

STATE OF TEXAS

COUNTY OF McCULLOCH

CITY OF BRADY

The City Council of the City of Brady, Texas met in a Budget Work Session on Monday, May 16, 2022, at 10:00 a.m. with Mayor Anthony Groves presiding in person. Council Members present were Jane Huffman, Missi Elliston, Jay May, Larry Land, and Jeffrey Sutton. City staff present were Acting City Manager Erin Corbell, Public Works Director Steven Miller, Finance Director Lisa McElrath, Police Chief Steve Thomas, and City Secretary Tina Keys.

1. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL & CERTIFICATION OF A QUORUM

Mayor Groves called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. Council quorum was certified.

2. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Council Member May gave the invocation, and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments

4. INDIVIDUAL CONCERNS

A. Animal Control Building

Council Member Huffman said 6 years ago, one of the very first conversations when she was elected to office was how one of the biggest problems was animal control. We increased the salary of the Animal Control Officer, added a second ACO officer, created new rules, and she said she doesn't think we have had any change in animal control. We still have dogs chained up. Last month after an incident at her house, she looked at the monthly report. February and March we had 1 citation and 34 warnings. Council Member Huffman said she requested copies of the warnings and ticket. She got a copy of one ticket and one warning. They could argue their warnings are verbal, but they couldn't remember 34 verbal warnings. In the last month there were 7 citations given. We're never going to fix the problem with 7 citations. Council Member Huffman said she had an incident and called dispatch on a Sunday. Jessica responded very quickly. The owner of the dog showed up. There was no warning or citation issued. Nothing was done. Council Member Huffman said ACO Jessica told her they had never seen that dog before but dispatch logs showed different. A lot of the same animals are being called in, but no citations issued. We've got to do something. They are doing a good job with the facility they have and taking care of the jobs but that's not enough. Council Member Elliston said she has three letters from residents who are going to be at council tomorrow night because they are fed up. These people cannot go out their doors without being terrorized. Their pets have been killed by these dogs. They are aggressive animals. There was a situation where a homeowner used a gun against an aggressive dog. It was a pellet gun. The dog was attacking his grandchild. They had called multiple times on this dog. Council Member Huffman said this is a huge issue. Council Member Land asked what's going on. Erin Corbell said she thinks the girls are too compassionate. Mayor Groves said if a dog is threatening a person and you call animal control and they're not there soon, he thinks it's appropriate to call 9-1-1 and say you need an officer.

Council took a break at 12:13 and resumed at 12:20

Council Member Land said it sounds to him like we need to get stricter. Council Member Elliston asked if there have been any reprimands. Erin said no. Erin said these discussions are just now getting started. Council Member Huffman said she would like to talk in a meeting about what is expected. Erin said she will present something for Council Member Huffman to review. Erin mentioned a daily activity log. Chief Thomas said that used to be done. Council Member Huffman said we need some major accountability.

Erin went through the department of state health standards for an animal control facility. She also went over the options: make it work with what we have now, new building or purchase the Paws building. Council Member

Land said he really doesn't think GRW is a good long term solution. Council Member Huffman said we could explore other options; contracting with somebody to get the dogs or contracting with a service to handle the whole thing. Chief Thomas said they outsourced in Taioga to All American Dogs who patrolled on a regular basis and handled all problems. He said he thinks it cost \$4500. Council Member Huffman said the City Manager needs to outline and relay the expectations. Council Member Elliston asked about putting the ACO officers on a probationary period. Council Member Huffman said to tell them the expectations and that we will re-evaluate in 90 days. Mayor Groves asked if we have asked other cities if they have a place we can quarantine IF we needed to. Erin said we have not. Mayor Groves said it needs to be established that everyone be issued a written a warning then the next time, a citation is issued.

B. Individual Council member priorities for FY22-23 budget sessions

Mayor Groves said update comprehensive plan needs to be updated, and also look at the budget impact on sale of lake properties.

Council Member Sutton asked if we should sit down with different people and ask what they expect or their idea for the sale of lake properties. Like go visit with a commissioner and ask what they think about us selling the property. Council Member Huffman said people can come to us if they have an opinion. Council Member Sutton said if they know about it, they would, but if they don't know they're free to do so, then they won't. Council Member Elliston said it's on the website, it's out there. We have a social media page, ect. Council Member Sutton said he would like them to get their ideas of how it's sold, split, not split, etc. Council Member Land said he thinks the people that would voice their opinions would come to Council. Council Member Huffman thinks a lot of people are fully aware that we're talking about it. She is hearing they think we should break it up; the Mutualistic side. Council Member May said the old Ford Ranch is dividing and selling their properties at around \$8,000 an acre. There's going to be a lot of property that's going to be available. Council Member Huffman added that those properties would not have water rights. Council Member May said San Angelo owns the water rights. Council Member Huffman said as much as this is going to be talked about, people will have an opportunity to be heard. We are not keeping this as a secret.

Council Member Sutton asked, when he goes and buys an old house and he's going to fix it up, what fees does he have to pay? Erin Corbell said you get a building permit and it's based on the value of the remodel. Council Member Huffman said we are light on our tapping fees compared to other municipalities. Erin said she researched other cities tapping fees and we are 50% if not a quarter of other cities amounts.

Council Member Sutton asked what's picked up by the trash guys and what's not. Erin says our ordinance clearly states what we will be picked up and what will not.

Council Member Sutton said Mason and San Saba let people come down in their RVs and let them stay in the RV parks for any length of time. Erin said we brought to Council a plan for long term RV spaces. We have some at the lake. At the time, Council said they didn't want to explore that option in our parks because there are kids playing. Council Member May said we do have places at the lake where people have been for years. He also said there are several reasons why we would not want to do that at the park. If we have events, there won't be any place for people to park. For example, Goat Cook-off, we have to have places for them. Council Member Huffman said we do have several places in Brady that have long term rentals.

Council Member May said he is constantly interested in where we are with the water. Steven Miller said they're still looking at the end of they year for compliance.

Council Member Land asked if the EDC does any kind of a report. Erin said she can put together an update.

Council Member Land asked about the China Street water situation. Miller updated Council on status

Council Member Land said we need to look at some charter changes. Erin said we need people to volunteer on the Charter Review Committee.

Council Member Elliston said police department is a priority. She still feels like they're underpaid even though we've moved them up. Our guys need to be equipped. Council Member Sutton said he has a problem with Council giving certain people raises because he thinks the City Manager should do that. He said Council should approve the overall payroll budget. Council Member Elliston said she disagrees and thinks we need to protect our

people; we struggle to get officers. Council Member Sutton said he just thinks it's not our duty to give individual raises. Council Member Huffman said one of council's biggest job is the financial aspect. With the past City Managers, there were hand picked pay raises as opposed to the council, as a whole, looking at entire salary system, we have a problem with the way the structure is. Council Member Huffman said it is our job to say we need to fix these salaries. Council Member Sutton said we set the budget and City Manager salary and then the rest of it is up to the City Manager. Council Member Huffman said she agreed, but we vote on the budget based on these salaries. Council Member Sutton said he questions the individual action of salaries by the Council. Erin said she and Lisa McElrath have been talking about the step schedule. It's probably time to shift the entire pay schedule. Our superintendents are struggling to start people at step one. So, we are looking at starting them at a higher step. But then they tap out, so that poses another issue. Council Member Huffman said she doesn't think the city manager has to ask the Council if she wants to give a pay raise, but Council need to be notified about it. Lisa McElrath asked Council Member Elliston if she has a percentage in mind. Council Member Huffman said maybe we could do some type of longevity increases for the police department. Council Member Elliston asked if we can work on some type of incentive. Erin said we are looking at that now. Council Member May said he thinks we're going to have a problem with people in general with inflation going the way it is. We're going to have to give some raises or we're not going to have anybody. Erin said we're looking at raising the on-call pay and it would be brought to council at budget

Council Member Elliston said she would like to see lights at the soccer fields. Erin said we're looking at that and it's already in the budget.

Council Member Huffman said she wants to talk to animal control

Mayor Groves said there are a lot of places that do not have street signs. There was a program to replace street signs, but it was stopped a while back, but he would like it started again. Council Member Sutton asked about clearing shrubbery around street signs. Erin said street crews clean around signs but they're so busy.

Council took at break at 11:32 and resumed at 11:48

C. Future work session dates/topics

Erin said to plan for 3 full days with a potential of 4 if we need it. Lisa McElrath said we're giving the budget on June 30th, so any time after that. Lisa thinks usually the 2nd and 3rd week is most practical. Council Member Huffman asked if we could do the week of July 11th. Lisa said if we put 3 days in a row, that makes it hard if she has to work on any numbers. Erin said let's look at July 11, 13 and 14. Everyone said that works, 10:00 a.m. We can do the 18th if we need another day.

D. Discuss Process and Announcements

Erin Corbell said we are going to do an orientation to the budget book on the 11th. If an item is important to the continuation of the program, it is a supplement but it is included in the base budget. Items employees and staff have determined are critical. Lisa said most, if not all, are capital purchases. Lisa McElrath asked if council wants to take that first day for orientation or one day before? Council Member Huffman said they understand the budget books. Council Member Huffman said since we get our books at the end of June, if anyone has any questions, they can go to City Hall and ask. Council Member May said we would maybe need a little refresher but that's it. Council Member Land said a 10 or 15 minute review is great.

Erin said one department head asked for a very significant raise for his entire department this year, Erin said no and told him he can come back with a more reasonable amount of maybe 5 to 10%, then she would present to Council. He said he was not ok with that, so he is going to ask to 15%. Council Member Elliston asked if that 15% includes the 3% COLA raise and Erin said it does. Erin said she is doing a salary survey and will show council where we are at in relation to other cities. Council Member Huffman said she thinks it's time we put our foot down with the county not paying their fair share for Fire/EMS. Erin said she has a meeting Wednesday to discuss. She asked EMS for call numbers. Our department numbers were very different than what the county shows.

5. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the Mayor adjourned the meeting at 1:25 p.m.



Mayor Anthony Groves

Attest: 

Tina Keys, City Secretary