

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL WORK SESSION MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF JERSEY VILLAGE, TEXAS, HELD ON MAY 15, 2024 AT 6:00 P.M IN THE CIVIC CENTER MEETING ROOM, 16327 LAKEVIEW, JERSEY VILLAGE, TEXAS.

A. The meeting was called to order by Mayor Warren at 6:00 p.m. with the following present:

Mayor, Bobby Warren	City Manager, Austin Bless
Council Member, Drew Wasson	City Secretary, Lorri Coody
Council Member, Sheri Sheppard	
Council Member, Michelle Mitcham	
Council Member, James Singleton	
Council Member, Jennifer McCrea	
Council Member Elect, Connie Rossi	

Staff in attendance: Robert Basford, Assistant City Manager; Mark Bitz, Fire Chief; Danny Keele, Chief of Police; Isabel Kato, Director of Finance; Abram Syphrett, Director of Innovation and Technology and Laura Capps, Human Resources Manager.

B. CITIZENS' COMMENTS: Citizens who have signed a card and wish to speak to the City Council will be heard at this time. In compliance with the Texas Open Meetings Act, unless the subject matter of the comment is on the agenda, the City staff and City Council Members are prevented from discussing the subject and may respond only with statements of factual information or existing policy. Citizens are limited to five (5) minutes for their comments to the City Council.

Ashley Hart, 8602 Red Pheasant Court, Jersey Village, Texas (302) 465-6834 – Ms. Hart spoke to City Council. She thanked City Council for tabling the Golf Course Bridge item at the last meeting. She lives in Windham Village. She is affected by the closure of the GOLF Course Bridge. She believes that all the options concerning a solution for the bridge are not perfect. She outlined the concerns. She proposes a variation to one of the solutions outlined in the Budget Memo. She wants a one-way street from Rio Grande to Jersey Meadow that shares the Golf Course Bridge and allows a way to exit the City. She believes this may be the best solution given it is most cost effective. She stated that there were solutions to keep this alternative safe.

C. FY 2024-2025 COUNCIL/STAFF BUDGET RETREAT

1. Overview and Departmental Information presented by Austin Bless, City Manager

City Manager, Austin Bless, explained the purpose of this meeting. It is a first blush at ideas for the next budget. He began his presentation on the 2024-2025 budget overview the following information:

Major Impacts to FY24

- Sales Tax is about 9% behind budget – Chapter 380 agreements biggest impact
 - Argos has informed us they are leaving Jersey Village – Loss of \$800K
- State Medicare cost share is down
- Fines are down
- Looking at \$1,500,000 lower revenue than budgeted for this fiscal

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Responses to Major Impacts to FY 24

- Hiring Freeze 1 Dispatch position, 1 police officer position – Approximately \$220,000
- Grants/incentives line decrease - \$800,000
- Capital Improvement Decrease of \$190,000
- Gas/Fuel coming about \$55,000 under budget
- These four lines are \$1,265,000
- Other areas are coming under, and any deficit for FY24 should be 1% or less.

Council engaged in discussion about the \$800K loss. It was mentioned that the net impact to the budget is actually \$400 to \$450K. This represents the real loss. There were questions about Argos leaving. City Manager Bless stated that Argos was bought out and Staff is hoping to work with the new company but nothing as of yet.

Looking Ahead - Unknowns

- Town Center – This has been here for years
- Inflationary pressures
- Legislative issues – property tax issues
- 2024 state/national elections that can bring economic and legislative impacts

Impacts to Next Fiscal Year Revenues

- Sales tax will be down about \$400,000
 - Fire and Crime Control will be down \$200,000 each – this impacts transfers to General Fund
- Property tax revenue increase– Estimated around 4.5 Cent increase
 - This is for voter approved debt service
- State Medicare cost share is down

Council engaged in discussion about the decrease in sales tax and the reasons for same. City Manager Bless explained that the Chapter 380 agreements are mostly responsible given they are down some \$200K.

Impacts to Next Fiscal Year

- Golf Course Bridge/Jersey Meadow Drive Expansion
- Utility Rates
- Communications Role – Council request
- Possibility of Retirements – Sick/vacation time payouts
 - 6 Employees 62 or older
 - 11 Employees eligible under TMRS standard

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Golf Course Bridge / Jersey Meadow Drive Expansion

- Main Options
- Extending Jersey Meadow across detention Pond - \$5,200,000 estimated cost
- Follow existing right of way - \$6,370,000 estimated cost
- Extend Rio Grande - \$1,000,000 Estimated cost
- Expand Village Dr - \$2,840,000
- Make Village Dr No Parking - \$500
- Dedicated right hand turns on Village Green Drive - \$1,000

Citizen Feedback – 20 Responses

- Extending Jersey Meadow across detention Pond – 2 In favor, 14 against, 4 Maybe
- Follow existing right of way – 7 in favor, 8 against, 5 maybe
- Extend Rio Grande – 2 in favor, 17 against, 1 maybe
- Expand Village Dr – 9 in favor, 9 against, 1 maybe
- Make Village Dr No Parking – 9 in Favor, 7 against, 4 Maybe
- Dedicated right hand turns on Village Green Drive – 15 in favor, 3 against, 2 maybe

Other Options Proposed by Citizens

- One way bridge traffic only
 - This would be an enforcement issue
 - Some type of prevention method would be required
 - Would also have to accommodate golf carts

What Alternatives Does City Council Want to Look At Further?

Council engaged in discussion about Village Drive with no parking. This option sounds great except for those who live on this street. If they were offered a parking lot, it might be doable. This option would also have enforcement concerns. Additionally, City Manager Bless stated that there is a City Attorney Opinion that states we could not spend monies on this option if it were just parking for those residents.

The various opinions of residents that were collected from the City's website were discussed. City Manager Bless explained that the survey will be in the Jersey Village Star and in the weekly.

Resident complaints and actual participation in the surveys were discussed.

Some members felt that trying to come up with a traffic solution is more of an engineering questions. City Manager Bless explained that there have been traffic studies, and he gave the information concerning same.

There was discussion about the bridge and the parking lot on the other side. Neither were constructed for this volume of traffic or traffic in general.

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Having a traffic study focused on safety was discussed. Additionally, the traffic patterns have changed over the years, especially with the new Golf Course Clubhouse.

Closing the bridge was discussed, and the safety issues associated with same. It seems that residents are split 50/50. It was mentioned that any change in Jersey Village is difficult. It was mentioned that in the past seven (7) years there were only two issues (cut-through traffic and no parking across sidewalks) that resulted in communication from a large number of residents. With this in mind, when you begin to impact the public's conveniences there will be many that voice their opinions.

Cut-through traffic was discussed. City Manager Bless gave background information concerning the history of same.

The cost of a dedicated right hand turn on Village Green Drive was discussed. This option should be implemented regardless of what option or solution is ultimately decided concerning the bridge.

The path moving forward was discussed. At the Golf Course Advisory Committee Meeting, there was no support for keeping the bridge open. The reasoning was safety. There was concern about accidents and the liability of the City. City Manager Bless explained that such a claim would be covered by insurance.

The reasons for using the bridge were discussed. It seems that most use the bridge to save time and for convenience.

Most members stated that this ingress/egress route was never intended to be a road, it is two parking lots joined by a golf cart bridge.

Some members felt that we need to define what closing the bridge actually means. Chief Keele stated that police do use this route as it gives a viable route to get to Jones Road, but it would not affect them if the bridge were closed. Fire Chief Bitz stated that the Fire Department does not use this route given his vehicles are overweight for support of the bridge.

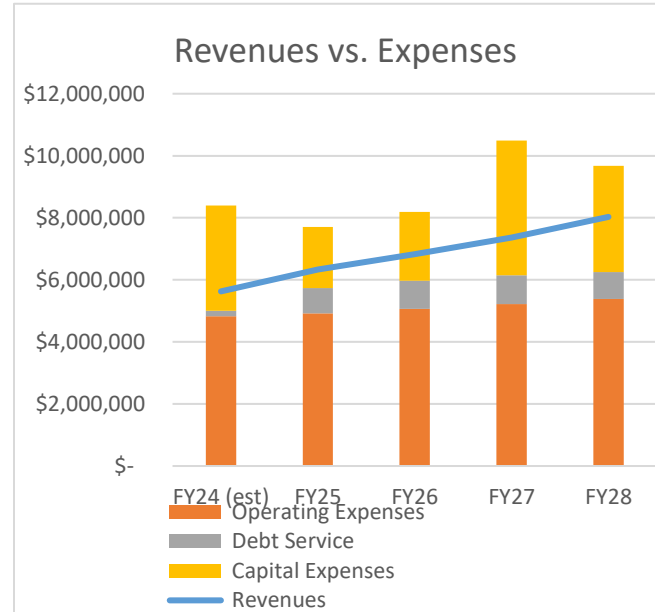
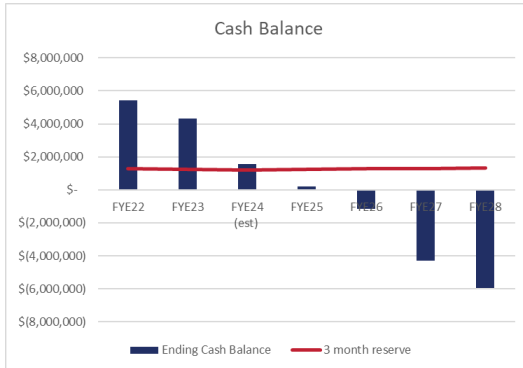
It was discussed that perhaps this could be presented to the Bond Committee for review. Some members did not think this is for the Bond Committee because it is an engineering and safety issue.

Utility Rates

- Capital improvement plan adopted by Council in March 2024
- About \$20,000,000 that we need to do over the next 10 years
- Another \$25,000,000 may be required if further development happens
- Current rate structure adopted by Council will increase
- 10% for water And sewer

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Utility Fund Forecasts



Council engaged in discussion about this information. Projects for these funds were discussed.

Possible Options

- Re-Arrange CIP schedule to be a 15-year schedule
- Larger increase in utility rates
 - 1% water increase is about \$30,000
 - 1% Sewer Increase is about \$25,000
- Bond
 - May have some remaining bond proceeds from recently bonded amounts
 - \$6,145,000 in water/sewer bonds approved and earmarked for ETJ
- Grants
 - Tough to come by and no guarantee
 - Requires some type of matching funds

It seems that the revenues and expenses have changed since we went out for bond. City Manager Bless explained that since that time a CIP Review was conducted by consultants that identified issues and better identified the cost to fix these issues. There are many issues that can be delayed somewhat but will need to be addressed sooner rather than later. The White Oak Bayou Wastewater Treatment Plant was discussed and the bad repair of same.

Annexations from the ETJ was discussed and the effects of same on the system. Some felt that this project had to be cut.

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Addressing the issues as opposed to delaying was discussed. City Manager Bless explained that infrastructure issues cannot be ignored.

The cost of projects/operating costs over revenues was discussed.

Mayor Warren called for a recess at 6:55 pm. He reconvened the budget work session meeting at 8:47 p.m.

What Options Does City Council Want to Look At Further?

Council engaged in discussion about the 1% increase for water and sewer. There were also questions about the expenditures and how “front-loaded” are these numbers. City Manager Bless explained the numbers. Some needed a better understanding of what numbers are covered by bond monies and what expenses are not covered by bond monies. The bond funds were discussed. City Manager Bless explained that what is covered by bond money are pipes, CIP plants and lift stations.

Over the next five years, what is not covered by bond monies? In terms of the chart, everything that is displayed in GOLD is not covered by bonds. The bond projects are being done out of the bond funds and is separate from the numbers in the chart.

In reviewing these numbers, because of many years of neglect, the Council will need to consider raising the fees for residents for water and sewer services. Funding with bonds at least will permit payment that is spread out over the years to come as opposed to raising rates. Some felt that it is fair for residents to pay for operating expenses, maintain the three (3) month cash reserve, and pay for infrastructure. The pros and cons of going out for bond vs. fee increase was discussed.

Some members wanted to see what it would cost the average consumer for a 10%, 15% and 20% increase in rates, and then compare the numbers against what it would cost to go out for bonds.

Communications Person

- Council has asked for a communications person for the City
- That cost is roughly \$100,000 for year 1
- Currently there is an intern that helps with communications on a limited basis

Communication Goals

- What are the goals council wants to achieve with this position?
- Where on the priority scale does this land?

Some members felt we just need to do a better job in getting information to residents, especially information that is not written by AI. The information does not need to be verbose; it just needs to summarize important issues. Some members were supportive of having this position, stating that residents have a perception issue with the City. Other members did not agree, pointing out that the information is available, but residents are not involved until it affects them directly. A

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communications person can take the “fire hose” of information and disseminate it to the residents. Outsourcing the service was discussed as well as getting more interns. Some felt that freezing police and dispatch positions and hiring a communications position is hard to justify.

The priority for this position is low.

City Swimming Pool

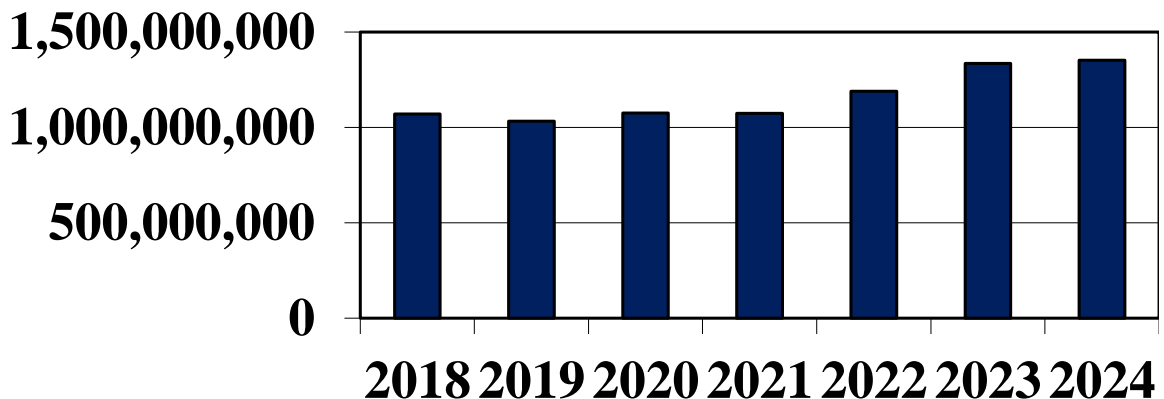
- ADA Compliance Issues
 - \$19,000 to come into compliance with two new ADA lifts for main pool
 - Unrealistic to make baby pool ADA compliant
- Estimate of \$1,100 for safety vacuum release system (SVRS) that was found to be non-functioning this week for Baby pool
- Pool Maintenance
 - As of May 13, we have spent \$13,136 out of a \$17,000 pool maintenance budget this year
 - We are likely to go over that budget amount
- Does council wish to provide any feedback or direction on moving forward with these issues?

Council engaged in discussion about the baby pool. It should be drained. Problems with the pool and the expense to address these problems was discussed. Assistant City Manager Basford explained the monies spent on repairs through May 13. Some members wondered if there would be additional major expenses this budget year. Mr. Basford addressed this question explaining what has already been spent. The pool maintenance budget of \$17,000 was discussed. Some members wanted to know what amount for maintenance is appropriate. Mr. Basford stated that last year it was \$12K, but repairs necessitated an increase to \$17,000 for this budget year.

There was concern about the items that are needed to become ADA compliant and the cost for these items. Some wondered if spending this money is wise given the pool may be replaced or closed. These expenditures were discussed. It was the consensus of Council that the City should keep funding the pool and keep it open for this budget year and clearly communicate to residents that the pool will be closed at the end of the season.

SALES TAX AND PROPERTY VALUE TRENDS

Property Values Update – March 2024 – 1.91% Increase



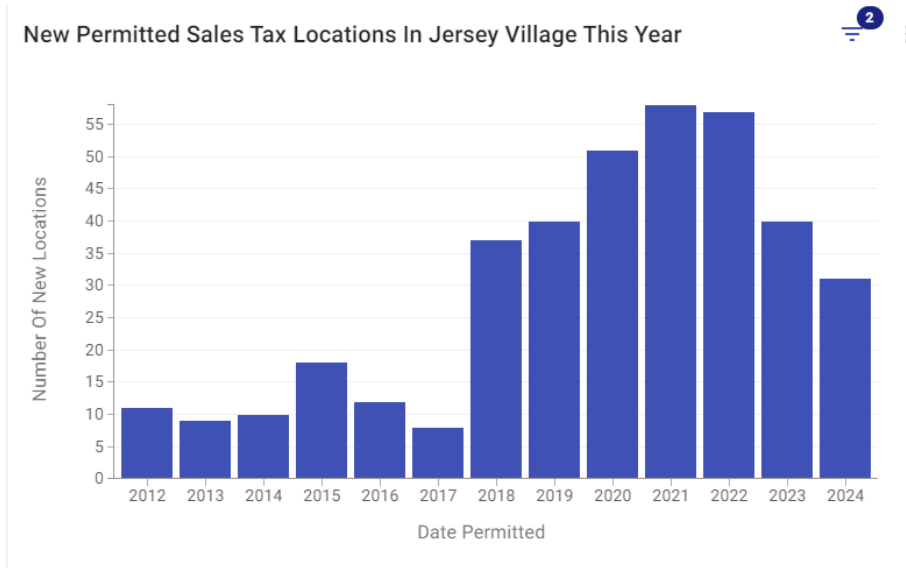
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Council engaged in discussion concerning these numbers.

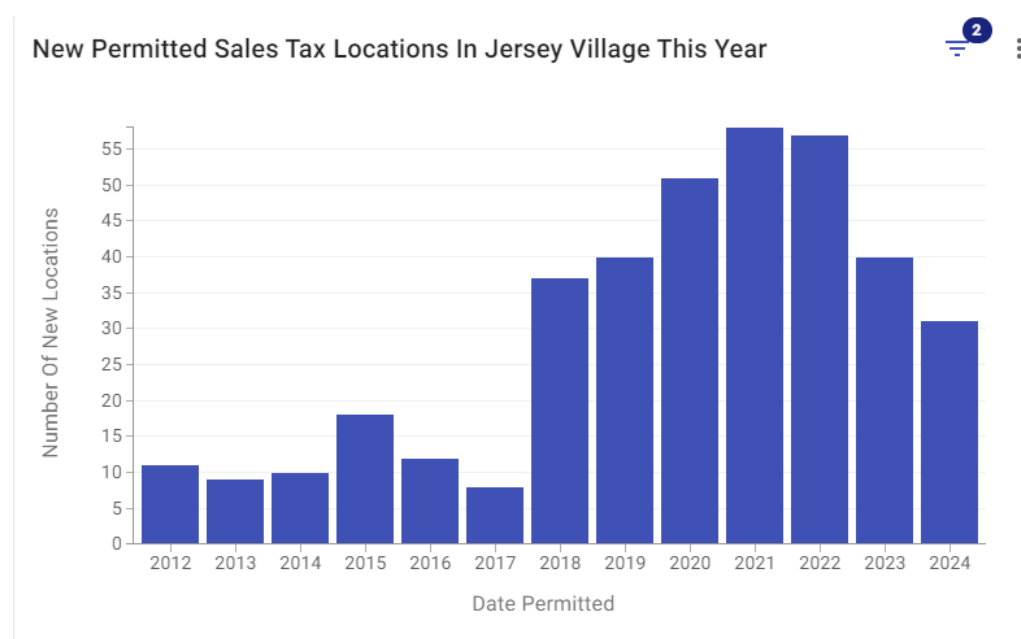
Does City Council Want to Increase Over 65 Exemptions Again?

Council engaged in discussion about the exemption. Most members felt that there just aren't enough funds to increase this exemption at this time.

New Business Growth is Slow



Sales Tax Trend



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Council engaged in discussion about these trends. City Manager Bless explained that the bulk of this decrease for sales tax revenues is from the decrease in revenues from the Chapter 380 agreements.

Those are the Big Topics

Council engaged in discussion about how the City will communicate about the pool and its closure at the end of the season. Also, when will this communication happen. Some felt it should be communicated regularly and throughout the City, to include posting the information at the pool.

ADJOURN

With no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 10:04 p.m.

Lorri Coody, City Secretary

