

Regular Council Meeting

August 2, 2022

Meeting called to order Mayor Harley at 6:00pm.

Invocation given by Councilman Bird.

Pledge of Allegiance led by Councilman Armijo.

Welcome extended to all by Mayor Harley.

Present were Mayor John R. Harley, Councilman Robert D. Bird, Jr., Councilman Justin Wright, Councilman J. Micheal Evans, Councilman Edward Armijo and City Attorney Rebecca Tydings.

Public Comments

None

Adoption of Minutes: Motion made by Councilman Bird to adopt minutes as written; seconded by Councilman Wright. Motion carried.

- July 19, 2022 Council Work Session

Old Business

New Business

2nd Pubic Hearing-Proposed Tax Increase 2022 Millage Rate: Mayor Harley read press release. Closed regular meeting at 6:04pm and entered into public hearing. Opened floor for public comments.

Susan Lemme, 209 Mason Drive, concerned about the notice, not considering a roll back rate. Looking at what was proposed that was adopted by Houston County, school board and home. Every time the millage rate goes up by 1 point, increases taxes. Recession is looming, prices are increasing for everyone, given all information, would like for Mayor and Council to consider citizens, there will be a need for more employees, if taxes are increased what will citizens receive as improvements? So, are moneys spent for what we want or need? What do we need this property increase for, could roll back some, due to the housing market, increase in interest rates, please consider our worth?

Councilman Bird, thanked Mrs. Lemme, wanted to clarify, have not voted to raise taxes, this is proposed, 5 different alternatives proposed at the last council meeting. If we choose the roll back rate would actually be losing money. Have 5 options ranging from keeping current to roll back rate and 3 in between. Legally had to announce as written, even though that decision has not made, only proposed millage rate as advertised.

Mayor Harley stated that the last 3 years, roll back rate was adopted. More businesses have opened, more customers, and services needed. Have talked about our employees how great they are, we need more staff, and equipment. But we have a lot of new homes that will be coming in the next 2 years.

Councilman Wright, if we increase the number of homes and keep the rollback rate, will collect money. There are things that I would like to buy for my home. Can choose to downsize, but cannot choose to not pay taxes. None of these things that we have described will make the wheels fall off the wagon this year. In a recession, just don't know this is a necessary move. Extra cost in taxes, fuel, groceries, death by a thousand cuts. Do better by our citizens, do not increase taxes. This is not the moment to make this change, just because we can. Mentioned that Houston County and Bibb County are adopting roll back rate. We don't set the budget based on millage rate. Set budget to collect the things we need.

Mayor Harley, stated we cannot estimate on the budget, has to be a balanced budget.

Councilman Evans, our responsibility here is to the City of Centerville, not Houston County or Bibb County. They do what they need to provide their services, we do the same thing. Need to discuss what we are going to do, main concern do what we were elected to do, provide services.

Jay Taylor, 403 Collins Estate Avenue, my concern as a citizen, you aren't leaving your money on the table, this money belongs to the people. Basically, raising taxes when they can't afford it, may not need too. Opposes tax increase.

Councilman Armijo, thanked Mr. Taylor and Ms. Lemme, tried to let people know when meetings are being held, very important to hear view of citizens. We have not made this decision, after the next hearing a decision will be made. Make the right choice and decision for the citizens. I understand that there is inflation, increased costs, a lot of things to consider. Like running a business, without having the resources. Even though we would have more income, still have demands to provide services. We need to make sure we make those decisions understanding all situations, a lot to consider. Come to meetings to speak for yourself, your neighbor. Thanked them again, we take it seriously, looking forward to our next meeting. Understand that we are not operating off the fly, 5 people here to make decisions. Trust me we love Centerville.

City Accountant Harrison, informed all that when we do the budget, we do look at construction, assessment for value, take this into account, budget revenues, take into growth and current millage rate, only 30,000 less that last years, but if you take into account all things, revenue 120,000 less than last years.

Councilman Wright stated he agree with other options.

Councilman Bird doesn't support keeping the current rate.

Mayor Harley closed public hearing at 6:33pm. Opened regular council meeting 6:33pm.

Home Based Business Licenses: Councilman Wright made motion to adopt both; seconded by Councilman Bird. Motion carried.

- Mann Up Security, 829 Collins Avenue (owner: Jake Coley)
- T & M Transportation, 108 Anne Drive (owner: Demetra Richardson)

Comments from Council

Post 4 Councilman Armijo, invited everyone to join the Lions Club, Boy Scouts of America, civic organizations, Rotary Club. Went to the first meeting the other day, get out and check them out. Recycling Center, did a video, trying to encourage volunteers.

Post 3 Councilman Evans, no comment.

Post 2 Councilman Wright, no comment.

Post 1 Councilman Bird, reiterate about the recycling center, there today, never had a bad experience, great function that we can provide for the community and surrounding areas. Reminder Food Truck Friday, Saturday-Farmers Market, encouraged all to come out.

Mayor Harley, Monday last week official grand opening, they named the teachers of the year. Mentioned Centerville, Eagle Springs, Thomson Middle, Northside Middle. Recognized our teachers. Thanked citizens that came tonight to speak, set the example for the others citizens.

Mayor Harley adjourned meeting at 6:39pm.

Mayor John R. Harley

Attest by City Clerk Krista Bedingfield

Date