

Julie Masters, Mayor
Charles Suderman, Mayor Pro Tem
Sean Skipworth
Walter Wilson

MINUTES
City of Dickinson
CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING

Wally Deats
Louis Decker
William H. King III
Chris Heard, City Administrator

August 11, 2020

The Dickinson City Council met in a duly called and announced **REGULAR MEETING** on **Tuesday, August 11, 2020, at 7:00 p.m.** In accordance with order of the Office of the Governor issued March 16, 2020, the City Council of the City of Dickinson, Texas conducted the meeting by telephone and video conference in order to advance the public health goal of limiting face-to-face meetings (also called “social distancing”) to slow the spread of the Coronavirus (COVID-19). The meeting was held for the purpose of considering the following items:

ITEM 1.) CALL TO ORDER AND CERTIFICATION OF A QUORUM

Mayor Masters called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m. City Secretary Alun Thomas called roll and certified a quorum. Council Members present were as follows: Mayor Julie Masters, Mayor Pro-Tem Charles Suderman, and Council Members Sean Skipworth, Walter Wilson, Wally Deats, Louis Decker, and William H. King, III. Also present were City Attorney David Olson, City Administrator Chris Heard, Finance Director Penny Hunter, Police Chief Ron Morales, and Assistant to the City Administrator Kerilyn Bascle.

ITEM 2.) INVOCATION

Pastor Jack Matkin of First United Methodist Church of Dickinson gave the invocation.

ITEM 3.) PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Masters led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ITEM 4.) PROCLAMATIONS

None.

ITEM 5.) ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRESENTATIONS

A. Council Comments.

- Welcome to everyone attending the meeting.
- Last Friday’s Knights of Columbus fish fry served 354 dinners. The next one is scheduled for September 6.
- The spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19) appears to be slowing down in our area. Everyone is encouraged to take the necessary precautions to stay healthy.

- 1,261 gallons of free milk were distributed last week by Borden through a grant program, and a recent food fair assisted 300 families.
- Council Member King said that he had a parade for his 55th birthday. He thanked those who helped make the day so memorable.
- Council Member Decker thanked City Administrator Chris Heard for getting some of Hughes Road cleaned up. He said that property owners should be held accountable for maintaining their trees that overhang City rights-of-way.
- There are many discussions on social media about proposed tax rates.
- The City is working on making the Public Works division larger. If anyone has mowing concerns, please let the City know.
- Condolences to the family of Shalonda Robinson on her recent passing-away.

B. Presentation of the Voter Approved Tax Rate Worksheet

City Administrator Chris Heard presented the Worksheet to Council, noting that he is required by law to present it to Council by August 7, 2020 or as soon as is practical thereafter. Mr. Heard discussed the document and informed Council that three critical pieces of information on it are the No-New-Revenue Tax Rate of 39.9853¢, the Voter-Approval Tax Rate of \$1.143724, and the *De Minimis* Rate of \$1.155775.

Mr. Heard said that the City has deadline of September 22 for its tax rate and budget hearing (which it has to have regardless of the proposed tax rate), and September 29 to adopt its budget.

Council then discussed Mr. Heard's suggestion that the City consider raising its tax rate. Mr. Heard said that for every one-cent increase in the *ad valorem* tax rate, the City gains approximately \$103,000 in additional revenue. The City, because it has fewer than 30,000 residents, is also not subject to the 3% tax rate increase cap. Mr. Heard's calculations and proposals in the new budget are currently based off of an *ad valorem* tax rate of 44¢ per \$100 valuation. Council Member Skipworth expressed his opposition to raising tax bills with the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and historic levels of unemployment. Council Member Deats agreed, adding that he wished to keep his promise of staying revenue neutral. Mayor Masters expressed her disagreement; the City, she said, also promised to provide its residents with good streets. Mayor Masters said that the City also risks losing a lot of sales tax revenue starting October 2021.

Council concluded the discussion by directing Mr. Heard to provide it with information about how much an *ad valorem* tax rate increase of 1¢ per \$100 valuation would affect a \$200,000 house. Council Member

Wilson said that the Council needed this and other similar information in advance of these types of discussions so that it could be better informed.

ITEM 6.) REPORTS

None.

ITEM 7.) PUBLIC COMMENTS: At this time, any person with city-related business may speak to the Council. In compliance with the Texas Open Meetings Act, The City Council may not deliberate. **Comments from the public should be limited to a maximum of three (3) minutes per individual speaker.**

None.

ITEM 8.) CONSENT AGENDA: CONSIDERATION AND POSSIBLE ACTION:

The following items are considered routine by the City Council and will be enacted by one motion. There will not be a separate discussion on these items unless a Council member requests, in which event, the item will be removed from the consent agenda and discussed after the consent agenda.

- A. Approval of the Minutes of the Council Special Workshop Meeting of July 28, 2020
- B. Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Council Meeting of July 28, 2020.
- C. Approval of the Minutes of the Special Council Meeting of August 3, 2020.
- D. Approval of the Minutes of the Special Council Meeting of August 5, 2020.

Council Member King made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda, and Council Member Skipworth seconded the motion. There being no discussion, Mayor Masters called for the vote.

VOTE:

6 AYES (Suderman, Skipworth, Wilson, Deats, Decker, King)

0 NAYS

MOTION PASSED

ITEM 9.) CONSIDERATION AND POSSIBLE ACTION CONCERNING: Proposed Parking Structure for the Water Street Square Development.

Council Member Wilson made a motion to approve the proposed parking structure, and Council Member King seconded the motion.

City Administrator Chris Heard discussed the history of the project, which arose following Dickinson Economic Development Corporation's decision to not move forward with the development of a public market at that location. Mr. Heard explained that approval of this item would provide the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) with affirmation that the City Council and Dickinson Economic Development Corporation would be supportive of this new project and grant if it is approved. Council discussed the money that was expended on the former public market project and questioned how much money the new grant application would cost the City. Mr. Heard clarified that the City had expended a lot of funds on the project but not on the grant application. He said that the City would probably engage Public Management Inc. to make the necessary changes to the grant application so that the City could meet the deadlines. In response to a question from Council, Mr. Heard said that the board of Dickinson Economic Development Corporation had not yet seen this proposal.

There being no further discussion, Mayor Masters called for the vote.

VOTE:

5 AYES (Suderman, Skipworth, Wilson, Deats, King)

1 NAY (Decker)

MOTION PASSED

Mayor Masters commented that Council Member Decker's "nay" vote would not be helpful for the City's ability to move forward with the project. Scott Jones, Chief Executive Officer of Dickinson Economic Development Corporation, said that the board is aware of this proposed project, and is generally supportive. He said that a special meeting of Dickinson Economic Development Corporation can be called if getting its support is necessary.

ITEM 10.) EXECUTIVE SESSION: The City Council will now hold a closed executive meeting pursuant to the provision of Chapter 551, Government Code, Vernon's Texas Codes annotated, in accordance with the authority contained in:

- A. Section 551.071 – Consultation with Attorney regarding pending litigation and matters in which the duty of the City Attorney requires to be discussed in closed meeting.
- B. Section 551.074 – Personnel Matter – Discussion to Deliberate the Appointment, Employment, Evaluation, Reassignment, Duties, Discipline or Dismissal of the City Secretary.
- C. Section 551.074 – Personnel Matter – Discussion to Deliberate the Appointment, Employment, Evaluation, Reassignment, Duties, Discipline or Dismissal of the Chief of Police.

Mayor Masters recessed the regular meeting at 8:10 p.m.

ITEM 11.) RECONVENE

Mayor Masters reconvened the regular meeting at 9:00 p.m.

ITEM 12.) CONSIDERATION AND POSSIBLE ACTION CONCERNING: Matters Discussed in Executive Session.

None.

ITEM 13.) ADJOURN

Council Member Wilson made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 p.m., and Council Member King seconded the motion. There being no discussion, Mayor Masters called for the vote.

VOTE:

6 AYES (Suderman, Skipworth, Wilson, Deats, Decker, King)

0 NAYS

MOTION PASSED

PASSED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED this the 25th day of August, 2020.

ATTEST:



Alun W. Thomas, City Secretary





Julie Masters, Mayor