



City of Garden Ridge

"A way of life, not just a place to live"

MINUTES CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2019, 7:00 P.M.

Councilmembers Present:

Mayor Larry Thompson
Mayor Pro-Tem John McCaw
Councilmember Lisa Swint (arrived at 7:55 p.m.)
Councilmember Bryan Lantzy
Councilmember Kay Bower
Councilmember Todd Arvidson

Councilmembers Absent:

None

City Staff Present:

Nancy Cain, City Administrator
Marisa Spencer, City Secretary
Kat Balbi, Assistant City Secretary
Ron Eberhardt, Police Chief
Jacob Parsons, Water Manager

1. Call to Order

With a quorum of the City Councilmembers present, Mayor Thompson called the special meeting of the Garden Ridge City Council to order at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, September 10, 2019, in the City Council Chambers of the Garden Ridge City Hall, 9400 Municipal Parkway, Garden Ridge, Texas 78266.

2. Roll Call: See above.

3. Pledge of Allegiance: Mayor Thompson led the Pledge of Allegiance and the Texas Pledge.

4. Citizen Comment Period – limited to 30 minutes total

Mayor Thompson reviewed the rules for Citizen Comment Period.

John Andrews, 9403 Gloxinia Drive, spoke regarding the water rate structure.

Martha Stipp, 21007 Cedar Branch, spoke regarding the water rate structure, penalties, regulations, and funding.

Shane Slaughter, 9011 Cinnabar Court, spoke regarding the water rate structure and town hall meetings.

Beth Fraser, 8302 Wild Wind Park, thanked City Council for serving the City of Garden Ridge and spoke regarding Councilmembers being the voice of Garden Ridge residents.

Ken Kneupper, 8891 Schoenthal Road, spoke regarding the water rate structure, the cost of transporting water, conservation, drought resistant plants, and the difference in rain totals from year to year. He thanked City Council for volunteering to serve the City of Garden Ridge.

Jeff Jerome, 20745 Wahl Lane, spoke regarding the water rate structure, managing water and electricity, and working with the Water Manager.

Eric Lamberson, 22118 Cristobal Drive, spoke regarding the water rate structure, billing cycles, and communication.

Amy Harrell/Lowrimore, 9315 Sumac Lane, spoke regarding the water rate structure, average water usage, water meters, monthly Grapevine newsletters, and the City's website.

Shannon Drichta, 9380 Cinchona Trail, spoke regarding the water rate structure, communication, educational opportunities, and electronic billing.

Jim Miller, 9910 Marie Meadow, spoke regarding the water rate structure and water usage.

5. Business Items

The following items are for discussion, consideration, and action.

- a) Ordinance No. 54-082019 An Ordinance adopting a Comprehensive Water Company for the City of Garden Ridge; providing definitions; statement of organization; establishing a Water Commission; general policies; regulations and rules; rates and billing cycles; providing for a penalty; providing for severability; and declaring an effective date.**

1. Discuss Water Rates.

Mayor Thompson reviewed the attached presentation and detailed the timeline for the water rate increase process. Mayor Thompson apologized and took responsibility for the water rate structure oversight as well as overlooking the timing of implementation.

Jacob Parsons, Water Manager, spoke regarding the billing software and water meters, stating the Water Department continually conducts meter tests to validate the accuracy of water meters and obtains laptop reads of individual water usage upon the request of residents.

The City Council discussed the water rate structure, water usage, water conservation, water meters, the previously conducted Water Rate Study, the Water Commission reevaluating data, Commission vacancies, and the need for additional volunteers in the City of Garden Ridge.

2. Discuss and consider delaying implementation and billing based on the Water Rate Structure as stated in Ordinance No. 54-042017.

Mayor Thompson provided City Council with possible options and the following recommendations:

- Reissue August water bills based on the Water Rate Structure implemented in 2015 but keep the \$2 base rate increase in effect.
- Direct the Water Commission to reexamine the water rates and bring a recommendation to City Council in October to be implemented for the October-November billing cycle (December bill).

Motion: A motion was made by Councilmember Swint, seconded by Councilmember Lantzy, to accept Mayor Thompson's recommendations. During the discussion of the motion, Councilmember Bower recommended to extend the implementation of any water rate changes by an additional month to the November-December billing cycle (January bill).

Motion Amended: A motion was made by Councilmember Swint, seconded by Councilmember Lantzy to modify the motion to extend the implementation of any water rate changes by an additional month to the November-December billing cycle (January bill). The City Council voted five (5) for and none (0) opposed. The motion carried unanimously.

6. Citizen Comment Period – limited to 20 minutes total

Mayor Thompson reviewed the rules for Citizen Comment Period.

Debraun West, 9752 Trophy Oaks Drive, spoke regarding the water rate structure, water usage, and water meters.

Waylan Simmons, 8312 Wild Wind Park, spoke regarding the water rate structure and water usage.

Keith Sanders, 8810 Tuscan Hills Drive, spoke regarding the water rate structure and the volume of water available.

Cheryl Bither, 9925 Trophy Oaks Drive, spoke regarding the Water Fund Budget and communication.

Ann Caton Gill, 21749 Forest Waters Circle, thanked City Council for scheduling a special meeting to discuss the water rate structure and spoke regarding water bills detailing each tier and their respective costs.

Joshua Sigman, 19835 Zephyr Cove, thanked City Council for reverting to the water rates implemented in 2015 and spoke regarding water rates affecting the real estate market.

Herb Langthorp, 9010 Sumac Cove, spoke regarding the water rate structure and water usage.

Phil Langlais, 9524 Goldenrod Circle, thanked Mayor Thompson for taking responsibility in the water rate structure oversight, stating he appreciates Mayor Thompson's leadership. He spoke regarding maintaining lawns and communication.

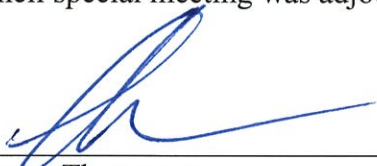
Wes Kleckley, 19515 Windswept Cove, thanked City Council for reverting to the water rates implemented in 2015 and spoke regarding water usage.

Rob Chamberlain, 8807 Cherokee Path, thanked Mayor Thompson for taking responsibility in the water rate structure oversight, thanked City Council for reverting to the water rates implemented in 2015, and spoke regarding volunteering.

Jim Miller, 9910 Marie Meadow, spoke regarding water leaks.

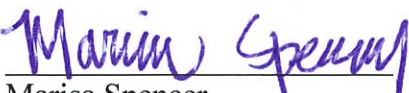
7. Adjournment

Motion: A motion was made by Mayor Pro-Tem McCaw, seconded by Councilmember Bower, to adjourn. The City Council voted five (5) for and none (0) opposed. The motion carried unanimously. There being no further business, the Tuesday, September 10, 2019, City Council special meeting was adjourned at 9:12 p.m. by Mayor Thompson.



Larry Thompson
Mayor

ATTEST:



Marisa Spencer
City Secretary

SIGN IN TO SPEAK AT THE SEPTEMBER 10, 2019
CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING
CITIZEN COMMENT PERIOD

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Rules for Citizens' Participation:

The City Council welcomes citizen participation and comments at all City Council Meetings. The City Council offers citizens the opportunity to address them by signing up to speak prior to the meeting. If you speak, you must follow these guidelines:

- a) Respect and courtesy:
 - i. Direct your comments to the entire City Council, not to an individual member, nor to the audience.
 - ii. Show the City Council the same respect that you would like to be shown.
 - iii. End your speaking at the time allotted below.
- b) Speaking:
 - i. First citizen comment period
 1. You are required to sign up to speak.
 2. You are limited to one 3 minute period.
 - ii. Business item period
 1. You are required to sign up to speak.
 2. You are limited to one 3 minute period.
 - iii. Second citizen comment period
 1. You are not required to sign up.
 2. You are limited to one 2 minute period.
 - iv. State your name and address before your comments begin.
 - v. You are only allowed to speak once per topic, unless also speaking during a posted Public Hearing.

*NOTE: The Texas Open Meetings Act permits a member of the public or a member of the governmental body to raise a subject that has not been included in the notice for the meeting. However, any discussion of the subject **must be limited** to a proposal to place the subject on the agenda for a future meeting and any response to a question posed to the City Council is limited to either a statement of specific factual information or a recitation of existing policy. TEX. GOV'T CODE § 551.042*

NAME	ADDRESS	TELEPHONE NUMBER (OPTIONAL)	SUBJECT
1. John Andrews	9403 Glaxinia		WATER Rates
2. Martha Stipp	21007 Cedar Branch		"
3. Shane Slaughter	Cenualga Ct		water
4. Dev Patel	8302 Wild Wind Pl		water rate
5. Ken Knepper	8891 Schoenthal Rd		WATER RATE
6. Jeff Jerome	20745 Wahl Ln		Water Metering
7. Eric Lamberson	22118 Custoba		Water Rate Change
8. Amy Harrell/Lowmore	9315 Sumac Ln.		water meters
9. Shannon Drichta	9380 Cinchona Trail		Water rate
10. Jim Miller	9910 Marie Meadow		WATER
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September 10, 2019 City Council Special Meeting

2nd Citizen Comment Period

NAME	ADDRESS	SUBJECT
1. Debrajn West	9752 Trophy Oaks	Meter
2. WAYLAW SIMMONS	8312 Wild Wind PARK	METER
3. Keith Sanders	8810 Tuscan Hills Dr.	Rates/Fees
4. Cheryl Bither	9925 Trophy Oaks Dr	Provide info on \$ -
5. Ann Cates Gill	21749 Forest Waters Circle	needed & expected
6. Joshua Sigman	19835 Zephyr Cove	greater info requested on
7. FLEAS LANGFORD	9010 Sunset Cove	water bill
8. Phil Langford	9514 Goldenrod Circle	usage charges
9. Wes Keadley	19515 Windingt Cove	Communication
10. Rod Chamberlain	3807 CHEROKEE PATH	Water
11. Jim Miller	9900 MARIE MEADOW	WATER
12.		TOILETS
13.		
14.		
15.		
16.		
17.		
18.		



City of Garden Ridge

Water Rate Discussion
Special Council Meeting
September 10, 2019



Session Overview

- Why we're here
- What Happened & Issues
- Why an Increase
- The Way Forward
- Recommendations
- Decision



Why we're here

- Understand what has happened with rates/billing
- Discuss the imperatives of new rates
- Provide current relief to rate-payers
- Provide opportunity for transition to new rates
- Ensure the future of our Water Company



What Happened

- Proposed rate increase to Council in July 2019
 - Rate Comparison(s)
 - Didn't consider timing
- Discussion at September Council Meeting
- Scope of issue since September Council Meeting



Issues

- Timing of the increase
 - Process (2+ yrs) culminated in our highest use month
 - Budgeted water rate study back in 2017
- Scope/Intention of rate increase
 - Protect low rate-payers, incentivize conservation
- Contention over usage/meter readings
 - Meter & system accuracy/reliability
 - Usage comparisons & climatology



Why an increase

- Expenses
 - Increased 16+% since 2015
 - Transition to fully-loaded (vs. General Fund share)
- No adjustments since 2015
- Continue to invest in highly reliable and safe system
- Encourage conservation



Conservation

- Regional responsibility
- Two common methods
 - Mandatory Restrictions
 - Incentives to voluntarily conserve
- Voluntary Conservation
 - Address discretionary use, particularly irrigation
 - Encourage education and prudent resource use



The Way Forward

- Maintain Superior System
- Encourage Conservation without restrictions
 - Maintain Credits
 - Enhance existing conservation education
- Be a good regional neighbor
- Give rate-payers more time to prepare/adjust
- Reconsider middle use rates



Recommendations ¹

- Roll back step rate increases
 - August to October at previous rates
 - Bring on increase in November (December Bill)
- Keep \$2 base rate increase effective August
 - In Ordinance and already budgeted
- Reissue August bills at previous rate (with \$2 increase)
 - Issue account credit to those who already paid



Recommendations ²

- Direct Water Commission
 - Examine rates
 - Maintain intent of study and original recommendation(s)
 - Consider lower “middle of the curve” rates
 - Possible implementation over longer period
 - Bring recommendation to Council in October
- Effect of recommendations



Closing Comments



Discussion / Action(s)