

# The City of Galena Park

## City Commission Meeting

Date: September 16, 2014

A Public Hearing of the City Commission of the City of Galena Park was held in the Council Chambers of City Hall, Tuesday evening at 5:30 P.M. on September 16, 2014.

Present were:	Esmeralda Moya	Mayor
	Danny Simms	Commissioner
	Lois Killough	Commissioner
	Maricela Serna	Commissioner
	Juan Flores	Commissioner
	Mayra Gonzales	City Secretary
	Robert Pruett	City Administrator
	Jim DeFoyd	City Attorney

Mayor Moya called the meeting to order.

Mayor Moya stated that one of the things that she still doesn't think we need is the street sweeper due to the fact that she thinks we over spent \$400 and something thousand this year. Mayor Moya stated that with that said, in terms of the salaries she thinks that they should defer that due to the over spent of the year. Mr. Robert Pruett asked the Mayor if he could correct her on the \$400,000 that she says they over spent. He would like for Nanette Moreau, the bookkeeper, to clarify the \$400,000 out of the water and sewer department. Mr. Pruett stated that it seems that the Mayor is confused on and saying that they over spent \$400,000, could she clarify that for him. Ms. Nanette Moreau stated that it was hard for her to clarify it because she doesn't know exactly what the Mayor is referring to, but the general fund is to the good. Ms. Moreau stated that there were a few departments that did go over budget a little bit but not by that much. The general fund is to the good a little over a million right now and the water fund is still going to be in the hole for a little while, but it is in the hole around \$300,000. Mr. Pruett stated to the Mayor that is where the confusion comes in with the water and sewer department. For years they have been in a deficit with the water and sewer department and under state law they cannot make a profit under water and sewer. Mr. Pruett stated that for the last 10 or 12 years they have been running so far behind on the water and sewer rates, and he knows the citizens are feeling the pain, but the city really doesn't have much control over that. Mr. Pruett stated that 90% of the water is what they purchase from the City of Houston, and for years they were pulling \$50,000 a year out of the general fund to augment the water and sewer fund and that is where this overage that she is talking about is coming from. As far as the line budget items, nobody has gone over budget and nobody has over spent. Mr. Pruett stated the water and sewer department has put the city in the hole and has for years because Mayor and Council were reluctant to raise the rates on the citizens, but the City of Houston was not reluctant to raise the rates on the city. Mr. Pruett stated that the City of Houston hit the city with a 3% increase every year to where the city was paying out \$50,000 a month more than what we were collecting from the water and sewer costumers along with the construction of the new plant that the city is slowly paying back. Mr. Pruett stated that the city is slowly starting to pull out of that now to where the city is \$40,000 a month to the good, but one repair job can wipe that out. Mr. Pruett stated that the rate increase was spread out over a period of 5 years, so the citizens would not get hit hard. Mr. Pruett stated that if the city goes back they will be right back where they started from and the deficit that the Mayor is talking about is the water and sewer, not the general fund. Mayor Moya stated that at any rate it is a deficit and that is why she wanted to defer the raising of the salaries for now. Mayor Moya stated that would alleviate and take some burden off the citizens as well. Mr. Pruett asked if they were going to put that deficit on the backs of the employees. Mayor Moya stated that

she did not say they were going to put the deficit... she said they were going to defer the raising of the salaries. Mayor Moya stated she could bring out the amounts and show everyone again what it is going to cost the city. The hourly rate were at \$10.00, \$18.00, \$20.00 were only \$.30 more to a check. Mayor Moya stated that if she compares it to the salary ones we are talking about \$9,000 or \$10,000 a 9% raise. Mayor Moya stated that they are talking about a 3% raise for the hourly employees. Mr. Pruett stated that the city is slowly pulling out of its slump. Mayor Moya stated that is why she wants to defer. Mr. Pruett stated that the cost of living raises were for the employees that have bit the bullet for the city for the last several years. Mayor Moya stated that she understands and why don't they a do an across the board raise, \$1,200 for everyone including Mr. Pruett, instead of a 9% raise. Mr. Pruett stated that should have been addressed during the budget workshop and there they are in the second reading of the budget. Mayor Moya stated that is what she is stating and asked for any other discussion. Commissioner Flores asked the book keeper if he was correct in saying that there is no deficit and they are 1 million to the positive. Ms. Nanette Moreau, bookkeeper, stated yes. Commissioner Simms stated that they have already cast their first vote on the budget. Mr. Pruett stated that most of what they are discussing should have been hashed out during the budget workshop. They are in the second reading of the budget now and by law they need to pass the budget before October 1<sup>st</sup>. Mayor Moya stated that they can pass it, but she is not in agreement with the salary raise. Mr. Pruett stated that he understands her concerns, but they have laid out that and they are slowly bringing the city to where it needs to be. Mr. Pruett stated everything is there and it is a good budget, the cost of living for some of the employees is well needed. Mr. Pruett stated that the other separate sheet with his salary and the city secretary's salaries, they have all worked for tens of thousands of dollars less than their predecessors had. Mr. Pruett stated that the city is getting back on track and a lot of people are feeling the pain with the water and sewer rates. It is beyond their control, the City of Houston has told them in writing to expect a 3% increase every year from now until forever. Mayor Moya stated to Mr. Pruett if she recalls correctly he gets a raise every year. Mayor Moya asked if it was in the last minutes, how often they give pay raises. Commissioner Simms stated that they try to give their employees a pay raise every year. Mr. Pruett stated that was correct, the cost of living raise. Mayor Moya stated that there are some cities that are in the red and they don't get pay raises every year. Mr. Pruett stated there had been several years that they did not get a pay raise or just got half of a percent. Mr. Pruett stated it is all a matter of record, he does not recall off the top of his head what they received or didn't receive. Commissioner Simms stated that in those years they gave the everyday employee a raise and didn't give the upper level people a raise. Mr. Pruett stated that the city secretary and himself had been paid \$10, \$12, or \$15,000 less than their predecessors. Mayor Moya stated that they were not talking about the predecessors they are talking about what is best for the city. Mayor Moya stated that she wants to focus on the city and not the neighboring cities. Mayor Moya stated that she is concerned about their future and she is not against giving a raise if it is across the board. Mayor Moya stated that she think \$1,200 across the board..... Mr. Pruett stated that he understood but that is the second reading of the budget and it is up to Mayor and Council whether to vote it up or down. Mayor Moya called for a vote to adjourn the meeting.

Commissioner Killough moved to adjourn the public hearing. Commissioner Serna, 2<sup>nd</sup>... Vote: 5 Ayes... Motion Carried.

Meeting adjourned: 5:39 P.M.

  
MAYRA GONZALES  
CITY SECRETARY

  
APPROVED