



BROOKS TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

MINUTES

Monday, August 15, 2022

Mayor Pro Tempore Scott Israel led the Invocation and Pledge and called the meeting to order.

Mayor Pro Tempore: Scott Israel

Council Member present: Ted Britt
Brian Davis
Todd Speer

Absent: Daniel Langford
Kay Brumbelow

The proposed Agenda for Monday, August 15, 2022, was emailed to the Mayor and Council Members for review before tonight's meeting. Council Member Ted Britt made a Motion to approve the Agenda; Council Member Todd Speer seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor.

The draft Minutes for Monday, July 18, 2022, were provided via email to the Mayor and Council Members for review before tonight's meeting. Council Member Todd Speer made a Motion to approve the minutes as presented; Council Member Brian Davis seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor.

Old Business:

Adoption of the Approved 2022 Comprehensive Plan: M. Ungaro stated that back in June Council voted to transmit the Comprehensive Plan for review; the review was completed with no changes and brought back this evening to Council for final adoption. Mayor Pro Tempore Scott Israel asked for a motion as there were no major concerns; Council Member Brian Davis made a Motion to approve the adoption, and Council Member Ted Britt seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor. With the adoption of the approved plan, Resolution #2022-02 was signed by Mayor Pro Tempore Scott Israel.

Public Hearing:

Tax Increase – Millage Rate

The Town of Brooks is proposing a millage increase of 0.64 for a total millage rate of 1.64. The FY2023 Budget was reviewed and adopted in June 2023, with revenues and expenditures reflecting a 1.64 millage rate. The millage rate would reflect an 83.4% in Net Taxes % increase and would propose a total tax increase for a home with a fair market value of \$300,000 @ \$196.80 per year. M. Ungaro reviewed the process for the calculation of the Net Taxes % increase.

Mayor Pro Tempore opened the Public Hearing:

Resident Richard Burke on Butler Road asked where the money is going and about COLA salary increases.

Resident Philip Bradley asked if the Town produces a CAFA report (audit) even though it is not generally required; and asked if you do the math for a percentage tax increase to get to the 83.04% and look at the net millage proposed at 1.64, it's still at an increase of almost 2/3 over the prior year and on top of the 40% increase for 2021, the 5-year history and the millage rate at 1.64 would produce a 127% increase since 2017 or more than double that we were looking at a few years ago, and his income hasn't doubled in the same period, and yes, inflation is at 10%, and we have record prices so is this really the time to raise our millage rate by 0.64 over the prior year?

Resident Barry Murphy asked if we are going to see \$500k worth of changes, we should see some type of changes. This Town should show \$500k in money spent.

Resident Melissa Murphy asked about the salary raises.

Responses to the resident's questions regarding the millage increase by Mayor Pro Tempore, Council, and M. Ungaro, L. Spohr:

Mayor Pro Tempore Scott Israel – The Town has not increased millage except for last year; it has been kept artificially low for several years. The Town is incurring all the increases everyone else is incurring. The rollbacks were done due to the hardships of the community. We can't do it anymore; otherwise, we will use our reserve funds. The Town has made improvements in the past few years, including streetlights, speed bumps, and sidewalks.

Council Member Brian Davis – We probably did a disservice in the previous years by doing rollbacks, probably 19 times out of the last 20 years., there comes the point when it can't be rolled back.

Council Member Ted Britt – Explained that everyone has incurred increases, and the Town is not an exception. We are seeing the same increases; a prime example is that the fuel for the cemetery has increased.

M. Ungaro – the Town needs to remain compliant, daily operations are costing more due to the inflation rate and referred to the CPI for Atlanta and Southeast Region, and the Town is not immune to the cost increases incurred by everyone. The cost of COLA increase for the staff is 8.5%. The Town of Brooks does not produce a CAFA report and offered a copy of the Town's Audit report if an Open Records request is made.

L. Spohr – Offered Richard Burke a copy of the Budget, Balance Sheets and P&L if he would submit an Open Records request. L. Spohr reviewed the FY22 budget vs. actual and reported that an amendment will need to be made to the FY2022 budget as expenditures exceeded budgeted amounts to respond to B. Murphy's question of where money has been spent.

Mayor Pro Tempore Scott Israel closed the Public Hearing

Committee Reports:

Mayor's Report: - None

Planning and Zoning: Nothing to report

Recreation: - None; no financials

Town Clerk Report: Nothing to report

Library: K. Bradley reported library traffic is slower due to school being back in session, cleaning off shelves for new books, and updating the Lexile numbers.

Farmer's Market: K. Bradley reported the next market will be on August 27, 2022

Finance Officer's Report: The financial information was distributed prior to the meeting. L. Spohr reviewed the financials; LOST and SPLOST are at an increase over the same time last year. SPLOST YTD over this time last year is at an increase of 15%, and LOST YTD over this time last year is at an increase of 13.48%. Council Member Brian Davis asked if there is an overage in the SPLOST account and what is done with those funds. M. Ungaro will investigate if those funds need to be returned.

Town Manager Report:

Transportation – Church Alley, new speed limit signs were installed, posted speed is 15 mph.

Federal Grants – The Woods Rd culvert replacement was turned into the County Engineer for inclusion in a comprehensive county-wide Bridge and Culvert Replacement grant application. The Town will be applying for a Transportation Alternatives grant to install sidewalks from the railroad crossing to Price Rd. and to continue down Price Rd. to the Brooks Memorial Cemetery. Also included will be a sidewalk from Brooks Park to W. McIntosh Rd., continuing W. McIntosh to Hwy 85 connector and then crossing over to Price Rd.

Traffic – With the start of a new school year at Liberty Tech, morning, and afternoon (especially afternoon) traffic has caused issues with the vehicular flow on Hwy 85 Connector. On one afternoon two weeks ago, I observed the afternoon pick-up traffic. During that time, I witnessed two near head on collisions and saw a county Marshall pull three vehicles over for executing illegal maneuvers related to the traffic pattern. I have met with the school's principal and had a positive and constructive conversation. She indicated that while they have staggered times for pickup, many new parents arrive too early and upset the schedule. They are instituting some changes related to the staging of students after school and are looking into hiring an off-duty Sheriff's Deputy to control traffic at Price Rd. and Hwy 85 Connector. A suggested alternative route would be to Bankstown and Price Rd. Council Member Todd Speer asked why it is worse this year. M. Ungaro replied that there are more students; Council Member Ted Britt stated approximately 422 students this year.

Resident Don Britt inquired about the paving that is scheduled to be done by Piedmont Paving; M. Ungaro replied that the paving is being done by the County Road Department and a work order has been submitted, but the work has yet to be scheduled. M. Ungaro stated he would stay on top of it.

Any Other – None

Any Other Business – None

Mayor Pro Tempore Scott Israel adjourned the meeting at 7:35 p.m. to begin the Executive Session. Mayor Pro Tempore Scott Israel adjourned the Executive Session at 8:05 p.m.

Adjourn: There being no further business to discuss this evening, Council Member Brian Davis offered a Motion to adjourn; Council Member Ted Britt seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lorey Spohr
Town Clerk