

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

**BE IT REMEMBERED** that on the 25<sup>th</sup> day of September A.D., 2023 at 6:00 P.M. the City Council met in a Special 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

Bridgette Begle, City Attorney  
Sabrina Alvarez, City Secretary

**1. Call to order and invocation.**

Mayor Erica Gillum called the meeting to order at 6:04 P.M. and Mayor Pro-Tem Lonnie Garfield gave the invocation.

**2. Pledge of Allegiance.**

The Pledge of Allegiance was given.

**3. Public Comments.**

Pete Pieper spoke against the proposed tax rate and budget. Judith Richey spoke against the proposed tax rate and the budget. Kim Hargrave spoke against the proposed tax rate, budget, and salaries. Jimmy Economou presented a Bible from 1828 to Mayor and Council to hold. Zaundria Warren introduced herself to the citizens of Hempstead, Mayor, and Council.

**4. 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. Public Hearing on Tax Rate

**The Public Hearing opened at 6:25 P.M.**

Juan Venegas is against the tax rate. Raul Villarreal is against the tax rate, property values are up, against salaries. Mike Trojan against tax rate, citizens are struggling.

**Public Hearing Closed at 6:28 P.M.**

Mayor Pro-Tem Lonnie Garfield spoke on why he was for the tax rate increase. Councilmember Cindy Pearce stated that she is against the tax rate and asked Bridgette Begle about the county's tax rate, does the council have to approve it. Councilmember Nora Hodges stated that we started with a deficit that got it down to \$1.9 million, not in favor of a tax increase of 9.04%, she is aware that the city won't be able to meet the deadline if vote for the lower tax rate. She received various calls from single parents and senior citizens, who were against the tax rate.

**b. Consideration and action on an ad valorem tax rate of \$0.075027 on each \$100.00 of assessed valuation for debt service. (Record Vote)**

AYES- Mayor Pro-Tem Lonnie Garfield, Councilmember Karon Neal, Councilmember Mildred Jefferson

NO's – Councilmember Nora Hodges and Councilmember Cindy Pearce  
Motion carried.

**c. Consideration and action on ad valorem tax rate at the rate of \$0.507658 on each \$100.00 of assessed valuation for maintenance and operations. (Record Vote)**

AYES- Mayor Pro-Tem Lonnie Garfield, Councilmember Karon Neal, Councilmember Mildred Jefferson

NO's – Councilmember Nora Hodges and Councilmember Cindy Pearce  
Motion carried.

**d. 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 tax rate of \$0.582685, which is effectively an 5.45% percent increase in the tax rate.” (Record Vote)**

AYES- Mayor Pro-Tem Lonnie Garfield, Councilmember Karon Neal, Councilmember Mildred Jefferson

NO's – Councilmember Nora Hodges and Councilmember Cindy Pearce  
Motion carried.

**5. Consideration and action on a recommendation from HEDC on a Project to sell approximately 4.98 acres of HEDC-owned land for purchase and use as a retail store.**

Crystal Fife with Fife Realty is the agent associated with the contract for Tractor Supply. Tractor Supply offered \$750,000 and the city counteroffered \$850,000. Tractor Supply wants to purchase 4.98 acres. It will take 15 months to build, and it will bring 35 to 50 jobs to the city. Councilmember Cindy Pearce asked about tax abatement, easement, and frontage. It is currently

zoned Highway Commercial. Councilmember Nora Hodges asked about selling price and does the city have a performance agreement, holding Tractor Supply to some agreement.

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

**6. Consideration and action on a Resolution of the City Council of the City of Hempstead appointing position and terms to the Board of Directors of the City of Hempstead Economic Development Corporation 4A & 4B.**

The three board members gave a small background of their work history. Soraya Rodriguez is a local business owner and works for the Prairie View small business office. Zaundria Warren works for the extension office in Hempstead and works with adults and 4H members. Shaquez Wilder is a local business owner. Councilmember Mildred Jefferson made a motion to approve the Resolution. Mayor Pro-Tem Lonnie Garfield seconded the motion and carried.

**7. Consideration and action on Planning and Zoning Commission Annual Report September 1, 2022 – August 31, 2023.**

Councilmember Mildred Jefferson made a motion to approve the annual report. Mayor Pro-Tem Lonnie Garfield seconded the motion and carried.

**8. Consideration and action on Board of Adjustment Annual Report September 1, 2022 – August 31, 2023.**

Councilmember Mildred Jefferson made a motion to approve the annual report. Councilmember Nora Hodges seconded the motion and carried.

**9. Consideration and action on lease from EDC Building located at 745 12<sup>th</sup> Street.**

Item will be tabled waiting for mold test inspection. Councilmember Nora Hodges made a motion to approve the mold test. Councilmember Karon Neal seconded the motion and carried.

**10. Consideration and action on payment of current bills.**

Councilmember Mildred Jefferson made a motion to approve the bills. Mayor Pro-Tem Lonnie Garfield seconded the motion. All in favor except Councilmember Cindy Pearce, doesn't agree with charges on credit cards.

**11. Adjourn City Council Meeting.**

Mayor Pro-Tem Lonnie Garfield made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:31 P.M. Councilmember Mildred Jefferson seconded the motion and carried.

**PASSED AND APPROVED** this the 23<sup>rd</sup> day of October, A.D., 2023.

**APPROVED:**

**/s/: Erica Gillum, Mayor**

**ATTEST:**

**/s/: Sabrina Alvarez, City Secretary**