

Somerville City Council
Regular Meeting
September 8, 2020

The Somerville City Council met in a regularly scheduled meeting, on September 8, 2020, in the Somerville Senior Citizens Center. Present were Mayor Micheal Bradford; Alderwoman Debra Coleman, Alderman Jeff Schoppe, Alderman Delfino Orozco and Alderman Don Murray; City Administrator Danny Segundo; City Secretary Rose Rosser; Visitor's Register - on file in the City Secretary's Office.

CALL TO ORDER

6:15 PM - The meeting was called to Order at this time by Mayor Bradford.

INVOCATION

Invocation was given by Lucinda Murphy.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Pledge of Allegiance followed the Invocation.

PUBLIC HEARING

6:16 PM - Public hearing opened by Mayor Bradford for the purpose of discussion on the (1) Proposed Ad Valorem tax rate of 0.66198 / \$100.00 valuation for the City of Somerville, Texas.

Vicky Simon: How the rate has gone down?

Administrator Segundo: Explained that the tax rate and tax revenue are done by county, when the appraisals go up, the tax rates go down. However, the City does have the option to keep it at the current rate, but our recommendation is to go with the 0.66198 / \$100.00 valuation.

Theresa Bradford: If the property values go up the tax rate goes down, why not keep the tax rate the same?

Administrator Segundo: The goal was not to generate more than needed to operate.

Theresa Bradford: The City needs street repairs and other repairs, why not take that few dollars and (inaudible).

Administrator Segundo: Raising people's property tax rates is not the goal right now.

Alderman Orozco: He would like to keep the tax rate where it is to build up the funds so that we can work on our streets and our city. Why not keep it the same? It's not that much of a difference, it's not putting a big burden on everybody.

Vicky Simon: Will pot holes would be filled?

Administrator Segundo: Yes, maintenance will be done.

Alderwoman Coleman: Clarified that that was her understanding, pot hole patching is maintenance.

6:22 PM - Public hearing closed by Mayor Bradford at this time for the purpose of discussion on the (1) Proposed Ad Valorem tax rate of 0.66198 / \$100.00 valuation for the City of Somerville, Texas.

PUBLIC HEARING

6:22 PM - Public hearing opened by Mayor Bradford for the purpose of discussion on the (2) City of Somerville's 2020-2021 Annual Budget.

Theresa Bradford: Is this budget including new police officers or was it still based on the old department?

Administrator Segundo: The department and the budget had been revamped. There was a decrease of about \$40,000.

Theresa Bradford: Are we were saving that money?

Administrator Segundo: It is being reinvested in officers pay.

Howard Faust: Are there were going to be less police officers? and Are you serious?

Administrator Segundo: We were budgeting approximately \$250,000 for our officers. Which is the Police Chief, a part time Patrol Sgt., and 4 Officers. We were unable to fill one of those positions, so we were paying a lot of overtime to the other officers. What was proposed is that we do away with the position that we can't fill, we promote someone to Patrol Sgt. and make that a fulltime position, then hire 3 officers and a Chief. That allows an increase for salaries to go from \$15.00 to \$18.25 an hour starting pay for officers.

Vicky Simon: That sounds like a good restructure.

Alderman Orozco: He was not happy with the way the budget was done. He would like to have gone over with more detail, and they weren't allowed, He's just not happy with the way it turned out. He would have liked to have seen more spelled out where the money was going. He said that they weren't allowed to have a second meeting and he's not happy about that.

Mayor Bradford: Was that the vote of the Council?

Alderman Orozco: Correct.

Lucinda Murphy: Her concern is that she doesn't know how informed Council is (inaudible) money being budgeted. She's concerned that if Council doesn't understand the budget how can they vote on it.

6:27 PM - Public hearing closed by Mayor Bradford at this time for the purpose of discussion on the (2) City of Somerville's 2020-2021 Annual Budget.

CITIZEN'S COMMENTS

Carol Freeman: Came to address the petition. It is frivolous and complains of disrespect. She personally sees the irony in the petition, this is a disrespectful petition, complaining of disrespect. It is long on hate and short on fact. Two sitting council members signed this petition, that is wrong on so many levels and disrespectful. True strength is being able to walk away from the nonsense with your heads held high. But instead these same council members are part of the nonsense and sometimes the instigators of it. These same council members said they have nothing to do with it, that statement has a hollow ring to it. We hoped that when we voted for this council we voted for ideas that make us a better community. This has not happened. Take a look around, no street repairs, no drainage modifications to speak of and no infrastructure modifications. Absolutely nothing. I speak for many citizens here tonight, and ask this

council to take note that we are sick and tired of ugly. The time, effort and energy that went into obtaining signatures on a baseless petition could have been used to do something positive for Somerville. We don't expect anything extraordinary from our City Council members, but we do expect you to give us your best. This council should press the reset button and do the job they agreed to do when they took office or step aside. Everyone in this room and everyone listening out there tonight should remember that respect is earned and not given. So why don't we all try to earn each other's respect instead of this hateful rhetoric. Thank you.

Lucinda Murphy: My comments are based on personal experience not from face book or rumors. The Mayor was in the military for 10 years and has been heavily involved in Eagle Scouting. In a presentation he gave to the Historical Society he said that the (inaudible) in Eagle Scouting by leaving the world a little better than you found it. He has certainly made that effort in Somerville from day one. In this same spirit I thank him for but not limited to the significant leadership he has provided to Somerville. He has done this without support. Specifically, I thank him for the professionalism he has shown in running council meetings. He actually does prepare for these meetings, knows the agenda and addresses and gives input on issues that come up. I thank him for the leadership provided when we had the crisis in our police department (inaudible) with our former Chief. It forced the City to take a new look at the type of police department that will hopefully be more accepted, efficient, and provide better funding for our police officers and most importantly one that will be people friendly. We were watching. Thank you for the leadership and protection you provided at our two protests. We were encouraged to stand up peacefully for justice and for right. We did it without guns and without (inaudible). Thank you for the intelligent response you gave in the newspaper regarding the baseless accusations against you on a piece of paper that got (inaudible) with every signature. Your response was both to the point and respectful because that is the kind of person you are. I didn't say you were perfect. Someone in (inaudible) recently said 'If you are in the arena you have to be able to take a punch. But you also have to be able to give one back.' You have respectfully done that with the power of the pen. Thank you for respecting and protecting your children's privacy. When others have chosen to (inaudible) them publicly, especially on public media. And I paraphrase this quote, 'People have chosen to go low, you have chosen to go high.' To the citizens of Somerville, I say this, let us be children of the light and not of darkness. Let us work together to make Somerville a likable, and dignified community. We can do it, join me. Mayor lead us with more energy and determination. I leave you with this quote, 'No one can hurt me unless I give them permission. ' That's from Mahatma Gandhi. Thank you.

REPORTS

Police Department Activity Report

Interim Chief Arnim reported on Police Department Activity for the month of August 2020.

Municipal Court Activity Report

Rose Rosser reported on Municipal Court Activity for the month of August 2020.

Public Works Activity Report

Joshua Young reported on Public Works Activity for the month of August 2020.

Code Enforcement Activity Report

Kathy Pollock reported on Code Enforcement Activity for the month of August 2020.

Senior Center Activity Report

Elizabeth Rosser reported on Senior Center Activity for the month of August 2020.

CONSENT AGENDA

All Items on the Consent Agenda are to be considered self-explanatory in nature and may be enacted with one motion, one second and one vote and without separate discussion of each item. However, Council reserves the right to move any item or all items from the Consent Agenda to New Business for discussion and separate action.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES / FINANCIAL MATTERS

Motion made by Alderman Schoppe to **approve** the Minutes of the August 11, 2020 Regularly scheduled City Council Meeting, August 18, 2020, August 19, 2020 and August 20, 2020 Special called meeting for the purpose of interviewing Police Chief Applicants; and the August 25, 2020 Special Called Council Meeting; Statement of Revenues and Expenditures Report, Sales Tax Report, and the Accounts Payable Check Register. **Seconded** by Alderwoman Coleman. Motion **carried** by a vote of 3 (Schoppe, Murray & Coleman) in favor and 1 (Orozco) abstained on the approval of the August 11, 2020 Council Meeting Minutes.

PRESENTATIONS

Presentation by Michele Kwiatkowski, CPA, with Seidel Schroeder Certified Public Accountants / Business Advisors, presented the City of Somerville FY 2018-2019 Annual Audit. The following were reviewed with Mayor and City Council: Financial Statement; Statement of Net Position; Business type activity in Utilities; Governmental Activity in General Fund; Fixed Assets; Capital Assets; Prior Year AP; Debt; GO and CO Bonds; Proprietary Fund; Net pension liability; Audit Adjustment and Internal Control Procedures.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

NONE

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NONE

NEW BUSINESS

Action Items

FY 2018-2019 Annual Audit

Motion made by Alderman Orozco to **approve** accepting the auditor's report as presented by Michele Kwiatkowski, for FY 2018-2019. **Seconded** by Alderman Murray. Motion **carried** by a vote of 4 in favor and 0 opposed.

2021-2022 CDBG Grant

Motion made by Alderwoman Coleman to **approve** authorization to issue requests for proposals (RFPs) for administrative services and requests for qualifications (RFQs) for engineering services related to the 2021-2022 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program administered by the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA). **Seconded** by Alderman Orozco. Motion **carried** by a vote of 4 in favor and 0 opposed.

Reappointment of Planning and Zoning Commission

Motion made by Alderman Schoppe to **approve** the reappointment of Dick Meyer to the Planning and Zoning Commission. **Seconded** by Alderman Murray. Motion **carried** by a vote of 4 in favor and 0 opposed.

Appointment of Alderman

Mayor and City Council discussed making an appointment to fill the vacant council seat of Shelley Gotte. Alderman Orozco Asked if the council has to appoint someone to fill that vacancy, with it being such a short period of time. Mayor said that there are 4 regulars and as long as they keep showing up, we're in good shape. Alderman Orozco said that he didn't see why they should appoint someone. Alderman Murray said that he would like to recommend Deonna Moses, she works with the Chamber of Commerce, she works at the bank. Alderman Orozco said that he would like to recommend Fred Elliott to fill that seat. Mayor said that he wished that there was someone there to do a minimal interview with, but he will move ahead. Alderman Orozco asked if they could table it. Mayor Bradford said that they needed a motion to do whatever they want to do. Alderman Orozco asked if he could make a motion to table it and Mayor Bradford said that he could. Alderman Orozco made a motion to table appointment of an Alderman. Mayor Bradford asked for a second. No second was given. Mayor asked for a motion to consider and approve appointing an individual. Alderman Murray made a motion to **approve** appointing Deonna Moses to fill the vacant seat. **Second** by Alderman Schoppe. Motion **carried** by a vote of 3 (Murray, Schoppe, Coleman) in favor and 1 (Orozco) opposed.

2020 Ad Valorem Tax Rate

Motion made by Alderwoman Coleman to **approve** the 2020 Ad Valorem tax rate of 0.66198 / \$100.00 valuation for the City of Somerville, Texas. **Seconded** by Alderman Schoppe. Motion **carried** by a vote of 3 (Murray, Coleman, Schoppe) in favor and 1 (Orozco) opposed.

2020-2021 Annual Budget

Motion made by Alderman Schoppe to **approve** the City of Somerville's 2020-2021 Annual Budget. **Seconded** by Alderman Murray. Motion **carried** by a vote of 3 (Schoppe, Murray, Coleman) in favor and 1 (Orozco) abstained.

MAYOR & COUNCIL COMMENTS

Alderwoman Coleman: Being on the City Council of Somerville has been challenging. I thought it would be like Mayberry, you do a little something and everybody's nice to everybody. Just because of what I feel doesn't mean that you have to agree. But that's ok. I feel like we can get along. My husband went to school with Delfino. I went to school with Jeff. It's about doing what we can for the City of Somerville. It's not about no body else. I am not led by anyone else. I go by myself. We have to include others to come in and do what's best for the City. When I got on this council, someone helped me fill out the paperwork, I won't name any names, but they helped me because they thought that I would be good on Council. I try the best I can. When I vote, don't get mad at me. The way that I vote has nothing to do with you, it has to do with me and what I believe. I went to Danny when I had a problem, he sat down and talked with me and we still talk. He has always been very respectful. I tell my children to be respectful. Even if you don't agree with your elders, you still talk with them and respect them and go on. But don't be disrespectful to anybody. The Mayor and I have had some words, but you've been quite respectful to me. Even though I was very upset about some things, you were still very respectful. I try to get myself in line because I know when I'm out of line. We need to agree or agree to disagree. But lets do what we know is best for the City of Somerville. I'm not being funny, I'm being truthful. We've got to be respectful to one another and it needs to start tonight. Thank you.

Adjourn

7:33 PM - At this time the Mayor said that "there were no other agenda items" and adjourned the meeting. He did not ask for a motion to adjourn or a second.

Passed: 10-13-2020


Micheal Bradford, Mayor

I, Rose Rosser, City Secretary for the City of Somerville, Texas, do hereby certify that I am the custodian of the records for the City of Somerville, Texas, and that the above is a true and correct copy of the Minutes of the regularly scheduled meeting held on September 8, 2020.


Rose Rosser, City Secretary