

**CITY OF VIDOR
VIDOR CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING
September 12, 2024**

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mayor Songe
Councilmember Lee
Councilmember McGowan
Councilmember Bourque
Councilmember Weldon

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Councilmember Thompson
Councilmember Barker

Administrative Personnel: Robbie Hood, City Manager; Pebbles Eckhoff, Finance Director; Rachel Duplechain, City Secretary; Chris Leavins, City Attorney; Rod Carroll, Chief; Brooke Carroll, HR Director; Sherri Morris, Animal Control Supervisor

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 7:03 p.m., Misty Songe, Mayor, presiding.

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

Chris Leavins, City Attorney, 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 –	\$477,463.66
	MCBSF –	\$685.28
	Hotel Occupancy –	\$1,058.54
	Disaster Fund-	\$163,223.40
	Proprietary Fund –	\$51,249.26
	Total:	\$693,680.14

B -2. Approval of Minutes: Regular Meeting – August 22, 2024

A motion to **approve the Consent Agenda** was made by Councilmember McGowan, seconded by Councilmember Lee. The Council voted four (4) for and none (0) opposed. **The motion carried.**

C. COUNCIL REGULAR AGENDA

C -1. Discussion and possible action to approve a Resolution to support Southeast Texas Regional Planning Commission–Metropolitan Planning Organization’s (SETRPC-MPO) effort to redesignate and expand its planning area boundaries to accept Jasper County

Robbie Hood, City Manager, Mayor/Council the Regional Planning Commission has already acted on it they have brought Jasper in to be a part of the Regional Planning Commission. They brought them in by small steps, the grants are already established prior to their arrival don't go to Jasper County, but going forward, God forbid if things happen, it makes sense. They are going to be coming on board 911 as well, correct Chief. Rod Carroll, Chief, that is correct. They are just asking the Cities already in the Regional Planning Commission for their support, they have already made the changes.

A motion to **approve the Resolution to support Southeast Texas Regional Planning Commission-Metropolitan Planning Organization’s accepting Jasper County**, was made by Councilmember McGowan, seconded by Councilmember Bourque. The Council voted four (4) for and none (0) opposed. **The motion carried.**

C -2. Discussion and possible action to approve an Ordinance of the City of Vidor, Texas amending the Vidor Code of Ordinances by amending Chapter 6 – Regulation of Animals, Article VI. - Impoundment, to establish an Animal Shelter Advisory Committee, including the purposes and membership of the Committee.

Sherri Morris, Animal Control Supervisor, the purpose of the advisory committee is to comply with the State’s Code Chapter 823, Section 823.005, to raise awareness among City of Vidor residents about animal services, procedures, and compliance with the State regulations related to Animal Shelters. To provide recommendations to City Council or other governing bodies on animal control issues, educate the Community to promote awareness about responsible pet ownership, spaying/neutering, and vaccinations, monitor the operations of the animal shelter to ensure humane treatment for animals, review shelter practices and suggest improvements. This Committee will come together and play a vital role in creating a safe and compassionate environment for both animals and residents. Councilmember McGowan, so do you have a committee in mind? Morris, yes, I already have a committee in mind. Chris Leavins, City Attorney, and Council to reiterate what Ms. Morris had said it is required by the Texas Health Safety Code, if you have an animal shelter then you have to have an Animal Shelter Advisory Committee, so she is putting that together to comply with it. The composition of the can be more than four people, but it has to be at least one licensed veterinarian, one County or Municipal Official, one person who’s duties include the daily operations of the animal shelter, and one representative from an animal welfare organization. Robbie Hood, City Manager, Sherri would you mind letting us know who you have in mind for this committee. Morris, it will be myself, Misty Songe, Dr. McGowan from McGowan Veterinary Clinic, and Tammy Smith with Falls. Leavins, this just establishes the committee, we will need to bring it back to Council for the appointment of those people.

A motion to **approve the Ordinance amending the Vidor Code of Ordinances by amending Chapter 6, – Regulation of Animals, Article VI. - Impoundment, to establish an Animal Shelter Advisory Committee, including the purposes and membership of the Committee** was made by Councilmember McGowan, seconded by Councilmember Lee. The Council voted four (4) for and none (0) opposed. **The motion carried.**

C -3. Consideration and possible approval of an Ordinance of the City of Vidor, Texas amending the Code of Ordinances by Amending Chapter 54 – Solid Waste, Article II – Rates and Charges, regarding rates and charges for solid waste;

Pebbles Eckhoff, Finance Director, Mayor/Council, this is what we discussed before in our original budget meeting, this was the increase for the sanitation rates, as you know we are on the verge of having to get a new truck and on top of that dumping expenses have gone up twelve (12) percent, fuel although it is going down right now has pretty much been up most of the year. So, although while everyone around us has gone up their rates, we have not raised rates since 2019 on sanitation. So, we went and did some surveying of other areas and came up with a \$2.77 increase for Residential and \$1.00 for Senior Citizens and the Commercial rates we went \$90.00 for a three-yard and \$100.00 for a six-yard dumpster and that is still well under competitors. Even on the dumpsters alone I think we are still \$40.00 under our competitors', and this will bring in an additional \$155,000.00 additional revenue for the sanitation department and help us pay for those overages, sustain dump fees, and help pay for the new sanitation truck. Robbie Hood, City Manager, and the sanitation fund is a proprietary fund and is only funded for sanitation, this is not being added to the General Fund. Misty Songe, Mayor, so when will we put it out to the Citizens if it starts October 1st, once it's approved. Hood, yes mam, Mayor as soon as Council adopts the Budget, we will put it out. Chris Leavins, City Attorney, since it involves appropriations, we will have to bring it back for a second reading so that all Council members have a chance to vote on it. Then it is up to the City and Council if you want to push it till November 1st or start it on October 1st. Hood, even though it is on the budget to start October 1, if the Council wants to push it till November 1, we are fine with that. Songe, I would recommend pushing it to give us adequate time to inform the citizens especially those that are elderly and live on fixed incomes. Hood, we can put it on our website and Facebook City page and then you can capture it and help spread the word. 7:07 PM Chief Carroll had to leave the meeting Police Emergency. Leavins, so if Council wants to approve it to come back for that second reading with just that one change we just need a motion.

A motion to approve the Ordinance of the City of Vidor, Texas amending the Code of Ordinances by Amending Chapter 54 – Solid Waste, Article II – Rates and Charges, regarding rates and charges for solid waste, starting November 1, 2024, was made by Councilmember McGowan, seconded by Councilmember Lee. The Council voted four (4) for and none (0) opposed. The motion carried.

C -4. Discussion and possible action to approve a Resolution authorizing the City Manager, to sign a Letter of Intent to purchase for the new Sanitation Truck

Pebbles Eckhoff, Finance Director, so this letter of intent does not mean that we are going to purchase it or lock us into a purchase agreement, it just lets us keep this price for a certain amount of time. That way we can secure funding and Council can approve the purchase of it and things of that nature. We just wanted to make sure they held it and held it at that, and they needed that letter of intent to do so. Robbie Hood, City Manager, Mayor/Council, MiKayla had a great question. You will there is one price which is the base price, and the other price is for the outfitting of that vehicle, we are looking at a side arm loader this time. Councilmember McGowan, didn't we just purchase a new truck a couple of years ago? Hood, yes, we had to there was a wreck involved. McGowan oh okay. Hood, we are looking at going to the side load for safety purposes and Cliff has a great plan to use that vehicle on Main street and we are still going to keep the rear loaders, because there are some areas where we still have to back into. But it is a safety factor for him on Main street where there is a lot of traffic. Songe, so how long does this hold it? Eckhoff, it will hold it for up to five months.

A motion to **approve a Resolution authorizing the City Manager, to sign a Letter of Intent to purchase for the new Sanitation Truck,**

was made by Councilmember McGowan, seconded by Councilmember Lee. The Council voted four (4) for and none (0) opposed. **The motion carried.**

C -5. Public Hearing – on the proposed tax rate for the City of Vidor for fiscal year 2024-2025

Misty Songe, Mayor Reads:

I would like to open the Public Hearing at this time for the proposed 2024/2025 tax rate for the City of Vidor at 7:13 pm.

Chief Carroll returned to the meeting at 7:13 pm as well.

Pebbles, Eckhoff, Finance Director Reads:

The current fiscal year 2023/2024 tax rate is \$0.65393. The 2023/2024 no new revenue rate is \$0.61219; the 2023/2024 voter-approval tax rate is \$0.61835; and the 2024/2025 proposed tax rate is \$0.634391, a 2% overall decrease from last year's rate. The 2024/2025 proposed tax rate of \$0.634391 is the same as the voter-approval rate and lower than the de minimis rate and does not exceed the rate that allows voters to petition for an election under Section 26.075, Tax Code. If the City of Vidor, Texas adopts the proposed tax rate, the City of Vidor is not required to hold an election so that the voters may accept or reject the proposed tax rate and the qualified voters of the City of Vidor may not petition the City of Vidor to require an election to be held to determine whether to reduce the proposed tax rate.

Misty Songe, Mayor Reads:

The City of Vidor's 2024 Certified Total Taxable Value is \$578,721,384 and the Freeze Adjusted Taxable (Net Taxable minus Freeze Taxable minus Transfer Adjustment) is \$504,568,497. The breakdown of the proposed tax rate is as follows: \$0.541519 for maintenance and operations; \$0.092872 for interest and sinking with a combined proposed tax rate of \$0.634391. The proposed tax rate is the same as the voter approval rate but lower than the de minimis rate. The proposed tax rate is estimated to raise more maintenance and operation funds of \$90,945 than the prior year and less interest and sinking funds of \$59,442 than the prior year. The proposed tax rate is estimated to raise \$3,068,575 at a 100% collection rate before the debt service is deducted. Only one public hearing is required and is being held on September 12, 2024, at 7:00 p.m. at Vidor City Hall, 1395 North Main Street, Vidor, Texas.

Mayor Reads:

Are there any questions at this time? No questions were asked

Mayor Reads:

If there are no questions, I would like to close our Public Hearing on the proposed tax rate for the City of Vidor for the 2024/2025 fiscal year at 7:16pm.

C -6. Public Hearing – on the proposed fiscal year 2024-2025 budget for the City of Vidor

Misty Songe, Mayor Reads:

I would like to open the Public Hearing at this time for the proposed 2024/2025 budget for the City of Vidor at 7:16pm.

Pebbles Eckhoff, Finance Director Reads:

Please look at your new 2024/2025 Proposed Budget Message and I will go over all the changes made since the tentative budget was presented on July 25, 2024. For Wages: This budget 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. For Medical, Dental, and Life Insurance: We will see an increase of 15% overall on health insurance premiums. Which is a 10% decrease from the tentative budget as we originally thought it would be a 25% increase overall. This budget includes replacing the HDHP Co-Pay plan with PPO Co-Pay coverage for employees. Resulting in the elimination of the HSA contribution, saving the city \$281,000. Dental increase \$1.60 per employee. Life insurance incurred no change, Vision incurred no change. 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. For Benefits: 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. That overall is a 9% decrease. The city is required to contribute to the Texas Municipal Retirement System. We are happy to provide this benefit to our employees. This budget includes the city going 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%. Overall Changes: There have been decreases made to capital outlay, in streets/drainage, parks, and the police department. A \$15,000 capital outlay item has been listed for the pool. This will cover a large repair project or several small repairs, DOE on estimates. A \$13,000 capital outlay has been added for the animal shelter for much needed kennel and quarantine repairs. Mayor Songe, there was also another \$2,500.00 for the Animal Shelter as well. Eckhoff, yes, their supply budget was increased from \$2,500.00 to \$5,000.00 for the budget year. Councilmember McGowan, so I have a question. Eckhoff, yes mam. McGowan, how do we go about seeing about a salary adjustment for the City Manager? Councilmember Weldon, yes can we add that? McGowan, can we afford a salary adjustment for Robbie? McGowan, your (Eckhoff) are going to graduate in a year and Brooke is going to graduate in about so ya'll are both going to get bumped up so ya'll are going to get that adjustment, can we afford to do a salary adjustment for him as well. Eckhoff, what figure? McGowan, \$10,000.00 a year, can we afford that? Eckhoff, so if we added that as a salary adjustment, we would still be able to absorb that and stay probably about 5.02 months of reserves. Weldon, great. Eckhoff, would probably take off 0.3 percent. Councilmember Lee, I agree with that. Weldon, as usual you took care of everybody else and you didn't worry about yourself, especially over the last year. Eckhoff, so you want me to add that to the budget? Weldon, mmhmm. Hood, thank you. Lee, I have a question on the last two capital outlay items where did those items come from? Eckhoff, so the \$15,000.00 capital outlay for the pool was actually a benefit, the pool this year their revenue this year was \$16,093.00. So, we decided to take some of that revenue from this year and do some much needed repairs to the pool. Hood, it's an older pool, Percy and his staff have been doing a really good

job of keeping it open, as Misty can attest to as she has been here longer than myself. McGowan, it also gets used a lot by the Vidor High School Swim Team and I hear complaints from them all the time about when something is going to get done about. Eckhoff, yes and Percy did let me know there are some much needed repairs and the past years the pool didn't really go in the black, so it was hard to do a lot of repairs as the budget is tight. But this year they made a good bit of money, and I think it attributed to lowering the rates at the pool that was a very big help. We were able to buy the much-needed water fountain out there and we were able to get a good one, that you could drink out of it and fill a bottle as well. Hood, that was a collaboration with Misty and that was a good idea. We had some citizens complaining and it was catch twenty-two, we require them to get stuff from our concession stands. We do not allow glass containers or anything to be brought in, so now once you buy a bottle of water, we now have a water fountain where you can just keep refilling your bottle there for free. Weldon, yeah that was a great idea. Eckhoff, and the umbrellas were purchased as well and that provides much needed shade for the entire pool instead of everyone huddling underneath the canopy. Weldon, yes those were a huge hit, I remember seeing that on Facebook. Hood, there are not a lot of cities that have swimming pools, and we are just a small Community, and we have to try and offer what we can, Library is another one with the private park right beside it as well. McGowan, well it's a good way to try and keep kids out of trouble. Hood, yes mam. Lee, ya'll are doing a great job. Eckhoff, and the \$13,000.00 is just going to come out of the General Fund budget, the kennel has not had any repairs for many years, and it is much needed. Ms. Sherri has done a good job of trying to fill it in here and fix this here and fix that there and it is just to the point of no return and needs a complete replacement.

Misty Songe, Mayor Reads:

Are there any questions from the audience at this time?

If there are not any (further) questions, I would like to close the Public Hearing for the proposed 2024/2025 budget for the City of Vidor at 7:23pm.

Pebbles Eckhoff, Finance Director explains:

A final draft of the budget will be presented for adoption on September 26, 2024.

Robbie Hood, City Manager, this next Council meeting is very important. We have to have all Council present in order to adopt the Budget.

C -7. Consideration and possible action resulting from the public hearing on the City's proposed tax rate for fiscal year 2024-2025

Robbie Hood, City Manager, unless you want to change it from the Voter-Approval rate there is no action. Mayor Songe, okay then there is no action.

C -8. Consideration and possible action resulting from the public hearing on the City's proposed 2024-2025 budget


Robbie Hood, City Manager, again with the changes that the Council recommended we will bring it back with those included so there will be no action. Mayor Songe, okay that is where I was confused, so no action.

C -9. Consideration of Adjournment

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Councilmember McGowan, seconded by Councilmember Bourque. The Council voted four (4) for and none (0) opposed. **The motion carried; the meeting adjourned at 7:25 pm.**

These minutes were approved on September 26, 2024.

ATTEST:



Rachel Duplechain, City Secretary





Misty Songe, Mayor