

**State of Texas
County of Bexar
City of San Antonio**



Public Comment

No in-person access to this meeting

Wednesday, September 8, 2021

5:00 PM

Videoconference

ROLL CALL

The City Council convened in a Regular Meeting. City Clerk Tina J. Flores took the Roll Call noting a quorum with the following Councilmembers present:

PRESENT: 11 - Mayor Nirenberg, Bravo, McKee Rodriguez, Viagran, Rocha Garcia, Castillo, Cabello Havrda, Sandoval, Pelaez, Courage, and Perry

Public Hearing

1. Public Hearings on the City's 2021 Ad Valorem Tax Rate for the FY 2022 Proposed Budget and the FY 2022 Proposed Budget. [Erik Walsh, City Manager; Scott Huizenga, Director, Management & Budget]

Management & Budget Director Scott Huizenga stated that the FY 2022 Proposed Budget would:

- Reflect faster fiscal recovery from COVID-19, but uncertainty remained
- Restore cuts planned for FY 2022 and would increase compensation for employees with no increase to the City property tax rate
- Focus on critical services emerging from the pandemic
- Respond differently to certain calls for service informed by the community-wide discussion about policing
- Make investments to become a more resilient city

Mr. Huizenga reported that 12,000 Budget surveys were completed and two Telephone Town Hall Meetings with 465 residents were held. He stated that the community strategic investment priorities included:

- Streets and sidewalks
- Public Health
- Senior services
- Parks & Recreation
- Housing affordability

Mr. Huizenga stated that the FY 2022 Proposed Budget was \$3.1 billion of which \$1.36 billion was allocated to the General Fund; \$1.12 billion was allocated to restricted funds; and \$592 million was allocated to the Capital Program. He reviewed the revenue and expenses of the FY 2022 General Fund and the property tax taxable valuation % change from the prior year. He indicated that the City received 22.6% of the property tax bill. He noted that \$72.4 million in City tax relief was provided with 106,338 seniors and disabled individuals receiving homestead exemptions and frozen city tax payments. He added that 28,412 senior and disabled homeowners paid \$0 city property taxes.

Mr. Huizenga reviewed the next steps in the Budget process:

- City Council Budget Work Sessions (August 17 – September 15)
- Community input (August 16 – August 30)
- Two public hearings (September 8 and September 14)
- Budget adoption (September 16, 2021)

Mayor Nirenberg stated that the first of two FY 2022 Budget and 2021 tax rate public hearings were hereby opened.

Dawn Trisch stated that she did not want the police involved in any mental health crisis call effective immediately. She noted that it was important to have crisis workers incorporated into the system.

Antonio Diaz expressed concern regarding housing and the eviction process. He stated that local government needed to do more to address housing and evictions. He noted that he would like to meet with any committee or commission developed to assist indigenous people migrating into the area.

Ananda Tomas stated that there was no need to reinvent the wheel when it came to developing a successful program for mental health crisis response. She noted that programs like the Denver Star Program and the Cahoots Model were highly regarded and have data proving their effectiveness.

Yaneth Flores stated that there were three priorities throughout all Council Districts which were public health services, housing and affordability programs and senior and youth services. She noted that the City needed to remove Police Officers from interacting with the community when

individuals were vulnerable and at risk.

Mayor Nirenberg announced that the second of two combined Budget and tax rate public hearing would be held on Tuesday, September 14, 2021 beginning at 5:00 PM at 114 W. Commerce. He reported that the City Council would vote on the City of San Antonio property tax rate for tax year 2021 at its meeting on Thursday, September 16, 2021 at 9:00 AM in the City Council Chambers at 114 W. Commerce.

Mayor Nirenberg stated that having heard all comments from citizens on the FY 2022 Proposed Budget and the tax rate, the first of two combined FY 2022 Budget and 2021 tax rate public hearing was hereby closed.

Public Comment

2. Public Comment is your opportunity to address your City of San Antonio elected officials directly about issues that are important to you and your community. To sign-up to speak, please go to www.sanantonio.gov/agenda and click on the eComment link for instructions. Members of the public are given up to three minutes to speak, and groups are given up to nine minutes.

Public comments have been submitted through the eComment System and will be attached to the minutes.

Diana Abrams displayed a photo of a dog used for breeding and a photo of a social media post regarding code enforcement. She stated that no one was held accountable and code enforcement could use extra funds.

Amanda Hill stated that San Antonio could become a no-kill city. She noted that it took everyone working together to make it a priority. She stated that the City did not need more police.

Valeria Reiffer stated that making the General Election a holiday was more important than making Cesar Chavez Day a holiday. She noted that she supported an Office of Crime and Recidivism, a position of Civil Rights Coordinator and a Mental Health Support Team.

James Hamilton asked that City Council appropriate funds for housing assistance. He noted that San Antonio residents were struggling and the City could not afford having more people on the streets.

Bennie Tyler requested \$50 million to support housing in San Antonio. He spoke of an incident where rent was increased twice.

Jeffrey Okolo expressed support for establishing the Office of Crime and Recidivism and housing support. He stated that mental health support should not involve the police.

Marco Acuna stated that the community deserved at least \$50 million for housing and legal

support. He noted that the desires of developers had been prioritized resulting in displacement of residents.

Deborah Frost stated that the community deserved at least a \$50 million investment in housing assistance and streetlights that worked.

Eddie Ortiz requested funding for after school programs and street maintenance. He noted that different areas of the City seemed to be repaired at different rates.

Antonio Diaz stated that more money should be allocated to help people stay in their homes. He requested a street name change for Columbus Street.

Justin Martinez urged City leaders to reconsider police enforcement. He stated that people in crisis deserved investment in the community and care from trained professionals and law enforcement should only respond in a secondary role.

Elizabeth Davila thanked the Mayor for his efforts in getting people vaccinated. She stated that people voted for the City Council and City Council needed to do its part.

Charles Sittewhite stated that Council District 2 needed a civil rights office and there should be a place where people could go for education on how to stay out of prison.

Bianca Maldonado asked if the Texas Department of Transportation was held accountable for their developments. She spoke of offering a discount to flood policy holders.

Jordyn Parks stated that a portion of the Police Budget should go to education and other programs in Council District 2. She urged the City Council to show that it heard the community.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further discussion, Mayor Nirenberg recessed the meeting at 5:35 PM.

APPROVED

Ron Nirenberg
Mayor

Attest:

Debbie Racca-Sittre
Interim City Clerk

DRAFT