

**LOCKHART CITY COUNCIL  
SPECIAL MEETING and  
BUDGET WORKSHOP**

**AUGUST 13, 2009**

**7:00 P.M.**

**Council present:**

Mayor Pro-Tem Frank Estrada  
Councilmember Richard Wieland

Mayor James Bertram  
Councilmember Lew White  
Councilmember Richard Banks

**Council absent:**

Councilmember Kenny Roland  
Councilmember Paul Gomez

**Staff present:**

Vance Rodgers, City Manager  
Jeff Hinson, Finance Director

Connie Ortiz, City Secretary

**Citizens/Visitors Addressing the Council:** None.

**ITEM 1. CALL TO ORDER.**

Mayor James Bertram called the special meeting and budget workshop to order on this date at 7:10 p.m.

**ITEM 2. CITIZENS/VISITORS COMMENTS**

Mayor Bertram requested citizens to address the Council. There were none.

**ITEM 3-A. PRESENTATION, WORKSHOP, DISCUSSION AND/OR ACTION REGARDING THE FISCAL YEAR 2009-2010 PROPOSED BUDGET, TAX RATE AND RELATED INFORMATION.**

Mayor Bertram requested information regarding the 2009-2010 proposed budget, tax rate and related information.

Mr. Rodgers provided information regarding the following:

**TAX RATE**

There was discussion regarding the following:

- Comparison of tax rates from previous years; significant increases in emergency services department over the past 10 years
- Two vacant positions in the Public Works Department and one in Electric Billing would not be filled to save funds in proposed wages.
- Other departments with vacant positions would most likely not be filled.
- Discussion regarding cemetery tax of which those funds must be placed in a separate fund or trust to be utilized only for maintaining City owned cemeteries. There was discussion.
- Mr. Hinson requested that if the Council chose to increase the tax rate, a decision would be made during this meeting to allow a record vote to be taken during the August 18 meeting to meet State and publication requirements.
- There was further discussion regarding the proposed cemetery tax rate.

Mayor Pro-Tem Estrada stated that he could not support an increase in property tax or cemetery tax.

**PROPOSED SALARY FOR MAYOR POSITION**

Mayor Pro-Tem Estrada stated that he could not support an increase in the Mayor's salary.

Councilmember White stated that he could not support an increase in the Mayor's salary. He suggested that an increase in the Mayor's salary should be taken to the voters. There was discussion regarding reimbursement of expenses such as mileage.

Councilmember Wieland stated that he did not support an increase in the Mayor's salary. He suggested that the Mayor be reimbursed for all official expenses.

Mayor Bertram stated that he did not support the salary increase for himself as Mayor but believed that increasing the salary would attract a variety of candidates to run for the Mayor's office in the future. He stated that he believed that a salary for the Mayor's position would allow that person to be able to attend the many meetings of various boards during normal business hours.

The Council commended James Bertram for his dedication during his term and continued term as Mayor.

**CONSENSUS:** After discussion, the consensus of the Council was not leave the salary of \$35,000 per year for the Mayor's position in the budget.

Mayor Bertram requested the Council's consideration on any amount of increase in the Mayor's stipend. He reminded the Council that he did not want the increased stipend for himself and that it was suggested for a future Mayor. There was discussion.

**CONSENSUS:** After discussion, the consensus of the Council was to leave the Mayor's stipend and car allowance as currently budgeted, with no increases.

**WAGE INCREASE FOR NON-CIVIL SERVICE EMPLOYEES**

- Discussion regarding the possibility of a wage increases.
- Mr. Rodgers stated that staff conducts a survey of surrounding cities with a similar population every budget session that compares the "market" salaries of each position. The survey reflects that there are many positions that are below the market salary rate. He also explained that there are several positions that are \$ 4 to \$9 below market rate for cities our size. There was discussion about the importance of staying at or near the market rate to retain employees and especially those that are retirement eligible but have many good years left to serve this community.
- Discussion regarding a wage increase of which Mr. Rodgers recommended approval of the following:
  - ✓ Three percent (3%) wage increase across the board as a market rate increase for non-civil service employees
  - ✓ Plus an increase in longevity pay as presented by the City Manager
  - ✓ Market rate adjustments for several positions as presented by the City Manager

Consensus to leave these in the budget as presented at this point.

**PROPOSED PROPERTY AND CEMETERY TAX RATE**

- Discussion regarding the proposed tax rate and proposed cemetery tax rate.
- Discussion regarding the public hearing process and publication process. Staff would make sure that the publication would itemize the tax rate showing the effective tax rate and the cemetery maintenance trust tax rate. The cemetery tax must be placed in a trust fund separately can only be used for maintenance of the City owned cemeteries and would each year be based on the budget of the cemetery. The Council could choose in the future to supplement funding to the cemetery maintenance trust in lieu of raising

**CONSENSUS:** After discussion, the consensus of the Council was to do the following:

- Set the tax rate at the effective rate of 68.78 cents, set a cemetery maintenance trust tax at 24.8 cents.
- Take a record vote of the proposed tax rates during the August 18 Council meeting.
- Schedule two public hearings regarding the proposed tax rates during the August 18 Council meeting.
- Publish public hearing notice in the newspaper regarding the proposed tax rate and cemetery maintenance trust tax.

**ITEM 3-B. DISCUSSION AND/OR ACTION REGARDING TENTATIVE BUDGET AND TAX RATE ADOPTION CALENDAR.**

Mr. Hinson requested that the budget workshop on August 20, 2009 is cancelled since the Council decided on the tax rate. An updated calendar would be sent to the Council.

**ITEM 4. ADJOURNMENT,**

Councilmember Wieland made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Councilmember White seconded. The motion carried by a vote of 5-0. The meeting was adjourned at 8:43 p.m.

PASSED and APPROVED this the 18<sup>th</sup> day of August 2009.

CITY OF LOCKHART

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James Bertram, Mayor

ATTEST:

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Connie Ortiz, TRMC, City Secretary