

**CITY OF VIDOR
VIDOR CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
August 22, 2024**

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Councilmember Lee
Councilmember McGowan
Councilmember Thompson
Councilmember Barker
Councilmember Bourque
Councilmember Weldon

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Mayor Songe

Administrative Personnel: Robbie Hood, City Manager; Pebbles Eckhoff, Finance Director; Rachel Duplechain, City Secretary; Chris Leavins, City Attorney; and Rod Carroll, Chief

A. OPENING, PRESENTATIONS, AND CITIZENS COMMENTS

A -1. Call to order and the establishment of a Quorum

A quorum was present, and the Regular Meeting of the Vidor City Council began at 7:11 p.m., Nicole McGowan, Mayor Pro tem, presiding.

A -2. Invocation and Pledge to the United States Flag and the State of Texas Flag

Watson Franks gave the Invocation and led the Pledge to the United States Flag and the State of Texas Flag.

A -3. Citizen Comments

None

B. COUNCIL CONSENT AGENDA

B -1. Approval of Accounts Paid:

Paid Invoices:	General Fund –	\$253,065.63
	MCBSF –	\$359.06
	Emergency MGMT Service -	\$197.38
	Hotel Occupancy –	\$26.50
	Disaster Fund -	\$16,240.00
	Proprietary Fund –	\$44,543.62
	I & S Debt Serve 2008/2016 -	\$364,400.00
	Total:	\$678,832.19

B -2. Approval of Minutes: Regular Meeting – August 8, 2024

A motion to **approve the Consent Agenda** was made by Councilmember Thompson, seconded by Councilmember Bourque. The Council voted six (6) for and none (0) opposed. **The motion carried.**

C. COUNCIL REGULAR AGENDA

C -1. Presentation and possible approval of AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING CITY REPRESENTATIVES TO EXECUTE A COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE CITY OF VIDOR, TEXAS WITH THE VIDOR POLICE ASSOCIATION AND ACCEPTING THE TERMS THEREOF (The term of this CBA is October 1, 2024 – September 30, 2025.)

Robbie Hood, City Manager, Mayor Pro tem/Council, we met with Representatives from the Police Association and had a very good meeting. Our Police Department, our force as our Chief can pertain to that we are on the lower end of the pay raises for our area for officers, for years in the past they have only been given cost of living raises and not salary adjustments and that is why we are here today, this in essence will get them back to at least the median in the market. We cannot compare it to cities like Beaumont, but compared to cities like us Bridge City, Jasper, things like that. So basically, we are just asking for approval of just a one-year contract, because I did not want to put the City in a position where it could not sustain the raises or put them in a situation where they could have gotten more based off things opening up next year like the Road Ranger, Tractor Supply, and a bunch of other things happening in the City. So, this agreement is for a one (1) year contract from October 1 till September 30, 2025, and it includes a ten (10) percent raise to the Police Department, ten (10) percent certificate pay to the Police Department, and also adding back what needed to be in there which is the Evergreen Clause. Which basically says if we reach the end of the year and we have not reached an agreement with the Police Association and we go after October 1, this gives us another twelve (12) months to continue negotiations, and everything stays the same as the current agreement is now. Also included for our Detectives they have to be on-call, so it provides them with four (4) hour comp time, plus they get to leave four (4) hours early on the Friday before their on-call week. Councilmember Barker, where is the language listed at that it covers this. Chris Leavins, City Attorney, if you look at wages under Article Fourteen (14) it is listed out. It is the last paragraph. Barker, what page is that on? Leavins, it is on page nine (9), right above where it says Section Two (2).

A motion to **approve the Ordinance authorizing City Representatives to execute a Collective Bargaining Agreement on behalf of the City of Vidor, Texas, with the Vidor Police Association and accepting the terms thereof (The term of this CBA is October 1, 2024 – September 30, 2025)**, was made by Councilmember Barker, seconded by Councilmember Bourque. The Council voted six (6) for and none (0) opposed. **The motion carried.**

C -2. Discussion and possible action to approve an Ordinance amending the Vidor Code of Ordinances by amending Chapter 58 – Streets, Sidewalks and Other Public Places, Article III. – Driveways and Culverts, Section 58-63. – Application for permit, request to establish pipe sizes, grades and surface grate inlet spacing, regarding requested permits for driveways, driveway culverts or landscape culverts; providing for repeal of conflicting ordinances; providing for severability; and providing for publication and an effective date (second reading)

Robbie Hood, City Manager, basically to bring the Council back to what we talked about two weeks ago, so each property owner has a culvert and ditches, some of these property owners are wanting to fill in their ditches, which is fine. But if we do that then we have to get an engineer to approve saying that it will not impact the flow of water in the ditches. This is requiring property owners to have to do the same.

A motion to **approve the Ordinance amending the Vidor Code of Ordinances by amending Chapter 58 – Streets, Sidewalks and Other Public Places, Article III. – Driveways and Culverts, Section 58-63**, was made by Councilmember Barker, seconded by Councilmember Thompson. The Council voted six (6) for and none (0) opposed. **The motion carried.**

C -3. Consideration and possible action to approve Work Order Quote 711 from Gallow Mechanical Services, LLC in the amount of \$6,195.00 for HVAC repairs at City Hall

Pebbles Eckhoff, Finance Director, Mayor/Council, this is for repairs to the ac in the Chambers, we had some things go wrong with it and it was not in the budget. We are going to ARPA funds for this and will receive compensation back. Robbie Hood, City Manager, Council just so you are aware the things going on in the Council Chambers will all be covered by insurance.

A motion to **approve the Work Order Quote 711 from Gallow Mechanical Services, LLC in the amount of \$6,195.00 for HVAC repairs**, was made by Councilmember Thompson, seconded by Councilmember Bourque. The Council voted six (6) for and none (0) opposed. **The motion carried.**

C -4. Consideration and possible action to approve a Resolution approving and authorizing a property tax exemption for qualifying child-care facilities under Section 11.36 of the Texas Tax Code

Chris Leavins, City Attorney, Council after discussion with City Staff we are going to bring this back after we look at a few more things, if that is okay.

C -5. Certification of the Amended 2024 Anticipated Collection Rate & 2023 Excess Debt Collections as presented by the Orange County Tax Assessor-Collector

Pebbles Eckhoff, Finance Director, explained when checking the calculations and rates presented by the Orange County Tax Assessor, it was discovered that there were some changes that needed to be made, section 26 was changed back in January, I was aware of this as was the new Tax-Assessor. But it was changed again on the last day of July, and we had to re-calculate with the new form, changing the tax rate by \$0.0002. Now we need to reapprove the rates again.

A motion for **Certification of the Amended 2024 Anticipated Collection Rate & 2023 Excess Debt Collections as presented by the Orange County Tax Assessor-Collector**, was made by Councilmember Bourque and seconded by Councilmember Thompson. The Council voted six (6) and none (0) opposed. **The motion carried.**

C -6. Consideration and possible approval of a an amended “Secretary’s Certificate” to designate the Orange County Tax Assessor-Collector to (1) calculate and publish the No-New-Revenue Tax Rate and Voter-Approval Tax Rate for the City and (2) to submit updated electronic data to Orange County Appraisal District.

Pebbles Eckhoff, Finance Director, this is just what we went over in C-5, this is just giving Rachel permission to post it. Robbie Hood, City Manager, and we did contact Orange County as well.

A motion to **approve the Amended “Secretary’s Certificate” to designate the Orange County Tax Assessor-Collector to (1) calculate and publish the No-New-Revenue Tax Rate and the Voter-Approval Tax Rate for the City and (2) to submit updated electronic data to Orange County Appraisal District** was made by Councilmember Thompson, seconded by Councilmember Barker. The Council voted six (6) for and none (0) opposed. **The motion carried.**

C -7. Consideration and possible action on establishing a proposed ad valorem tax rate, including a Maintenance and Operation tax rate and an Interest and Sinking tax rate, and giving notice of public hearing on September 12, 2024, if necessary

Pebbles Eckhoff, Finance Director Reads:

The Certified Taxable Value is lower than Preliminary Values by \$12,756,832 as presented in the first draft of the budget. The City's current tax rate is .65393 which was used in the first draft of the budget. Staff are proposing that Council pass a tax rate of .634391, which is less than prior year and will raise \$90,945 which is 2% more revenue than in the prior year.

A motion to **approve the certification of the 2024 Property Values as presented by Orange County Tax-Assessor Collector**, was made by Councilmember Barker, seconded by Councilmember Thompson. ROLL CALL VOTE: Councilmember Weldon, aye; Councilmember Barker, aye; Councilmember Bourque, aye; Councilmember McGowan, aye; Councilmember Thompson aye; and Councilmember Lee, aye. The Council voted six (6) for and none (0) opposed. **The motion carried.**

C -8. Discussion of the tax rate for Fiscal Year 2024 – 2025

Nicole McGowan Mayor Pro tem Reads:

Council needs to discuss and approve a maximum tax rate today, but that is not necessarily the tax rate that will be adopted by Council.

Brief Discussion amongst Council

AFTER DISCUSSION

Nicole McGowan Mayor Pro tem Reads:

Council approves using .634391 as the maximum total tax rate at this time. The breakdown of the proposed tax rate is as follows: \$.541519 for Maintenance & Operation, \$.092872 for Interest and Sinking with a combined proposed tax rate of \$.634391 a public hearing is required and will be held on September 12, 2024, at 7:00 p.m.

C -9. Discussion regarding review, revisions and updates related to the City's Budget

Pebbles Eckhoff, Finance Director, so the changes to the tentative budget from the proposed budget you got tonight includes a three percent (3%) across-the-board wage increase for all city employees, this budget includes salary adjustments for the sanitation office positions, court clerk positions, code enforcement positions, animal shelter assistant position, library staff, janitorial staff, and street/maintenance clerk position. This budget includes a 10% wage increase for officers, 10% increase for officer certificate pay, a detective on call incentive, and a step pay system for dispatchers. This budget DOES include the cost to go to a 5-year vesting city. This budget DOES include premium increases to our TML insurance rates. This budget DOES include health, dental, and life insurance premium rates. This budget includes replacing the HDHP plan with PPO coverage for employees. There have been decreases made to capital outlay, in streets/drainage, parks, and the police department. There have been minor changes to various line items due to projections. This will continue to occur to each budget draft as revenues and expenditures continue to change, as we get closer to the end of the fiscal year. The city is required to contribute to the Texas Municipal Retirement System. We are happy to provide this benefit to our employees. If the Council approves this budget, the city will go to a 5-year vesting City. The City's monthly contribution rate effective January 1, 2025, will be 17.33%, an increase of .70% from this year's rate of 16.63%. The City provides each employee with medical, dental, and life insurance. We cover 100% of the cost to provide these benefits to our employees. We also absorb 40% of the cost to provide these benefits to the employee's spouse and/or

dependents should they elect coverage. We will see an increase of 15% overall on health insurance premiums. Dental increase \$1.60 per employee. Life insurance incurred no change. Liz McKee with TK Insurance will be discussing the changes for this year in more detail and answering any questions. Robbie Hood, City Manager, before we get into that let me talk about the five (5) year vesting for a moment. Right now, the City of Vidor is a ten (10) year vesting, I started off twenty-seven (27) years ago with the City of Stephenville, and they were five (5) year vesting. There is something magical about when you reach that point, it helps you retain employees even if it is only for two (2) or three (3) years longer. If they have ten (10) years to go they may leave, it means something when you reach that Plato, it's something to achieve. It will help reduce employee turnover and help retain our employees longer. The cost that we would incur in order to be able to do this is so minimal there isn't a reason to know not to do it. The Chief and I have had multiple conversations surrounding this and it is something that is very much needed. Rod Carroll, Chief of Police, I have lost several employees at the three (3) and four (4) year mark because of this, it was worth it for them to jump to another City where they paid much, much better, but if I had the five (5) year I could have maintained them for at least another two (2) years. We are spending about \$160,000.00 a year to initially get an officer trained and up and running. Eckhoff, and that is with the ten (10) year vesting. Chief, yes, I can't get a young person to understand ten (10) years, but I can get them to understand another two (2). Eckhoff, it is costing the City \$26,000.00 to go to five (5) year vesting and \$6,000.00 in Sanitation Proprietary Fund, it's not a very big difference. And the insurance going to the PPO plan is going to save the City at least \$20,000.00 a month to go to the PPO plan and get rid of the high deductible high premium plan. Councilmember Weldon, I understand all of this, but the step pay program, I haven't heard of that. Eckhoff, for the Dispatchers? Weldon, yes, I have not heard of that one. Eckhoff, so originally someone that had been there thirteen (13) years would make the same as a new hire. So, with the step pay program new hires will make less than the veterans that have been there longer and work their way up. Hood, Pebbles has worked very hard on this budget, it is a very tight budget. We are still going to maintain five (5) months of reserves in order to keep the City in a good position and be able to sustain everything that is in this budget, the raises and everything accordingly, without having to raise the property taxes again. Our City is similar to the other Cities in the County with the exception of the City of Orange, years ago the voters of Orange voted to have a EDC funded by the half of cent sales tax, whereas the other Cities including Vidor, voted for property tax relief. So, when our sales tax goes up our ability to be able to garnish more in property tax levels off. Weldon, yes, they did. It is going to be a very tight budget this year, but we are going to have our Department Heads keep to a very strict budget this year, we had to do some things we were not prepared to have to do this budget year for the Police Department. We had to get more vehicles, we were not able to get vehicles, and we were literally driving around in vehicles that were falling apart, they were spending more time in the shop in maintenance than being driven. Captain Martin started talking with Enterprise and asked do we have to stay in the state of Texas in order to get new vehicles and we actually got these vehicles from Georgia. We had to get new vehicles so that our officers have dependable transportation.

C -10. Public Hearing – Discussion and presentation of applicants/applications seeking hotel occupancy tax funds for fiscal year 2024-2025 in accordance with Chapter 351 of the Texas Tax Code

Nicole McGowan, Mayor Pro tem, convened the Regular Meeting at 7:33 pm and opened the Public Hearing.

(Presentations of the applicants will be limited to one representative per application and limited to three minutes. Questions and/or comments by Council members do not count towards the three-minute time limit.)

Robbie Hood, City Manager, Mayor/Council, if I may I request that when your funds are needed, you're your event please send an email to the City Secretary two weeks in advance requesting your check so that my staff have adequate time to complete the request. Also, these funds are for the upcoming fiscal year 2024-2025 and may not be distributed before October 1, 2024.

Watson Franks, District 8 Checkers Association Representative, gave a brief overview of the Checkers Association and the USA Nationals event that will include five days of competitive checkers to determine the Top Checker's Player in the USA and attract players from across the world.

Shannon Burke, Eastgate Bible Quizzers Representative, gave a brief overview of the Bible Quizzers program and the Bible Quizzers State Tournament in 2025, that will bring in 300 to 400 people that will stay two nights in Vidor.

Robby Steptoe, KMR Media Group, Tower Wave Junction Media Representative, gave a brief overview of Tower Wave and Just Outside The Spotlight event that will be a songwriter in the round atmosphere, in the theme of Nashville's World-Famous Bluebird Café and it will be broadcast live on the web.

Watson Franks, District 8 Checkers Association Representative, gave a brief overview of the Checkers Association and the First World Cup Checkers Championship event that will include five days of competitive checkers to determine the Top Checker's Player in the World and attract players from across the world.

Johnnie Anderus, Texas Star Music Festival Representative, gave a brief overview of the Festival and the Texas Star Music Festival that will be held at The Oaks Event Center, that will bring people to Vidor that have a passion for music.

Donna Little, Bow Tie Entertainment Representative, gave a brief overview of the organization and the Music By the Stars event that will highlight local Music Stars and bring people to the Community who love music.

Atasha Quebedeaux, Vidor Chamber of Commerce Representative, gave a brief overview of the organization and the Hometown Holidays three-day event that will bring together the Community and the surrounding areas while promoting local businesses.

David Nutt, Eastgate Representative gave a brief overview of the Kingdom Works Organization and the Kingdom Works event that will bring business entrepreneurs from all over to Vidor for a workshop event that will take place over the course of three days.

Derek Veazey, Q'ing for a Cause Representative, gave a brief overview of the Organization and the Big Buc BBQ Bash event that will promote the sport competition of BBQ while emphasizing Vidor's outstanding reputation in the BBQ Community.

Nicole McGowan, Mayor Pro tem, closed the Public Hearing at 8:12 pm.

C -11. Consideration and possible action of a request from District 8 Checkers Association, for hotel occupancy tax funds for fiscal year 2024-2025, to include releasing the funds to the applicant if approved.

A motion to **approve the request from District 8 Checkers Association for the USA National Checkers Tournament in the amount of \$10,000.00** was made by Councilmember Thompson, seconded by Councilmember Bourque. The Council voted six (6) for and none (0) opposed. **The motion carried.**

C -12. Consideration and possible action of a request from Eastgate Bible Quizzers, for hotel occupancy tax funds for fiscal year 2023-2024, to include releasing the funds to the applicant if approved.

A motion to **approve the request from Eastgate Bible Quizzers for the State Tournament in the amount of \$10,000.00** was made by Councilmember Thompson, seconded by Councilmember Bourque. The Council voted six (6) for and none (0) opposed. **The motion carried.**

C -13. Consideration and possible action of a request from KMR Media Group, for hotel occupancy tax funds for fiscal year 2024-2025, to include releasing the funds to the applicant if approved.

A motion to **approve the request from KMR Media Group, Tower Wave Junction Media for the Just Outside the Spotlight event in the amount of \$10,000.00** was made by Councilmember Thompson, seconded by Councilmember Bourque. The Council voted six (6) for and none (0) opposed. **The motion carried.**

C -14. Consideration and possible action of a request from American Checkers Federation District 8 of AFC for hotel occupancy tax funds for fiscal year 2023-2024, to include releasing the funds to the applicant if approved.

A motion to **approve the request from District 8 Checkers Association for the First World Cup Checkers Championship in the amount of \$10,000.00** was made by Councilmember Thompson, seconded by Councilmember Bourque. The Council voted six (6) for and none (0) opposed. **The motion carried.**

C -15. Consideration and possible action of a request from Texas Star Music Festival for hotel occupancy tax funds for fiscal year 2024-2025, to include releasing the funds to the applicant if approved.

A motion to **approve the request from the Texas Star Music Festival for the Festival event in the amount of \$10,000.00** was made by Councilmember Thompson, seconded by Councilmember Bourque. The Council voted six (6) for and none (0) opposed. **The motion carried.**

C -16. Consideration and possible action of a request from Bow Tie Entertainment for hotel occupancy tax funds for fiscal year 2023-2024, to include releasing the funds to the applicant if approved.

A motion to **approve the request from Bow Tie Entertainment for the Music By the Stars event in the amount of \$10,000.00** was made by Councilmember Thompson, seconded by Councilmember Bourque. The Council voted six (6) for and none (0) opposed. **The motion carried.**

C -17. Consideration and possible action of a request from Vidor Chamber of Commerce for hotel occupancy tax funds for fiscal year 2024-2025, to include releasing the funds to the applicant if approved.

A motion to **approve the request from Vidor Chamber of Commerce for the Hometown Holidays in the amount of \$10,000.00** was made by Councilmember Thompson, seconded by Councilmember Bourque. The Council voted six (6) for and none (0) opposed. **The motion carried.**

C -18. Consideration and possible action of a request from Eastgate Kingdom Works for hotel occupancy tax funds for fiscal year 2023-2024, to include releasing the funds to the applicant if approved.

A motion to **approve the request from Eastgate for the Kingdom Works event in the amount of \$10,000.00** was made by Councilmember Thompson, seconded by Councilmember Bourque. The Council voted six (6) for and none (0) opposed. **The motion carried.**

C -19. Consideration and possible action of a request from Q'ing for a Cause for hotel occupancy tax funds for fiscal year 2024-2025, to include releasing the funds to the applicant if approved.

A motion to **approve the request from Q'ing for a Cause for the Big Buc BBQ Bash event in the amount of \$10,000.00** was made by Councilmember Thompson, seconded by Councilmember Bourque. The Council voted six (6) for and none (0) opposed. **The motion carried.**

C -20. Consideration of Adjournment

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Councilmember Thompson, seconded by Councilmember Bourque. The Council voted six (6) for and none (0) opposed. **The motion carried; the meeting adjourned at 8:19 pm.**

These minutes were approved on September 12, 2024.

ATTEST:


Rachel Duplechain, City Secretary




Misty Songe, Mayor