



**MINUTES
OF THE CITY OF SAN BENITO
SPECIAL CITY COMMISSION MEETING AND BUDGET WORKSHOP**

On June 25, 2019 the City Commission met for a Special City Commission Meeting and Budget Workshop at the San Benito Municipal Building, Cesar Gonzalez Meeting Hall, 401 North Sam Houston Boulevard, San Benito, Texas at 5:30 p.m. A quorum was present including the following:

HONORABLE BENJAMIN GOMEZ, MAYOR, WAS THE PRESIDING OFFICER

CITY COMMISSION MEMBERS

**Benjamin Gomez, Mayor
Carol Lynn Sanchez, Mayor Pro Tem
Antonio Gonzales, Commissioner, Place 1
Rene Villafranco, Commissioner, Place 2
Ricardo Guerra, Commissioner, Place 3
Mark Sossi, City Attorney**

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

**Manuel De La Rosa, City Manager
Fred Bell, Assistant City Manager**

ABSENT

**Carol Lynn Sanchez, Mayor Pro Tem
Antonio Gonzales, Commissioner
Ruth McGinnis, City Secretary**

ITEM 1. WELCOME.

Mayor Benjamin Gomez called the meeting to order. “The City Commission and I welcome you to this Special City Commission Meeting and Budget Workshop. The time is 5:30 p.m. and we have a quorum.”

ITEM 2. DISCUSSION OF THE 2019 AD VALOREM PROPERTY TAX RATE.

City Manager Manuel De La Rosa, addressed the City Commission, introduced was the proposed tax rate of \$0.728125 per \$100. This tax rate exceeds the lower of the effective or rollback tax rate. State law requires that two public hearings be held by the governing body before adopting the proposed tax rate. The preceding year’s tax rate is \$0.728125 per \$100. The effective tax rate is \$0.701194 per \$100. The rollback rate is \$0.786703 per \$100. The rollback tax rate is the highest tax rate that the City of San Benito may adopt before voters are entitled to petition for an election to limit the rate that may be approved to the rollback rate. **City Manager Manuel De La Rosa** stated that there is no tax increase in the proposed Fiscal Year 2019-2020 general operating budget. The tax rate can be raised by up to 8%, but it would then be subject to rollback action. He cautioned that next fiscal year, however, he anticipates a 3.5 cent increase in the City

budget due to newly enacted legislation resulting from the recently completed 86th Legislative Session. No motion carried **DISCUSSION ONLY.**

ITEM 3. BUDGET WORKSHOP NUMBER 1 FOR FISCAL YEAR OCTOBER 1, 2019 TO SEPTEMBER 30, 2020.

City Manager Manuel De La Rosa addressed the City Commission stating he is proposing a 3% employee salary increase, but noted also that anticipated medical benefit costs are \$180,000 over current year totals which could affect the recommended increase. **Human Resources Director Yolanda Villafranca** reported that in the Police and Fire Departments, due to the collective bargaining agreement, the City's options are limited to regulating the number of employees versus staffing needs. **City Manager Manuel De La Rosa** advised that the City is losing police officers to larger Cities which offer higher salaries and benefits, but said that the City is working to increase retention rates. Meanwhile, the Fire Department is not seeing a significant turnover at this time. Other needs he addressed in relation to the Police Department included its communications system, which is in need of upgrades despite its \$1.5 million cost which was financed over a five-year period, which has not yet expired. **Commissioner Ricardo Guerra** suggested exploring four grants that are available through the Lower Rio Grande Valley Development Council to find funds for the needed upgrades. Overtime issues have arisen, the city manager said, but noted also that with 43 police officers on the force, the City is getting a "good bang for its buck." "We have a good police department, with some problems, like all other departments," he added. **City Manager Manuel De La Rosa** advised, in the Fire Department's budget, incentive pay is now at \$600, while the budget includes a proposed rate of \$1,000. This would increase their commitment to longevity. Their stability pay was also discussed, with **Commissioner Ricardo Guerra** commenting that decreasing it would result in the loss of some officers. **Commissioner Rene Villafranco** questioned how to create incentive for directors. **City Manager Manuel De La Rosa** advised he needed feedback on the proposed budget prior to the scheduled budget workshops in order to create a balanced budget. On July 16, the city manager is scheduled to present a preliminary budget to the City Commission. No Motion carried, **DISCUSSION ONLY.**

ITEM 4: ADJOURNMENT.

Mayor Benjamin Gomez requested a motion adjourn. **Commissioner Ricardo Guerra** moved to adjourn. **Commissioner Antonio Gonzales** seconded the motion. Voting Aye; **Mayor Benjamin Gomez, Commissioner Antonio Gonzales, Commissioner Rene Villafranco, and Commissioner Ricardo Guerra.** Motion carried to **ADJOURN AT 6:40 P.M.**

Note: The City of San Benito does not discriminate on the basis of disability in the admission of, access to, treatment of, or employment in its programs, activities, or public meetings. Any individual with a disability in need of an accommodation is encouraged to contact the City Secretary at (956) 361-3800, Extension 103, by Monday, no later than 5:00 P.M., to make proper arrangements.

CITY OF SAN BENITO

Benjamin Gomez
Mayor

ATTEST:

Ruth McGinnis
City Secretary