

Notice of Regular Meeting Minutes
CITY OF BEVIL OAKS, TEXAS

September 18, 2025

1. **Call to Order @ 6:30**
2. **Pledge of Allegiance/Invocation- Given by Councilman Bud Merendino**
 - a. The United States Flag
 - b. The Texas state flag: "*Honor the Texas flag; I pledge allegiance to thee, Texas, one state under God, one and indivisible.*"
3. **Roll Call- All Present**
4. **Conflict of Interest Statement- None**
5. **Citizen Comments (3 minutes each)** – An opportunity for the citizens to address Council on agenda items or concerns not on the agenda – those wishing to speak must complete the comment card, present the comment card to the City Secretary prior to the beginning of the meeting, and observe a 3-minute time limit
 - **Abigail Morrales-** Introduces herself. States that she is helping Councilman Clayton with research and do outreach.
6. **Presentation**
 - a. **Presentation** given by Fire Chief Chris Gonzales regarding Sales and Use Tax Allocation
 - **Councilman Merendino-** States that there was an incident with a resident that he needed an ambulance for. If it weren't for the fire department, the resident wouldn't have gotten the help that he needed quick enough.
 - **Chief Gonzales-** States that the fire department used to be volunteer. Right after Harvey, the volunteers went down so there wasn't anyone working at the fire department. States that the fire department had to start hiring firefighters. States that time is important and if there isn't anyone at the fire station, the response may not be as quick as it needs to be. States that the district covers 32 square miles. States that the ESD was voted in around the 90's. States that property tax is collected within that boundary to run the fire department. States that there are 5 ESD's in Jefferson County. States that they need to hire fire fighters instead of having volunteers in a competitive field with the larger districts. States that in November, the fire department will be going out to collect more tax from the other areas that they serve. States that Bevil Oaks is already paying the 8.25% sales tax, so it won't raise the sales tax rate. States that it is critical that this passes so that they can afford to always have a firefighter at the station. States that with the current situation, if an emergency happens and there is no one at the station and he is the only person in the area, he will have to drive all the way to the station, get the truck then go to the emergency. States that if there is a true emergency, then doing all of that takes up valuable time. States that educating the public about the importance of the need for this to be approved. States that the ballot will say "sales and use tax. This will raise taxes." States that it is state mandated that it goes on the ballot as that verbiage. States that the fire department will be paying around \$40,000 to put this on the ballot.
 - **Councilman Wright-** Asks what the voting demographic is for this? Is it just for the houses in ESD 1?

- **Chief Gonzales-** Yes. States that North-West Forest, Moore Road and old Sour Lake.
- **Councilman Wright-** States that the 1.5% that the Dollar General is paying now, is that currently going to the fire department?
- **Chief Gonzales-** No. It goes to Bevil Oaks. States that the fire department will not receive any money from Bevil Oaks.
- **Councilman Merendino-** Clarifies: 6% of taxes go to the state, .5% goes to the county, and 1.75% goes to Bevil Oaks.
- **Chief Gonzales-** States that outside of Bevil Oaks, that 1.75% goes to the state right now unless the tax rate passed then it will go to the fire station. States that the point in this tax rate is to reallocate that 1.75% to the fire department.
- **Councilman Thibodeaux-** Ask how much money that would give the fire department?
- **Chief Gonzales-** Possibly \$15,000- \$20,000/year. States that those aren't hard numbers.
- **Councilwoman Cramer-** Asks what it is called on the ballot?
- **Chief Gonzales-** Sales and Use tax
- **Councilwoman Cramer-** Asks if the fire department is going to be putting out signage?
- **Chief Gonzales-** States that they are going to put out flyers. States that Sabrenna said that she would also put it on the website.
- **Councilman Wright-** States that he would suggest getting the word out as soon as possible.
- **Sabrenna Crain-** States that the verbiage on the ballot would read as follows " Jefferson County ESD # 1 proposition A the adoption of a local sales and use tax in Jefferson County Emergency Services District No. 1 at a rate not to exceed one and one-half percent (1.5%) in any location in the district. This is a tax increase."
- **Councilman Wright-** States that if he read that without knowing any of the information that Chief Gonzales has given, then he would vote no. States that information is going to need to be put out so that people are aware of what this is for.
- **Councilman Mannette-** asks if it would be helpful if there was a town hall meeting to discuss this?
- **Chief Gonzales-** States that he plans to have 2 meetings at different times. States that it is possible for this not to pass. States that ESD 4 put it on their ballot and it didn't pass because there wasn't enough information given out.
- **Councilman Merendino-** States that the City has access to a call out system so we can get the message out.
- **Chief Gonzales-** States that all fire departments are graded. The grade ranges from 1-10. 1 being the best and 10 being the worst. States that the current grade for Bevil Oaks fire station is a 5. States that your home owner insurance is based on the grade of the fire station as well. States that if the tax rate doesn't pass, it will start affecting the response time for the fire department, therefore, lowering the grade of the fire department. If the fire department's grade goes down, it will increase the homeowners insurance because part of the discount that is received.

7. Executive Session @ 7:00

- a. The Council may convene into executive session to discuss the various matters relating to potential or threatened litigation.

8. Resume Regular Meeting @ 8:09

9. Review/Approve Consent Items- M/M/2/C- Councilman Merendino/Councilwoman Cramer- Approved-Unanimous

- a. **Financial Reports for City of Bevil Oaks**
- b. **Financial Reports for Public Works**
- c. **Utility Innovations Report**
- d. **General Operating 2025-2026 Budget**
- e. **Public Works 2025-2026 Budget**

10. Review/Approve Action Items

- a. **Consideration/Discussion/Approval** of setting a budget to purchase a recreational vehicle for City and Public Works Department Use- *presented by Councilman Lonnie Clayton M/M/2/C- Councilman Merendino/Councilman Clayton- Approved a budget of \$20,000 and when a vehicle/atv is found, it will be brought back to Council for a vote- Unanimous*
 - **Councilman Merendino-** States that the City used to have a truck that was utilized. States that a truck will keep everyone out of the elements rather than a golf cart. Suggests purchasing a pick-up truck. States that leasing a truck would be the best option for the City. States that a truck can be used to go get supplies. States that getting insurance on a side by side or a vehicle might be hard for the City to obtain.
 - **Councilman Mannette-** States that when he got insurance on his personal side by side, his insurance company asked if he took the courses to operate it. States that it doesn't cost that much to take the courses for a side by side.
 - **Councilman Merendino-** States that there is only 2% of the water department area that can't be accessed by a vehicle. States that those areas have been able to be accessed by walking up to this point. States that those areas don't have to be accessed on a regular basis.
 - **Sabrenna Crain-** States that per her experience, getting in and out of a vehicle to do a lot of the meter work, is difficult.
 - **Councilman Wright-** States that we are looking at expanding the public maintenance department and doing meter inspections. States that the trailer park and Carroll have already been completed. States that eventually the maintenance department will be doing meter rereads and in the long run will be replacing meters. States that he likes the idea of having a vehicle. States that Sabrenna has personal experience with those things. States that right now, they are using their personal vehicles and getting reimbursed for mileage, but that isn't the best way to do it.
 - **Sabrenna Crain-** States that the money doesn't have to come out of the operating budget. The City has ARPA funds and insurance money that can be used to purchase the vehicle.
 - **Councilman Merendino-** States that if the vehicle is leased, then the City doesn't have the cost of maintenance.

- **Councilwoman Cramer-** States that she thinks purchasing both a vehicle and an atv would be possible.
- b. **Consideration/Discussion/Approval** of 2025 tax rate after consideration of comments, if any. Received at previous hearing on proposed tax rate. **M/M/2/C- Councilman Wright/Councilman Merendino-** Approved the current rate of **0.130890/\$100- Unanimous**
- c. **Consideration/Discussion/Approval** of resolution regarding a Policy on Use of City Resources. **Mayor Mitchell M/M/2/C- Councilman Clayton/Councilman Mannette-** Approved- **Unanimous**
 - **Mayor Mitchell-** States that the Council can't utilize resources for personal gain.
 - **Councilman Merendino-** States that this item was brought up by the trash cans that were used for the car show.
 - **Councilman Thibodeaux-** States that he didn't call to reserve the cans for the car show as a Council member.
 - **Mayor Mitchell-** States that she received a call from Laura (City's Republic rep).
 - **Councilman Thibodeaux-** States that he never represented himself as a City Council member. States that the reason that the Mayor was called is because there was a note on the file that stated that nothing was to come to Bevil Oaks without the Mayor's permission for any event. States that it was a mix up with the City rep and the sales team. States that he agrees with the resolution.
 - **Mayor Mitchell-** States that she is trying to protect the City.
 - **Councilman Clayton-** States that the Mayor felt that it was necessary to pass this resolution to protect the City.
 - **Councilman Thibodeaux-** States that he is willing to present any documentation that is necessary to prove that he followed the rules when it came to the event.

11. Reports

- a. **Mayor Mitchell-** No Report
- **Councilman Thibodeaux- First on reports.** States that there is a city-wide garage sale coming up in October.
- **Councilman Clayton- Second to report.** States that he was tasked to make a checklist on a schedule of work/maintenance for the Civic Center, City Hall and the Water Department. States that he spoke with Paul Blackburn from Entergy about cleaning the trees in their rights-of-way.
- b. **Councilwoman Cramer- Third to report.** States that her and Councilman Clayton are working on sending out a survey to their ward as a whole.
- c. **Councilman Wright- Fourth to report.** States that the meter warranty is out on all of the meters. States that we were able to get the new meters with endpoints at a discounted price of \$200 per meter set up. States that we will be ordering meters soon to replace the ones that aren't working. States that there will be some work going on at the end of Carroll to repair some sewer main.

States that we are working on I & I issues, which is where water is coming into the sewer lines.

- d. **Councilman Mannette-** No Report
- e. **Councilman Merendino-** Residents at the trailer park are being told that the rates that the City is increasing on the yearly fee, requires them to raise the rates for the residents. States that they may not have increased the rates in years, so the owners may be taking this as an opportunity to raise rates.
 - **Councilman Clayton-** States that it is an owner vs. tenant issue, not a City issue.
 - **Councilman Merendino-** States that there was a concern raised by one of the residents.
 - **Councilman Merendino-** States that the County will start road work at the end of the Blvd on Tuesday. After that is completed, they will move on to Chimney Rock and Thousand Oaks. States that Sabrenna will do a call out to the effected people so that they know what's going on. States that there will only be an hour where no one can drive on it.
 - **Councilman Merendino-** States that DD6 has done a tremendous amount of work in Bevil Oaks.
 - **Councilman Merendino-** States that the County's machine that is used for the ditches is broke down right now.
 - **Councilman Mannette-** Which ditches are DD6 and which ones are County?
 - **Councilman Merendino-** States that the DD6 ditches are on a map at the office. States that the DD6 ditches are the big ditches. States that County ditches are the ditches that run in front of peoples houses. States that if the County were to clean all the ditches in Bevil Oaks, it would take them around 22 year being that we only get 3 days a month dedicated to Bevil Oaks. States that the work orders that get turned in now are prioritized by water getting in peoples houses and water going over the road. Once those are taken care of then the rest of the ditches can be done. States that he likes working with the County and DD6.
 - **Councilman Merendino-** States that mowing is slowing down, so the mowing contractors will be trimming limbs at the parks. States that there are some dead trees that are close to the roads. States that the dead trees that are in peoples yards are the homeowners responsibility to cut down.

12. Adjourn Meeting @ 8:50 – Councilman Merendino/Councilman Clayton

Approved on this 15th day of January, 2026.



Mayor Cheri Mitchell

Attest:



City Secretary, Jeff Thibodeaux