

Special Meeting
of
THE CITY OF PARKER CITY COUNCIL
January 11, 2023
5:30 pm
PARKER CITY HALL

Mayor Kelly called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm.

Roll call by Clerk Hinrichs:

Ms. Barrow – present
Mr. Chaple - present
Ms. Galbreath – present
Ms. Gibson – present
Mayor Kelly – present

Also present: Chief Hutto, Beverly Hutto, Mark Rega, Kathleen O'Brien, Bill Libby, Mark Rega, AnnMarie Morris, Tony Summerlin, Chuck Tindell, Officer Sikes, Officer Perdue, Donna Perdue

Mayor Kelly let audience know they may talk about the agenda item once a motion was made. Each person would have 3 minutes and a timer will be used. Only item on the agenda is ad valorem tax. Parker has been running in the past by water revenue only and with the infrastructure needs more revenue is going to be needed. Cameras have been utilized in the sewer system; Mayor has not seen the film but numerous sinkholes are in our roads. Pipes are falling, roads are failing. Mayor Kelly is asking citizens and council to support ad valorem to have funds to fix the needs. Ms. Galbreath asked if a motion is needed to start discussions with citizens. Yes, per Mayor Kelly. Ms. Galbreath made a motion to pass the 3.8 ad valorem tax, second by Mr. Chaple. Mr. Sloan clarified that this is to start the ad valorem tax process. Mayor Kelly stated that the tax money would not come in for a year to a year in a half. FEMA money is starting to come in from Feds and State. Mayor Kelly invited residents to come to podium to speak.

Chuck Tindell of 1201 E Park – supports the tax, even though anti-tax guy. This all comes down to supporting city to stay a city. Has a question as to if it passes, what happens next? How it is collected, used, and communicated to citizens? Mayor Kelly stated the money would be used for infrastructure repair, not to be confused with Infrastructure Committee monies that are allocated by the Infrastructure Committee. Mayor Kelly said an 8" water supply line is going to be placed on Tyndall Parkway. The ad valorem would be part of the budget for the city, with the infrastructure being the priority. The income from the tax would be a line item in the budget. Ms. Galbreath stated that this will be a question we continue to receive, how to spend the money and how to be transparent. Ms. Galbreath would like to set up an oversight committee. Mayor Kelly and Mr. Sloan see no problem with an oversight committee. Mr. Sloan said the money would be collected by the paying of property tax, the monies would be remitted to the city from the tax collector. The tax bills come out in the end of October. Ms. Gibson asked when the tax would show on the tax bills? Mr. Sloan has not met with the tax collector yet, but when the tax is certified, around July 1st, after certain publication notices, around the end of this fiscal year, you would put the tax on the tax bills. Mayor Kelly feels it would be on this year's trim bill and money could come in when taxes are paid by homeowners.

Steven Youngblood of 1225 Stratford and 5216 Soule Dr - not for this tax, you will run off the elderly with these taxes, he feels they cannot take anymore. May need to charge for boat ramp usage, look for

other ways to get income. Parker has numerous parks. Old people cannot take this. Mayor Kelly stated you cannot charge for boat ramps that were built with federal funds. Mr. Youngblood said several old people will move out of Parker; times are getting harder. Mayor Kelly stated that a lot of the issues are due to the age of the pipes. City wanted to reline the pipes but replacing looks like it is a cheaper option. Ms. Youngblood stated roads are collapsing due to underground river. Ms. Gibson stated she campaigned on no ad valorem tax, she has seen the budget and information from Rural Water District, and in two years if we don't pass this there will probably not be a Parker. Bay County, Springfield or Callaway will take us over and they all have ad valorem that we will still pay. Mr. Youngblood states we pay too much for engineering work, it could be used to replace sewer lines. Mr. Youngblood said money was wasted in previous dredging proposed project. Mr. Youngblood said cuts need to be made in the city. Mayor Kelly stated that last year's budget had a \$7,000 surplus. Mr. Youngblood said many lots were purchased in the past very cheaply and now the residents can't afford their taxes.

Mark Rega 1502 Dover Road, tough decision, but if the alternative is to stay Parker, maybe look at a term limit on the tax. He trusts this group and trusts the council and mayor to make the right decision. Maybe a five-year limit on the tax would make it more palatable. In five years if the expenditure is met, you can relook at the tax. Vote annually to look at the expenditures and budget. Mayor Kelly has concerns over the amount of road repairs and the increase in costs, for repair, fuel, etc. Mayor Kelly feels that lots down Tyndall Parkway will develop once sewer and water line are put in and those now places could help offset the tax in the future. Mr. Rega would like a term limit of maybe five years, so next council would be made to relook at it, like a special assessment, perhaps these kinds of expenses may not be needed in the future. Mr. Sloan clarified that the ad valorem and budget must be reviewed on an annual basis. Public notices and hearings are done annually. Per Mr. Sloan the council must reaffirm the ad valorem tax on an annual basis, in essence it has an annual review. The citizens will have an opportunity to hear, and see and participate in the budget process so the citizens can help the council determine what ad valorem, if any, is needed.

Paul Palmer 1135 West Street, people who have lived here, just because their neighbors home is appraised high, does not mean their taxes will go up. As we get older, having a local police and fire department is an important service. Like having these services where we can look the police and firemen in the eye.

Glen Pepper 5315 Thornton Lane asked about repaving his road. Mr. Summerlin stated that the piping has been replaced and now the road repaving will begin. Mr. Pepper asked about lighting at the sport park. Mr. Summerlin is working with FPL now to have lights placed where the city pays a monthly service fee. Mayor Kelly stated that vandalism has been a problem at the sports park, a well was destroyed which cost \$25,000. Mayor Kelly would like to see some of the money go towards a security system CCTV.

Kim Rega of 1503 Dover Road, happy that an annual review can take place by the citizens, but concern that this council and mayor will not be here in 20 years. What recourse do the citizens have for future taxation? Mr. Sloan said that would be done at the ballot box. Also, you can participate in budget meetings as a citizen.

Cynthia Rozzo of 1440 Dover Road ask about urgent need of infrastructure, water pipes and sewer, asked if anyone has done the math on the replacement? Mr. Summerlin stated that Mr. Nalley of Northwest Water said the water replacement was \$18 million alone. Asked about the cost of road resurfacing? Asked if math was done to see what tax would bring in? Information sheet was provided at the previous town hall meeting. Ad valorem rates of other cities given by clerk. Parker would still be

the third lowest at 3.8 millage. Asked if annexation was an option? Must annex to a city that shares a border with Parker. Springfield has ad valorem of 15.03 and Callaway is 12.91 currently.

Bill Libby of Sunset Drive was convinced by Ms. Stacie that there would be oversight and convinced by the Mayor the money is needed. He agrees with Mayor and council that the tax is needed. Mayor Kelly stated he ran on premise, as did Ms. Gibson, that he did not want to raise taxes. Mayor stated he received a letter from the governor, when coming into office, that said the City of Parker books must be fixed or you will be dissolved. Mayor Kelly would not ask to do this if he felt there was another way to do this.

Patricia Fousek 1344 Stratford Ave understands the city's situation but wants to help others understand. This problem has been staring us in the face for a long time, how did this happen and how are we going to be reassured that this will not happen again? She does not know the Mayor as well as others do and would like reassurance. Mayor Kelly stated that we got here due to when issues came up others in the past kicked the can down the road and didn't address the issues. City should be run like a business, revenue in and revenue out, if you don't have the money then you don't spend it. Mayor Kelly stated we do not generate enough income to take care of things like we did in 1965, the predecessors should have put in 1 mil ad valorem twenty years ago and adjusted if needed, but that did not happen. It would have been more palatable per Ms. Fousek. Mayor Kelly stated public works does not have the manpower, pay is not what it is in Panama City. Infrastructure failure, no water on the left side of Tyndall Parkway, all of the parkway should be developed. His vision is to have businesses on Business 98 as well. New business can pay taxes and help with ad valorem rates for citizens. Mayor Kelly was convinced by the cameras in the lines and Rural Water that something needs to be done. Ms. Fousek spoke of infrastructure needs but would like to designate this money to infrastructure. Mayor Kelly said it would be a budget line item. Ms. Fousek would like the money to go towards infrastructure and not parks, but to what is needed to sustain the city. Ms. Gibson said the money that came in for the parks was FEMA money and went to the existing park we had, to rebuild the park that existed. Ms. Gibson said we are not spending out of pocket money. Mayor Kelly said that money is coming back to the city now from FEMA as projects are being completed. Mr. Summerlin cleared up that 1.4 million was for the park, the rest was for other projects in the city. Per Mayor Kelly the storm is not closed out for insurance money. Ms. Galbreath wanted to make clear that the ad valorem tax is to run the city, the water and sewer bills generate about \$800,000 to make repairs for the infrastructure repairs. Ms. Galbreath said that for the past 50 years they have done a really good job of having a balanced budget, but the infrastructure is at the end of its 50-year life. Ms. Gibson stated that the water money should have been used in the past for infrastructure and that's why we are where we are. Ms. Gibson stated that the gentleman who came twice to discuss his review of the water system projected \$18 million on the water system alone to replace what is needed.

Steven Youngblood, asked if new developments pay an assessment fee when they come in to Parker? Mr. Summerlin stated that they did pay an impact fee when they built. Mr. Youngblood states he cannot afford to pay property taxes anymore.

Ms. Barrow stated that Mayor Kelly blamed the deal with all these pipes on your predecessors, and put that monkey on her back as too, how did you sit here as the fire chief for all these years budgets and not hear what was needing to be done all that time, did you not understand it until you became mayor is my question? "No ma'am", replied Mayor Kelly, "I knew exactly what was happening, but I was responsible for the fire department, not making sure the city council did the right thing by the infrastructure". Ms. Barrow replied she was "not saying that, what you insinuated you didn't know about none of it." Mayor said, "I didn't say that; I knew and so did you." Ms. Barrow stated, "but every

year we worked on it, and we worked on it, and we worked on it, and every year like every city we don't have enough money but you do what you can." Mayor stated, "I am afraid Ms. Barrow we have come to the end of the tether and there is no more time." Ms. Barrow, "I do not appreciate you sitting there and throwing it all at everyone before you". Mayor Kelly said, "If you are elected to the seat of the mayor your responsibility is to help run the city, along with the city council and that did not happen cause if it did, why did it not happen before I was mayor." Ms. Barrow said, "so you are putting it off on me that it was partly my fault". Mayor Kelly stated, "It was absolutely partly, everybody that sat behind this bench, just like it is today, that's what leadership is about." **(Verbatim at the request of Ms. Barrow)**

Kim Rega apologized if she sounded terse earlier, appreciates the dedication of the council and the hard work they do. Thanked Ms. Barrow for all her hard work over the years. Thanked all and want to build a better city.

Paul Palmer likes the diversity of the council. All areas are represented. Thanked all individually for their dedication, vision, and management. Hopes the decision is made by council, as a statement of support, is a unanimous decision today to not have the issue become an election issue and to help stay on the course we are on.

First and second on floor, clerk asked to call vote:

Ms. Barrow - nay
Mr. Chaple - aye
Ms. Galbreath - aye
Ms. Gibson - aye
Mayor Kelly - aye

Motion passed 4-1.

Mayor Kelly thanked the citizens and council for their time.

Adjournment at approximately 6:20 pm.



Jami Hinrichs, City Clerk