

Minutes for Special Meeting September 6, 2022

The Austwell City Council met for a Special Meeting on Tuesday, September 6, 2022, at the Community Center. Mayor Andrew Biery called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM and led the Pledge of Allegiance. He explained that there had been some confusion regarding the day and date of the previous meeting (in August), although consultation with a Texas Municipal League representative had approved that meeting. In order to guarantee the validity of several important decisions made at that meeting on Thursday, August 18, they were included on the agenda for this meeting. Announcements included the upcoming change of the City Hall telephone number which had been announced in the most recent water bill mailing and which is also available on the city website. Council member Torres requested that citizens volunteer their assistance for an upcoming Halloween event. There were no public comments.

Item 5: Receive presentation from Bureau Veritas

John Livingston, a representative of Bureau Veritas, described services regarding support that his company could provide for the city in regard to construction ordinances and procedures. He requested the city's help in gathering applicable ordinances, application forms, and fee schedules in addition to holding a meeting with city officials to review, update, and revise documents related to construction procedures in Austwell. Use of Bureau Veritas would also provide an unbiased third party to make recommendations to citizens and city officials regarding building projects.

Item 6: Use of Bureau Veritas as Contract Building Official

Commissioner Torres presented a motion to allow the city to enter into an agreement with Bureau Veritas to plan reviews, to make construction inspections, to determine habitability, to assess windstorm repairability, and to provide other services as requested. Commissioner Ancira seconded the motion, and all three commissioners voted for it. The motion passed.

Item 7: New Base Water/Sewer Rate of \$100 per month

In order to avoid oversight and regulation by state agencies of a water and wastewater system that is aging and in need of repair, funds are needed to improve the condition of the drainage and water delivery systems in the city. The increase in the water usage rate from \$66.06 per month to \$100 per month would apply to 4000 gallons of water used per connection and would provide funds to balance next year's city budget. Motion was made by Commissioner Ancira to set the base rate for 4000 gallons of water used per month at \$100 effective on the September 2022 water bill. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Torres and passed.

Item 8: Adopt Fiscal Year 2022-2023 Budget

Copies of the proposed budget have been made available to citizens since the most recent (August 18) council meeting. Income and expenditures are balanced. Water system projects and drainage improvements are necessary. Grantworks officials have indicated willingness to assist the city in locating financial assistance, but local funding must be contributed. Commissioner Torres moved that the proposed budget be adopted; Commissioner Ancira seconded the motion. The motion carried and the budget was adopted.

Item 9: Adopt 2022 Proposed Tax Rate (\$0.2439 per \$100 of value)

The 2022 Proposed Tax Rate proposed by County Tax Assessor-Collector Ida Turner to support the Fiscal Year 2022-2023 City of Austwell Proposed Budget is \$0.2439 per \$100 of value. Commissioner Ancira moved to accept the proposed tax rate of 0.2439 per \$100 of value; Commissioner Torres seconded the motion. All three commissioners voted for the motion. The motion passed.

Item 10: Consider Contract for Audit Service to Prepare Audit for 2022 Accounting

Mayor Biery announced that accountant Vickie Whitaker has recommended an auditor, S. Noel Snedeker II of Taft, TX, who is willing to audit financial documents for both the 2020-2021 fiscal year AND the 2021-2022 fiscal year, OR for the 2021-2022 alone (for a smaller fee). Grantworks is willing to accept an audit for the 2021-2022 year on its own, without the previous year's audit. The fee for a single year's audit is considerably less than for two years, and would be reviewing the accounts that have been kept since Ms. Whitaker's agency has been handling accounts for the City of Austwell. Commissioner Ancira moved that S. Noel Snedeker II be employed by the City of Austwell to audit the financial documents of the City of Austwell for the fiscal year 2021-2022. Commissioner Torres seconded the motion, and all three council members voted in favor of the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Item 11: Adjournment

Mayor Biery declared the meeting adjourned at 6:43 PM.