

**City of Belle Meade
Board of Commissioners Meeting
Belle Meade City Hall
June 16, 2021**

Call to order

The meeting was called to order by Mayor James Hunt at 4:00pm

Commissioner's present

James Hunt, Mayor Rusty Moore, Vice Mayor Louise Bryan
Bob Weigel Haley Dale

Staff members present

Beth Reardon, City Manager Charles Williams, Chief of Police
Lyle Patterson, Assistant City Manager and Building Official
Doug Berry, City Attorney Leigh Mills, Director of Finance & HR
Edie Glaser, City Recorder Larry Smith, Public Works Director

I. Pledge of Allegiance - led by Mayor James Hunt

II. Public Comments - Thom Druffel, Councilman, District 23, announced the Metro Council approved the general operating budget for the fiscal year. Taxes will not be raised this coming year. District 23 home appraisal values went up twenty seven percent.

III. Minutes - regular meeting held May 26, 2021

Motion to approve: Moore **Second:** Weigel **Vote:** All aye

IV. Public Works

1. **Monthly Reports** - submitted by Director Smith reviewed.
2. **Request for Parade Permit** - The annual Boulevard Bolt is scheduled for November 25, 2021 (Thanksgiving) from 6:30am-10:00am on Belle Meade Boulevard. The Boulevard Bolt is requesting a Parade Event Permit. The Bolt provides a Certificate of Insurance.

Motion to approve as submitted: Bryan **Second:** Moore **Vote:** All aye

V. City Services

A. Public Safety -

1. **Monthly Reports** - submitted by Chief Williams. There were 179 community contacts during the month of May. The fingerprinting service provided by the Belle Meade Police Department at no charge to Belle Meade residents and for a small fee to nonresidents has resumed after being shut down for close to a year due to Covid. The City of Belle Meade will not restart the Traffic School program taught here by our police officers. We will utilize on-line schools only.

Statistics Summary June 2021

<u>363</u> Citations Issued	<u>1</u> Traffic Crash	<u>36</u> Alarms
<u>0</u> Burglary	<u>1</u> Theft of Property	<u>7</u> Arrests

License Plate Removal (LPR) Report
6 - Stolen Vehicles 3 - Stolen License Plates

2. Declaration of Surplus Property - Chief Williams is requesting the following four electronic ticket writers equipment be declared surplus property. The equipment is outdated, not used, and has no monetary value. He recommends the writers be donated to the Cross Plains Police Department.

Motorola Ticket Writers - Model MC67ND
Serial Numbers: 14011521402108
 14011521400237
 14011521400450
 14011521400193

Motion to declare the ticket writers to surplus property: Weigel
Second: Dale **Vote:** All aye

B. Health and Sanitation

1. Monthly reports - submitted by Nathan McVay reviewed.

C. Building/Zoning/Planning

1. Monthly Reports - submitted by Assistant City Manager and Building Official Lyle Patterson reviewed.

11 Permits Issued \$2,002,000.00 estimated construction cost
2 Permits Closed
2 Grading/Soil/Disturbance Permits
0 Stormwater Complaints Filed

2. Updates to Boards and Commissions - Appointment of Puneet Mishra to BZA and appointments of Charlie Rankin and Renee Stubblefield Poe to the HZC. Ordinance 2021-2 amended the Belle Meade Code to increase the number of members on the HZC from five to seven.

Motion to approve the appointments of Charlie Rankin and Renee Stubblefield Poe to the Historic Zoning Commission: Moore
Second: Weigel **Vote:** All aye

Motion to approve the appointment of Puneet Mishra as an alternate to the Board of Zoning Appeals: Dale **Second:** Bryan **Vote:** All aye

D. Waste Collection - NO MATTERS

E. Beautification/Landscape -

1. Monthly Report - Laura Katherine Wood reported that Ceres Society Donations have reached their highest record to date at a total of \$88,770.00. The Committee has voted to give former member Caroline Stevens emeritus status.

F. City Communications - NO MATTERS

IV. ADMINISTRATION

A. Finance

- 1. Financial Statements** - April 2021 presented by Leigh Mills
- 2. Investment Schedule** - reviewed
- 3. Approval of Invoices over \$5,000**

Kimley-Horn & Associates Inc.	\$ 8,035.00
Local Government Corp.	\$25,698.50
Wascon, Inc.	\$ 6,149.50
Gibson Brothers Construction (Jackson & BMB)	\$ 7,220.00
Gibbs Brothers Construction (Malone & Ellendale)	\$ 7,220.00

Motion to approve invoice over \$5,000: Weigel **Second:** Bryan
Vote: All aye

B. Facilities - NO MATTERS

C. Personnel

1. Introduction of POST Certified Officer Billy Scarbrough - Police Chief Williams introduced new hire Officer William Scarbrough. Before becoming a full time police officer with the city, he worked as a dispatcher for the department.

VII. LEGISLATION -

- 1. Public Hearing - Consideration of Ordinance 2021-3, Fix Tax Rate for Fiscal Year 2021-2022, on second reading.**

The City's proposed FY 2021-2022 budget, if adopted, will require a proposed tax levy of \$0.50 per \$100 of assessed valuation in order to balance the budget. The city has followed the law in giving notice of public hearing in the City's Newsletter and on the City's website.

Charlie Thornburg, 1212 Nichol Lane, we have fourteen million in assigned funds. I recognize the shortfall of the hall income tax. The kicker is we have fourteen million in reserves that we are getting \$9.00 a month in interest. While the property tax is probably necessary in the future, I would like to see some of those reserves drawn down because we are not earning much money on that, and to me, it just seems unnecessary at this point.

Ansel Davis, 605 Belle Meade Boulevard, what percentage of the vote in favor does it have to be to get this approved and is it enough? Will we have to have another one in a few years?

Bunny Blackburn, 4409 Harding Place, I do support this and think it is the only fiscally responsible thing you can do. One of the biggest benefits from living in Belle Meade is our police department. I believe crime is going to continue to go up and I would vote for more police presence. We have a very large reserve. I would like to see

more capital improvements. I am a sidewalk advocate. What are we going to do with the money that is sitting in the bank? I do not want to use that to balance our operating budget. I do support it, is it enough and should we be looking at bigger budget increases in the future based on the growth of the city and around the city, and additional policing that I believe will be necessary. I would like Belle Meade to be more defined when you are coming into the city. I think that would be a deterrent for crime. I do wish the Commission will address what they are going to do with this reserve with the increase in taxes.

Alex Buchanan, 1115 Belle Meade Boulevard, due to the fairly dramatic increase of value of houses being sold in Belle Meade in the last six months and across the city this will result in a major surplus for the city. At the same time also a substantially bigger tax increase than what's currently contemplated. I am just asking permission to evaluate that, is it appropriate given that we know what housing values have done the past six months?

Motion to close public hearing: Moore Second: Bryan Vote: All aye

Commission Moore stated this proposed tax increase is based on the new evaluations. When we have a new evaluation four years from now this rate, as the property values go up, if we want to keep the revenues the same, we will have to reduce the rate for equalization. That is actually what has occurred with the rate that we had previously. Your Metro rate is going down this year because the home values have gone up. Equalization will protect all of us from the tax going up just because our value goes up.

The question was asked is this enough. What we have looked at with our highly credible finance committee that are citizen volunteers who look behind the scenes and look at our budget five years out. The view is that this increase that we are looking at now will sustain us for at least that time period. No one can guarantee that because we do not know what the future holds year to year, but we do have a pretty good picture of going forward. The budget committee actually recommended we make this increase last year but due to Covid and the large increase in Metro, we made the decision not to increase last year and to use some surplus to get us through. This year the .50 cents number is recommended by the budget and finance committee.

Commissioner Louise Bryan stated there is a lot of uncertainty. COVID showed us that people appreciate and love the low density, the green space, the community, and the safety. Our 2019 survey showed us that is what people want. There is a range of \$5.3 million in the general fund for five years of capital improvements. Historically Belle Meade has been very responsive to its residents. The Master Plan is a holistic plan to bring together further community engagement and to figure out what people really want, what they value. We believe some of the reserve is appropriate to be spent on some of the Master Plan projects. It is not a given, every year the budget must be approved. The fund balance has enough to give us a conservative amount to keep the City safely running as well as prepare for the future with changes to the City.

Commissioner Haley Dale stated increasing the tax incrementally makes it difficult to budget for capital improvements. It makes more sense to take a larger sum of money and plan on a larger project taking place, and increase our property tax to cover operating budget. Due to the hall tax, This should have been done five plus years ago; there should have been a move to make incremental increases. We are putting the money into things that our residents believe in and feel strongly about. I do not like the idea of putting a tax increase in an election year. I think it politicizes the issue. With the hall tax going away there is no choice but to increase to cover our operating expenses. It is not our intention to leave the fund balance at fourteen million dollars while not making capital improvements to the city. Capital improvement will be made.

Bunny Blackburn, the city services will increase as well, the chipper services, dumpster services, etc....

Commissioner Moore commented that is an excellent point. The finance committee does an excellent job in projecting out the next five years.

Commissioner Weigel stated, I have no problem justifying what we pay compared to what a nonresident of Belle Meade pays with the Police Department and all the services the city provides the residents.

2. Ordinance 2021-03, Fix Tax Rate for Fiscal Year 2021-2022, on second reading

**Motion to fix the tax rate for the fiscal year 2021 and 2022 based on the Ordinance presented on second reading: Moore Second: Dale
Vote: All aye**

Motion to amend the actual tax rate to .50 cents per \$100 of assessed valuation: Dale Second: Bryan Vote: All aye

3. Ordinance 2021-1, Budget Appropriations for Fiscal Year 2021-2022, on second reading:

Commissioner Dale commented that based on the last budget and finance committee meeting there was a general consensus that they would be comfortable covering the cost of the employees increase of health insurance premium in the next years' operating expense. She would like to have further discussions on this in a future meeting.

**Motion to approve Ordinance 2021-01, Budget Appropriations for Fiscal Year 2021-2022, on second reading: Moore Second: Bryan
Vote: All aye**

4. Ordinance 2021-2, Amend Title Two of the Belle Meade Municipal Code to Increase the Number of Commissioners on the Historic Zoning Commission from Five(5) to Seven(7), on second reading

**Motion to approve Ordinance 2021-02 on second reading: Moore
Second: Dale Vote: All aye**

5. Resolution 2021-06, Amending Ordinance 2020-1, Budget Appropriations for Fiscal Year 2020-2021

Motion to defer until special meeting to be scheduled this month before the end of the fiscal year: Hunt Second: Weigel
Vote: All aye

6. Resolution 2021-07, A Resolution to Accept Donations from Belle Meade Citizens for the Purchase of Body Cameras for Each Officer and Automatic External Defibrillators (AEDs) for each Patrol Vehicle

Mayor Hunt stated the Finance Director will set up separate accounts in the General Fund for donations to each category of equipment. Donors will be formally recognized at future meetings by name, and also in the newsletter.

Motion to approve Resolution 2021-07 as submitted: Dale
Second: Weigel Vote: All Aye

Motion to adjourn 6:10pm: Weigel Second: Dale Vote: All Aye

Mayor James Hunt

City Recorder Edie Glaser