



**TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING -  
BUDGET WORKSHOP**  
Monday, August 26, 2024 at 9:00 AM  
Fulton Council Chambers, 201 N. 7th Street

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**MINUTES**

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**CALL TO ORDER**

**PRESENT**

Mayor Kelli Cole  
Mayor Pro Tem Robert Loflin  
Place 3 MaryAnn Pahmiyer  
Place 4 Margo Nielsen  
Place 5 Laura McCorkle

**ABSENT**

Place 2 Chris Garis Place

**STAFF PRSENT**

Stephanie Garcia, City Secretary  
Ty Gerstenberger, Police Chief  
Matt Olenick, Director of Operations  
Alyssa Hendricks, Administrative Assistant  
Steven Robertson, Comptroller  
Ashley Sloan, Bookkeeper  
Sherry Myers, Pier Manager  
Melissa Pina, Coordinator

Mayor Cole called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – U.S. Flag and Texas Flag**

Mayor Cole led everyone in the pledges.

**OBSERVE A MOMENT OF SILENCE/PRAYER**

Mayor Cole led everyone in a moment of silence.

**CITIZENS TO BE HEARD (PUBLIC FORUM)**

*Public participation is valued and at this time, comments limited to three (3) minutes will be taken from persons who have signed the Speaker's Card located on the table inside the Council Chambers and delivered to the City Secretary before the meeting begins. Written comments received by submission to the City Secretary in person or emailed to [citysec@fultontexas.org](mailto:citysec@fultontexas.org) by 3:00 p.m. on the day of the meeting, on any subject matter that is not on the agenda, will be read and summarized in the minutes of the meeting. Persons wishing to address the Council and who have registered using the Speaker's Card will have up to three (3) minutes to speak. In accordance with the Open Meetings Act, Council may not*

*discuss or take action on any item that has not been posted on the agenda. While civil public criticism is not prohibited; disorderly conduct or disturbance of the peace as prohibited by law shall be cause for the chair to terminate the offender's time to speak.*

No one came forward.

## **ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

1. Presentations and general discussion of Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT) fund request from the Rockport-Fulton Chamber of Commerce.

Mayor Cole read the item. Shelly Stuart and Alyssa Massingill introduced themselves and began with a discussion of the changes at the Rockport-Fulton Chamber of Commerce. The City of Rockport will no longer contribute to advertising; however, they have asked the Chamber for a six-month extension to their contract. The Chamber will be focusing on their visitor center. Mrs. Stuart informed the Council that the Chamber does still require our support to continue running the visitor center and provided the Mayor with an updated financial plan. Alderwoman Nielsen inquired as to whether the Chamber will still act as the chamber. Mrs. Stuart addressed her question.

2. Presentations and general discussion of Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT) fund request from the Aransas County Council on Aging.

Mayor Cole read the item. MaryEllen Nies introduced herself as the Executive Director and informed the Council that the bountiful bowl event is their main fund raiser. She indicated that they have someone helping them with the advertising. The advertising primarily consists of email, print and website. The Council of Aging organization is requesting \$2500 this year. The event will be held at the Presbyterian Church on February 1, 2025.

3. Presentations and general discussion of Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT) fund request from the Texas Maritime Museum.

Mayor Cole read the item. Mike Ables introduced himself as Executive Director and began his discussion regarding their request and the draw of the public to the Maritime Museum throughout the year. Mr. Ables shared with the Council that they are enhancing and revitalizing the museum and indicated the ongoing need for the hotel motel funds received from the Town of Fulton.

4. Presentations and general discussion of Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT) fund request from the Friends of Fulton Mansion.

Mayor Cole read the item and noted there was not a representative in attendance.

5. Presentation and general discussion of proposed FY 2024-25 Budget.

Mayor Cole began by asking the Town's Comptroller, Steven Robertson, to begin the presentation. Mr. Robertson suggested beginning with the hotel motel fund due to the recipients being in the audience.

Hotel/Motel – Mr. Robertson noted that there was a minimal downturn in revenues compared to the last three years. He indicated that advertising and promotion paid for by the Town will

increase, chamber funding has been reduced slightly to reflect the collections, and there have been repairs made to the schoolhouse this year. Mr. Robertson shared that due to a new statute ten percent of funds may be used on park maintenance. It was noted there is a new transfer to visitor center/pier fund. Alderwoman Pahmiyer inquired as to what will be done at the Visitor Information Center. Mayor Cole and Mr. Robertson addressed the question. Mayor Cole informed the council that they spoke to Melissa Pina regarding in-house advertising. The Mayor also discussed the City of Rockport's marketing plan and informed the Council that no one from the City of Rockport has spoken to her regarding joining them in their advertising campaign. There was discussion regarding the funding for the visitor center.

Mr. Robertson referenced page one of the budget regarding the estimated totals for the fiscal year 2024 – 2025. He noted the proposed voter-approval rate of 0.250843 and discussed the values regarding the freeze adjusted rates. The average taxpayer's taxes should decrease by \$110. Mayor Cole noted that the no-new-revenue rate is higher than the voter-approval rate; however, it does not trigger an election because the Town is not seeking a rate more than the voter-approval rate.

General Fund – Mr. Robertson indicated that the sales tax has experienced a downturn this year; however, the Town budgeted for that. He further discussed that the franchise fees increased, the building permits, and inspection fees. He suggested that the tower lease should be reviewed, and the Town has done well with interest this year. He continued to review the items in the general fund. He noted that the Town still has not received updated information for the dispatch costs and there will be a two percent cost of living raise for the employees.

Debt Service – Mr. Robertson asked for any questions. Alderman Loflin inquired as to whether the current debt will be paid this year. Mr. Robertson indicated that it will mature in 2025 and the Town will most likely be considering issue debt mid-2025.

Police Department – Alderwoman McCorkle inquired regarding the fines and fees being proposed at less than last year. Mr. Robertson and Chief Gerstenberger addressed the question. There was further discussion regarding the funding of the police department, and the vehicle repairs and maintenance fund being increased.

Sewer – Mr. Robertson indicated that the Town has not raised sewer rates and will not need to in the near future.

Convention Center – Mr. Robertson noted that Ms. Pina's numbers came in very close to what was predicted. He reviewed the increases in maintenance wages, and informed the Council that there were no other large changes. Ms. Pina mentioned the concrete flooring does not seem to be holding up well. There was discussion about installation and information that has been received in the past regarding repair and maintenance.

Pier – Mr. Robertson shared with the Council that there is a need to increase repairs and maintenance due to storms damaging the pier. He reviewed the items within the fund. Alderwoman McCorkle inquired regarding the decline in pole fees. Pier Manager, Sherry Hudson, addressed her questions. There was also a discussion regarding tourism being down in general, and merchandise to be sold at the Visitor Center.

**CLOSED SESSION**

*The Town Council may elect to go into closed session pursuant to Chapter 551, Government Code on any Agenda item where appropriate and particularly Sections 551.071 (consultation with attorney) and 551.074 (personnel matters), Government Code.*

The Council did not convene into Closed Session.

**OPEN SESSION**

*Discuss/Approve/Disapprove any and all action necessary with regard to the preceding matter(s).*

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Mayor Cole entertained a motion to adjourn.

Motion made by Place 5 McCorkle, Seconded by Place 3 Pahmiyer to adjourn the meeting.

Voting Yea: Mayor Pro Tem Loflin, Place 3 Pahmiyer, Place 4 Nielsen, Place 5 McCorkle

The meeting was adjourned at 10:04 a.m.

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Kelli Cole, Mayor

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Stephanie Garcia, City Secretary