

**MINUTES OF THE TOWN HALL MEETING OF THE
HIGHLAND VILLAGE CITY COUNCIL
HELD AT THE HIGHLAND VILLAGE MUNICIPAL COMPLEX
LOCATED AT 1000 HIGHLAND VILLAGE ROAD
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2017**

1. Call Meeting to Order

Mayor Charlotte J. Wilcox called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and thanked residents for attending. Members of the City Council and City staff were then introduced. Mayor Wilcox provided an overview of the meeting and encouraged questions after each presentation.

Roll Call

Present:	Charlotte J. Wilcox	Mayor
	Mike Lombardo	Councilmember
	Barbara Fleming	Deputy Mayor Pro Tem
	Fred Busche	Councilmember
	John McGee	Councilmember
	Daniel Jaworski	Councilmember
Absent:	Michelle Schwolert	Mayor Pro Tem
Staff Members:	Michael Leavitt	City Manager
	Ken Heerman	Assistant City Manager
	Angela Miller	City Secretary
	Doug Reim	Police Chief
	Brad Goudie	Fire Chief
	Scott Kriston	Public Works Director
	Fince Espinoza	Parks Operations & Projects Mgr
	Laurie Mullens	Public Affairs Manager
	Andrew Boyd	Media Specialist

2. Discuss the Utility Rate Adjustment and Increase

Mayor Wilcox stated water and sewer is the most essential service cities provide. She followed by saying the Council and City staff did not like raising the rates for utility services and that all options were explored before moving forward with an increase. She reported a short video would be presented that explains the reason for the change and the new rate structure.

After the video presentation, the following people spoke:

James Garcia (606 Hidden Oak Court) – Mr. Garcia asked what verifiable data the City used to arrive at the conclusion that both the weather and any resident conservation were the cause of a revenue deficit? Mr. Leavitt reported the City's historical average from approximately 2005 to 2010 was about 7 million gallons per day. In 2014 the City initiated a Phase I Conservation plan, and residents saved approximately 20%. Since that time the area has experienced more rain and the usage patterns have changed. The average daily use now since then has been about 3.1 gallons per day.

He then asked why there were open cleanouts and manholes and is staff being as efficient as possible in maintaining the system. Mr. Leavitt reported over time, ground shifting occurs or sometimes residential clean out caps can get damaged, which then

allows seepage. He stated staff currently takes a proactive approach to find breaches and to ensure needed repairs are done.

Councilmember Jaworski stated there is a national standard that is used to determine staffing levels when maintaining water and sewer systems, and the City is actually doing more with less number of staff. He also stated staff strives to be economical when purchasing items while still maintaining quality, such as purchasing from online sources. He added as new technology is introduced and the cost of providing services goes up, this is the only logical way to keep the utility fund solvent so we don't have the same issue in the near future.

Councilmember Busche also stated the accuracy rate in meter reads has increased since the new meters were installed. Public Works Director Scott Kriston reported there was a complete meter change out a few years ago and the efficiency that came about from that was phenomenal. Mr. Leavitt encouraged residents to use the app, which can be accessed by computer or phone, which allows residents to monitor their usage and set alarms for notifications.

Austin Adams (695 Timber Bend) – Mr. Adams provided some history regarding water service in Highland Village. He also referenced an earlier study that was conducted, which did call for conservation. Mr. Adams asked how the rate structure was modified for commercial customers. Assistant City Manager Ken Heerman reported the previous rate structure was lower for commercial and that most area cities use the same rate structure for residential and commercial customers. He reported the new rate structure is somewhat higher for our commercial customers.

Deedee Ricketts (108 Glasgow Court) – Ms. Ricketts asked how the City compares with other cities on residential rates. Mr. Heerman reported staff did look at other comparison cities. He stated Highland Village is very competitive with other cities on water rates, however we face challenges with sewer rates due to our terrain and proximity to the lake.

William Meek (2980 Hillside Drive) – Mr. Meek reminded everyone if they sign up for electronic payment drafting for their utility bill, they will receive a \$5.00 discount each month.

Jean Scott (486 Medina) – Ms. Scott asked why residents can no longer turn off the water to their home if they have a leak. She also voiced concern about the rate increase and the effect on residents that are on a fixed income.

Mr. Leavitt reported every home should have an external turn off valve, but unfortunately many do not know where they are located. He added the new water meters that have been installed were very costly so now City staff will come out to do it. In addition, he added that approximately 22% of our residents are 65 or older and/or disabled, so Council recently increased the homeowner exemption from \$50,000 to \$75,000.

3. Discuss the Bond Election to be held in the City of Highland Village on November 7, 2017

Mayor Wilcox reported every year during the budget process, Council and staff look at a Five Year Forecast of Capital Improvement Projects. She stated a bond election is scheduled in November for street improvements and park projects, with no tax increase associated with the approval of these two propositions.

Assistant City Manager Ken Heerman reported regular maintenance of our streets is included in the City's general budget, but approximately every five (5) years there is the need to address street reconstruction, which is much more costly. Mr. Heerman presented projects that would be included in the bond package.

The following people spoke:

William Meek (2980 Hillside Drive) – Mr. Meek stated the City is in good financial standing and has a good bond rating.

James Garcia (606 Hidden Oak Court) –With the rebuilding of Kids Kastle and the use of recycled plastic wood material, would the material be safe in warm temperatures. Fince Espinoza, Park Operations and Projects Manager, reported the material is safe for playground use and maintenance free. Mr. Garcia also suggested rebuilding the playground during the offseason when it is not so widely used. He also asked about concerns and incidents of slipping at the Doubletree splash pad and removing the boulders. Mr. Leavitt reported it has been resurfaced and the boulders were strategically placed outside of the splash area to allow parents a place to sit while watching their children.

Mark Solow (730 Oak Hollow Lane) – Mr. Solow reported he started a cycling group in the area that now has a large following. He stated Highland Village has a lot of places to ride and inquired about areas in Highland Village that were of concern to riders. Public Works Director Scott Kriston reported some of the areas mentioned are being researched and that Council has asked staff to look into redeveloping Highland Shores Boulevard to make it more walkable and bicycle friendly. Mr. Leavitt also reported staff is looking into grants related to this.

4. Visitor Comments

Deedee Ricketts (108 Glasgow Court) – Ms. Ricketts stated when Kids Kastle was first constructed, stones were sold as a fundraising effort that displayed donors names. She asked what was planned for those. Mr. Leavitt reported many of them have been saved or went back to the original owners. He also reported the same firm that helped build the original playground will be involved in the rebuild.

Jennie Biggs (840 Highland Village Road) – She is ecstatic the City is considering putting a trail or sidewalk on her street, and that the City did not raise taxes. She also shared how much she enjoys Doubletree Ranch Park and the trail system in Highland Village.

Nalini Artham (2901 Darlington Drive) – Mr. Artham asked why builders are allowed to put water heaters in attics. Mr. Leavitt stated the City has adopted the 2015 International Building Codes as our standard, which allows them in attics. He stated homeowners can relocate them, but it is costly.

Fire Chief Brad Goudie – Chief Goudie stated sometimes after hours the Fire Department responds when water needs to be shut off. In the fire industry, staff is aware of the damage caused by water so he stated the importance of being able to respond quickly to help stop any damage.

5. Adjournment

Mayor Wilcox thanked everyone for coming to the Town Hall Meeting and adjourned at 8:42 p.m.

Charlotte J. Wilcox, Mayor

ATTEST:

Angela Miller, City Secretary