

**PALM VALLEY CITY COUNCIL  
MINUTES  
SPECIAL  
MEETING  
August 22, 2020**

The City Council of the City of Palm Valley met in a Special Meeting on the 22nd day of August 2020 at 9:00 a.m. at 1313 N. Stuart Place Road, Palm Valley, Texas. The meeting was attended by the following persons:  
(ZOOM videoconferencing was available for the public).

In person:

Mayor George Rivera  
Councilman Eric Hoff  
Councilman Jerry Wade  
Councilman Michael Galvan  
Councilwoman Lisa Taylor  
Councilwoman Cynthia Thompson

Jason Mann, City Attorney

City Secretary: Sylvia R. Trevino (in person)

Staff present: Chief A. R. Garcia (in person)  
Rosendo Flores, Director of Public Works (in person)

1. **CALL TO ORDER** - The meeting was called to order by Mayor Rivera.
2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** - The Pledge of Allegiance followed led by Mayor Rivera.
3. **LEGISLATIVE PRAYER** - The Legislative Prayer was led by Councilman Hoff.
4. **PUBLIC COMMENTS**  
No public comments were made.
5. **MINUTES FOR APPROVAL – JULY 21, 2020**

Councilman Wade made a motion to approve the minutes as presented.

Councilman Galvan seconded the motion.

Mayor Rivera took the votes and the motion carried unanimously by those present.

At this time, Mayor Rivera asked if any Council members are currently members of the Harlingen Country Club. Everyone replied no. However, it was noted that Councilman Wade is an employee of the Club. Councilman Wade was asked to leave the meeting and an affidavit regarding potential conflict of interest will be filed with the City Secretary. Councilman Wade was not present for the following two items.

6. **DISCUSSION HELD REGARDING PROPOSED DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENTS ON PALM VALLEY DRIVE EAST NORTH OF BOUGAINVILLEA.**

David Flinn, City Engineer, explained and showed on a map the proposed drainage improvements and gave a background of the drainage issues in Palm Valley. He explained that all the drainage projects are meant to move the water through Palm Valley faster.

Mr. Flinn explained in detail every aspect of the preliminary cost estimate options (3) as:

Storm Sewer by-pass (30") for Lakes 4-7	\$1,282,295.00
Storm Sewer by-pass (36") for Lakes 4-7	\$1,346,095.00
Storm Sewer by-pas (42") for Lakes 4-7	\$1,467,745.00

After questions and answers regarding the details of these cost estimates, a motion was made to table this item at this time by Councilwoman Thompson and a second by Councilman Galvan.

7. **BID AWARDED FOR THE SEWER PLANT MAINTENANCE PROJECT ON LAKE NO. 3.**

Mayor Rivera commented that the City is not liable but responsible to maintain the pond according to the 2005 agreement which allowed the City to use the pond for the discharge of the City's effluent. He acknowledged that this is a major expense, but it is 50 years in the making.

There was some discussion regarding the use of mini dredge floats that the City could purchase and could save about \$191,000 on the project. However, if the City chooses to go this route, the entire project will need to be re-bid again.

Also noted was the fact that TCEQ has a permit on this pond and they require that the City must use an engineer rather than going at it alone.

David Flinn recommended awarding the bid to Rhyner Construction in the amount of \$654,480.

Councilwoman Taylor made a motion to award the bid as recommended by David Flinn.

Councilwoman Thompson seconded the motion.

Mayor Rivera took the votes and the motion carried unanimously by those present.

Returning back to Item No. 6, because of some easement issues and topic sensitivity, a motion was made by Councilman Galvan to go into Executive Session pursuant to the Open Meetings Act 1) Section 551.071: Consultation with Attorney and 2) Section 551.072: Deliberations about Real Property.

The motion was seconded by Councilman Hoff.

Mayor Rivera took the votes and the motion carried unanimously by those present.

The Executive Session convened at 9:59 a.m. and concluded at 10:19 a.m. with no action taken in closed session.

(There was a five-minute break before continuing with the workshop)

## BUDGET WORKSHOP

The budget worksheet (Excel) was displayed on the projector that reflected each line item for each department: Administration (General Fund); Police Department; Public Works; Municipal Court; and Water Department.

Mayor Rivera explained that the budget reflects a year-to-date with projections through the month of September. As for the tax revenue if no taxes are raised the anticipated revenue would be \$619,529.

The Council was given the opportunity to express their thoughts on the numbers as proposed. For the most part most of the line items remained the same as last year.

Discussion followed on employees' salaries. Mayor Rivera commented that there has been some discussion regarding hazard pay due to the pandemic but he suggested that if the Council chooses to offer hazard pay that it be applied to all employees and not just the police officers, in all fairness. He suggested some type of incentive apart from the fiscal year 20-21 merit increases for all employees who have continuously reported to work without fear of jeopardizing their health.

Mayor Rivera suggested that based on surplus projections a two-week paid vacation incentive could be offered and paid within this current fiscal year as a 'bonus' or the Council could choose to do nothing.

Councilman Hoff questioned the disparity between the Administration's salary and Police Department and Waterworks.

Mayor Rivera commented that it all has to do with their share of responsibilities. Something to also consider is how long the Directors have been employed with the City and what was their starting salary. He added that past years more of an increase had been given to the employees than the Directors

In conclusion it was the consensus to offer two weeks of paid vacation to all fulltime employees, as a bonus, and that it be paid before the current fiscal year ends.

Continuing with further discussion, there was agreement that a 3% across the board increase be given to the employees for the fiscal year 2020-21.

Mayor Rivera continued the line by line items with the budget. He noted that the Parks and Recreation Board had not spend their entire budgeted amount and the Board was asking for \$9,200 this coming year.

Mayor Rivera that no capital projects were being proposed except for new vests for the Police Department.

Continuing with the Waterworks budgets, Mayor Rivera stated that something to think about is the need for fiberglass encased manholes. There is a current estimate of \$71,400 to do six. Currently, they are encased in brick and there is leakage.

He added that there a lot of pending infrastructure projects. The discussion came up of imposing some type of fee to pay for needed infrastructure. This fee could be included in the water bills monthly. Mayor Rivera suggested putting

this as a proposition on the May 2021 election and let the citizens decide. The amount to impose would have to be a significant fee in order to make an impact. Something like could be considered in lieu of increasing property taxes.

Councilman Hoff stated that if it is treated like the survey that was sent out on the purchase of the property next to City Hall, it will not go. The citizens elect us (the Council) because they trust us to make the right decisions for the community. He suggested setting up a fee of \$5.00-\$7.50 to start off with.

Councilwoman Thompson disagreed and stated that to be transparent we cannot just 'throw' this at the citizens.

Mayor Rivera agreed with both Councilman Hoff and Councilwoman Thompson but commented that the City would be losing out on seven months of this income if something was not done now. The City's budget is solid, but we cannot depend on the budget to do infrastructure. The current projects will deplete the funds that are at the bank right now; the cleanup of the drains; the East drainage project and the Palm Valley North proposed drainage project.

Councilman Hoff felt that he would not be in favor of doing 'piece meal' assessment fees. Try imposing a \$10 fee and show the citizens where it will be spent. Regardless of how it is done it will still be an increase to the citizens.

Councilman Galvan commented that a lot of cities impose these types of fees and even if the City goes with bonds, the City still must pay.

Mayor Rivera commented that the City could impose \$10 now and have the proposition in May and possibly increase the fee depending on the outcome of the election.

After further discussion, Councilmen Galvan, Wade and Hoff felt the impact fee should be added to the 2020-21 budget. Councilwomen Taylor and Thompson were against it.

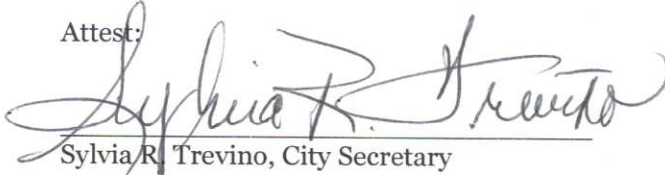
Discussion continued how best to approach the citizens and educate them on the need for this assessment fee.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:18 p.m. upon a motion by Councilman Hoff and a second by Councilwoman Taylor.



George Rivera, Mayor

Attest:



Sylvia R. Trevino, City Secretary