

CITY OF ROCKPORT

MINUTES

CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING 6:30 p.m., Tuesday, September 8, 2020 Via Video Conferencing Application ZOOM

A temporary suspension of the Open Meetings Act to allow telephone or video conference public meetings was granted by Governor Greg Abbott. These actions were being taken to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 by avoiding meetings that bring people into a group setting and in accordance with Section 418.016 of the Texas Government Code.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the attorney general has said: “statutes that may be interpreted to require face-to-face interaction between members of the public and public officials are suspended; provided, however, that the governmental bodies must offer alternative methods of communicating with their public officials.” Public participation is valued and citizens wishing to express their views on any topic or agenda item can either electronically submit a Citizen Participation Form in order to register to speak by going to <https://rockport.seamlessdocs.com/f/CouncilCitizenParticipation> or scanning the QR code to the right. Using the same form, citizens can also provide written comments to the City Secretary by 4:00 p.m. on the day of the meeting. The Mayor will read the comments and they will be entered in the minutes of the meeting.

On the 8th day of September 2020, the City Council of the City of Rockport, Aransas County, Texas, convened in Regular Session at 6:30 p.m., via video conferencing application ZOOM and notice of meeting giving time, place, date and subject was posted as described in V.T.C.A., Government Code § 551.041.

CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT

Mayor Patrick R. Rios
Mayor Pro-Tem J.D. Villa, Ward 2
Council Member Michael Saski, Ward 1
Council Member Bob Cunningham, Ward 3
Council Member Andrea Hattman, Ward 4

CITY COUNCIL MEMBER(S) ABSENT

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT

City Manager Kevin Carruth
City Secretary Teresa Valdez
Finance Director Katie Griffin
Public Works Director Mike Donoho
Assistant to the City Manager Kimberly Henry
Police Chief Greg Stevens
Parks & Leisure Services Director Rick Martinez

ELECTED OFFICIALS PRESENT

Opening Agenda

1. Call to Order.

With a quorum of the Council Members present, the Regular Meeting of the Rockport City Council was called to order by Mayor Rios at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, September 8, 2020, via video conferencing application ZOOM.

2. Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Rios led the Pledge of Allegiance to the U.S. flag.

3. Presentation: Spirit of Rockport Award – Castaways.

The "Spirit of Rockport" award was developed to recognize individuals and organizations who exemplify the unique spirit of Rockport. Nominees are those who go above and beyond to make our community a better place. Nominations are reviewed by the Sesquicentennial Committee with awards presented throughout the year at City Council meetings and other events. Each recipient will receive a limited-edition, commemorative medal that was designed specifically for the Sesquicentennial (below).



Mayor Rios said tonight's award is special because they are very important for our community. Mayor Rios stated the award is going to Castaways, a volunteer thrift shop that shares its proceeds with community groups and organizations. Mayor Rios said volunteers with Castaways and representatives of First Presbyterian Church, First United Methodist Church, Peace Lutheran Church, Sacred Heart Catholic Church, and St. Peters Episcopal Church work tirelessly to generate and accept donations; stock the shop in a clean, retail setting; manage the registers; and assist with the loading and unloading of materials. Mayor Rios added people may donate to the organization, commonly referred to as the "shop," or any of the five church partners, which share a percentage of their sales that go towards Castaways operating costs. Mayor Rios informed everyone that over the past five years, Castaways has infused than \$1.3 million in the community to youth activities, history and arts, animal rescue, social services, and volunteer first responders and in 2019, Castaways awarded more than \$438,000 in grants. Mayor Rios stated in addition, a portion of Castaways sales goes to the five member churches for support of their ministries. Mayor Rios said although Castaways is currently closed to protect the health of its volunteers and community, they are accepting applications for the coming year. Mayor Rios encouraged residents to support and become involved in this incredible organization. Mayor Rios stated because of the number of honorees and the pandemic, we will present Castaways with a special Proclamation upon its reopening to the public.

City Manager Kevin Carruth stated the City has received four grants for City parks from Castaways over the last several years.

4. Presentation: Items from 1970 Centennial Time Capsule.

Assistant to the City Manager Kimberly Henry stated this is the seventh presentation of items from the 1970 Time Capsule. Ms. Henry said the items presented this meeting are fun items: maps of gold, tickets to the “Bustles to Bikinis” production, “Bustles to Bikinis” rehearsal schedule and script, and a list of candidates and winners of the Centennial Queen and Princesses. Ms. Henry stated if anyone has a story, they would like to share about any of these events the City would like to hear it. Ms. Henry added that eventually there was \$1000 buried for the maps of gold search. Ms. Henry informed the Council these items are located in her office at the Rockport Service Center if anyone is interested in viewing them.

5. Citizens to be heard.

At this time, written comments received by 4:00 p.m. on the day of the meeting, on any subject matter that is not on the agenda, will be read by the Mayor and entered in the minutes of the meeting. Persons wishing to address the Council and who have registered using the Citizen Participation Form will have up to three 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.

Mayor Rios stated there were no Citizen Participation Forms received to be heard under “Citizens to be heard” Agenda item.

Consent Agenda

All consent agenda items listed are considered to be routine by the City Council and will be enacted by one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a Council Member so requests, in which event the item will be removed from the Consent Agenda and considered in its normal sequence on the agenda.

7. Deliberate and act on approval of Regular Meeting Minutes of August 25, 2020.

8. Deliberate and act on a Resolution that commits waived fees towards the matching commitment on Texas Department of Agriculture grant 721940.

Mayor Rios called for requests to remove any item from the Consent Agenda for separate discussion.

MOTION: Council Member Hattman moved to approve the Consent Agenda, as presented. Mayor Pro-Tem Villa seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Public Hearing

8. Conduct a public hearing for City of Rockport 2020 Property Tax Rate for taxpayers to have an opportunity to express their views on the increase; the City of Rockport will adopt the budget and tax rate for Fiscal Year 2020-2021 on September 15, 2020, at 6:30 p.m. at the Rockport Service Center, 2751 State Highway 35 Bypass, Rockport, Texas.

At 6:43 p.m., Mayor Rios opened the Public Hearing.

Mayor Rios stated four Citizen Participation Forms had been received.

- 1) Kristie Rutledge, 1411 Dana Drive – Ms. Rutledge addressed the Council:

I am here to urge you to vote “no” on the proposed tax increase. In May Governor Abbott ordered all State government offices to cut their budgets by 5% and prepare for economic shock as quoted in the Texas Tribune. In Aransas County tourism has been shuttered and many still face unemployment. More than 25% of Rockport residents live in poverty; many others are widows, elderly or live on fixed incomes. The average annual household income of 25-44 year old’s is just \$43,000. I emailed tax analysis showing the effect of the City tax increases since 2012. This is a representative sample of my friends; they are widows, families with school-aged children, one retiree and small business owner. Most have homes valued under \$230,000. Mayor Rios since you were elected to Council as my Ward 3 rep in 2012 the amount of taxes levied each year on my household by the City of Rockport has nearly doubled, while my property has not gained value in that same time period. One household that was analyzed, a family with school-aged children and modest value increases are now paying 85% higher annual taxes to the City since 2012. In 2018 home values decreased while most households had increased tax levied by the City. One family’s home was uninhabitable for more than 10 months of that year; Mayor Rios that was my home – I was homeless for months after Hurricane Harvey. My family was not able to return to my home until mid-October of 2018, yet I pay higher taxes while my property values decreased; that was the first year you were our Mayor. Last week the question was asked by Bob Henderson “Can the City afford a \$14.7 million tax note?” The question that should have been asked is “Can the people of Rockport afford the tax increase?” This analysis shows households are paying between 45% and 85% higher annual amount of tax to the City since you were elected to the Council in 2012. Mayor Rios we are not ignorant of the facts as you told us last week. I am shocked, I am hurt, and I am scared that the City would propose a second tax increase in the middle of another economic crisis that the people of Rockport are facing. Mayor Rios stop capitalizing on our economic hardships.

- 2) Lindslee Merrell, 102 Palo Pinto Dr. – Mayor Rios read the following:

After going through Harvey three years ago, and now in the middle of a pandemic the working class of Rockport has experienced a lot of hardships financially. My family has experienced increased insurance rates after the hurricane, no work during that immediate recovery period and lack of childcare inhibiting myself to return to work full time until last year. Now come 2020 the COVID-19 pandemic has led to both my husband and I being laid off for almost two months this spring. Financial burdens and stress is all that has ensued since the shutdown in March this year. My husband and I are both working reduced hours than what we were prior to the onset of the pandemic. I do not believe that any of our council is taking into measure what their constituents are experiencing and dealing with day in and day out. Your responsibility is to do what is best for the City of Rockport and her people. Now is NOT time to add more burden. Just like we have had to

adjust our lifestyle and budgets the City of Rockport should as well. I am asking my ward's councilman, JD Villa, Mayor Rios and the rest of the council to hear my plea; please do not raise our taxes until this pandemic is over. Allow us to get through this pandemic and revisit any potential increase at that time.

3) Candace Sargent, 214 Portia Ave. – Mayor Rios read the following:

I ask that you please reconsider any tax increase!!! Between Harvey and Covid regular citizens are being squeezed too far! With the increase of this HUGE City Hall it's just criminal to increase taxes even further! It's swell that city council gets a regular uninterrupted paycheck and the employees a COLA! But unlike you we have had to trim our budgets considerably. Gov Abbott is decreasing budget by 5%! There is no doubt Rockport can cut as well. You can start with Whitson and company at a total cost of \$374,000 a year or the financial gentleman that said taxes would go up 3.00 a year on an average home until pressed by Mr. Cunningham. This is NOT the time with tourism being drastically cut as well as paychecks to those outside government! Not the time....but it is the time to listen to the constituents you claim to represent.

4) Andrew Kane, 2106 Lakeview Drive – Mr. Kane addressed the Council:

Mayor, I am here today to present some facts about the citizens efforts to petition the City about the previously proposed \$24 and three quarter million certificates of obligation as I am tired of hearing your spin on the issue. Mayor you question the petitions motivation at the August 18, 2020 City Council meeting. A phenomenal turnout to sign the petition between a Thursday and a Monday clearly shows the citizens want to be a part of the process before taxes are raised. Though you said this was put in front of the citizens 25 times, Council Member Cunningham corrected you at the last Council meeting by stating the first he saw of deciding cost was July. Mayor you told KIII News that the petition was a day late to get it on the November ballot; the petition was not late. The law petitioners had was to the close of business on August 18th to turn in the petition and we turned in that morning. Our petition was timely. What wasn't timely was the date you published the notice for the certificate of obligation. My own County Commissioner said it was your responsibility to know the deadline and stop blaming the system for the deadlines only you control. If you wanted it on the November ballot instead of May you should have posted the notice a week earlier. Mayor the first time I heard defund the police was when you said it here when the audience was speaking during the City Council; neither me nor the petition volunteers ever uttered those words. I do question why you would fund \$1.2 million in police and other vehicles on a 20-year note; that seems like an expense that should be covered in your general operating budget. If you have not been adequately funding the budget it seems you are the one defunding the police. Mayor I ask a question why our tax rate needs to go up at all when many other areas are going down. Your revenues are increasing the volume of property values especially on commercial properties. Other areas are reducing taxes and tightening their belts ..(could not understand what was said)...current disaster. Now is not the time for more debt and rising taxes.

At 6:52 p.m., Mayor Rios closed the Public Hearing.

Regular Agenda

9. **Deliberate and act on first reading of an Ordinance of the City of Rockport approving the assessment and renditions for the 2020 taxable property as submitted by the Appraisal District; levying a tax rate for \$100.00 valuation for the City of Rockport, Aransas County, Texas, for the Tax Year 2020 of \$0.241668 for the purposes of Maintenance and Operation, \$0.179643 for the payment of Principal and Interest on debt of the City for a total tax rate of \$0.421311; and providing an effective date.**

Mayor Rios stated eight Citizen Participation Forms had been received.

- 1) Mary Ritter, 1901 Cochran Lane – Mayor Rios read the following:

Please vote no on any tax increases. The citizens of Rockport have been hit hard enough by Harvey and then by the Covid19. Now is the time to be reducing what we spend as a city, not increasing. We need to contract city spending, especially where building and construction are concerned. There is a community of people who live in Rockport that are not wealthy and/or live on a limited income. Some of us have lost our businesses or jobs and have not been able to replace them. Please, what makes Rockport special are the people here; don't run us out of town in favor of the wealthy.

- 2) Kimberly Cate, 202 Highlands St. – Mayor Rios read the following:

Mayor and city council,

Vote no to raise taxes. This has been a difficult year for all. Mentally and financially. We are going to have to Sell our home because we can't afford the property taxes and upkeep. We have had medical expenses that we can't pay. Postpone this tax increase. Listen to the citizens who are struggling to stay afloat.

Thank you

Kim Cate

- 3) Joel Deans, 1501 Dana Dr. – Mayor Rios read the following:

The City of Rockport needs to cut their budget like other government agencies. This is not the time to raise taxes, all that will be accomplished is to force people to leave Rockport. Maybe that is what you have in mind.

- 4) Corrine Deans, 1501 Dana Dr, - Mayor Rios read the following:

Since Hurricane Harvey tore through our town 3 years ago, most of us have made huge adjustments and sacrifices. Many have re-built their homes and businesses with no government assistance. Those are the lucky ones. Then there are other Rockport folks that have had to resort to living in much less than desirable situations, and finally, and most painfully, there were those of us made completely and utterly homeless. You now tell us that you not only want to rebuild what was lost in the way of government buildings but

you want to greatly increase the size of them. Lastly you want to increase our property taxes for your project without putting this matter on the ballot for us to decide. I wonder if your attempts at circumventing our representative form of government will in the end give you any satisfaction.

- 5) Dominic Dominguez, 20 Mazatlan – Mayor Rios read the following:

Vote no tax increase.

- 6) Kathleen Jackson, 2205 Monkey Road – Mayor Rios read the following:

First, I wonder why there was no mention or item in the Consent agenda for meeting minutes for the August 31, 2020, Special meeting. Second, I know the decision is already made, but I urge the Council to seriously consider their vote on Agenda Item #9. Today's Agenda Item 9 is to "Deliberate and act ... approving the assessment and renditions for the 2020 taxable property ... 0.241668 for the purposes of Maintenance and Operation, \$0.179643 for the payment of Principal and Interest on debt of the City for a total tax rate of \$0.421311 ...". Mr. Henderson, at the August 31 meeting for which there was no mention of the minutes on today's consent agenda, said, if memory serves, that ad valorem taxes pay a very small part of the City's debt and it is mostly paid by utilities revenues. This may be true since I do remember seeing debt for utility improvements. But why would an official document say that 42.6% of ad valorem taxes pay for Principal and Interest? It is well known that he who controls the numbers controls reality. So, who is controlling the numbers here? I can only use the numbers as they are given to me. Looking through the Certified Ad Valorem Tax Rate Comparison FY 2020-2021 table on page 51 of the agenda packet, the I&S Debt Service Fund line item never changes so it can be assumed a good general number for Principal and Interest payments would be approximately 40% of what is collected. In another way, for every \$5 collected in ad valorem taxes, \$2 services the debt and \$3 goes to the operation of the City. That should make everyone think.

- 7) Keith Allen, 129 South Verne Street – Mayor Rios read the following:

Hello Council: 1. At Bob Cunningham, Great job trying to be the voice of reason against the tax notes for city hall. 2. I have heard it mentioned that citizens have not participated in city council meetings in the past. That is unfortunate, but thanks to a devoted group of citizens (Independents, Democrats and Republicans alike) that seems to no longer be the case. We can look back on how city council presented the need for citizen participation and learn from it and make needed adjustments to improve it but it is certainly not going to change if the approach does not change. I see the approach has changed thanks to citizens helping citizens and the citizens are responding. I am sad to have witnessed the citizens participation increased but the majority of this council felt that was not good enough to further involve them. 3. The new buzz around town is "defund the police" and that is probably because it was spoke out loud in this city council chamber by a city councilmen more than once. What should be more of a concern is the defunding of citizens based on higher taxes year after year from this same city council. We as a city

have only grown because of annexation and the citizens didn't want that either. You as a council have burdened the community with outreaching to grab land in an effort to further gain city revenue. Now you want to burden everyone yet again at the worst economic time in our history of those alive to bare it. Budget cuts should happen and raising taxes should NOT.

- 8) Kristie Rutledge, 1411 Dana Drive – Mayor Rios stated Ms. Rutledge submitted an email with tables she had created of tax analysis and he has not had time to read through them. Mayor Rios read the following:

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|--|--|--|----------------------|---|-------|-------------|--|---|--|--|---|--|--|---|---|-----------|---------------------------------|-----|
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| <table border="1"> <tr><td colspan="2">Rate of Increase in Tax Levied by the City of Rockport</td><td>-3%</td></tr> <tr><td colspan="2">Tax Increase - Annual Amount Due from Household</td><td>-\$19.67</td></tr> <tr><td colspan="2">Property Value Increase</td><td>-17%</td></tr> </table> | Rate of Increase in Tax Levied by the City of Rockport | | -3% | Tax Increase - Annual Amount Due from Household | | -\$19.67 | Property Value Increase | | -17% | <table border="1"> <tr><td colspan="2">Tax Analysis for Household – 2010 (year immediately following Hurricane Harvey)</td></tr> <tr><td>Rate of Increase in Tax Levied by the City of Rockport</td><td>15%</td></tr> <tr><td>Tax Increase - Annual Amount Due from Household</td><td>\$ 110.52</td></tr> <tr><td>Rate of Property Value Increase</td><td>-2%</td></tr> </table> | Tax Analysis for Household – 2010 (year immediately following Hurricane Harvey) | | Rate of Increase in Tax Levied by the City of Rockport | 15% | Tax Increase - Annual Amount Due from Household | \$ 110.52 | Rate of Property Value Increase | -2% |
| Rate of Increase in Tax Levied by the City of Rockport | | -3% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Tax Increase - Annual Amount Due from Household | | -\$19.67 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Property Value Increase | | -17% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Tax Analysis for Household – 2010 (year immediately following Hurricane Harvey) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Rate of Increase in Tax Levied by the City of Rockport | 15% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Tax Increase - Annual Amount Due from Household | \$ 110.52 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Rate of Property Value Increase | -2% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <p>***Property undervalued/ fairly unable to live on premises 8/25/2017 1/8/2019**</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <table border="1"> <tr><td>Household Description</td><td>two-ages couple family, dependent children</td></tr> <tr><td>Property Description</td><td>single family home, Rockport, Texas - Ward 1</td></tr> <tr><td>Value</td><td>\$137,000's</td></tr> <tr><td>Rate of Property Value Increase Since 2017</td><td>1%</td></tr> </table> | Household Description | two-ages couple family, dependent children | Property Description | single family home, Rockport, Texas - Ward 1 | Value | \$137,000's | Rate of Property Value Increase Since 2017 | 1% | <table border="1"> <tr><td colspan="2">Tax Analysis for Household – 2017-2020, Pol Ross, Ward 1 and Meyer</td></tr> <tr><td>Rate of Increase in Tax Levied by the City of Rockport</td><td>85%</td></tr> <tr><td>Tax Increase - Annual Amount Due from Household</td><td>\$426.83</td></tr> </table> | Tax Analysis for Household – 2017-2020, Pol Ross, Ward 1 and Meyer | | Rate of Increase in Tax Levied by the City of Rockport | 85% | Tax Increase - Annual Amount Due from Household | \$426.83 | | | |
| Household Description | two-ages couple family, dependent children | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Property Description | single family home, Rockport, Texas - Ward 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Value | \$137,000's | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Rate of Property Value Increase Since 2017 | 1% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Tax Analysis for Household – 2017-2020, Pol Ross, Ward 1 and Meyer | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Rate of Increase in Tax Levied by the City of Rockport | 85% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Tax Increase - Annual Amount Due from Household | \$426.83 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <table border="1"> <tr><td colspan="2">Rate of Increase in Tax Levied by the City of Rockport</td><td>16%</td></tr> <tr><td colspan="2">Tax Increase - Annual Amount Due from Household</td><td>\$126.43</td></tr> </table> | Rate of Increase in Tax Levied by the City of Rockport | | 16% | Tax Increase - Annual Amount Due from Household | | \$126.43 | <table border="1"> <tr><td colspan="2">Tax Analysis for Household – 2010-2020, Mayor Pat Ross</td></tr> <tr><td>Rate of Increase in Tax Levied by the City of Rockport</td><td>12%</td></tr> <tr><td>Tax Increase - Annual Amount Due from Household</td><td>\$94.47</td></tr> </table> | Tax Analysis for Household – 2010-2020, Mayor Pat Ross | | Rate of Increase in Tax Levied by the City of Rockport | 12% | Tax Increase - Annual Amount Due from Household | \$94.47 | | | | | |
| Rate of Increase in Tax Levied by the City of Rockport | | 16% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Tax Increase - Annual Amount Due from Household | | \$126.43 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Tax Analysis for Household – 2010-2020, Mayor Pat Ross | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Rate of Increase in Tax Levied by the City of Rockport | 12% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Tax Increase - Annual Amount Due from Household | \$94.47 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| Rate of Increase in Tax Levied by the City of Rockport | | 12% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Tax Increase - Annual Amount Due from Household | | \$94.47 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Property Value Increase | | -4% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Tax Analysis for Household – 2010 (year immediately following Hurricane Harvey) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Rate of Increase in Tax Levied by the City of Rockport | 12% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Tax Increase - Annual Amount Due from Household | \$94.47 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Rate of Property Value Increase | -4% | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Mayor Rios stated the Council worked on this budget starting in February with Planning Workshop and in August with a Budget Workshop and received input from all City departments. Mayor Rios called the Council's attention to the Certified Ad Valorem Tax Rate Comparison Table (below) included in the Agenda packet. Mayor Rios said Council agreed upon the last column, 4% increase above the No New Revenue Rate which sows the Maintenance & Operations (M&O) Tax Rate of \$0.242668 and the Interest & Sinking (I&S) Tax Rate of

\$0.179643 for a total tax rate of \$0.421311.

Certified Ad Valorem Tax Rate Comparison FY 2020-2021

| | Certified 2020 No-New Revenue Tax Rate | 2020 Voter-Approval Tax Rate | De Minimis Tax Rate \$500,000 Above NNR | Alternate Tax Rate 2 3.5% Increase Above NNR | Alternate Tax Rate 3 4% Increase Above NNR |
|---|--|---|--|---|---|
| Percentage M & O Increase | 0.00% | 8.35% | 8.99% | 3.50% | 4.00% |
| M & O Tax Rate | \$ 0.225484 | \$ 0.259308 | \$ 0.261889 | \$ 0.239643 | \$ 0.241668 |
| I & S Tax Rate | \$ 0.179643 | \$ 0.179643 | \$ 0.179643 | \$ 0.179643 | \$ 0.179643 |
| Total Tax Rate | \$ 0.405107 | \$ 0.438951 | \$ 0.441532 | \$ 0.419286 | \$ 0.421311 |
| Total Taxable Value | \$ 1,400,701,107 | \$ 1,400,701,107 | \$ 1,400,701,107 | \$ 1,400,701,107 | \$ 1,400,701,107 |
| Total Tax Levy | | | | | |
| Total Tax Levy | \$ 5,674,338 | \$ 6,148,392 | \$ 6,184,542 | \$ 5,872,940 | \$ 5,901,312 |
| Over 65 Frozen Taxes | \$ 968,223 | \$ 968,223 | \$ 968,223 | \$ 968,223 | \$ 968,223 |
| Disabled Frozen Taxes | \$ 14,019 | \$ 14,019 | \$ 14,019 | \$ 14,019 | \$ 14,019 |
| Total Tax Levy | \$ 6,656,580 | \$ 7,130,634 | \$ 7,166,784 | \$ 6,855,182 | \$ 6,883,554 |
| Total Tax Revenue | | | | | |
| Total Levy | \$ 6,656,580 | \$ 7,130,634 | \$ 7,166,784 | \$ 6,855,182 | \$ 6,883,554 |
| Collection Ratio | 98% | 98% | 98% | 98% | 98% |
| Total Tax Revenue | \$ 6,523,449 | \$ 6,988,021 | \$ 7,023,449 | \$ 6,718,078 | \$ 6,745,883 |
| Revenue Allocation by Fund | | | | | |
| M & O General Fund | \$ 3,746,670 | \$ 4,211,242 | \$ 4,246,670 | \$ 3,941,299 | \$ 3,969,104 |
| I&S Debt Service Fund | \$ 2,776,779 | \$ 2,776,779 | \$ 2,776,779 | \$ 2,776,779 | \$ 2,776,779 |
| Total Tax Revenue | \$ 6,523,449 | \$ 6,988,021 | \$ 7,023,449 | \$ 6,718,078 | \$ 6,745,883 |
| Revenue Difference | | | | | |
| Additional Revenue | \$96,882 | \$464,572 | \$500,000 | \$194,630 | \$222,434 |
| % Increase in Revenue | 1.5% | 6.6% | 7.5% | 2.9% | 3.3% |
| Residential Taxpayer Impact Analysis | | | | | |
| Residential Value | NNR Tax Paid | Difference in Tax Paid from No-New-Revenue Tax Rate | | | |
| | | VAR | De Minimus Rate | Alt Tax Rate 2 | NNR Rate |
| Average Market - \$240,077 | \$972.57 | \$81.25 | \$87.45 | \$34.04 | \$38.90 |
| Average Taxable - \$231,205 | \$936.63 | \$78.25 | \$84.22 | \$32.78 | \$37.47 |
| Median Taxable - \$170,860 | \$692.17 | \$57.83 | \$62.24 | \$24.23 | \$27.69 |
| Residential Value | NNR Tax Paid Difference from Last Yr | Difference in Tax Paid from Last Year's Tax Rate | | | |
| | | VAR | De Minimus Rate | Alt Tax Rate 2 | Tax Paid Last Yr |
| Average Market - \$240,077 | -\$35.95 | \$45.30 | \$51.50 | -\$1.91 | \$2.95 |
| Average Taxable - \$231,205 | -\$34.62 | \$43.63 | \$49.59 | -\$1.84 | \$2.84 |
| Median Taxable - \$170,860 | -\$25.59 | \$32.24 | \$36.65 | -\$1.36 | \$2.10 |

City of Rockport

Council Member Hattman asked what the big difference would be if the City adopted the 3.5% increase compared to the 4% increase. Council Member Hattman asked for clarification.

City Manager Kevin Carruth answered the Council would have to come up with \$28,000 in cuts.

Mayor Rios stated that is how much that produces in a year, \$28,000.

Council Member Hattman asked if that is a possibility and still make the City work as a whole.

Mayor Rios said the Council would have to decide what to cut in the budget that would equal

\$28,000. Mayor Rios stated in the budget workshop the departments had submitted their budget requests and he does not believe any department received 100% budgeting for what they requested. Mayor Rios expressed the Council was trying to stay within a nominal increase this year because of everything that is going on; the City is hurting also with a huge loss of revenue. Mayor Rios said we have not filled up depleted staff, have had a hiring freeze and just recently looked at filling a couple of positions because of need because we cannot get the job done. Mayor Rios stated “yes” it is possible but we are talking about \$28,000 out of a \$40+ million budget

MOTION: Council Member Saski moved to approve the first reading of an Ordinance of the City of Rockport approving the assessment and renditions for the 2020 taxable property as submitted by the Appraisal District; levying a tax rate for \$100.00 valuation for the City of Rockport, Aransas County, Texas, for the Tax Year 2020 of \$0.241668 for the purposes of Maintenance and Operation, \$0.179643 for the payment of Principal and Interest on debt of the City for a total tax rate of \$0.421311; and providing an effective date. Mayor Pro-Tem Villa seconded the motion.

Council Member Cunningham said he wanted to point out that even with the budget at the rate we are using, we also are borrowing over one million dollars from the Disaster Loan Fund in order to continue our operating budget and we are more or less standing still on being able to put reserves away for the potential of another catastrophe which has also been a principal issue for me; not just for the aspect of that which preserves our bond rating but because that was the difference in my mind between Rockport being able to fund current needs when we had a disaster and being able to recover to the extent that we have in comparison to some of our neighboring communities who are still on the mat. Council Member Cunningham expressed in our situation reserves are nice to have, but it is really an important thing to have because FEMA does not write checks to you when they walk through the door; you have to put forward the money and continue to fund your operations and work through everything that you have to work through to get that funding on the back end. Council Member Cunningham stated I feel and hear the comments from the public that are also hurting but we also have a duty to ensure the City will function effectively. Council Member Cunningham said he hoped that the people who are concerned now will stay concerned and meet with us earlier in the process next year so that we can look more seriously at some of the issues they are raising; I’m particularly struck by not just looking at our year over year increases but also what that looks like to representative tax payers in terms of the actual dollars that they are having to pay out over a decade. Council Member Cunningham expressed he will have to go with the budget we created and look forward to public participation next year.

Mayor Rios said he had one other piece of information he wanted to share with everyone. Mayor Rios said staff looked at how we stack up against our neighbors. Mayor Rios read the following:

| Municipality | 20-21 Proposed Tax Rate |
|---------------------|--------------------------------|
| Fulton | 0.224791 |
| Port Aransas | 0.269402 |
| Rockport | 0.421311 |
| Victoria | 0.6115 |

| | |
|----------------|----------|
| Corpus Christi | 0.646264 |
| Portland | 0.650959 |
| Ingleside | 0.664422 |
| Sinton | 0.737849 |
| Aransas Pass | 0.799194 |

Mayor Rios declared in the Coastal Bend area Rockport has the third lowest tax rate.

Mr. Carruth reminded Council during the workshops we were very aware of the issues the community was facing, still recovering from Hurricane Harvey and the issues that have come along with COVID-19 that residents were dealing with and that is why we are treading water with this budget. Mr. Carruth stated we are not putting away money into our reserves like Council Member Cunningham said; we are just staying put this year. Mr. Carruth said one reason why we were able to do what we did when Hurricane Harvey hit is because we had been making up for the unintentional damage that was done seven or eight years before 2010-2011 when previous councils just adopted a tax rate that did not consider inflation and other costs beyond our control. Mr. Carruth explained we went above that and built up our reserves so when Hurricane Harvey hit, we were able to do what needed to be done and the community benefited from that and we were able to recover quicker than anyone around us. Mr. Carruth said this year because we have the Community Disaster Loan available to us, we were able to not have increases in our utility rates and able to minimize our tax rate increase to where it is almost negligible. Mr. Carruth added he knows a tax rate of any kind can be difficult for some people but is really for a residential person one-half of them will be \$2.10 or less. Mr. Carruth said this year we are treading water in recognition of what the community is going through right now.

Council Member Cunningham said he wanted to make one observation about long-term debt. Council Member Cunningham stated we all recognize that you do not want to be in too much debt but on the other hand debt seems to be perfectly appropriate for the kinds of projects that a generation of people are going to use; you should spread that cost over the people that are going to use it and not put all that burden on current tax payers for the free benefit of future taxpayers. Council Member Cunningham said to the extent that our debt is largely in infrastructure kinds of projects, it seems to be perfectly appropriate

Mayor Rios called for a roll call vote:

FOR MOTION: Council Member Saski, Mayor Pro-Tem Villa, Council Member Cunningham, Council Member Hattman and Mayor Rios.

AGAINST MOTION: None.

Motion carried.

- 10. Deliberate and act on first reading of an Ordinance amending the City of Rockport Code of Ordinances, Chapter 82 "Solid Waste" Article II. "Refuse Collection", Section 82.39 "Fee Schedule"; repealing all prior ordinances in conflict herewith; and providing for publication and an effective date.**

Finance Director Katie Griffin stated Kristian Santos with Republic Services was present to address the Council regarding the proposed solid waste rate increase.

Kristian Santos with Republic Services addressed the Council. Mr. Santos informed the Council the 2020 Consumer Price Index (CPI) increase is 2.91% and will add \$.63 so the new rate would be \$22.11. Mr. Santos stated there had been no CPI increase in 2019.

Ms. Griffin said the correct amount is \$23.44 because there is an administrative fee on top of the rate that Republic charges.

Mayor Rios read the following changes:

The monthly fees charged for refuse collection shall be as follows:

- (1) Residential 96-gallon cart rate: ~~\$22.70~~ \$23.44
- (2) Additional 96-gallon residential cart rate: ~~\$19.36~~ \$19.97
- (3) Residential 65-gallon cart rate: ~~\$22.16~~ \$22.86
- (4) Commercial 96-gallon cart rate: ~~\$34.52~~ \$35.53

Mayor Rios thanked Republic Services for not having a rate increase last year.

Mayor Pro-Tem Villa asked if the City went to twice a week solid waste collection how would that affect the rate.

Mr. Santos said he could not provide an answer to that right now because it would have to be studied; more trucks, etc. Mr. Santos stated he receives that question a lot and there has been an increase in solid waste collection because of COVID-19.

City Manager Kevin Carruth stated he believes the City's contract with Republic Services ends in 2022 and it may be a little too-early to renegotiate a twice a week pickup. Mr. Carruth said maybe in nine months or so the renegotiation process can begin.

MOTION: Mayor Pro-Tem Villa moved to approve the first reading of an Ordinance amending the City of Rockport Code of Ordinances, Chapter 82 "Solid Waste" Article II. "Refuse Collection", Section 82.39 "Fee Schedule"; repealing all prior ordinances in conflict herewith; and providing for publication and an effective date. Council Member Hattman seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

11. **Deliberate and act on second and final reading of an Ordinance extending a Moratorium for 120 days on the submission, acceptance, processing, and approval necessary for the creation of development plats, construction or facilities related to recreational vehicle (RV) parks or manufactured housing parks for land within the City of Rockport, providing a savings clause; providing a severability clause; finding and determining that the meetings at which the Ordinance was passed were open to the public as required by law; and providing an effective date.**

Mayor Rios said there have been no changes in format of Ordinance since Council approved the first reading on August 25, 2020. Mayor Rios stated this is hopefully the last extension of the Moratorium.

MOTION: Council Member Saski moved to approve the second and final reading of an Ordinance extending a Moratorium for 120 days on the submission, acceptance, processing, and approval necessary for the creation of development plats, construction or facilities related to recreational vehicle (RV) parks or manufactured housing parks for land within the City of Rockport, providing a savings clause; providing a severability clause; finding and determining that the meetings at which the Ordinance was passed were open to the public as required by law; and providing an effective date. Mayor Pro-Tem Villa seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

12. Hear and deliberate on status of COVID-19 and response efforts.

Mayor Rios said lately the numbers of COVID-19 have been interesting as they come from the State; they are back logged. Mayor Rios stated there have been over 300 confirmed cases in the area and we will see what the Labor Day weekend and school starting does to the numbers.

13. Reports from Council.

At this time, the City Council will report/update on all committee assignments, which may include the following: Aransas County Alliance Local Government Corporation; Aransas Pathways Steering Committee; Building and Standards Commission; Coastal Bend Bays and Estuaries Program; Coastal Bend Council of Government; Park & Leisure Services Advisory Board; Planning & Zoning Commission; Rockport-Fulton Chamber of Commerce; Aransas County Storm Water Management Advisory Committee; Rockport Cultural Arts District, Swimming Pool Operations Advisory Committee; Tourism Development Council; Tree & Landscape Committee; YMCA Development Committee; Texas Maritime Museum, Fulton Mansion, Rockport Center for the Arts, Aransas County, Aransas County Independent School District, Aransas County Navigation District, Town of Fulton, and Texas Municipal League. No formal action can be taken on these items at this time.

Council Member Saski commented he is proud of everyone being safe and wearing their masks. Council Member Saski said we will all get through this together.

Mayor Pro-Tem Villa said he was glad to see people getting involved with Council meetings. Mayor Pro-Tem Villa commented people should be able to disagree and not have backlash; treat others with respect.

Council Member Cunningham stated he had attended the General Land Office workshop on shoreline resiliency. Council Member Cunningham said Pathways is moving forward with southern trail. Council Member Cunningham commented the Storm Water Management Committee met today and there are two projects on the horizon that will affect Rockport. Council Member Cunningham expressed he wanted to clarify that the money the City is borrowing from

the Community Disaster Loan for operating expenses, the City is hopeful it will not have to be repaid; previous recipients have not had to repay.

Council Member Hattman said she attended the Chamber Luncheon where Mayor Rios gave a presentation. Council Member Hattman expressed she enjoys working with the Council Members who all have great minds and she thinks we are doing a great job.

Mayor Rios commented he was amazed at the number of boats in the parade this weekend.

Council Member Cunningham stated the Aransas County Alliance Local Government Corporation will meet tomorrow at 12:30 P.M.; the Agenda is on the City's website.

Executive Session

City Council will hold an executive session pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 551 of the Texas Government Code, in accordance with the authority contained in:

- 14. Section 551.072 Deliberation Regarding Real Property - To deliberate the purchase, exchange, lease, or value of real property: Right of way and easement acquisitions necessary for the Key Allegro Bridge project.**

At 7:36 p.m., Mayor Rios convened the Rockport City Council into an executive session pursuant to provisions of Chapter 551 of the Texas Government Code, in accordance with the authority contained in Section 551.072 Deliberation Regarding Real Property - To deliberate the purchase, exchange, lease, or value of real property: Right of way and easement acquisitions necessary for the Key Allegro Bridge project.

Open Session

City Council will reconvene into open session pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 551 of the Texas Government Code to take any actions necessary related to the executive sessions noted herein, or regular agenda items, noted above, and/or related items.

At 8:19 p.m., Mayor Rios reconvened the Rockport City Council into open session pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 551 of the Texas Government Code to take any necessary actions related to the executive sessions noted herein, or regular agenda items, noted above, and/or related items.

Mayor Rios stated he had good news regarding the final easements needed for the relocation of utilities on the Key Allegro bridge. Mayor Rios said Casey Ventures and Reising Industries have agreed to terms for the easements, and they are very willing to work with the City. Mayor Rios explained at one point, at a previous Council meeting (August 25, 2020), there had been language on an Agenda cover sheet that Darren Casey and Mark Uhr disagreed with - the City had stated they had made demands; that really was not the case. Mayor Rios said there was some discussion and confusion on the money they had been requesting for the easements, but Casey Ventures and Reising Industries have agreed to the easements and we can get started on the Key Allegro bridge.

MOTION: Mayor Rios moved to authorize the City Manager or Mayor to negotiate and execute

all necessary documents with Reising Industries and Casey Ventures for the acquisition of easements for the Key Allegro Bridge Project. Motion seconded by Council Member Saski. Motion carried unanimously.

15. Adjournment.

At 8:21 p.m., Mayor Pro-Tem Villa moved to adjourn. Motion was seconded by Council Member Cunningham. Motion carried unanimously.



ATTEST:

Teresa Valdez
Teresa Valdez, City Secretary

APPROVED:

Patrick R. Rios
Patrick R. Rios, Mayor