

City of Hays
City Commission
Work Session Notes

Thursday, August 4, 2022 – 6:30 p.m.

Present: Michael Berges, Shaun Musil, Sandy Jacobs, Reese Barrick, Toby Dougherty, Kim Rupp, and Melvin Sauer, Jr.

Mason Ruder joined the meeting via Zoom.

July 21, 2022 Work Session Notes

There were no corrections or additions to the minutes of the work session held on July 21, 2022; the minutes stand approved as presented.

Annexation of City-Owned Property at 1732 West 41st Street

Jesse Rohr, Director of Public Works, stated the City of Hays owns the property at 1732 West 41st Street and has submitted a signed consent to annex the property. This property has been owned by the City of Hays for many years and is currently in agricultural production. The property is slated for the new Fire Department fire station, which will better accommodate future development by improving response times to emergencies. The City desires to annex the parcel to allow for development and connection to City services. The land is contiguous to City limits. Staff recommends annexing this property due to its proximity to the City limits and the availability of City services and infrastructure necessary to serve this property.

At the August 11, 2022 Commission meeting, Commissioners will be asked to approve an ordinance annexing the property at 1732 West 41st Street.

Rezoning of City-Owned Property at 1732 West 41st Street from Agriculture (A-L) to Public and Institutional District (P-I)

Jesse Rohr, Director of Public Works, stated the City of Hays has submitted a request to change the zoning for this same tract of property at 1732

West 41st Street from Agriculture District (A-L) to Public and Institutional District (P-I). The City has owned the property for several years, and it is also the current location of a City water well and booster station. The property has been in agriculture production for many years and is the location for the proposed fire station for the City of Hays. Staff, as well as the Planning Commission, recommends changing the zoning from Agriculture District to Public and Institutional District for the 3.78 acres of land owned by the City of Hays, due to the relative gain to the health, safety, and welfare of the general public and the compatibility of adjacent zoning districts.

At the August 11, 2022 Commission meeting, Commissioners will be asked to adopt an ordinance approving the change in zoning from Agriculture District (A-L) to Public and Institutional District (P-I) for the 3.78 acres of land owned by the City of Hays, generally located at 1732 West 41st Street.

2023 Budget Review

The 2023 Budget was presented to the Commission at the July 7, 2022 Work Session and the draft budget was discussed at the July 21, 2022 Work Session. City Manager, Toby Dougherty, stated there were no change pages at this time.

Mr. Dougherty reviewed the allocations for outside agency funding and asked the Commission for a consensus on the funding requests.

He stated that the Care Council has been allocated \$168,000 for many years and they are asking for \$170,000 this year. It was the consensus of the Commission to grant the additional funding. Commissioner Musil stated they do a great job for our community but asked for information as to what the increase would be used for.

Mr. Dougherty stated there is a new request for funding from the Hays Chamber of Commerce for \$45,000. Commissioner Musil was in favor of this request but stated that more than 80% of the comments he has heard from citizens are against the funding. Should the funding be approved, he would request it come from Commission Capital Reserves.

Commissioner Jacobs stated she is not in favor of this funding; not because she doesn't think they are doing a good job, but she feels it is a member driven organization. She added that if the Chamber of Commerce had a program or project that needed to be funded to this level and came to the Commission, she would be very apt to approve that from a project standpoint rather than from an operational standpoint.

Commissioner Barrick feels this is a very important organization, but it may be opening up a can of worms for every member driven organization to request funding. In general, he doesn't feel it is the City's responsibility for this kind of funding; but on the other hand, the things they are doing are important to the community and he would not have a problem with granting the funding for one year.

Vice-Mayor Berges stated he would also support a one-time request for 2023 and not beyond. He added that the Commission can issue funding throughout the year to an organization with Commission Capital Reserves. He would prefer this request be handled outside of the budget process. The Commission Capital Reserves are there for the Commission to make discretionary spending decisions and he feels like that would be the way to handle this one-time funding request.

Mayor Ruder stated he appreciates what the Chamber of Commerce has done for the City. He agrees that they could come to the Commission throughout the year and request funding for a specific project rather than including it in the budget as a line item.

Mr. Dougherty stated the Commission can approve funding through the Commission Capital Reserves at any meeting should they choose to. They can also put conditions or restrictions on the funding.

Vice-Mayor Berges asked what the Chamber of Commerce was wanting the funding for. Sarah Wasinger, President/CEO of the Hays Chamber of Commerce, stated they have struggled to retain their workforce as everyone else has. Essentially this requested funding would be used to pay staff a more equitable pay in order to retain them. In addition, expenses have gone up and

due to COVID, fundraisers have not brought in what they had in the past. They are exploring additional ideas in order to earn that income themselves and not come to the City for funding. She noted that she has spoken to other Chamber Directors, and many have downturns in membership due to the finances of businesses at this time. She added that the Chamber is instituting a 10% increase in membership costs for 2023 and she anticipates about 25 members will drop out as a result. She stated that the employee health insurance plan will be available for Hays Chamber members, and they have already had some new members join based on the health insurance offering.

Vice-Mayor Berges stated should the Chamber of Commerce request funding outside of the budget process, the funding would have to be for a specific project and not for staffing or operational funding.

The Commission will discuss this funding request further at the August 18, 2022 Work Session.

Mr. Dougherty stated the following agencies are asking for increased funding from last year's amounts in the Convention and Visitors Bureau Budget.

- The Wild West Festival - an increase of \$500
- The Ellis County Historical Society - an increase of \$18,116
- Downtown Hays Development Corporation (DHDC) – an increase of \$6,000

The Hays Arts Council and Sister Cities are requesting the same amount as last year.

Mr. Dougherty stated the Commission is able to fund all of the increased requests, but it will be creating a zero balance.

Vice-Mayor Berges suggested that DHDC's funding request be removed from the Convention and Visitors Bureau Budget and paid for out of the Commission Capital Reserves Budget for 2023.

Commissioner Jacobs is in favor of funding the Ellis County Historical Society at their requested amount as they have met all of the challenges the Commission gave them last year and have done some really good things.

Commissioner Barrick stated the Ellis County Historical Society is at a crossroads. He believes they need an aspirational plan to make this into something great or there is no point to it. He feels that the Historical Society could be an impactful draw for the City of Hays. They would need to hire a trained professional staff with a new mission and a new name to make this into a great draw for the area. He noted that Fort Hays State University (FHSU) has a museum study program. It could be impactful to the community to both protect our history and be an economic benefit. He stated, as an example, the Sternberg Museum has a \$4 million economic impact on Hays because of the 40,000 people that come to visit. He feels there is huge potential for the Historical Society and could be an investment in the future of our community.

Commissioner Jacobs asked if this could be an opportunity for a partnership with FHSU, the City of Hays, Ellis County, and the Ellis County Historical Society.

Commissioner Berges stated should the Ellis County Historical Society Board bring forward a vision plan, the City Commission would consider it. He feels we could fund them at their requested amount for 2023.

It was the consensus of the Commission to fund the Ellis County Historical Society at their requested amount of \$21,116 and the Hays Arts Council at \$15,000. The Commission will discuss the funding for DHDC and the Chamber of Commerce at the August 18, 2022 Work Session.

Mayor Ruder added that it is a great place to be on a government level to discuss funding for quality-of-life issues and not have to worry about providing services to our citizens. He appreciates his fellow Commissioners and City staff for making that the situation for the City of Hays.

Other Items for Discussion

Commissioner Jacobs shared a compliment she received about City staff. She stated a developer told her that he would not have been able to accomplish the things he did, in the time frame he needed to, without the cooperation of

Curtis Deines, Planning and Development Superintendent. She was proud to hear that and asked that the compliment be passed on.

Vice-Mayor Berges stated the annual Community Night Out with the Hays Police Department is being held at the Hays Aquatic Park this evening and it is a very nice event.

Mayor Ruder thanked Toby Dougherty, Kim Rupp, and staff for putting together a very good budget.

The work session was adjourned at 7:44 p.m.

Submitted by: _____

Brenda Kitchen – City Clerk