

**STATE OF TEXAS
COUNTY OF WALLER
CITY OF HEMPSTEAD**

BE IT REMEMBERED that on the 18th day of September A.D., 2023 at 6:00 P.M. the City Council met in a Regular Meeting at the Hempstead City Hall, 1125 Austin Street, Hempstead, Texas, there being present, to-wit:

Erica Gillum, Mayor
Lonnie Garfield, Mayor Pro-Tem
Cindy Pearce, Councilmember
Karon Neal, Councilmember
Nora Hodges, Councilmember
Mildred Jefferson, Councilmember (Absent)

Bridgette Begle, City Attorney
Sabrina Alvarez, City Secretary

1. Call to order and invocation.

Mayor Erica Gillum called the meeting to order at 6:02 P.M. and Pastor Charles Tompkins gave the invocation.

2. Pledge of Allegiance.

The Pledge of Allegiance was given.

3. Public Comments.

Judith Richey stated her concerns about the pay raises and the police step program taken away from the budget.

Jackie Hilman is against the pay raises, tax rate increase and against the travel policy that was passed not including the elected officials.

Kim Hargrave does not agree on the pay raises or tax rate. She expects more on the street maintenance and overtime pay.

Jimmy Economou is against the raises and tax rate.

Rebecca Tim inherited 8.5 lots in the city, and she is having rodent problems along with feral animals with an abandoned house next to her property.

Clint Heavy is against the tax increase.

4. Consideration and action on minutes from August 21, 2023, August 22, 2023, September 5, 2023 & September 8, 2023.

Councilmember Nora Hodges made a motion to approve the minutes. Councilmember Cindy Pearce seconded the motion and carried unanimously.

5. Consideration and action on a Resolution of the City of Hempstead approving the Hempstead Economic Development Corporation 4A and 4B 2023-2024 Fiscal Budget.

Councilmember Mildred Jefferson made a motion to approve the HEDC Budget. Councilmember Karon Neal seconded the motion. AYE'S-Councilmember Mildred Jefferson, Councilmember Karon Neal and Mayor Pro-Tem Lonnie Garfield. NO'S-Councilmember Nora Hodges and Councilmember Cindy Pearce. Motion carried.

6. Consideration and action on an Ordinance of the City of Hempstead, Texas approving and adopting the City of Hempstead General Budget for the year 2023-2024; making appropriations for City for such year as reflected in said Budget; establishing the procedure for intra-budget transfers; and containing other provisions relating to the subject. (Record Vote)

Motion was approved on September 15, 2023.

7. Consideration and action on an Ordinance of the City of Hempstead, Texas providing for the assessment, levy, and collection of ad valorem taxes for the 2023 tax year and for each year thereafter until otherwise provided; proving the date on which such taxes shall be due and payable; providing for severability and repealing all ordinances and parts of ordinances in conflict therewith.

- a) Consideration and action an ad valorem tax at the rate of \$0.075027 on each \$100.00 of assessed valuation for debt service. **(Record Vote)**
- b) Consideration and action on an ad valorem tax at the rate of \$0.507658 on each \$100.00 of assessed valuation for maintenance and operations. **(Record Vote)**
- c) Consideration and action on an Ordinance providing for the assessment, levy, and collection of ad valorem taxes for the year 2023. **MOTION:** *“I move that the property tax be increased by the adoption of a tax rate of \$0.582685, which is effectively an 9.04% percent increase in the tax rate.”* **(Record Vote)**

Motion was tabled until the September 25, 2023, Special City Council Meeting.

8. Zoning Map Amendment request to rezone Clear Creek Development Lot 1 Acres 25.132 from AR-Agricultural Residential to HC-Highway Commercial.
a. Public Hearing

Public Hearing Opened at 6:30 P.M.

Frank Rodriguez, our Building Inspector, informed the council that the property is in Mack Washington. It is the last lot in our city limits in that vicinity that wants to be rezoned Highway Commercial. Juan Venegas spoke and stated that the city has to do better planning before rezoning properties. Jimmy Economou asked if there was a protocol on what can be brought into that property.

Public Hearing Closed at 6:35 P.M.

9. Consideration and action on an Ordinance of the City Council of the City of Hempstead amending the Zoning Map to rezone Clear Creek Development Lot 1

**Acres 25.132 from AR-Agricultural Residential to HC-Highway Commercial.
(P&Z recommended approval at 9/5/23 meeting)**

Councilmember Nora Hodges made a motion to approve the Ordinance. Mayor Pro-Tem Lonnie Garfield seconded the motion and carried unanimously.

10. Consideration and action on a Resolution of the City Council of Hempstead, Texas adopting positions and terms to the Board of Directors of the City of Hempstead Economic Development Corporation 4A & 4B.

Mayor Erica Gillum stated there were some vacancies on the board that needed to be filled. Councilmember Cindy Pearce stated she read Brent Rystrom biography would be a good fit for HEDC board. Kenneth Pilcher owns businesses in the city. Brad Austin owns a business as well and has several rental properties.

Councilmember Mildred Jefferson made a motion to approve the Resolution. Councilmember Karon Neal seconded the motion and carried unanimously.

11. Presentation by Dan Jackson with Willdan Financial Services on a Rate Study and Financial Forecast for the City of Hempstead.

Mr. Dan Jackson with Willdan Financial Services carried out a rate study on the City of Hempstead. He showed a slide on the tv and talked to council about utility rates going up all over the United States. He stated the cost for a city that runs their own utilities averages about 3% to 5% per year due to inflation. Transmission costs will go up significantly in the next coming years. Water and sewer costs will go up over the next ten years by an average of 3% to 4.5 %. Capital improvements to the sewer system, meaning issuing more debt. He recommended designing a rate plan to pay debt on a five-year plan. Gas will be a 3% to 4% increase as well. No need for capital improvements to the gas system. Several citizens asked about solar power, why the city isn't deregulated.

12. Consideration and action on lease from EDC Building located at 745 12th Street.

Jessica Holloman stated EDC lease is up fixed issues and that the reports were in the council packets. Mold and mildew were present in the building. Mrs. Holloman stated that a mold test was done and showed inclusive results. The center beam was treated and the air filtration. Councilmember Cindy Pearce asked if the EDC approved the lease prior to the mold issue? Councilmember Mildred Jefferson stated the EDC board didn't want to renew the lease because of the mold present. Councilmember Nora Hodges would like to hear from the EDC Administrator on the issue. Mayor Erica Gillum stated she liked the location of the building. Mayor Pro-Tem Lonnie Garfield made a motion to approve the lease for one year. Councilmember Mildred Jefferson seconded the motion and carried unanimously.

**The council convened in Executive Session at 7:30 P.M.
Executive Session ended at 7:44 P.M. NO ACTION TAKEN**

13. Consideration and action on authorizing the Mayor to enter into a written Agreement & Release with Pilot Travel Centers LLC for the repayment of monies overcharged on utility account for the property located at 2000 FM 1488 Hempstead, TX 77445.

Mayor Pro-Tem Lonnie Garfield made a motion to approve the agreement and release. Councilmember Mildred Jefferson seconded the motion and carried unanimously.

14. Presentations.

A. Mayor's Reports-

- a. Sales Tax-Sales tax up for the month of September 3.53%
- b. FabTech 2023 Update- EDC members were asked to go, nobody wanted to go. Mayor Erica Gillum met with many vendors about our city. Moving forward.
- c. Delivery of Lunch to Hempstead Football Team. -Delivered lunch to the Hempstead Football team from Subway.
- d. Code Red-stated to the citizens that the city has a Code Red for natural disasters, boil notices and will be in full effect soon.
- e. Customer Portal-stated to the citizens to sign up to get daily alerts about water usage.

B. Councilmember's Report-

- a. Karon Neal- A big thank you to the electrical department.
- b. Nora Hodges- COLA update Social Security is 3.2% based on the Consumer Price Index at the end of August.

PASSED AND APPROVED this the 23rd day of October, A.D., 2023.

APPROVED:

/s/: Erica Gillum, Mayor

ATTEST:

/s/: Sabrina Alvarez, City Secretary