

MINUTES
SPECIAL CALLED
CITY COUNCIL MEETING
CITY OF STAFFORD, TEXAS
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 2023

On the 29th day of September, 2023, at 5:00 p.m., the City Council of Stafford, Texas met in the Council Chambers. The following members of City Council were present: Mayor Ken Mathew, and Council Members Alice Chen, William K. Bostic Jr., Virginia Rosas, and Tim Wood. Absent: Mayor Pro Tem Xavier Herrera and Council Member Christopher Caldwell. The following City Staff were present: City Secretary Roxanne Benitez, Chief Financial Officer Alka Shah, Accounting Manager Horace Calasara, Chief of Police Richard Ramirez, Assistant Police Chief Kelly Wright, Police Captain Joe Williams, Fire Chief Larry Di Camillo, Director of Human Resources Shanell Garcia, Stafford Centre General Manager Bryan Blaum, Stafford Centre Assistant General Manager Rebecca Hathorn, Director of Recreation Susan Ricks, Code Compliance Administrator Scott McElrath, Director of Public Works/Economic Development Jose Pastrana, and Olson and Olson Attorney Mary Ann Powell.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Mathew called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

2. Pledges of Allegiance.

Council Member Bostic led the pledges to the United States and Texas flags.

3. (a) Discussion of an Ordinance approving and adopting the General Budget for the City of Stafford, Texas for Fiscal Year 2023-2024; 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.

City Council, City Staff, and Olson and Olson Attorney Mary Ann Powell discussed the following:

- Effective dates for new positions.
- Transferring the Grants Manager position from the Fire Department to the Finance Department.
- Updating the Stafford Centre's budget to reflect a five-percent increase for the eight Stafford Centre employees instead of two percent.
- A five-percent salary increase for the Fire Chief.
- Recognizing and funding Juneteenth as an official City holiday.
- Removing Presidents Day as an official City holiday and replacing it with Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

(b) Public Hearing on Proposed Budget for Fiscal Year 2023-2024.

The public hearing opened at 5:53 p.m.

Public comments were received from the following:

- Wen Guerra, who lives at 2402 Duchess Way, applauded the City Council for their work. He spoke about his previous experience as a City Council Member. Mr. Guerra applauded Council Member Wood for his astute statements. He advised that the Police and Fire Departments were main components in most cities.
- Cliff Cowperthwait, who lives at 111 Squires Bend, spoke on Stafford Centre's contract and suggested that their employees wait for a salary increase as the contract had already been approved. He also spoke on the proposed salary increase for the Fire Chief. Mr. Cowperthwait advised that City Council had already approved Juneteenth as an official City holiday. He also advised that the Juneteenth and Fourth of July celebrations may not occur if there was not funding for the events. Mr. Cowperthwait advised that the budget goes on forever and Council needed to be mindful of their spending. He also advised that the Mayor did not present a balance budget as grant funds were used for reoccurring expenditures. Mr. Cowperthwait spoke of the \$2.5 million that was taken from the fund balance for salaries to retain employees. He advised that the \$2.5 million needed to be replenished.

Council Member Bostic made a motion to allow Mr. Cowperthwait to speak for an additional two minutes, and Council Member Chen seconded the motion. Mayor Mathew and Council Members Chen, Bostic, Rosas, and Wood voted "Aye". "Nay" – none. Motion carried 5-0.

Mr. Cowperthwait advised that the City Council took \$3 million from other funds and suggested that they stop spending money next year. He also advised that City streets and parks were slightly deteriorating and added that funds were needed to replenish them. Mr. Cowperthwait advised that the Council would need to budget for a new fire truck and police vehicles next year. He urged the City Council to stop spending money.

The public hearing closed at 6:03 p.m.

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

After a brief discussion, Council Member Bostic made a motion to fund Juneteenth as an official City holiday, with the funds of \$154,000 coming from the general fund surplus, and included in the \$2.5 million dollar repayment, and Council Member Chen seconded the motion.

Council Member Rosas advised that she was concerned about funding and suggested that Juneteenth replace Presidents Day or one of the floating holidays.

The vote was then taken after discussion. Mayor Mathew, and Council Members Chen, Bostic, and Wood voted "Aye". "Nay" – Council Member Rosas. Motion carried 4-1.

Council Member Wood made a subsequent motion to approve the Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Budget, including \$2.64 million from the fund balance to cover expenses approved by City Council, and Council Member Bostic seconded the motion.

Council Member Chen asked for clarification regarding the transfer of the Grant Manager position from the Fire Department to Finance Department.

At this time, Council Member Rosas made an amended motion to add to the budget a five-percent salary increase for the Fire Chief and a three-percent additional salary increase for Stafford Centre employees, in the amount of \$13,052.50. The motion was not seconded. Motion failed.

After a brief discussion Council Member Wood withdrew his original motion.

Council Member Wood made a motion to approve Ordinance No. 1262, adopting the General Budget for the City of Stafford, Texas for Fiscal Year 2023-2024, including \$2.64 million from the fund balance to cover expenses approved by City Council and a five-percent salary increase for the Fire Chief, to be effective January 1, 2024, and Council Member Bostic seconded the motion. Mayor Mathew, and Council Members Chen, Bostic, and Wood voted "Aye". "Nay" – Council Member Rosas. Motion carried 4-1.

4. (a) Discussion of a Resolution approving the Stafford Economic Development Corporation (SEDC) Budget for Fiscal Year 2023-2024.

No discussion was held.

- (b) Public Comments on item (a).

None.

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

Council Member Chen made a motion to approve Resolution No. 45-23, as presented, and Council Member Bostic seconded the motion. Mayor Mathew, and Council Members Chen, Bostic, Rosas, and Wood voted "Aye". "Nay" – None. Motion carried 5-0.

5. (a) Discussion of a Resolution adopting the Fee Schedule for Fiscal Year 2023-2024.

Chief Financial Officer Alka Shah advised that a memo with the proposed changes was included in the packet. She also advised that an amendment regarding Stafford Civic Center fees would be presented at a later time.

(b) Public Comments on item (a).

None.

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

Council Member Wood made a motion to approve Resolution No. 46-23, as presented, and Council Member Chen seconded the motion. Mayor Mathew, and Council Members Chen, Bostic, Rosas, and Wood voted "Aye". "Nay" – None. Motion carried 5-0.

6. (a) Discussion of the 2024 Holiday Observance Schedule.

Council Member Bostic suggested replacing Presidents Day with Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

Council Member Rosas exited the meeting at 6:29 p.m.

(b) Public Comments on item (a).

Public comments were received from the following:

- Cliff Cowperthwait, who lives at 111 Squires Bend, asked for clarification regarding which holiday would be replaced. Council Member Bostic provided clarification.

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

Council Member Bostic made a motion to substitute Presidents Day with Martin Luther King Jr. Day, and Council Member Chen seconded the motion. Mayor Mathew, and Council Members Chen, Bostic, and Wood voted "Aye". "Nay" – None. Motion carried 4-0.

7. (a) Discussion of Police Department Restricted Funds for Fiscal Year 2023-2024.

Chief of Police Richard Ramirez provided information regarding the proposed restricted funds and advised that, due to confidentiality, no discussion could be held.

(b) Public Comments on item (a).

None.

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

Council Member Chen made a motion to approve the Police Department restricted funds for Fiscal Year 2023-2024, and Council Member Wood seconded the motion. Mayor Mathew, and Council Members Chen, Bostic, and Wood voted "Aye". "Nay" – None. Motion carried 4-0.

Council Member Rosas entered the meeting at 6:32 p.m.

8. (a) Discussion of Police Department Classification and Salary Chart for Fiscal Year 2023-2024.

Chief of Police Richard Ramirez advised that this was an annual requirement and update of all positions in the department. He also advised that there was an error on page two in which one investigator position should be listed as frozen on the salary chart.

Council Member Rosas asked if the figures on the chart were the same as what the Human Resources Department had on file. Director of Human Resources Shanell Garcia confirmed that the figures were correct. Council Member Rosas asked to confirm that the salary chart was required by state statute. Chief Ramirez confirmed that was correct.

Chief Ramirez requested a correction on page two, changing the wording regarding hiring an officer at five percent over the posted salary to ten percent in order to allow for flexibility and hire more experienced officers.

(b) Public Comments on item (a).

None.


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

Council Member Rosas made a motion to approve the Police Department Classification and Salary Chart for Fiscal Year 2023-2024, with the requested changes, and Council Member Chen seconded the motion. Mayor Mathew, and Council Members Chen, Bostic, Rosas, and Wood voted "Aye". "Nay" – None. Motion carried 5-0.

9. Adjournment.

Without objection, the meeting was adjourned at 6:41 p.m.

ATTEST:



Roxanne Benitez
City Secretary



Ken Mathew
Mayor