

State of Texas

Brazoria County

City of Freeport

BE IT REMEMBERED, that the City of Freeport, met in a regular meeting on Monday, September 8, 2008 at 6:00 p.m. at the Freeport Police Department, Municipal Court Room, 430 North Brazosport Boulevard, Freeport, Texas for the purpose of considering the following agenda items:

City Council: Larry L. McDonald
Clan A. Cameron
Jim Saccomanno
Ron Wise
Norma M. Garcia

Staff: Gary Beverly, City Manager
Wallace Shaw, City Attorney
Delia Munoz, City Secretary
Larry Fansher, Public Works Director
Jeff Pynes, Chief of Police
John Stanford, Fire Chief
Bob Welch, Finance Director
Pinkey Hartline, Golf Course Director
Nat Hickey, Property Manager

Visitors: Patrick Gore Wright Gore, III
Dorothy Pirrung Jim Pirrung
Larry Shaefer Judy Shaefer
Susie Wise Rosa McDonald
Eric Hayes Lila Diehl
Lila Lloyd Sandra Leavey
Melanie Oldham Jerry Meeks
Richard Turner Juan Zapata
Dan Tarver Fred Bolton
Yvette Ruiz Alonzo Martinez
Mingo Marquez

Call to Order.

Mayor McDonald called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Invocation.

Wallace Shaw offered the invocation.

Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor McDonald led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Consideration of the approval of the September 2, 2008 Council Minutes.

On a motion by Councilman Cameron, seconded by Councilman Saccomanno, with all present voting "aye", Council approved the September 2, 2008 Council minutes.

Attending Citizens and Their Business.

Juan Zapata, 1123 W. 5th Street, member of Freeport Youth Alliance is prepared to work hard to get funding for a skating park. He is asking for guidance and support from Freeport. The area in question is city owned. Chief Pynes helped them find a grant of \$25,000 by the Tony Hawk Foundation.

Richard Turner of Freeport Funeral Home said that he believes present council wants Freeport to return to a small fishing village. He asked how the City Mayor could threaten the City Manager to concrete a private business. Mr. Turner stated that for the last 20 years has waited for Walnut Street to be lowered. His customers can not open the vehicle door because it hits the street. Mayor McDonald commented on this and said that it was the City's responsibility to replace what it removes to its original condition and that was the case at Lupita's Bakery on Gulf Blvd. The City had to remove her parking lot due to a drainage pipe installation. Mayor McDonald said that he alone did not make this decision, but that it was a decision of the majority of the city council.

Melanie Oldham lives in Angleton but works in Freeport. She stated that she has a lot of respect for Gary Beverly. He is great with finance and has been a great help to her. She plans to open a business in Freeport.

Proclamation: Proclaiming Direct Support Professionals Recognition Week.

Mayor McDonald read out the Proclamation proclaiming Direct Support Professional Recognition Week in Freeport.

Public Hearing: Proposed budget for fiscal year 2008-2009.

Mayor McDonald opened the public hearing on the proposed budget for fiscal year 2008-2009 at 6:12 p.m.

Gary Beverly discussed the changes to the budget and answered questions from Council. The salary includes 3% raise to the employees and salary market adjustments.

Councilman Wise asked why the City requires 5 park supervisors. Councilman Wise asked if he had demoted the Public Works Director- Mr. Larry Fansher and if he had changed his salary status. Gary said that he had moved him to the Parks Department but had not changed his salary.

Councilman Wise would like to see the budget re-evaluated, because he saw a lot of wasteful spending. Councilman Wise said that the City could not afford the pay increases on some employees.

Sandra Leavey told Council that she was disappointed with the tone of Council. She stated that Councilman Wise was acting very unprofessional and was very argumentative towards Mr. Beverly. She was confused; “had not this already been discussed” She asked why these issues had not been brought up before. She said that budget workshop was set up for that and that this was not the place to criticize.

Councilman Wise stated that he had not received the budget until late in the budget process.

Councilman Saccomanno felt that Councilman Wise was micromanaging the City Manager and that it was not necessary.

Melanie Oldham said that she had attended many Commissioners Court meeting in Angleton and had not seen a meeting unprofessional like this one. She suggested that personal attacks on Mr. Gary Beverly stop and that maybe a workshop can be scheduled to work out the budget discrepancies.

Wright Gore, III said that there was an article in the July 31, 2008 where the Freeport Police Department was getting more police. He asked if this was included in this budget.

John Stanford expressed serious needs for the Freeport Fire & EMS department, to be able to provide advance life skills to the City. He challenged anyone to find another city that operated on as low a cost as Freeport. He said that if the budget is postponed, it will have a serious effect on the Freeport Fire & EMS. He asked Council to study the competitive salaries posted by the Texas Municipal League.

Mayor McDonald reassured Mr. Stanford and Mr. Pynes that they would get their staff and their raises in this budget.

Fred Bolton asked of the Council were meeting “off campus”, because two of the Council members were in the dark on some projects and the other three Council members were very knowledgeable. Mayor McDonald denied such meetings taking place.

There being no further comments from the attendances and staff, Mayor McDonald closed the public hearing at 7:00 p.m.

Consideration of the approval of Ordinance No. 2008-2208 adopting a budget for fiscal year 2008-2009 for the City of Freeport.

On a motion by Councilman Saccomanno, seconded by Councilwoman Garcia, with all present voting 3 to 2, Council failed to approve Ordinance No. 2008-2208 adopting a budget for fiscal year 2008-2009 for the City of Freeport.

Mayor McDonald, Councilman Wise and Councilman Cameron opposed.

Public Hearing: Consideration of the first public hearing to set a tax rate in excess of the effective rate for the 2008 tax year.

Mayor McDonald opened the public hearing at 7:02 p.m.

Wright Gore, III said that an article on August 28, 2008 newspaper stated that a lot of the entities surrounding us were increasing the tax rates. Freeport is facing a lot of challenges and it needs to attract business. Freeport residents are being bombard by increasing tax rates by all taxing entities. Citizens are paying more for fuel, water, electricity, garbage and making more sacrifices. The City needs to set priorities and lower the tax rate. Mayor McDonald agrees.

Melanie Oldham asked what was going to be cut if the tax rate is lowered.

Gary Beverly reminded Council that the City had an \$85,000 exemption to Senior Citizens and the Disabled.

Mr. Shaw said the effective tax rate is \$ 0.685449 per \$100 of taxable value. The proposed tax rate is \$0.710000 per \$100.

Lila Lloyd said Mayor McDonald, Councilman Cameron, and Councilman Wise came here with their own agenda set. Mr. Gore said that he supported the Marina, when he has opposed it for years and has even sued the City. She said the City keeps losing its tax base. She said that Council was contradicting themselves. Roy Yates of Freeport Welding, a business was not able to get the 1495 off ramp widen, but another local business was able to get the parking lot done.

Members of the public attended the hearing and expressed their views. Their being no further comments, Mayor McDonald closed the public hearing at 7:20 p.m.

Consideration of the approval of appointing a representative to the Brazosport Water Authority.

On a motion by Councilman Cameron, seconded by Mayor McDonald, with all present voting "aye", Council tabled this item to advertise on the Facts.

Mayor McDonald closed the formal session and opened the Executive Session at 7:40 p.m.

Executive Session

A. Section 551.074, Government Code

Deliberations concerning the appointment, employment, evaluation, reassignment, duties, discipline or dismissal of a public officer or employee or to hear a complaint or charge against an officer or employee, to wit:

City Manger

Mayor McDonald closed the Executive Session and reconvened the open meeting at 8:10 p.m.

Adjourn

On a motion by Councilman Cameron, seconded by Councilman Wise, with all present voting “aye”, the meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Delia Munoz
City Secretary

Larry McDonald
Mayor