

**VERNON CITY COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING
April 15, 2015**

Mayor Joe Rogers called the Special Meeting of the Vernon City Commission to order at 5:00 p.m., and a quorum was declared present.

Present: Mayor Joe Rogers

Commissioners: Danny McMahan, Ruben Hinojosa, Travis Taylor and Pat Bryant.

Staff Present: Interim City Manager Kade Long, Municipal Prosecutor Jonathan Whitsitt, Public Works Director Darell Kennon, Police Chief Tom Wilson, Fire Chief Kent Smead, Community Development Director Monica Wilkinson, Finance Director Anne Garmon and City Secretary Linda Byers.

Commissioner McMahan made the motion to move Agenda Item No. 3 to No. 4 and move Agenda Item No. 4 to No. 3.

Commissioner Taylor seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

Commissioner McMahan led the group in the Invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the U.S. and Texas flags.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Daniel Walker made an Exception to the Commission entering into Executive Session under Government Code Section 551.074 – Personnel – Animal Control, since the City does not have an Animal Control position following the layoffs in the Police Department.

City Prosecutor Whitsitt said that was correct and the discussion must be in open session.

Commissioner Bryant stated that it was agreed to create the animal control job in Code Enforcement, and made the motion to open the job for hiring.

Commissioner Taylor seconded the motion.

Following discussion of the hiring process for this one new position, and the needed budget amendments for the corresponding expenses, the motion passed by unanimous vote. Community Development Director Wilkinson will be the supervisor for animal control.

ACTION FOLLOWING EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was no action following Executive Session. The agenda item died for lack of a motion.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Commissioner Bryant made the motion to enter Executive Session at 6:12 p.m. under Government Code Section 551.074 – Personnel – Police Chief and other Police Department Personnel.

Prosecutor Whitsitt told the Commission that since the subject of this meeting was made public, Officer Hall has the option to bring this into open session, and warned the Commission about the liability issues involved with any action.

Commissioner Bryant rescinded his motion.

ACTION FOLLOWING EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was no action following Executive Session. The agenda item died for lack of a motion.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Commissioner Taylor made the motion to enter Executive Session at 5:14 p.m. under Government Code Section 551.072 – Deliberation Concerning Real Property.

Commissioner McMahan seconded that motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

The Water Advisory Board was invited to attend the Executive Session.

RESUME REGULAR MEETING

Commissioner Hinojosa made the motion to resume regular session at 5:40 p.m.

Commissioner McMahan seconded that motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

ACTION FOLLOWING EXECUTIVE SESSION

Commissioner Taylor made the motion to have Community Development Director Wilkinson check into rezoning of 2817 Highway 287 Frontage Road, Vernon, TX.

Commissioner Hinojosa seconded that motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

ORDINANCE NO. #1660

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING SECTION 26-35 AND SECTION 26-36(a) OF ARTICLE II, COLLECTION AND REMOVAL SERVICES OF CHAPTER 26 – GARBAGE AND TRASH; AMENDING SECTION 54-152 OF ARTICLE V – WATER OF CHAPTER 54; AND SECTION 54-62 OF ARTICLE III – SEWERS OF CHAPTER 54 – UTILITIES, OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF VERNON; PROVIDING FOR A REPEALING SECTION; A SAVINGS SECTION; A RECORDING SECTION; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Interim City Manager Long presented four scenarios that adjust outline the revenue of various water and sewer rate increases.

Commissioner Bryant stated that he will not vote for a water rate increase and wants to invoke a sunset law with a termination date on the water increases.

Commissioner Hinojosa notes that there is no money set aside for repairs and this is the only way to do that. If we don't increase rates we will be in more trouble than we are now. Commissioner Taylor said that we have to do something. There is not enough revenue and too many expenses. Commissioner McMahan stated that revenue went down because we are selling less water, and we must be good stewards of our water. Mayor Rogers noted that we cannot cut operations to zero and must raise rates to support necessary expenses. There are not grants available for water improvements, but there might be a possible 30% forgivable loan from the Texas Water Board.

Finance Director Garmon noted that if we don't raise rates to cover necessary expenses we will not be as likely to obtain loans in the future.

There was discussion of a sunset rule for rates, problems with budget forecasting, and the different options that were presented for rate increases.

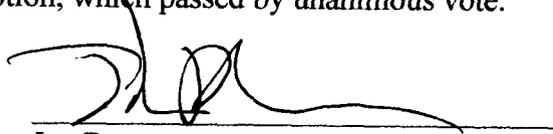
Commissioner Taylor made the motion to Approve Ordinance No. 1660 Amending Utility Rates Including Water, Sewer and Sanitation with Option 2 of an \$8.00 water rate increase, a \$0.25 per unit increase, an \$8.00 sewer rate increase with a \$0.25 per unit increase and a 1.5% increase in sanitation rates.

Commissioner McMahan seconded the motion, which passed by a vote of 4-1, with Commissioner Bryant voting against.

ADJOURN

Commissioner Taylor made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:10 p.m.

Commissioner McMahan seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.



Joe Rogers
Mayor

ATTEST:


Linda Byers
City Secretary