

SPECIAL MEETING

CITY COMMISSION

HARLINGEN, TEXAS

August 15, 2014

A Special Meeting of the Harlingen Elective Commission was held on Friday, August 15, 2014 at 11:30 a.m. in City Hall, Town Hall, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, 118 E. Tyler Street Harlingen, Texas. Those in attendance were:

Mayor and Commissioners

Mayor Chris Boswell  
Mayor Pro-Tem, Victor Leal, Dist. 5  
Danny Castillo, Dist. 1  
Tudor Uhlhorn, Dist. 2  
Michael Mezmar, Dist. 3  
Chino "Basilio" Sanchez, Dist. 4

Staff Present

Carlos Yerena, City Manager  
Amanda C. Elizondo, City Secretary  
Richard Bilbie, Interim City Attorney

Mayor Boswell called the meeting to order and stated the meeting had been duly posted according to state law.

- 1) Public hearing to solicit comments for or against the City of Harlingen Proposed Budget for Fiscal Year 2014-2015.

Elvia Trevino, Finance Director stated this was a public hearing to solicit comments from the public on the City of Harlingen Proposed Budget for Fiscal Year 2014–2015. A copy of the proposed budget was available in the City Secretary's Office for public inspection.

Mayor Boswell announced this was a public hearing and anyone wishing to speak for or against the proposed budget could do so.

David Schibi, President of the Rio Grande Birding Festival gave a brief update on the Birding Festival. Registration was being done online and 75% of all trips were booked. He said there was a wonderful group of volunteers; however, assistance was needed to do their website. Due to the loss of the expertise and knowledge of former CVB employees, measures had not been taken to fill those position, an employee of the Chamber of Commerce has been assisting with the registration procedures. Overall everything was working smoothly.

Wanda Greenhill, Treasurer of the Rio Grande Birding Festival stated the focus of the Festival was changing. The problem that existed was that the CVB had been handling the registration and phone calls for the past 20 years. A former volunteer of the festival was now assisting with the registration and phone calls. Ms. Greenhill requested that the City Commission consider allocating of an extra \$8,000 to increase the salary of the individual from \$33,000 to \$41,000.

Mr. Schibi stated the Rio Grande Valley Birding Festival was the longest and premiere running festival in the United States. The festival was on its 21<sup>st</sup> year and they thrived to better every year.

Mayor Boswell stated on behalf of the City they were proud of the birding festival and was the gateway to the City because of the yearly event. It was one of the most important aspects of tourism for the City. Staff would look into their request for the extra funding.

Commissioner Sanchez stated he did not have a problem funding their request and recommended that City Manager look into it.

Mr. Schibi extended an invitation to the Commission to the Kickoff Banquet prior to the start of the birding festival.

Mayor Boswell thanked Mr. Schibi and all the volunteers for making the event happen.

Joe Rubio, 2309 Hacienda Road, stated he opposed to the proposed budget for the following reasons:

- 1) Was confused why the Mayor reported at the budget workshop that the City was at \$3.25 million deficit. Prior, he had reported the City had a \$2 million in surplus.
- 2) A private security firm needed to be hired for a particular city department due to the ongoing theft problem which has caused the City a lot of money.
- 3) Did not understand how the City could work with only 6 police officers at any particular time to catch or apprehend burglary thieves at the Valle Vista Mall; there were training issues at the Police Department in regards to their budget; no records that indicated the damage to a Police Car last year; more accountability was required; there were five (5) missing teasers valued at \$800 each from the department that needed to be accounted for; a complete inventory needed to be done before the next police chief was hired; the collective bargaining process was going to affect the City's budget because the Police and Fire departments were asking for an 8% increase or \$49,000 by the year 2016.
- 4) The fire department has caused a "time theft" epidemic.

There being no additional comments, Mayor Boswell declared the public hearing closed.

- 2) Public hearing to solicit comments for or against the City of Harlingen Proposed Tax rate of 0.588827 per \$100 in value for Fiscal Year 2014-2015.

Ms. Trevino stated this was the first of two public hearings before the adoption of the proposed tax rate of 0.58827. The second public hearing was scheduled for August 20, 2014.

Mayor Boswell announced this was a public hearing and anyone wishing to speak for or against the item could do so.

Jose Rubio, 2309 Hacienda Road, stated he opposed the proposed tax rate because of the influx of money that came in and it was time to start spending money

There being no other comments, Mayor Boswell declared the public hearing closed.

- 3) Executive Session/Closed Meeting to discuss the following Items:
  - a) Pursuant to chapter 551, Subchapter D, V.T.C.A. Government Code, Section 551.074 personnel matters, to deliberate the annual evaluation, duties and performance of the City Manager
  - b) Pursuant to Chapter 551, Subchapter D, V.T.C.A. Government Code, Section 5651.074 personnel; matters, to deliberate the annual evaluation, duties and performance of the City Attorney.
  - c) Pursuant to Chapter 551, Subchapter d, V.T.C.A. Government Code, Section 551.074 personnel matters, to deliberate the annual evaluation, duties and performance of the City Auditor.

At 11:51 a.m., Mayor Boswell announced the City Commission would convene into executive session to discuss Item No. 3 a, b and c.

Motion was made by Mayor Pro-Tem Leal and seconded by Commissioner Castillo to go into executive session to discuss Item No. 3 a b and c.

Commissioner Castillo left the meeting prior to the conclusion of the executive session.

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At 1:19 p.m., Mayor Boswell announced the City Commission had completed its executive session and adjourned the meeting.

CITY OF HARLINGEN



Chris Boswell, Mayor

ATTEST:



Amanda C. Elizondo