

MINUTE S OF PUBLIC HEARING
& SPECIAL CALL MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF ODEM, TEXAS
SEPTEMBER 19, 2023

On this day, September 19, 2023 the City Council of the City of Odem met at the Odem Public Library, 516 Voss Avenue, Odem, Texas at 7:00 p.m. in a **PUBLIC HEARING & SPECIAL CALL MEETING**. The Special Call Meeting was called to order by Mayor, David Maldonado with the following members present to wit:

David Maldonado	Mayor
Jesse Falcon	Mayor Pro-Tem
Billy Huerta	Alderman Place 1
Yolanda Roblez-Alvaro	Alderman Place 2
Isaac Dominguez	Alderman Place 3
Elizabeth Candela	Alderman Place 5
Epimenio Ysassi	City Attorney
Hilda Gonzalez	Bookkeeper

Guests: Paul Baen, Donna Hutchins, L. Wilkinson, Angela Witten, Aurelio Martinez, Kris Sanchez, Mariaargas, David Krebs, Nora Aguirre, Jesse Aguirre, Vangie Braddock, Rollie Braddock, Dionicio Lopez, Amanda Garcia, Minerva Gonzales, Marcela Thormaehlen, Isabel Rivera, Chris Rodriguez, Rudy Guzman, Jacob Romero, Kathaeleen Herrin, Belinda Nino, Lottie Chapa, Gilbert Rodriguez, J. Salazar, Y. Guerro, Mark Hileman, Hector Castaneda, Felipe Rodriguez, Ramon Adamez, Becky Veit, Gerardo Ochoa, Claudio Esparza, Lucas Thompson, Kazondra Maldonado, Eva Garcia, Randy Marroquin, Marvin Pivonka.

1. CONVENE PUBLIC HEARING (Continued from September 12, 2023)

2. CALL MEETING TO ORDER:

- A. Declare a quorum. Mayor Maldonado declared a quorum.
- B. Pledge the Allegiance to the Flag of the United States and the Texas Flag
- C. Public Comments – Citizens to be heard – Mayor Maldonado thanked everyone for coming out and coming together as a community, and getting involved and becoming interested in what is going on in the community. Tonight, the city council has an opportunity to do something that has not been done in some time, that is to start the 2023-24 Fiscal year with a balanced budget. Initially it was proposed that the taxes were going to be increased to the de minimis rate. In this budget there won't be any need to increase taxes, in fact the taxes for the homeowners of this community will actually go down from last year. Last year tax rate for the city was 67 cents with the voter approved at 54 cents along with the school district decrease and county decrease, homeowners are looking at a pretty good decrease this year. Mayor summarized the items that were included in this year's budget. A total tax rate of voter approved tax rate \$0.540659. Removal of \$50,000 from the street department, \$73,000 from the general fund, \$350,00 from the PD and add 5% compensation adjustment for the staff, a 4% council contingency reserve line item and 2.5% utility reserve. Included are utility increases of \$8 for water, \$8 for sewer and 4% on garbage.

1. PLEASE LIMIT COMMENTS TO THREE (3) MINUTES.
A PERSON SHALL NOT BE ALLOWED TO ASSIGN THE THREE (3) MINUTES TO ANYONE ELSE.
Isabel Rivera spoke on her behalf in the PD.
Officer Salazar spoke regarding his service with the PD.
Officer Thompson spoke regarding the safety for the City of Odem and to work together for a solution.

Judge Guerro spoke regarding a court clerk needed in her office because there is a lot of revenue to be collected.

3. DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED:

Discuss, consider, and take action regarding the following issues related to the adoption of a budget for FY 2023-24: Discussion took place and each councilman was allowed to give their recommendations.

Place 1- Billy Huerta stated that the city administrator should be \$65,000 and it is still at \$73,000. He said the mayor compared the Odem Police Department to Fulton's Police Department. Fulton's population is 14,000. He is proposing that the council meets one more time to include to increase the sewer taps and water taps He suggested that they go back to the table and eliminate \$35,000 the 5% raises for employees and bring down the council pay to \$0. He still sees it on the budget. This could take care of another employee. The PD and Court were together in the budget.

Place 2- Yolanda Roblez-Alvaro No, not at this time. She stated that this is a tough decision but based on facts, there is a lot of expenditures, and we need to cut to save money. No one want anyone to lose their jobs. She said we have to look at the facts. What will happen if we have a hurricane or something like that? She said that we can rebuild at a later time.

Place 3 -Isaac Dominguez stated that he's ok with the budget but that he is very concerned about the Police Department being cut back. Crime is bad. He said we have police coverage at the school for a and that is mandated. He feels that cutting the budget 90% is too much and that we could have one more officer. Like the fact that there was no increase in taxes. He would like to look at the Police Department budget again. He feels like we are putting the safety of our kids, adults and the public in jeopardy. This is his biggest concern. Mrs. Rodriguez, a citizen voiced a concern with the PD and the times that they patrol. Kris Sanchez voiced his concern about a homeless kid and the police not showing up and how long it took to get there. He also saw officer Salazar and approached him to ask a question about the turn lane and did not have a good answer for him. He also said that he approached an officer that was monitoring traffic and the officer was a little agitated with him because he asked what was going on here. He said it was not anyone in the room. Gilbert Rodriguez questioned the mayor as to if San Pat Police will cover for us and will they be getting paid to patrol. Mayor's answer to him was "no sir." A resident made a comment about heartstrings being pulled, budget woes and that times are hard tight now buckle down and get it done, but there is no data for the PD. Where are the revenue generating items? We need a breakdown on drugs, burglary, and is the cost outweighing the benefits. He is not against the police department. Mayor explained what can and can not be put into the budget even though they generate revenue.

Place 4- Jesse Falcon He is not against the police department. He said numbers are numbers. He would like to revise the budget with grants for a police officer and have reserve officers to patrol. We have options.

Place 5 -Elizabeth Candela said no comment. She said she was new. She stated that they had thirteen hours of workshops and that she is a numbers person. The numbers are in black and white and we can not afford the Police Department. This is temporary not permanent. This is keeping us out of the deficit for another year.

David Maldonado, Mayor stated that the water and wastewater has a higher priority for him. If we have issues with our water system or wastewater system that needs some repair, goes down, that means the schools shut down the fire department doesn't have the water to fill up their trucks if there is a fire.

Restaurants will close most business will close. You can't flush your toilet if you have no running water. Mayor asked the public to "Trust his judgment." He will reach out to the Sherriff's department if we need more help. We are not doing away with the police department. He also said that we need a new server at City Hall that will cost \$9,000. Our staff needs tools to do their jobs.

Judge Krebs said that we are on the right track to move forward, get out of the hole first. We need to make some very hard decisions. Becky Veit commented that some items were not used in the revenue such as

sewer taps, sewer penalties, and meter deposits. That is all income. What about garbage penalties, garbage sales tax? Those are all income. Pretty good amounts of money and they are not included in the budget. Meter deposits are income for all the new homes. Building permits are not included last year they collected \$86,764. Citizen commented on water sales not being included. Falcon said that we could come back to that later. Mayor stated that the increase for the employees still has to be voted on by the council. Yolanda stated that we need to base the budget on "what ifs" but the water sales are not a concrete income. Paul explained the previous budgets and the way the revenue and expenses in a graft on the overhead projection. To gradually re-establish a reserve for the city. We are doing this at 5% per year for five years. By 2028 you will reach the goal of \$150,000. This will not allow a mayor to use these reserves without going before the council and the public. This is a crucial point that money can not be used without a vote. We need to show that we are fiscally responsible. A citizen is concerned in finding a money trail. They want to see what money is missing. Money was spent. We will see if it was misappropriated.

A.

1. Deliberate and take appropriate action on a Resolution approving Fiscal & Budgetary Policies for the City Alderman Falcon made the motion to discuss and Alderman Candela 2nd the motion. Vote was unanimous and motion passed.
 - i. To establish cash reserves, equal to 25% of budgeted annual operating expenditures for General Fund and System (Utility) Fund.
2. Deliberate and take appropriate action on a Resolution changing monthly fees charged to users of solid waste services as contained in "Exhibit #1" Fee Schedule of the Odem Code of Ordinances. Alderman Falcon made the motion to discuss and Alderman Candela 2nd the motion. Vote was unanimous and motion passed.
3. Deliberate and take appropriate action on an Ordinance changing the water and sewer base and volume rates as contained in Exhibit #1 Fee Schedule of the Odem Code of Ordinances. Alderman Falcon made the motion to discuss and Alderman Candela 2nd the motion. Vote was unanimous and motion passed.
4. Deliberate and take appropriate action to adopt fiscal 2023-2024 Annual City Budget, take record vote. Alderman Falcon made the motion to adopt the budget and was 2nd by Alderman Candela. Vote taken. Alderman Huerta no, Alderman Alvaro yes, Alderman Dominguez yes, Alderman Falcon yes, and Alderman Candela yes. Motion passed. 4 to 1.

B. Discuss, consider, and take action to adopt a tax rate, with the following language included in the resolution;

THIS TAX RATE WILL RAISE MORE TAXES FOR MAINTENANCE AND OPERATIONS THAN LAST YEAR'S TAX RATE.

THE TAX RATE WILL EFFECTIVELY BE RAISED BY 3.50 PERCENT AND WILL DECREASE TAXES FOR MAINTENANCE AND OPERATIONS ON A \$100,000 HOME BY APPROXIMATELY \$-44.21.

The vote on the ordinance, resolution, or order setting the tax rate must be a record vote and 60% of the governing body must vote in favor of the adoption of the tax rate. A motion to adopt the ordinance, resolution, or order must be made with the following form:

"I move that the property tax revenues be increased by the adoption of a M&O tax rate of \$0.525385, an I&S tax rate of \$0.015274/100, for a total tax rate of \$0.540659/100, which is effectively a -5.23

percent decrease in the tax rate." Billy made the motion and was 2nd by Isaac Dominguez. The vote was unanimous and passed.

- C. Discuss, consider, and take action to authorize Mayor Maldonado to accept insurance policies scheduled to renew in October for Texas Municipal League (TML) and Windstorm Insurance. Jesse made the motion and was 2nd by Billy Huerta. C

EXECUTIVE SESSION – Pursuant to Sec. 551.074 of the Texas Government Code – Personnel Matters:

- D. Agreement with Attorney Epimenio Ysassi Jesse made the motion to table at this time. Billy 2nd the motion and the vote was unanimous and passed to table.

RECONVENE REGULAR MEETING:

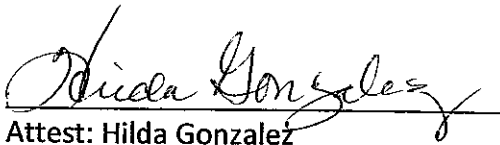
- E. Discuss, consider and take action on agreement with Attorney Epimenio Ysassi.

3. REPORTS:

F. Reports from Mayor, City Council and Staff may be given, but no formal action can be taken. Place 1-no, Place 2-no, Place 3- question about fixing the potholes by the post office, Place 4-let us know that the park sidewalks are being demolished, Place 5-no. Mayor Maldonado thanked the public for their continued support.

4. ADJOURNMENT:

Adjourn Isaac motioned that we adjourn and was 2nd by Elizabeth. All in favor. Meeting adjourned.


Attest: Hilda Gonzalez


City Mayor

