilmember Estep advised of several upcoming events:

- Now through Thursday, October 24, Tricky Treat Trail Boo Booth, The Link;
- Friday, September 27, 2024, Yarn Gnome Craft, Public Library, 6:00 p.m.;
- Tuesday, October 1, 2024, Texas Night Out, throughout the community;
- Thursday, October 10, 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
- Tuesday, October 15, 2024, Richland Hills Literary Club, Public Library, 6:30 p.m.;
- Every Thursday, Coffee Talk, Public Library, 10:00 to 11:30 a.m.

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 9:58 p.m.

ATTEST:

APPROVED:

Lindsay Rawlinson, City Secretary

Curtis Bergthold, Mayor