

Minutes of the Truth in Taxation meeting of the Syracuse City Council held on August 9, 2021 at 6:00 p.m., held in a hybrid in-person/electronic format via Zoom, meeting ID 814 2193 7453, in-person in the City Council Chambers at 1979 W. 1900 S., and streamed on the Syracuse City YouTube Channel in accordance with House Bill 5002, Open and Public Meetings Act Amendments, signed into law on June 25, 2020.

Present: Councilmembers: Lisa W. Bingham
Jennifer Carver
Jordan Savage (via Zoom)
W. Seth Teague
Paul Watson

Mayor Dave Maughan
City Manager Brody Bovero
City Recorder Cassie Z. Brown

City Employees Present:
Administrative Services Director Steve Marshall
City Attorney Paul Roberts
Public Works Director Robert Whiteley
Parks and Recreation Director Kresta Robinson
Fire Chief Aaron Byington
Community and Economic Development Director Noah Steele
Deputy Police Chief Heath Rodgers

1. Meeting Called to Order.

Mayor Gailey called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. as a special meeting, with notice of time, place, and agenda provided 24 hours in advance to the newspaper and each Councilmember. Councilmember Teague provided an invocation and Councilmember Bingham led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Consideration of Final Budget for Fiscal Year 2022-2023. Truth in Taxation Public Hearing and consideration of Proposed Resolution R22-30 setting the certified tax rate and adopting the final budget for the Fiscal Year (FY) ending June 30, 2021.

A staff memo from the City Manager and Administrative Services Director explained that as required by Utah Code Annotated 10-6-118, “before the last June 22 of each fiscal period, or, in the case of a property tax increase under Sections 59-2-919 through 59-2-923, before September 1 of the year for which a property tax increase is proposed, the governing body shall by resolution or ordinance adopt a budget for the ensuing fiscal period for each fund for which a budget is required under this chapter. A copy of the final budget for each fund shall be certified by the budget officer and filed with the state auditor within 30 days after adoption.” The Council is considering a truth in taxation process and raising property taxes by \$1,193,000 the second half of the paramedic program (\$450,000) and to fund additional employees in the following positions as noted below.

- Police Officer III
- 2 Park Maintenance Workers
- Facilities Maintenance Tech.
- Public Information Specialist
- HR Specialist
- Public Works Inspector

Since the Council is considering increasing the tax rate above the county certified tax rate, it is considered a tax increase under state law and requires a truth in taxation process. The council just completed a truth in taxation public hearing to discuss increasing the tax rate. The council will now need to decide to accept the proposed tax rate, accept a portion of the rate increase, or reject the rate increase and accept the certified tax rate from the county. The City advertised in the newspaper once individually and once on a county combined advertisement the intent to increase taxes. This increase shows on the property tax bills that were sent to all residents during late July. The tax bill shows that a TNT meeting will be held and gave a date and time of the public hearing.

Mayor Maughan summarized the City’s annual budget development process, which included several public meetings and opportunity for public input, after which City Manager Bovero reviewed the above staff memo and used the aid of a PowerPoint presentation to provide information regarding the items that will be funded with the additional revenue to be generated by the proposed property tax increase. He stated the City’s mission statement is to ‘provide quality, affordable services for its citizens while promoting community pride, fostering economic development, and preparing for the future’. Everything the City does aims to accomplish this mission statement and the focus of tonight’s discussion will be on ‘quality’

and ‘affordable’ services. He discussed the availability of information regarding the City’s finances; the City strives for transparency in financial reporting and has received the certificate of achievement for excellence in financial reporting from the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) for the past 12 years. Mr. Bovero then discussed the City’s revenue sources in the General Fund; property taxes are just 15 percent of the City’s total revenue. The State law is written in a way that allows for the rate to adjust based upon an increase or decrease in property tax rates; if the City does not adjust the rate, the amount of revenue it receives year after year would remain constant regardless of changes in property value. However, inflation can erode the City’s buying power; if the property tax rate were never adjusted, the same \$1,000 received in 2011 would be worth just \$786 in 2022. New growth requires the City to cover additional services required by new property; it is not intended to offset inflation. For an average Syracuse home valued at \$535,000, the City receives just \$372 in property taxes. The majority (65 percent) of a resident’s property taxes are diverted to the Davis County School District. The City’s share is just 13 percent. There are other taxing entities in the County that receive a smaller portion of the total property tax paid by residents. He then cited other things that residents pay for on an annual basis that are equal to or greater than the amount they pay in City property tax, including cable streaming services (\$660); cell phone bills (\$1,368); and cable television (\$1,141). However, for the \$372 paid to the City, the average resident gets public safety coverage, public works services, and quality parks. He noted he feels the average resident gets a great value for what they pay to the City for property taxes. If the City’s property tax rate were not adjusted this year, the rate would drop from 0.001653 to 0.001265. The current proposal is to adjust the tax rate from 0.001653 to 0.001689, which will generate an additional \$1,193,000 in additional revenue. This equates to \$124.76 per year or \$10.40 per month for the average residence. With the additional revenue to be generated by the tax increase, the City would fund the remaining cost of the transition of paramedic services from Davis County to Syracuse City (\$450,000), hire two parks maintenance workers (\$132,000), hire a Police Officer III (\$128,500), hire a public information specialist (\$98,250), hire a human resources specialist (\$86,000), hire a facility maintenance technician (\$80,000), and allocate \$18,5000 for a public works inspector position. He provided a breakdown of the average monthly cost each household will pay for these additional positions/services, after which he noted there are additional needs that will not be addressed by this tax increase, including:

- Landscaping along the West Davis Corridor (WDC) project;
- Park Development
- Park Land Acquisition
- Street Repaving
- Creation of a full Traffic Unit in the Police Department.

Finally, Mr. Bovero presented a chart comparing the City’s property tax rates with neighboring cities in Davis County, some of which do not have their own Fire Department and their residents pay an additional tax to the North Davis Fire District (NDFD); he noted that Centerville, Clearfield, Fruit Heights, South Weber, Sunset, West Bountiful, and West Point are also holding truth in taxation hearings this year.

Mayor Maughan then discussed questions that he has received in advance of this hearing relating to matters such as the self-sustaining programs in the City that are not funded by property tax revenue, increased utility fees in addition to property tax increases, applications for and receipt of grants for certain projects and programs in the City to avoid a greater property tax increase, unfunded mandates from higher levels of government that the City must comply with, and projects that are being delayed at this time to reduce the burden on taxpayers.

Mayor Maughan opened the public hearing at 6:45 p.m.

Mayor Maughan stated that tonight’s meeting agenda provided instructions for residents to email their public comments to City Recorder Brown by 4:00 p.m. tonight in order for them to be read into the record of the meeting. Ms. Brown indicated she received just one email for this meeting, which she read as follows:

“To Mayor Maughan and City Council:

Back in February 2022, the Museum presented a proposal to the city regarding our goals to expand the main building. While we understand the logistics of this proposal may take longer than we expected, we were shocked to find that the city only gave the museum the usual \$500 for the yearly budget. We asked for around \$250,000; we did not expect to receive that entire amount, or even half, but to receive nothing more than \$500 is disappointing.

The Museum has drastically improved operations, education outreach, miscellaneous programming, and updated exhibits. Even during the COVID-19 pandemic, we managed to keep operations and business afloat despite the decrease in visitor attendance and donations. With the addition of hours for our Curator, we have many more exciting goals ahead that absolutely require support from the city.

Our expansion presentation was well received by the City Council. The Museum contributes to the good name of Syracuse more than any other city entity through visitors from all over the world, all over the United States, and locally. We have many positive reviews from attendees saying the Museum was one of their favorite experiences while visiting Utah. A local citizen who visited the museum told us that we are a bright star in the community. With

our current volunteers, there are roughly 40 hours a week of volunteer time promoting Syracuse City through the Museum. That equates to one full-time employee that the city doesn't have to hire which gives a positive, public relations spin. We were very disappointed that there were no funds available to contribute to our vision of expansion and growth.

We appreciate the yearly donation of \$500, but by comparison, other city museums operating budgets are much higher. For example, the City of Layton gives the Heritage Museum of Layton \$5,000 for operational expenses in addition to \$75,000 from RAMP tax funding. We were hoping to get some expansion money from the sale of the city property near the cemetery as even a small percentage of that would help us immensely.

We hope you understand our frustrations with this situation. Our Curator and volunteers work hard to preserve the history, heritage, and culture of life along the Great Salt Lake, and we all want to see support from the city that we cherish. It's critical that the city invests in the Museum - as we experience rapid growth, we must preserve the history before it's lost and forgotten by future generations.

We hope to hear from each of you soon. Thank you for your time and consideration,

SYRACUSE MUSEUM FOUNDATION BOARD

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Doug Peterson

Mark Petersen

Lisa Saunders"

Mayor Maughan then invited in-person public comments.

Tom Park spoke to the impact that inflation is having on his and other households in the community; he added that he does not pay the costs included in Mr. Bovero's presentation for cable streaming services and a cell phone bill. His family is on a fixed budget, and they have had to reduce costs to adapt to inflation and he suggested the City do the same.

Mike McBride asked why other cities are able to keep their tax rates low, but Syracuse City has been forced to increase property taxes and fees on a regular basis. He then asked if Davis County reduced their tax rate in conjunction with transferring paramedic services to cities.

Mayor Maughan stated that the County's tax rate was reduced to offset the property tax increase considered by cities to which paramedic services was transferred.

Councilmember Bingham then stated that her guess as to why other cities are able to keep their property tax rates lower is that they have a stronger commercial/business tax base that Syracuse City has.

Alan Miller stated that Mayor Maughan suggested parks and recreation programs are self-sustaining and not supported by tax revenue, but he noted City residents pay a recreation, arts, parks (RAP) tax to fund certain park and recreation programs. Mayor Maughan acknowledged that is correct. Mr. Miller then spoke to the inability of businesses to operate in Syracuse for the long term; many businesses open in the City but close shortly after. He stated that other cities have been able to recruit and retain businesses because of proper planning associated with future infrastructure projects and he is upset that Syracuse City has not done the same in advance of the West Davis Corridor project.

Cody Hamer thanked Mr. Bovero for the information included in his presentation, but noted it is important to acknowledge that these are unprecedented times in the nation due to inflation and a recession. He stated that wages are not keeping pace with inflation, and he fears it will get worse due to actions taken at the federal level. He stated he understands the City's desire to beautify and improve, but at this time it is necessary that the City narrow its focus to help residents survive these unprecedented times.

Judy Meservy also thanked Mr. Bovero for his presentation, but also discussed the impact that inflation is having on residents and their ability to spend money in the community. A tax increase will also make it difficult for people to spend their

money in support of businesses in the community. She agreed that commercial growth would benefit the City, but many commercial areas have been converted to high density residential areas, such as the properties along Antelope Drive. This will not increase revenue but will place an additional burden on City services.

Steve Stolzenburg stated he has lived in many other communities that have done a tremendous amount of community planning to offset the costs associated with significant growth; these communities have required those who have developed high density housing projects to pay for associated improvements, such as stop lights, wider roads, and increased police protection. When a city decides to allow growth, they should tax the developer to pay for the increased demand for services. He asked what Syracuse City does to plan for increased growth.

Alan Christensen stated the general populous of Syracuse did not want high density housing to be built in the City and many residents are very angry about the projects that are underway. He has been impacted by projects that have been completed in the City due to growth; curb and gutter was installed in front of his home and the contractor removed his secondary water valve. The City has indicated they will take care of the situation, but it has been left unresolved for the last two years. He then stated that he has reached out to the Planning Commission about his concerns and has not received a response. He is retired and has been so since 2009; taxes have been increased regularly, but his income is not increasing on a regular basis. He is on a fixed income and is really in a bind.

Devin Smith stated Mr. Bovero's presentation included a lot of great information, but it is his belief that increased services and amenities should be paid for by the increased revenue associated with growth, not a property tax rate increase on existing residents. He is not anti-tax, and he appreciates the opportunity to live in a society that provides great services and conveniences. He is an economist and public administrator and feels he is qualified to provide insight on topics such as inflation and taxation; while inflation is a factor in the need for a tax increase in Syracuse, it is necessary to understand that inflation is not the main driver, and this is based upon information produced by the City. The City collected \$3.5 million in property tax last year, which is equivalent to \$3.8 million this year due to inflation. Only 17 percent of the proposed tax increase can be explained by inflation and the other \$1.1 million, or 83 percent, is unexplained and needs alternative justification. There is much more than inflation driving this tax increase and he referred to those as 'net increases', staffing that is being added to the budget. He does not refute that those things are needed, but he asked that they be accurately represented rather than portraying them as being caused by inflation. If the proposed tax increase is approved, the City's property tax revenue will have been increased by 122 percent over the last five years. He recognized this is only a small percent of the City's budget and a portion of the tax revenue is associated with new development/growth, but at least 77 percent can be attributed to Council decisions. Each household is experiencing increased costs across the board and a property tax increase will increase the burden. It is important and necessary for the City to tap into other funding sources so that one single funding source is not overused as the five-year trend is unsustainable in the long term. As the WDC project is built, he would encourage the City to pursue economic development opportunities to avoid ongoing tax increases.

Mayor Maughan responded to Mr. Smith and indicated that inflation is just a part of the problem the City is facing, not the entire program. He agreed with many of the points made by Mr. Smith.

Councilmember Carver then stated that the Mayor has been working hard to recruit businesses to Syracuse, but they have considered the survivability of businesses in the City and that information has influenced their decisions on where to locate.

Councilmember Bingham added that the national sentiment regarding law enforcement has also impacted the City's ability to retain quality police officers. She echoed the comments made by Councilmember Carver about the decisions made by businesses regarding where to locate. She added that many businesses also need a greater population to support them and that is one of the reasons that the City has allowed residential growth through mixed-use development projects.

Mr. Bovero then clarified that he did not intend to communicate that inflation is the only factor driving the property tax rate increase proposal; it is only one factor and the main drivers are the need to increase staffing in Departments across the City and to properly equip those employees. He stated that Mr. Smith's assessment is accurate.

Councilmember Watson noted that the City cannot impose impact fees that are high enough to cover increased staffing in the City; impact fees can only cover the costs associated with infrastructure improvements needed to service a project area.

Councilmember Savage added that while Mr. Smith is correct that the City's property tax rate has increased over the last 5 years, it is important to note that for the previous 20 years, the City had a very long period of time during which staffing levels were reduced and property taxes were not increased. The City has been in a situation where it is trying to 'catch up' and properly fund services and programs. The City is actively working to recruit businesses to the City in conjunction with the WDC project and other improvements in the community. He agreed that annual property tax increases are not sustainable, and he hopes that this year's tax increase will sustain the City for some time.

Mayor Maughan expounded on the manner in which impact fees are legislated in the State of Utah; the City cannot pay for improvements to existing roads, but only for new roads needed to serve a new development. However, everyone knows that new development will cause existing roads to deteriorate quicker. Mr. Bovero agreed and stated that the City does have

impact fee facilities plan that identify future project and those that will be needed based upon growth markers. New development can only pay for capital improvements and not any personnel needed to maintain a certain level of service in the City. Councilmember Carver suggested that residents reach out to their State representatives to encourage legislative amendments to address these concerns.

Doug Lund stated he recognizes the need for increased law enforcement in the community and he is grateful for the City's first responders. He noted that some of the things concerning him are the split votes in the past several months relative to pay increases for City employees; he appreciated Councilmember Watson's expression of the need to increase the commercial base in Syracuse, but it is his understanding that the person charged with business recruitment is spending more time on high density housing projects rather than recruiting businesses. He stated he feels badly that some City employees are not paid at levels comparable with the market, but he and his family have had to be creative to increase their own income. Many City employees make over \$100,000 per year, but many residents do not earn that level of pay. The City has a 'goldmine' in Antelope Island, but it is not promoted for business recruitment efforts. He stated that businesses are locating in other communities not based solely on population but based upon the willingness of those communities to work with them. He does not believe that more rooftops are needed to bring businesses here, but instead he believes it is necessary to plan, prepare, execute, and succeed. He discussed the management of his own small businesses and suggested the City operate similarly to ensure ongoing success; City employees should only be taken care of after residents are taken care of and other revenue is available to pay for increased wages.

Lisa Stolzenburg thanked the Mayor and Council for their time spent in representation of the City. She also thanked the City's first responders for the service they provide. She stated it would be helpful for the City to provide contact information for State representatives in order for residents to reach out to them. She also proposed that each individual unit in a high-density residential project be taxed the same amount as individual homes in the City. She suggested that developers of high-density projects pay for park improvements and ongoing maintenance, in addition to paying impact fees to cover other capital improvements. She added that as the City grows, more services and programming is expected, and the City needs to consider the means to pay for these improvements.

Mayor Maughan stated that the City can provide contact information for State representatives in a future edition of the City magazine.

Ike Buckley stated he finds it irresponsible for the City to increase its tax rate at a time when decisions that are being made by the federal government are already increasing the financial burden on residents. He stated residents are in bondage and do not even realize it; they are paying more for daily needs than ever before, and he believes that taxation is theft. He wonders what has happened to conservatism in Utah and noted that raising taxes is not conservative. Many run on a platform of lower taxes, but when the time comes to adopt a budget, taxes are regularly increased. He stated he and his wife homeschool their children and have no debt besides their mortgage; they just have one income and have been impacted by inflation, but they have been prudent in cutting costs wherever possible to sustain their family. He asked that the Council consider decreasing taxes rather than increasing them. He stated he has voted against things that would increase costs in the City and he is opposed to a tax increase at this time as well.

Mari Gast proposed changes to capital projects included in the budget, namely the BMX park project; she suggested that other existing parks be properly maintained and improved before new parks are built. Additionally, the City should encourage xeriscaping in homeowner's associations (HOAs), which would reduce the need for increased secondary water infrastructure. She also suggested that the City's splash pad be open on Sunday to make it accessible to residents who cannot visit it any other day of the week.

Mayor Maughan noted that the splash pad must be shut off at least one day per week for maintenance of the equipment. Ms. Gast suggested that it be another day as many residents work Monday through Friday and cannot visit the park during the week. Mayor Maughan noted the Council has voted on that issue and closed the park on Sunday.

Councilmember Bingham added that the City does not have the authority to regulate HOA projects, the State of Utah allows xeriscaping and HOAs can amend their own covenants, conditions, and restrictions (CCRs) to allow xeriscaping.

Tony Chicorelli asked if the City pays for the bird conservation center at Antelope Island, to which Mayor Maughan answered no. Mr. Chicorelli stated amenities like that are part of the reason that he and his wife chose to buy a house here; they did not buy a home here because of a handful of parks or the well-appointed Police Department. They purchased a home here because of the people who live here who are responsible, conservative, and prudent. He most certainly did not know who made up the City Council or who was serving as the Mayor. He stated that it is his belief that nothing that he or any other member of the audience says tonight will change the mind of the Council relative to the budget and proposed tax increase. Citizens have no recourse. He imagines that if people really disagree with the Mayor and Council, they should vote them out of office; he is sure that upstanding members of the community have a lot of friends who would vote against the current elected officials.

Jim Bishop stated Mr. Bovero's presentation was eye opening and convinced him of the need for a tax increase; he is concerned there are only two officers on shift during the overnight hours and that dispatchers are not familiar with Syracuse City when called upon for help. He then asked if the new apartments that have been built in the City are paying their fair share.

Mr. Bovero stated that property owners pay the taxes for their rental units, and they likely include their taxes in their monthly rent amount.

Darwin Perry thanked Mr. Bovero, the Mayor, and Council for the information provided tonight. He spoke about his experience living in Colorado where they paid for service provision as the area he lived in was unincorporated. Housing was not allowed in that area because of the amount of money it costs the community. He stated that Syracuse has dug a hole that it will not be able to get out of because of the amount of housing that has been allowed. The City needs to prevent additional housing projects, especially high-density housing, because it is becoming impossible to provide schools, infrastructure, and service to those houses. The growth the area has experienced is insane.

Kathy Brown stated she has lived in Syracuse for almost five years and her tax bill has increased \$1,000 since she first moved here. Mayor Maughan stated he suspects Ms. Brown is speaking of her total tax bill, not just the amount paid to Syracuse because there is no household in the City that pays \$1,000 to the City. Ms. Brown stated that is what her total tax bill has increased; if the City continues to increase taxes, she will not be able to stay in Syracuse. She suspects the same is true for many residents, especially the senior citizens who are retired. She stated that if impact fees do not cover the costs associated with infrastructure and services, those projects should not have been approved because they are only putting a burden on existing residents. Decisions made by the Council in the past years have been irresponsible.

Leonard Millgate stated he lives near Syracuse High School. He stated he has been retired for 13 years and his income has increased very little; last year he received a five percent increase, but that does not cover a 33 percent tax increase. He stated he does not know what the City has done in terms of employee salaries, but he expects that it is higher than his increase. He stated that he lived in California for a good portion of his career; if the City does not want to become what California is, they should stop approving high density projects. He moved to Syracuse because he wanted to live in a bedroom community, and it is no longer that. He suggested that the amount of property taxes paid for apartment units is not proportionate to the taxes paid by single family home.

Mayor Maughan stated that the City is not in control of the manner in which different types of properties are taxed; the City can only approve a property tax rate that is then assessed by the County.

Shauna Millgate asked the Council to consider if the taxation they are considering is fair. She stated that she is retired and is wondering if she needs to go back to work to pay for her living expenses; many cannot afford this taxation, which she feels is unfair. She stated the Council is made up of fairly young people and maybe it is necessary to get older people on the Council who have more wisdom. She stated she hates to see the loss of agricultural land to high density housing projects.

Mayor Maughan then invited input from Zoom participants. No comments were made.

The public hearing was closed at 8:20 p.m.

Mayor Maughan stated he is very sensitive to the fact that the proposed tax increase will impact many residents in the community, namely those on a fixed income. The City must balance a budget and manage the City responsibly. He would like to be able to say that the City's budget is as lean as it can be, and he wondered if anything could be removed from the budget at this time. There is at least one expenditure he feels could be removed from the budget, but that is not a decision for him to make as it is up to the Council to adopt a budget.

Councilmember Carver stated that she noticed there is a third police officer position included in the budget and she asked if that is related to the D.A.R.E. program. Police Chief Atkin stated that the position that was mentioned in the presentation is the backfill to get a metro officer back into that program; it was not related to the D.A.R.E. program as his understanding based upon the Council's last discussion of that matter was that the D.A.R.E. program was being put 'on hold' until the Council can decide if they want to resume the program and identify an additional officer to assign to the program. He stated that the D.A.R.E. logos were removed from the truck as it was much less expensive to repurpose the D.A.R.E. vehicle (\$250) than it would have been to purchase a new vehicle for the new officer. Councilmember Carver referenced the repurposing of the vehicle used for DUI enforcement as use for the K-9 program and asked why one of the sports utility vehicles (SUVs) owned by the Department could not have been used for that purpose. She asked if the DUI vehicle was grant funded. Chief Atkin answered yes but noted that the grant period has expired; however, assigning it to the K-9 program still satisfies the conditions of the grant as it must be used for alcohol and drug enforcement efforts. Councilmember Carver asked how the traffic unit will operate with just one officer. Chief Atkin stated when the Department is fully staffed, there will be two officers assigned to priority traffic enforcement and traffic investigation; this would be a separate crew assigned to a sergeant. At this time, he has dropped the sergeant from the traffic unit and put that position into the line with the crew so that each crew has a traffic officer. Right now, the traffic unit is not deployed because his Department is not fully staffed. Councilmember Carver stated that there is \$8,000 in the budget for the D.A.R.E. program. Chief Atkin stated that is correct, but that money will not be spent if the program is left on hold. The money will go back to the general fund if it is not spent. Mayor Maughan stated

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that the justification for the additional Police Officer position is based upon the need to participate in the County metro program, which has done a great deal of good in the community and surrounding communities.

Councilmember Teague stated that the community has reached out to residents on multiple occasions about the need to increase public safety service/coverage in the community and he is not willing to change the budget relative to those services. He added that he feels that the other items to be covered by the revenue generated by the tax increase are warranted and needed. The Council has spent a great deal of time evaluating the budget and he is comfortable with the proposal that is before the Council tonight.

Councilmember Watson agreed the Council has been exhaustive in examining the budget and working with Department Heads to set a budget that they need to operate effectively. He feels the budget that has been proposed is reasonable and the tax increase is prudent and responsible.

Councilmember Bingham agreed and stated that she understands the burden that is being placed on residents, especially the elderly or retired individuals as her own parents are living with her due to similar circumstances. However, she received a call from someone who indicated they did not feel they should be paying for paramedic services because they do not use that service, but that is a very shortsighted viewpoint as the point of emergency services is that no one knows when they will need them, but they must always be available and in working order. She stated that after hearing the information presented tonight, she would hope that the minds of some residents would have been changed about the need for a tax increase and whether the Council is being responsible. This is not a decision that any Councilmember takes lightly, there are many needs in the City and City staff and the City Council have worked closely to address some of those needs.

Councilmember Savage stated that he understands the impact that inflation is having on everyone; it is also impacting the City and the Mayor and Council have carefully examined all budget requests to develop a responsible budget. He stated that a few months ago he and other Councilmembers were called out for not fairly paying City employees, but now some are complaining that City employees are overpaid. He stated every opinion is valid and is carefully considered, but the Council is charged with providing for the safety and public good for the entire City; if departments are not adequately staffed, the City will suffer. He would argue that the City needs great parks as that is one of the things that brings residents and businesses to the community. The Council is balancing all interests and it is important to recognize that the City cannot be managed in the same way the federal government is managed.

Councilmember Carver asked Mayor Maughan for his thoughts on the budget. Mayor Maughan echoed the comments made about the need to increase wages for employees earlier this year, namely the City's public safety employees and first responders. The pay increases are a large part of the ongoing budget increases in the proposed budget. He is also pleased about the shift of paramedic services from the County to the City and congratulated Fire Chief Byington on his deployment of that program. He stated that one thing that he would cut from the budget is the communications position; however, he feels all other staffing positions that will be funded by the increased property tax revenue are needed.

COUNCILMEMBER TEAGUE MADE A MOTION TO ADOPT RESOLUTION R22-30 SETTING THE CERTIFIED TAX RATE OF .001689 AND ADOPTING THE FINAL BUDGET FOR THE FISCAL YEAR (FY) ENDING JUNE 30, 2023. COUNCILMEMBER BINGHAM SECONDED THE MOTION; ALL VOTED IN FAVOR.

At 8:50 P.M., MAYOR MAUGHAN DECLARED THE MEETING ADJOURNED.

Dave Maughan
Mayor

Cassie Z. Brown, MMC
City Recorder

Date approved: September 13, 2022