

CITY COUNCIL MEETING SPECIAL SESSION

Tuesday, August 26, 2025 at 5:00 PM

City Hall, 102 W. Ashley Wilson Rd, Sweeny, Texas

MINUTES

BE IT KNOWN that the City Council of the City of Sweeny met in **Special Session** on **Tuesday, August 26, 2025 at 5:00 PM.** at City Hall, 102 W. Ashley Wilson Rd, Sweeny, Texas with the following agenda.

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Mayor Hopkins called the meeting to order at 5:01 PM.

Neal Bess Jr., Brian Brooks, Sandra Blaine, and Caniel "Shaun" Massey were in attendance.

Reese Cook arrived at 5:03 PM, after initial roll call.

PLEDGES & INVOCATION

Pledges were led by Neal Bess Jr.

Invocation was given by Attorney Stevenson.

CITIZENS WISHING TO ADDRESS CITY COUNCIL

No citizen comments.

PUBLIC HEARING

Mayor Hopkins recited the full Notice of Public Hearing on the Tax Increase and the verbiage statement of the amount the proposed rate will raise maintenance and operations from last year's taxes. Mayor opened the Public Hearing at 5:10 PM.

1. NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING ON TAX INCREASE

A tax rate of \$0.901224 per \$100 valuation has been proposed by the governing body of CITY OF SWEENY.

Public Comments were received and can be found at the end of the minutes due to the amount of information contained with, following the adjournment information.

Mayor Hopkins addressed the public prior to closing and expressed his appreciation for everyone's comments and participation. Mayor closed the Public Hearing at 6:38 PM.

REGULAR AGENDA

2. Discussion and possible action to extending the solid waste contract with Waste Connections.

The contract with Waste Connections is set to expire September 30th. Matt Lowe and William Holloway of Waste Connections were in attendance to offer three possible options of services and pricing for contractual extensions. Councilman Cook would like to see the debris provision, "act of god", removed or modified within the current contract. He proposed the contract change so to state that Waste Connection would be willing to pick up 5 cubic yards per home, even on an act of God, on normal routes.

Reese Cook moved to table this item until the September Regular Session and allow David and Charlie to work on contract language and memorandum, to clarify some of the things talked about tonight. Seconded by Shaun Massey. Reese Cook, Brian Brooks, Sandra Blaine, and Shuan Massey were in favor. Neal Bess Jr. opposed. Motion carried.

3. Discussion and possible action to adopt the annual Budget by Ordinance for the 2025/2026 Fiscal Year; *MUST BE A RECORD VOTE*

Reese Cook moved to approve the Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Proposed Budget and City Ordinance 25-108, adopting the municipal budget for the 2025/2026 Fiscal Year. Seconded by Brian Brooks.

This was a Record Vote.

NEAL BESS JR.	AGAINST
REESE COOK	FOR
BRIAN BROOKS	FOR
SANDRA BLAINE	FOR
CANIEL "SHAUN" MASSEY	FOR

Motion carried.

Mayor read the ordinance aloud in full, Ordinance 25-108, adopting the FY 25/26 Budget.

4. Discussion and possible action to ratify the Tax Rate and approve Ordinance 25-109, adopting the Tax Rate for the 2025 / 2026 Fiscal Year; *MUST BE A RECORD VOTE*

Mayor Hopkins read Ordinance 25-109 aloud to ratify the tax rate.

Mayor asked for a motion to approve the that the property tax rate be increased by the adoption of a tax rate of \$0.901224, which is effectively a 44.59 percent increase in the tax rate, and approving Ordinance 25-109, adopting the tax rate of \$0.901224 per \$100 valuation.

Brian Brooks stated so moved. Seconded by Reese Cook.

This was a Record Vote.

NEAL BESS JR.	AGAINST
REESE COOK	FOR
BRIAN BROOKS	FOR
SANDRA BLAINE	FOR
CANIEL "SHAUN" MASSEY	FOR

Motion carried.

5. Discussion and possible action to approve Resolution 25-107, restricting the expenditure of funds from designated capital outlay accounts, pursuant to proposed tax rate approval. (If adopted tax rate does not coincide with the proposed rate, this agenda item will be null/void.)

Mayor read Resolution 25-107 aloud, restricting the expenditures of funds from designated capital outlay accounts pursuant to the adopted tax rate. Restricted accounts are:

Account 50-21-6610	Streets Capital Outlay	\$200,000.00
Account 50-22-6610	Drainage Capital Outlay	\$200,000.00
Account 50-28-6610	Parks Capital Outlay	\$50,000.00

Councilman Cook asked Attorney Stevenson about the expenditure of funds and if it were to cover budget amendments within those accounts. Attorney Stevenson stated amendments would require action by Council.

Reese Cook moved to approved Resolution 25-107, restricting the expenditure of funds from designated capital outlay accounts, pursuant to the proposed tax rate approval as read and presented.

Seconded by Shuan Massey. Reese Cook, Brian Brooks, Sandra Blaine, and Shuan Massey were in favor. Neal Bess Jr. opposed. Motion carried.

ITEMS OF COMMUNITY INTEREST

No items of Community Interest.

ADJOURN REGULAR SESSION

Mayor Hopkins adjourned the meeting at 7:15 PM.

PUBLIC COMMENTS DURING THE PUBLIC HEARING OF THE PROPOSED TAX RATE

Public Hearing opened at 5:10 PM and closed at 6:38 PM.

Public Comments were received from the following individuals. Mayor Hopkins and the Council addressed comments upon receipt. The below are those in attendance that *spoke and/or addressed Council* during the public hearing, with a synopsis of those comments. Comments notated are from both the public and City officials.

- Ricky Reid questioned the tax rate proposed, homestead exemption, and the process to fix the streets.
- Mayor Hopkins explained the interlocal agreement utilization for road maintenance services. He also explained the proposed Resolution for capital outlay expenditures. Next year, Council is proposing to go down significantly on the tax rate.
- Mark Morgan Jr. asked about the expenditures pursuant to the proposed tax increase.
- Councilman Brian Brook stated there are plans to create an advisory committee that would look at capital improvement projects within streets, drainage, and parks. The committee would prioritize and make recommendations to Council for expenditures of the funds. Once the new businesses within the Industrial Park come online and start generating sales tax, it will help to fund more projects.
- Councilman Reese Cook gave information on looking at a CO or bond for \$3 million, and how that would increase the debt of the tax rate for a longer period of time. Instead of jumping into a 10 - 20 year note, we need to allow for current debt to roll off and see if any other debts could be added for future capital improvements.
- Councilman Neal Bess Jr. stated he feels the sales tax increase Mr. Brooks mentioned is misleading. SEDC, CCPD, and the state make up a portion of the sales tax received and the City only receives a small portion. He is not in favor of the proposed tax rate. He wants this to go to a vote to citizens.
- Michael Heinroth asked Councilman Bess if he is retracting his vote on the proposed rate. Mr. Bess responded "yes I am." Mr. Heinroth asked about the cost to redo streets. Mr. Jordan, City Manager, stated it is approximately \$138,000 per mile for material. Heinroth does not feel the increase would pave a lot of roads in town. Heinroth expressed concern over the significant increase to those that are not as well off, with no plan for the excess funds received. He feels the City established the rate to hug just under the voter threshold. A 42% tax increase is huge and feels an established plan is needed.
- Councilman Brian Brooks stated that the advisory committee would be created to allow residents to join in and prioritize the needs. The citizens have the right to petition. If Council were to propose and send to ballot and it didn't pass, the budget would remain the same. The potholes would remain the same. People's homes flooding would remain the same. This is the most people to ever show to a budget meeting. No one will come to the meetings. We've been working for months on this budget and only one person has attended.

- Curt Liles stated he has lived here about two years and has experience in previous governmental work. What am I buying he asked? Recommends that before completing anything, all the ducks need to be in a row. Then sell the residents what you want to do and what it would cost.
- Mayor Hopkins gave further information on previous years' interlocal agreements, our capital improvement plan, and current non funded mandates.
- Jonell Joice asked about the Robin Hood school taxes and about lowering school taxes to help. She suggested getting grants for next year. No more development until Sweeny can get non-funded mandates straight. She expressed other possible options for consideration and drainage concerns previously expressed to the Drainage District.
- Councilman Reese Cook stated that Hurricane Beryl debris cleanup was approximately \$300,000.00 and drained our disaster contingency fund. Some cities are still awaiting reimbursement from Harvey. The City needs much more than what is proposed. We are essentially landlocked for expansion and do not get money from Chevron Phillips, P66, or the Hospital. Options would be a loan, which would cause a higher tax rate for many years. The Industrial Park is expanding, which will help with the sales tax revenue, and new residential development would bring in ad valorem taxes.
- Councilman Neal Bess Jr. stated he retracted his "yes" vote because of his research he did on the amount of grant money available for infrastructure. He has been on council off and on for five decades because he cares about this City, but April is his last term. His retraction is because he did not agree, as there is no plan. He encouraged the public to talk to their neighbors to petition.
- Jonell Joice questioned grants, in which Mayor Hopkins and Councilman Cook answered. Kurt Liles offered his services to help.
- Mekaela Karst stated she met with Mr. Jordan today. She gave him packets to help benefit the town greatly. She would like to write the grants, feels the community needs to be involved, and there should be ways to let them know. She feels she could be the project manager as well. She would love to talk to Council about it. Karst questioned the expenditure within the utilities in FY24.
- Councilman Shaun Massey stated his reason for running for Council was because Sweeny hadn't been fixed in a long time. We need new water softeners at the plant, the sewer plant needs upgrades, the drainage needs work, and the roads need to be repaired. We have to start somewhere and start fixing something.
- Michael Heinroth asked why we are jumping at a 1-year quick fix, instead of investigating a list with prices for a long-term plan? Presentation of what is on table needs to be shared.
- Councilman Massey stated that Council has been discussing for months, and yes, past Council has failed the citizens. As a group they are trying to get the City repaired and protect the City for the future.
- Councilman Neal Bess Jr. stated he has reached out to Perdue Brandon. We have approximately \$37,000 in taxes that have not been collected for 2024. Feels the increase could make someone lose their property.
- Councilman Brian Brooks stated bonds have been discussed. Council has looked at bonds and grants, and feel this is the route that should be taken due to the City's current stance.
- Wayman Hutchings stated he would have a business plan before going to the bank. With street repair costs, water, sewer, and gas costs; \$500,000 in one year won't pay anything. No taxes ever go down once raised. Put a plan together before asking for money he stated.
- Pat Murphy stated he has lived here 69.5 years. The City has not grown, as far as land, in all that time. Previously the City had many more businesses. We need more businesses, so residents don't have to shoulder the cost. If Council is raising taxes one year, it needs to be in writing that it will go back down on a specific date. He asked if that can be put somewhere?
- Councilman Reese Cook explained how lowering the tax rate still appears as an increase due to the rise in appraisals, and that specific language is required. The City, excluding this year, has technically lowered the tax rate for the last 5 years. Cook additionally questioned those in attendance on a certificate of obligation or a bond to voters for \$10 million versus a smaller tax increase. From listening to the citizens,

he asked if it is more favorable to raise the tax rate for 20 years at a significant increase for a bond? The City has been weighing these options.

- Councilman Shaun Massey stated that previously, the City has dropped the tax rate and has put in a homestead exemption of 10%, knowing city has issues, in order to help our citizens. The hospital and school district didn't and aren't going to do that. The City has applied for grants, but the date from application to funds being released can be years.
- Ricky Reid stated he feels the homestead exemption is a mistake.
- Councilman Neal Bess Jr. stated he recommends Michaela Karst and Kurt Liles be on an advisory committee; it is a non-paying job. Feels project management has been an issue.
- Councilman Reese Cook gave additional information on past projects and the management of City projects overall. He also gave information on the new businesses coming into the EDC Industrial Park, which should help with additional sales tax revenue.
- Curt Liles stated we need to bring in more revenue and businesses.
- Pat Murphy asked about a grocery store and made suggestions for reaching out to HEB.
- Melissa Karst asked about the City website and if agendas and minutes are posted? The response was yes, as this is a requirement by law. She asked about posting it on Facebook or making referenced on Facebook for the information to be found on the website.
- K Rollins asked about going with a bond versus a higher tax rate and getting more businesses in. That would not necessarily mean they would be paying the high tax rate for the next 20-30 years? Correct answered the Mayor.
- Mark Morgan Jr. asked about the maximum homestead exemption the City could offer. It would be 20%, but the City has only adopted a homestead exemption of 10%.
- Curt Liles stated people willing to move to the City look at the school district, taxes, and food. Feels we need to prioritize bringing people in to bring revenue in.

Public Hearing concluded at 6:38 PM.

Exhibit:

-Waste Connections Agenda Memo; Agenda Item No. 2

Staff Present:

David Jordan, City Manager
Karla Wilson, Finance Director/ Personnel Services
DeLane Brown, Director of Public Works
Brad Caudle, Police Chief
Kaydi Smith, City Secretary

Passed and approved this ____ day of _____, 2025.

Kaydi Smith, City Secretary

Meeting Date	08/26/2025	Agenda Items	
Approved by City Manager	Yes	Presenter(s)	City Manager
Reviewed by City Attorney		Department	Administration, Finance, Utilities
Subject	Discussion and possible action to extend the solid waste contract with Waste Connections.		
Attachments / Supporting documents			
Financial Information	Expenditure Required:		N/A
	Amount Budgeted:		N/A
	Account Number:		
	Additional Appropriation Required:		
	Additional Account Number:		

[illegible]

- [illegible]

- | | 1x Per Month | EOW | 1xWeek | 2xWeek | 3xWeek | 4xWeek | 5xWeek | 6xWeek | 7xWeek | Extra | |
|------|--------------|------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|--------|--------|-------|-------------|
| 1YD | \$ - | \$ - | | | | | | | | | \$ - |
| 2YD | \$ - | \$ - | \$ 65.78 | \$ 116.63 | \$ 168.94 | \$ 219.88 | \$ 272.09 | | | | \$ 843.31 |
| 3YD | \$ - | \$ - | \$ 89.70 | \$ 148.02 | \$ 206.32 | \$ 264.60 | \$ 322.91 | | | | \$ 1,031.56 |
| 4YD | \$ - | \$ - | \$ 104.67 | \$ 170.43 | \$ 234.06 | \$ 300.50 | \$ 364.78 | | | | \$ 1,174.43 |
| 6YD | \$ - | \$ - | \$ 135.75 | \$ 222.77 | \$ 315.48 | \$ 408.13 | \$ 500.82 | | | | \$ 1,582.95 |
| 8YD | \$ - | \$ - | \$ 159.34 | \$ 284.08 | \$ 408.17 | \$ 530.74 | \$ 654.80 | | | | \$ 2,037.13 |
| 10YD | \$ - | \$ - | | | | | | | | | \$ - |
- Comm Increase on "A" Pricing 1.1



AGENDA MEMO

Business of the City Council

City of Sweeny, Texas

In Scenario B & C where recycling is no longer offered, residents will have the option to keep their recycling cart if they'd like an additional for trash. However, this would come with a monthly fee for the extra cart. For those who do not wish to pay for an additional cart, Waste Connections would arrange pickup.

If Waste Connections is unable to retrieve a cart immediately, they would collect it later if the residents place it at the curb without having paid for the extra cart. There will be no additional charge to the city in cases where Waste Connections is unable to pick up a recycling cart right away.

Recycling service will continue as usual, and cart pickups will occur after service. It typically takes a few weeks to complete all pickups.

Recommended Action

Recommendation on Garbage is to keep the residential rates as flat as possible even if it means a longer contract.