

**CITY OF SANTA FE
SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING
SEPTEMBER 6, 2012 6:30 P.M.
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
12002 HWY. 6
SANTA FE, TEXAS**

MINUTES

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Mayor Ralph Stenzel.

Roll Call: Present: Mayor Ralph Stenzel
Mayor Pro-tem Pat McCrary
Councilmember Jeff Tambrella
Councilmember Joe Carothers
Councilmember Bubba JannetT
City Manager Joe Dickson
City Secretary Janet L. Davis
Absent: Councilmember Wanda Wagner, excused
City Attorney Ellis J. Ortego, excused

The invocation was given by and the pledge of allegiance to the U. S. Flag and to the Texas Flag was led by City Manager Joe Dickson.

Business:

First public hearing on proposed tax increase

City Manager Joe Dickson said we have held budget workshops and have discussed a tax rate that is 7 ½ percent over the effective tax rate. For the first time in a long while, the effective tax rate of \$0.3147 is higher than the current tax rate of \$0.3114. This meeting is to hear public comments on the proposed tax increase. The extra tax revenue of \$110,000 is proposed to be set aside for a building fund for a public safety/municipal court complex. Mr. Dickson said we have looked at a P3 (public private partnership) development, but it doesn't appear that this option will work financially. Another option is to consider the Alta Loma Volunteer Fire Station #1 facility on Hwy. 6 once they move to their new facility. The complaints we received during the previous unsuccessful bond elections were that the price tag was too high and we should use an existing building. Councilmember Jannett asked if we would place our property on FM 646 on the market if a P3 is determined to not be feasible. Mr. Dickson said that would be his recommendation.

Marcie Dreyer of 13013 Polk gave statistics on the national debt, unemployment rates, percentage of persons on food stamps, and increased school taxes. She said we need a new police station but we shouldn't be trying to sneak in a tax increase. She suggested we wait a couple of years and go back to the voters with another bond proposition.

Sandra Sandeno of 11739 Santa Fe Trail said a tax increase is despicable especially with the current state of the economy. She agrees we need a police facility, but the voters previously said no at three separate bond elections and we should honor that. She urged Council to consider the suggestions of its citizens and she suggested we consider gambling establishments as a new revenue source.

Dale Calcarone of 5626 Avenue G ½ asked if the city had saved any money to put toward a new facility. Council said this is what this proposed tax increase is proposed to do. He clarified that the facility would be to house the police department and municipal court and then asked why we need \$6,000,000.

Barbara Balli of 3226 FM 646 N said she thinks most people are upset mainly because they feel Council is going around what the voters said during the last three elections. Councilmember Tambrella said voters told Council during the last election to look at existing facilities and that is what we are trying to do. Councilmember Jannett said this public hearing is Council trying to get information to and from the voters to develop a plan for a public safety building.

Greg Howlett of 12044 – 21st Street said he first felt that Council is trying to go behind the voters to build a new facility. He asked if we sell our property on FM 646, will that be enough to purchase the old fire station and renovate it. Mr. Dickson said it may possibly purchase the property, so we are trying to start a building fund to move the police department into a different facility.

Loretta Driscoll of 11907 Old Spanish Trail said she did not support any of the three previous bond issues because no one has money for their own needs much less a tax increase. She said there are many kids at SFISD on the free lunch program because of economic situations, and she suggested we sell the property on FM 646 and use that money to start a building fund.

Matthew Driscoll of 11907 Old Spanish Trail asked each councilmember who is supporting this proposed tax increase. Councilmembers said they are considering this option, and based on input from the community, will make a decision to support it or not support it on September 27. He agreed that revenue from gambling establishments may be a viable option, and he also suggested we try to do something for around two million.

Pam Schwertner of 4322 Jensen asked when we would receive the proposed \$110,000 and the answer was that we would receive it this upcoming fiscal year. She said most people just want to have input and she suggested we have workshops to allow for that input. Ms. Schwertner said the building fund is a positive move in the right direction because we do need a new police station.

Jim Abney of 4827 Avenue H thanked Council for considering various options for a new facility and said he would support a tax increase if that is what it takes to offer the police a safe, working facility. He said he believes the previous bond elections failed because there was misinformation spread throughout the community.

Dale Calcarone, Jr. of 5626 Avenue G ½ said we previously said the facility was for a police station and now we are adding the court. Council responded that the proposals have always included a facility for both the police department and municipal court.

Kent Clegg of 17325 Park Street said he understands this proposed tax increase is the maximum allowed by the city charter but asked if we need the maximum amount to fund a new facility. He said we should sell the property on FM 646 and then some more homework to see what we actually need before we increase taxes.

The next public hearing is scheduled for September 13, 2012, at 6:30 p.m.

Motion by Councilmember Jannett, seconded by Councilmember Tambrella to adjourn. The motion passed and the meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

RALPH STENZEL, MAYOR

ATTEST:

Janet L. Davis, City Secretary