

MINUTES
SPECIAL CALLED CITY COUNCIL MEETING
CITY OF STAFFORD, TEXAS
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2022

On the 28th day of September 2022, at 7:00 p.m., the City Council of Stafford, Texas met in the Council Chambers. The following members of City Council were present: Mayor Cecil Willis Jr., Mayor Pro Tem Don Jones, and Council Members Alice Chen, William K. Bostic Jr., Wen Guerra, Xavier Herrera, and Ken Mathew. Absent: None. The following City staff were present: City Secretary Roxanne Benitez, Director of Finance Alka Shah, Chief of Police Richard Ramirez, Fire Chief Larry Di Camillo, Municipal Court Judge Debra Sinclair, Director of Court Nicole Nguyen, Director of Human Resources Shanell Garcia, Director of Information Technology Ryan Young, Director of Multimedia Communications Robert Frith, FMSquared President Bryan Blaum, Director of Public Works/Development Services Jose Pastrana, Development Services Specialist Laura Morales, City Attorney Art Pertile (appeared virtually), and Olson & Olson Attorney Bridgette Begle.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Willis called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. He asked that everyone keep Florida in their thoughts and prayers as a result of Hurricane Ian.

2. Pledges of Allegiance.

Council Member Chen led the pledge to the United States flag. Council Member Herrera led the pledge to the Texas flag.

3. (a) Discussion of an Ordinance Approving and Adopting the General Budget for the City of Stafford, Texas for Fiscal Year 2022-2023; Making Appropriations for the City for such Year as reflected in said Budget; and Making certain Findings and Containing Certain Provisions relating to the Subject.

Mayor Willis thanked Council Members and Staff for their involvement and recognized Director of Human Resources Shanell Garcia and Director of Finance Alka Shah for their work. Mayor Willis provided an overview on the following:

- New personnel positions
- New equipment
- Contingency items

Mayor Pro Tem Jones read a statement regarding the budget process, City's economic model, consideration of options to generate revenue, as well as economically feasible options for the City.

Council Member Herrera advised that he received concerns from residents regarding drainage issues and confirmed that there was \$100,000 allocated in the

proposed budget for a drainage study. Mayor Willis confirmed the amount of funds and that it would be funded from the SEDC drainage study program. Council Member Herrera asked about funding allocated for drainage improvements and locations. Mayor Willis advised that \$1 million had been allocated for drainage improvements and locations would be based on the study. Council Member Herrera asked if the City could provide sandbags to prevent flooding. City Attorney Art Pertile advised that sandbags change the flow of water, which could flood property of surrounding neighbors and result in a lawsuit. Council Member Herrera asked that Director of Public Works/Development Services Jose Pastrana give a presentation providing options to residents on how they could prevent flooding.

Council Member Bostic advised that \$1 million was not enough funds for drainage and streets as funds had not been set aside in previous years. He recommended that salary increases be given to remaining employees at 100% of the market.

Council Member Mathew suggested that employees be given as much as possible.

Council Member Chen agreed with Council Member Mathew and suggested that a special meeting be held to discover options for generating more revenue.

Council Member Guerra advised that he had been a member of Council for twenty years and used his business knowledge in his decisions on Council. He also advised that the compensation study should be implemented to the fullest and all departments should be compensated correctly. Council Member Guerra advised that \$1 million was not enough funding for streets, drainage, and maintenance. He also advised that the outfalls, ditches, and culverts need to be maintained. Council Member Guerra advised that rental properties should be inspected annually. He also advised that he received complaints on ants and dead trees in parks, many mosquitos in the City, feral dogs and cats, which were eating at the fabric of the City.

Mayor Willis thanked the Council for their thoughts, heart, and compassion. He advised that the Council had a fiduciary responsibility to guard the City's money and present a balanced budget at least forty-five days prior to the budget adoption. Mayor Willis also advised that all departmental requested items were included in the proposed budget, which consisted of General Fund, SEDC, and Special Funds. He advised that 76% of the budget was for employee salaries and benefits.

(b) Public Hearing on Proposed Budget for Fiscal Year 2022-2023.

The public hearing opened at 8:09 p.m.

The following public comments were made:

- Virginia Rosas, who lives at 619 Elm View Court, advised that she was surprised that Council Member Guerra had been on Council for 20+ years and had not done anything. She asked about drainage improvements and added that there had not been any flooding recently. Ms. Rosas advised that she was proud of the City's accredited Police and Fire Departments. She asked the Council what they had done and added that it was easy to give ideas without funding sources. Ms. Rosas advised that the Council was elected to make difficult decisions and added that she liked Council Member Chen's idea regarding holding a workshop to discover ideas for generating revenue.
- Cliff Cowperthwait, who lives at 111 Squires Bend, advised that Covid caused problems and that the City did not have funding to compensate employees 90% or 100% of the market and suggested 100% as employees had been waiting. He also advised that there were drainage issues in Vaccaro Manor as it is located in Harris and Fort Bend County. Mr. Cowperthwait advised that he had ideas to increase revenue and invited Council Member Chen to meet with him to discuss. He also advised that if drainage improvements are done, that they are done correctly.
- Tim Wood, who lives at 2022 Secretariat, advised that he wished he could have attended the meeting virtually, but instead had to bring his children and requested that Zoom be added. He also advised that a good budget was presented but with a big hole, the compensation study. Mr. Wood advised that the data should have been included as well as comparative salaries from neighboring cities. He also advised that the employees had been waiting.

The public hearing closed at 8:19 p.m.

(c) Consideration of appropriate action on item (a).

After a brief discussion, Council Member Chen made a motion to adopt Ordinance No. 1232, approving and adopting the General Budget for the City of Stafford, Texas for Fiscal Year 2022-2023; making appropriations for the City for such year as reflected in said Budget; and making certain findings and containing certain provisions relating to the subject, as presented, and Council Member Herrera seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was taken in the following order:

- Mayor Willis – Yes
- Mayor Pro Tem Jones – No
- Council Member Guerra – No

- Council Member Mathew – Yes
- Council Member Chen – Yes
- Council Member Herrera – Yes
- Council Member Bostic – No

Motion carried 4-3.

4. (a) Discussion of Proposed 2022-2023 City of Stafford Fee Schedule.

Mayor Willis advised that the approval of the fee schedule was done annually. He also advised that department heads reviewed the fees in attempt to cover costs.

The following public comments were made:

- Cliff Cowperthwait, who lives at 111 Squires Bend, advised that there needed to be more employees in enforcement as it took three days for someone to inspect something at his home.

Fire Chief Larry Di Camillo advised that the proposed fee increases, for the Fire Marshal's office, would cover costs.

(b) Consideration of appropriate action on item (a).

Council Member Chen made a motion to approve the 2022-2023 City of Stafford Fee Schedule, and Mayor Pro Tem Jones seconded the motion. Mayor Willis, Mayor Pro Tem Jones and Council Members Bostic, Chen, Guerra, Herrera, and Mathew voted "Aye". "Nay" – none. Motion carried 7-0.

5. (a) Discussion of Proposed 2023 Holiday Schedule for the City of Stafford.

Council Member Herrera exited the meeting at 8:31 p.m.

Mayor Willis advised that this had been done in previous years.

(b) Consideration of appropriate action on item (a).

Council Member Chen made a motion to approve the 2023 City of Stafford Holiday Schedule, and Council Member Bostic seconded the motion. Mayor Willis, Mayor Pro Tem Jones and Council Members Bostic, Chen, Guerra, and Mathew voted "Aye". "Nay" – none. Motion carried 6-0.

6. (a) Discussion of Compensation Plan for Fiscal Year 2022-2023.

Mayor Willis provided clarification advising that sworn employees of the Police and Fire Departments as well as telecommunicators were previously given salary increases.

Director of Human Resources Shanell Garcia advised that employees who were promoted, demoted, or on probation were not eligible. She also advised that newly hired employees would receive their compensation adjustment on their one-year anniversary.

Council Member Herrera entered the meeting at 8:36 p.m.

The following public comments were made:

- Cliff Cowperthwait, who lives at 111 Squires Bend, advised that 90% put employees in the table but one grade below market value, and asked when employees would be brought up to 100%. Mayor Willis advised that it would take four Council Members to approve 100%.

Fire Chief Larry Di Camillo suggested that the Fire Department and Fire Marshal's office be brought up to 90% as they were still behind. He also advised that there were outstanding dedicated individuals, and they should be included.

At this time, Council Member Bostic made a motion to allow Mr. Cowperthwait to speak again for one-minute during public comments, and Council Member Chen seconded the motion. Mayor Willis, Mayor Pro Tem Jones and Council Members Bostic, Chen, Guerra, Herrera, and Mathew voted "Aye". "Nay" – none. Motion carried 7-0.

The following public comments were made:

Cliff Cowperthwait, who lives at 111 Squires Bend, advised that if the Fire Department and Fire Marshal's office were brought up to 90%, then other departments also should be brought up to 90%.

(b) Consideration of Appropriate Action on Item (a).

Council Member Chen made a motion to approve the City of Stafford Compensation Plan for Fiscal Year 2022-2023 as presented, and Council Member Mathew seconded the motion.

Council Member Herrera made an amended motion to include the Fire Department, Police Department, and Fire Marshal's office employees with an increase of 90% of the compensation study or 8% of salary, whichever was greater. The motion was not seconded, therefore, the motion failed.

A vote was held on the original motion made by Council Member Chen and seconded by Council Member Mathew. Mayor Willis, Mayor Pro Tem Jones and Council Members Chen, Herrera, and Mathew voted "Aye". "Nay" – Council Members Bostic and Guerra. Motion carried 5-2.

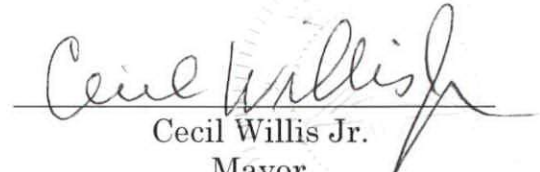
7. Adjournment.

Council Member Herrera made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:44 p.m., and Council Member Chen seconded the motion. Mayor Willis, Mayor Pro Tem Jones and Council Members Bostic, Chen, Guerra, Herrera, and Mathew voted "Aye". "Nay" – none. Motion carried 7-0.

ATTEST:



Roxanne Benitez
City Secretary



Cecil Willis Jr.
Mayor