



# CITY OF ROWLETT CITY COUNCIL STRATEGY & PLANNING SESSION MINUTES

*Our Vision: A well-planned lakeside community of quality neighborhoods, distinctive amenities, diverse employment, and cultural charm. Rowlett: THE place to live, work and play.*

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Saturday, May 16, 2020

8:00 A.M.

Rowlett Community Centre  
5300 Main Street

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Due to the public health emergency and to conform with the social distancing requirements set forth by the CDC, the City Council Strategy and Planning Session will only be available for public participation via a teleconference link.

**Present:** Mayor Dana-Bashian, Mayor Pro Tem Brown, Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Grubisich, Councilmember Margolis, Councilmember Sherrill, Councilmember Laning, and Councilmember Bell

**Staff Present:** Brian Funderburk – City Manager, Mark McAvoy – Assistant City Manager, Paul Stevens – Deputy City Manager (remotely), Wendy Badgett – Director of Finance, Laura Hallmark – City Secretary, Joey Brock – Director of IT

## 1. Gather

Mayor Dana-Bashian called the meeting to order at 8:17 a.m.

## 2. Opening Remarks and Review of Goals

The Mayor thanked Council and staff for preparing for and attending the session. Mr. Funderburk reviewed the agenda for the day and then asked for Council's biggest budget concerns. Responses included: SB2 – what would we have to cut, what would be left out; bond allocations and the three-year bond cycle; losing the momentum of the bond program – concern about going backwards; property taxes; the impact this will have on economic development; public safety and the City still growing – concern about being able to staff and outfit for additional needs; uncertainty of the economic situation/condition and residents at the forefront of decisions and having the inability to pay; and the possibility of being unable to do employee salary increases.

## 3. Budget Recession Strategies and Best Practices

Ms. Badgett reviewed the strategies, what the City has already implemented and what other cities have done. Discussion regarding priority based budgeting.

## 4. Update on CAREs Act and Funding Options

Mr. Funderburk reviewed the allocation to state and counties and allocation available to the City from Rockwall County, which is received directly from the state, and those funds to be

received from Dallas County. Discussion regarding the use of funds for City residents and mirroring Dallas County so residents are able to get the best opportunity to receive funds.

## **5. BREAK**

Break at 10:05 a.m. and reconvened at 10:27 a.m.

## **6. Update on FY2020 Projections and Discuss FY2021 Predictions**

Mr. Funderburk reviewed the revenue shortfall discussed at the April 13<sup>th</sup> City Council meeting and the plan to consider the worst case scenario going forward. He reviewed what some other cities are doing, actions taken by Rowlett thus far, status as of April 30<sup>th</sup> and FY21 predictions. He also reviewed the history of sales tax revenue, property tax values and what drives taxes, budget level scenarios for revenue and tax rate (effective and rollback), the General Fund budget reconciliations and options that are available.

Council took a short break to collect their lunch at 11:59 a.m. and reconvened at 12:10 p.m.

## **7. Boards & Commissions (working lunch)**

Ms. Hallmark reviewed the capacity of the boards/commissions to meet virtually, whether or not the boards/commissions have pressing business to be discussed and staff's recommendations regarding meetings. Council discussion regarding trying to get a sense of "normal" back to the community, the capacity for staff to conduct the work generated by the boards/commissions and the importance of keeping the volunteers engaged. It was the consensus of Council to resume meetings virtually.

While on the subject of "returning to normal," Council asked for an update on reopening City facilities. Mr. Funderburk reported that departments have submitted their plans to the Reconstitution Committee comprised of Emergency Management staff, who will review the plans with each department and provide further detail to Council at an upcoming meeting.

There was discussion regarding upcoming City-wide events, specifically Memorial Day and July 4<sup>th</sup>. It was determined that the Memorial Day event would be recorded ahead of time with no attendees and streamed on RTN16 and the website throughout the day on Memorial Day. Different options were discussed for the July 4<sup>th</sup> event and will be discussed further at a future Council meeting.

## **8. BREAK**

No break was taken at this time.

## **9. Budget Calendar**

Ms. Badgett reviewed Senate Bill 2 – its new terminology, major components, SB2 adoption governance, budget/tax rate adoption timeline and the SB2 disaster provision guidance which requires an opt in feature. After further discussion, Council asked that there be two budget presentations – 0% increase and 3.5%. Council asked for a priority based budgeting update in mid-June/July.

#### **10. Issuance of 2020 bonds and May 2021 bond election**

This item was taken out of order – after item #6.

Ms. Badgett reviewed the timeline for the \$20 million issuance scheduled for this summer and the issuance climate. She reviewed the original schedule for projects and the three-year issuance. Possible change could be to split the issuance and do \$10 million this year and the remainder in 2021. Also possible is to delay the '21 bond election to '22 and work a two-year issuance. After further discussion, it was the consensus of Council to move forward with the split issuance pending consultation with bond advisors at the June 2, 2020 Work Session.

#### **11. BREAK**

There was no break taken at this time.

#### **12. Charter Review**


Ms. Hallmark reviewed the process for updating the Charter and a timeline for a Charter Review Commission. Council discussed possible topics for the scope of review, including: municipal elections in November, review of Council stipend, internal auditor position, term limits, and code of ethics. Staff will elicit residents who are interested in serving in this capacity with appointments to be made at the June 16<sup>th</sup> City Council meeting. Discussion regarding Council liaisons to the Commission – Councilmembers Bell and Laning and Mayor Pro Tem Brown expressed an interest. It was the consensus of Council to prepare for a possible May 2021 election (if needed) but defer to November 2021 if there is no May bond election.

#### **13. Wrap up & Closing Remarks**

Mr. Funderburk and the Mayor provided closing remarks and once again, thanked Council and staff for their preparation, presentations and participation.

The meeting adjourned at 3:15 p.m.

  
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Tammy Dana-Bashian, Mayor

  
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Laura Hallmark, City Secretary

Approved on: June 2, 2020