



## Town Council

Monday, September 12, 2022 at 6:00 PM  
102 W. Bailey Street, Ponder, TX 76259

---

### NOTICE

**THE TOWN COUNCIL FOR THE TOWN OF PONDER, TEXAS, WILL CONVENE IN REGULAR SESSION AT 6:00 P.M. ON SEPTEMBER 12, 2022, IN PONDER TOWN HALL, AT 102 W. BAILEY STREET, PONDER.**

**ONE OR MORE MEMBERS OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MAY PARTICIPATE IN THIS MEETING REMOTELY IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE TEXAS OPEN MEETINGS ACT OR UNDER THE PROVISIONS PROVIDED BY THE GOVERNOR OF TEXAS IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE DECLARATION OF DISASTER ENACTED MARCH 13, 2020.**

### **REGULAR SESSION AGENDA**

#### **CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Poole called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

#### **ROLL CALL**

Those present were Council Member Lynch, Council Member Deussen, Council Member Couch, Council Member McWilliams, Mayor Pro-Tem McGregor and Mayor Poole (present via ZOOM).

#### **INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Mayor Poole led both.

**OPEN FORUM FOR CITIZEN INPUT** (Please limit to 5 minutes per person and if you wish to speak on a particular agenda item, please list the agenda item next to your name).

*This is a time for the public to address the Town Council on any subject. However, the Texas Open Meetings Act prohibits the Town Council from discussing issues which the public has not been given seventy-two (72) hours' notice. Issues raised may be referred to Town Staff for research and possible future action.*

Mayor Pro-Tem McGregor stated that there were individuals signed up to speak but wanted to speak during the item numbers reflected by their names on the list.

#### **CONSENT AGENDA**

None to approve

## ORAL STAFF REPORTS

None

## ITEMS OF BUSINESS

### 1. **PUBLIC HEARING, on the finalization of the FY 2022-23, General Fund Budget.**

Mayor Pro-Tem McGregor moved to table the public hearing for the FY2022-23 General Fund Budget. Motion seconded by Council Member McWilliams.

Mayor Poole asked McGregor when he wanted to table this item until, in which he replied that he would like to table until at least next week. Mayor Poole stated that this is a Public Hearing for the Citizens to give input on the proposed budget and that no action will be taken during this item. McGregor asked if we were allowed to hold a public hearing if the budget isn't going to be discussed. Mayor Poole responded that if they postpone the public hearing, then it postpones everything else. He stated that the Town has expended funds to meet requirements to publish the public hearings and it will all have to be published again. He also stated that this is the meeting where we are supposed to discuss the budget and that he is unsure what he wants. Mayor Poole also said that if Mayor Pro-Tem McGregor wanted to resend his motion and Council Member McWilliams agreed that we could move on with opening the public hearing. McGregor said that he thinks he can explain with discussion. Mayor Poole stated if there were things in the budget that they Council wanted to change or amend, they could do that during this meeting. Mayor Pro-Tem McGregor stated that he made the motion because he did not have a full understanding of this budget. He was under the understanding that we would be holding budget workshops, that he is very familiar with Local Government and that all other local governments host budget workshops for their annual budget. He said that he does not take spending over \$2 million very lightly as managers of the Taxpayer's purse. He also stated that he believes we can table everything in reference to budget tonight and reschedule and address the collections of the court and the PVFD tonight until we can come back together with a better understanding of the budget.

Mayor Poole asked for a vote: Ayes: Mayor Pro-Tem McGregor, Council Member McWilliams, Council Member Couch. Nays: Council Member Lynch, Council Member Deussen. Abstentions: None. Motion to table passed with 3 ayes, 2 nays and 0 abstentions.

Mayor Poole reported that this vote to table throws off the timetable that we are on to hold the public hearings.

### 2. **PUBLIC HEARING on the proposed tax rate for the Fiscal Year 2022-23.**

Mayor Pro-Tem McGregor moved to table the public hearing on the proposed tax rate for the Fiscal Year 2022-23 to discuss during the budget discussions. Mayor Poole asked if he understood that we can hold these public hearings and still hold future discussion about the budget and that this action is going to cost the Town thousands of dollars. He stated that this is just a public hearing for input and requires no action. He asked if Mayor Pro-Tem McGregor still wished to proceed with his motion, to which was replied yes.

Motion seconded by Council Member McWilliams.

Ayes: Mayor Pro-Tem McGregor, Council Member McWilliams. Nays: Council Member Deussen, Council Member Lynch, Council Member Couch. Abstentions: None. Motion failed with 2 ayes, 3 nays and 0 abstentions.

Council Member Lynch moved to open the public hearing. Motion seconded by Council Member Deussen. Ayes: Council Member Deussen, Council Member Lynch and Council Member Couch, Council Member McWilliams. Nays: Mayor Pro-Tem McGregor. Abstentions: None. Public Hearing open.

Mayor Pro-Tem Gorman stated that he does not know how they are supposed to approve an effective tax rate without knowing what the budget will be. Mayor Poole said that they were given a proposed budget and McGregor replied that it was only 12 days in advance. Mayor Poole said that he was given the opportunity to review and that he asked a bunch of questions and that is why this is done in advance and asked if he did not get all of the answers that he wanted. Mayor Pro-Tem replied that he never received the answers and that only a few of them were answered and that everything else was just mainly excuses. Mayor Poole stated that had we had the public hearing on the budget we could have had this discussion, which is the whole purpose of a public hearing where the citizens can comment as well. No action is required to be taken during a public hearing, it's just a time for questions and comments. Mayor Poole stated that if there were no more comments, that he would entertain a motion to close. Mayor Pro-Tem McGregor stated that there are people signed up and people wanting to speak.

Darrel King, a resident of Ponder said that he does not see how you can table a budget and hold a public hearing for a tax rate. Mayor Poole stated that nothing has been moved to be approved. Mr. King asked how you can act on a tax rate if a motion to table the action on the budget. The mayor replied that there was no motion made to table the budget, just the public hearing about the budget. All that has been accomplished is that we tabled the opportunity to discuss the budget. We have stifled discussion about the budget. He stated that if a member wants to pull the motion to table and open the public hearing, we can have a discussion about the budget. The public hearing has to legally occur before we can take any action on the tax rate or the budget.

Jay South a resident of Ponder said that a \$2 million dollar budget and two weeks to review seems unfair for people who work a job.

Mayor Poole stated that we can't complete the budget until we get the numbers from the County on what our property valuations will be. He said that once we get those figures the budget goes out and that we have been tasked by the State to meet all the requirements which is where the time crunch comes from.

Mayor Pro-Tem McGregor asked if we had received our actual numbers since, I think (unintelligible) said that they are not finalized until September 8<sup>th</sup>. Mayor Poole replied that the numbers given to us by the County are the figures at the top of the budget given to the Council. Mayor Pro-Tem McGregor asked to be clear that the numbers that they

sent us, and the Council was given on August 30, were the numbers that were sent out on September 8<sup>th</sup>? Mayor Poole replied yes that they send Sheri the figure and that is what she used to formulate.

Sue Partridge asked what the proposed tax rate is. Mayor Poole replied .71/\$100.

Mayor Pro-Tem McGregor moved to close the public hearing. Motion seconded by Council Member McWilliams. Ayes: Mayor Pro-Tem McGregor, Council Member McGregor, Council Member Couch, Council Member Deussen and Council Member Lynch. Nays: None. Abstentions: None. Motion to close passed with 5 ayes, 0 nays and 0 abstentions.

**3. Consider and act on approval of the Tax Rate for Fiscal Year 2022-23.**

Council Member Lynch moved to approve the tax rate for Fiscal Year 2022-23. Motion seconded by Council Member Deussen.

Mayor Pro-Tem McGregor noted that he does not believe that we can effectively consider a tax rate in good conscience with some discussion on the budget. He stated that even though it is going to cost some money that it is the correct way of doing it and that he doesn't know what those numbers are doesn't believe that anyone here knows what those numbers are so that is part of the price of doing business and it is unfortunate that we are in this situation. He stated that this is what the budget workshop is for to adequately prepare for this and that we have had a year for this. He said that the numbers that he saw in July, were the first time he ever saw any financials. Asking about numbers and stated that so many things being over budget and that he has not seen any budget amendments. He said with that being said, we haven't even balanced our budget, yet which is what the Texas Constitution requires and that we are not in a good position to approve this. He stated that he is not a wizard by any means at this but that he doesn't feel comfortable doing it.

Mayor Poole stated to McGregor that he was given the tax rate, it states how much revenue you will have for the year. Mayor Pro-Tem McGregor stated that he understands what he is saying and will disagree. Mayor Poole said that if he understands, he wants to delay the process and have special meetings to discuss the budget, but that he tabled the opportunity to discuss it tonight. Mayor Pro-Tem McGregor stated yes, because if the public hearing did not occur that the budget could not be approved and second that if we do not know what our budget is going to be then we can't have a public hearing to see what our citizens think about that budget. Mayor Poole asked again if Mayor Pro-Tem was saying that he wants a public hearing to discuss the budget, which he replied yes. Poole then said but you tabled the public hearing to discuss the budget, to which he replied that was correct. McGregor stated reminded the mayor the two other Council Members voted in favor of tabling the budget which is a majority, and we keep re-visiting this and this is wasting a lot of time. Mayor Poole disagreed and said that what is wasting time of the Town is that we could be discussing the budget right now, but you table that opportunity, but you want to call a special meeting to hold a public hearing. Mayor Pro-Tem McGregor stated that he said his piece.

Ayes: Council Member Couch, Council Member Deussen and Council Member Lynch.  
Nays: Mayor Pro-Tem McGregor, Council Member McWilliams. Abstentions: None.  
Motion passed with 3 ayes, 2 nays and 0 abstentions.

**4. Consider and act on approval of Ordinance 22-13, adopting the General Fund Budget for Fiscal Year 2022-23.**

No action taken.

**5. Consider and act on approval of Resolution 22-16, imposing additional fees for collection costs on fines and fees for Ponder Municipal Court.**

Mayor Pro-Tem McGregor moved to approve Resolution 22-16, imposing additional fees for collection costs on fines and fees for Ponder Municipal Court. Motion seconded by Council Member Lynch. Ayes: Mayor Pro-Tem McGregor, Council Member McWilliams, Council Member Couch, Council Member Deussen and Council Member Lynch. Nays: None. Abstentions: None. Motion passed with 5 ayes, 0 nays and 0 abstentions.

**6. Consider and act on approval of the Public Works budget for Fiscal Year 2022-23.**

Council Member Couch moved to approve the Public Works budget for Fiscal year 2022-23. Motion seconded by Council Member Lynch.

Gary Morris stated that this is just the public works budget. This years budget has no rate increase in it. However, the increase is needed. At this time the budget shows money from reserves to balance. Operating costs have all gone up. He would like to bring a study back to the Council next month to present and ask for a rate increase.

Council Member McWilliams asked if the reserves that Gary was referring to was the General Fund reserve. Gary replied no that it was separate.

Mayor Nick McGregor asked what the balance in the PW reserve was. Gary stated that at last year's audit it was around \$800,000. He also stated that we are required to have at least three months operating expenses in that account. Nick asked if this was a good option at this point. Gary stated that it is, but that is why they will bring information to show that we need a rate increase. Mayor Pro-Tem McGregor asked what pay increases were in Gary's budget. Gary stated that they are not all the same. He said that some were 6% and some were a little more. Gary and McGregor had some discussion about what salaries were and what line items they were coming from. Mayor Pro-Tem McGregor asked Gary if it would be acceptable to him to table this and have budget discussions when we gather to discuss the general fund budget on a future date, so that he could have a clearer picture of the entire budget.

Ayes: Council Member Lynch, Council Member Deussen, Council Member Couch. Nays: Mayor Pro-Tem McGregor. Abstentions: None. Motion passes with 3 ayes, 1 nay and 1 abstention.

**7. Consider and act on approval of an Interlocal Cooperation Agreement between the Ponder Volunteer Fire Department and the Town of Ponder.**

Mayor Pro-Tem McGregor moved to approve the Interlocal Agreement between the PVFD

and the Town of Ponder as written for \$100,000 funding. Motion seconded by Council Member McWilliams.

Mayor Poole stated that regardless of what action is taken on this contract, that there will have to be money taken from a different line item in the budget to accomplish funding this contract. Therefore, when you decide you want to have a public hearing and discuss the budget, \$50,000 dollars will have to be taken from some other item and moved to this.

Mayor Pro-Tem McGregor stated that there are people signed up to speak on this item. Mayor Poole stated that there was nothing to discuss. There is a motion and a second to approve. Mayor Pro-Tem McGregor said that he was waiting because they signed up to speak on item #7 on the agenda and if he needs to call on them specifically, he will do that, and that he would like to have some input on this. McGregor asked the audience if there was anyone there who would like to speak to stand up. Mayor Poole told Mayor Pro-Tem McGregor that he was in control of the meeting not McGregor and that he has no issue with anyone speaking and that we follow the same process every time. Mayor Pro-Tem McGregor replied that no we don't because the mayor usually speaks out of turn.

Mayor Poole asked who was on the list first to speak.

Darrel King, a resident of Ponder thanked the Council for letting him speak. As a taxpayer he is extremely concerned that the City will be unprotected, and his insurance rates will go up. He believes to protect the citizens of Ponder the Town needs a good Police Department to protect, a capable Fire Department and begs that they do not underfund the volunteer Fire Department. The least the Town can do is provide equipment needed for them to do their job, and we need a good water and sewer department.

Sue Partridge, a resident of Ponder and former 911 dispatcher, she is well aware of their duties and response times. It is unbelievable that our Town would not add funds to provide for the PVFD. In addition, after speaking with several insurance companies this will most certainly raise our insurance rates. If our rating went to a 10 there are insurance companies that would reject us. This would not be attractive to future residents.

Jeanea Wall, a registered nurse and past first responder. She spoke about the golden hour when a stroke or heart attack occurs. If we are waiting on Krum to respond you have at least 6 minutes. She thinks that \$100,000 is too low. She has a love hate with emergency responders from Tuscon. As far as a house burning, she thinks we should reconsider and bump it up to provide for more equipment and training. She believes that the PD and FD are the two groups that hold the Town together.

Bob Wall, a former Police Officer has been in the situation waiting on the FD to arrive. He is concerned that we don't have an ambulance in Ponder and we should do whatever it takes to get one in Ponder. It is essential. From what he understands, there hasn't ever been an increase for the FD. Water has been increased. If this is not paid children at the school and ballfields are at risk. He stated that \$50,000 out of \$6 million is not hard to find. He stated that what this is going to do to homeowner rates, is send them through the roof.

No others were signed up to speak. Mayor Pool asked if there was anyone else who would like to speak.

Aaron Tusken, a resident of Ponder spoke. He received a call at his house and thank goodness that the PVFD was there. It scares him that it could have been longer.

Nick Lamb said that one year ago we were discussing zoning changes for Ferti and that the discussion was that the PVFD could respond. He thinks it would be a terrible idea, since that was a selling point, to get rid of the PVFD. Also, if we are trying to get businesses in to increase the tax revenue, the PVFD being gone would deter that. It would also cost funding for schools and other public works.

Council Member Lynch stated that he appreciates everything that the PVFD does for Ponder. He stated that the Town does provide water for fires that cost approximately \$76,000 per year, and they have a training site on our WWTP property. He understands that they are not Town employees and are contractors and that the Town has never received any financials or an audit. His main thing was to say that the Town is not asking the PVFD to leave, the PVFD told us that it was \$100,000 or they were gone and that we are not trying to get rid of the fire department. He stated that he appreciates everything that they do and why they are here.

During the time Council Member Lynch was speak, there was constant interruption and heckling in the audience, so that it was difficult to hear all that he was saying. Mayor Poole asked that he not be interrupted.

Mayor Pro-Tem McGregor stated that he had spoken to Mayor Poole about this a month ago and that the mayor stated that we were about \$50,000 off and that was before the demand ever came. He can't even imagine. He said these guys and girls are paying out of pocket for their fuel to go to training and calls. He addressed them being hit on 380 on a call. He stated that these guys and girls are amazing. He knows them all personally. He believes that they are extremely underfunded. This is why he ran for Council. He believes our Police Department and Fire Departments are underfunded. He stated that those departments should be 67% of our budget. Our Proposed budget is \$2.4 million. He sees a lot of PD and FD in the audience, and they are here because they care. He said he understands that this is a grandstanding thing, but he is doing it because he cares about it. He realizes that he received a packet that says 5 million gallons of water is unaccounted for and it was written that this is to be fair, that this is half of the average, and that he doesn't know what it is. He added that he can tell us right now, that no one can put a price on your home, a price on your valuables and a price on your home over the cost of water. To him that is a terrible argument, and this sounds like a vindictive argument and it sounds like somebody who is hyper critical argument and seems like they are going after somebody, when he values these people. He stated that there should be more members and that it is probably because they are underfunded. He believes that we should approve this contract and he believes that we could come back and have that discussion during the budget. He would like to table this or approve it as the motion read.

Someone unidentified, asked how long the contract was for. McGregor replied that it is a one-year contract and that he has had discussions that lead him to believe that we could have discussion to make this a two-year contract to maintain that it does not spike. He has asked a lot of questions because the Ponder and Justin FD are working toward an ESD that will fund them adequately and that they are working through that. McGregor added that he and Lael McWilliams visited the FD and covered different aspects of this including finances. He stated that he learned that the Town had never requested financials from the PVFD. He stated that this was twisted around earlier, that if it was requested and denied, then that is a whole other question, but it is his understanding that we have never requested it.

Jeremy Kelly spoke about the audit and asked if it could be in the contract. Council Member Lynch stated that it is in the audit and that the FD said that we never requested one.

Mayor Poole clarified that the contract as presented and motioned to approve says that the agency agrees to make the records available only upon request from the Town.

Matthew Mitchell with the Justin Fire Department isn't here to badger the Town Council. He just wants everyone to realize that it is about the little things. He stated that the departments train together at least once per month. He added the experience that Chief Williams and Chief Economedes brings is invaluable. These guys are able to offer training for free. All of these guys work for free into the night and this would cost \$155 to \$175 per hour and the Town gets it for free. He has gone through this in his city and it takes a bad day for everyone to open their eyes. \$50,000 is nothing.

Council Member Couch stated that she has the utmost respect for the Chief and Department, and that her problem with this is that it was all or nothing. She stated that she believes they deserve more money and that there is more to this, but she stated that we aren't generating the sales tax that we will next year and believes that it has to be more than all or nothing.

Chief Williams asked if she was aware that the contract was delivered back in June. He stated also that he had talked to the mayor who said that \$100,000 looked like no problem. They met with the Town several years ago and were under the understanding that the Town wanted the ambulance as much as the PVFD did. The contract with Krum EMS contract will run out in two years. He stated that they just ordered the chassis and the box and equipment that goes in there. He said that they are already ALS ready and can do everything except transport. This year alone they have already had three people in town that have dropped over, and they have brought two of them back before the ambulance arrived and that is what the extra minutes do. All of the accessories brought the ambulance to around \$500,000 and they purchased this in good faith because that is what the Town wanted. The reason for the \$100,000 is because it is a uniform price and is a per call basis. The PVFD contracts with Denton County is \$650 per call. That is more or less



depending on the call that they go on. They just had an engine damaged on a call and it was out for a year. All of these fees have to come from somewhere. The \$30,000 that they get from the Town now equates to about \$171 per call in Town. That doesn't even pay for a tank of fuel. Everything is being funded by the County and none by the Town. The call volume has gone up. Previously the calls were heavy on the County side so it was absorbed, but as the Town grows the call volume goes up and is almost 50/50, and stated that it is kind of hard to fund that. He added that as far as the amount of water goes, he kind of disputes them, but has no way to prove it. That is not unique to the Town of Ponder. When the DCCC burned, water was trucked in from Justin and Denton. Non one ever mentioned water and it is in the Government Code. He also added that in reference to the training facility, agencies from all around use that. Very little water is used on those training fires. He said that the PVFD was going to put their training facility on their property but that the Town came to him and didn't want him to because it would block access to the Town water well site. So, they are the ones that requested that it be placed where it is. The PVFD training site is in the flood plain. He is happy to move it to Town. He said that he is about to start his 44<sup>th</sup> year. He has seen a lot and broken his hip training. None of the volunteers draw a salary, and most have paid fire department jobs. He stated that the figure should have been \$175,000 but that they reduced it to compensate for the EMS contract amount that the Town pays. He had a document that showed what they had received from the Town. He said that he is happy to show anyone their financials, but that they don't do an audit. They just send their books to the CPA each year and can get those records back. His report: 1996 - \$100/month, 1997 - \$500/month, 1998 - \$650/month, 2002 - \$700/month and in 2003 - \$1116.67/mo, 2008 - \$1228.00/mo., 2017 - \$2500/mo and that is what is maintained. He stated that there is about \$5 million in assets in the fire station today. He can outfit two people per year with the Town's contribution. That is why he only maintains 24-25 members. The gear is only good for ten years. They maintain as if they are a Municipal Fire Department. They deserve the same protection as a paid Fire employee. Grand total that the Town has contributed is \$429,624.88. That is why it is \$100,000. He stated that they have no problem with a two-year contract if that would make the Town happy. He said the question was brought to him of what would keep them from coming back and asking for more each year, they felt as if they were backed into a corner and can't give away something that doesn't belong to them. They have tried to keep this on a not emotional level and not personal and try to keep it on a business level. They are trying to improve their services as the Town grows. He feels that they give valuable service, more than what they are paid for. It was a long heart wrenching decision to say if you don't meet the contract. He asked if we negotiate the waste contract or Jeff Prose's contract. He stated that they stated their fees and you either pay it or go find someone else. He also said that if you the Town wanted to go find another FD then go for it, that the Town is not going to find another department in this area that will do it for \$100,000.

Council Member Deussen stated that this is emotional and asked if \$100,000 is enough and asked that he tell us what he needs. Chief Williams replied that they would gladly take more, but they were happy with what they asked for.

Mayor Pro-Tem McGregor stated that he had spoken with the Chief and with the Town

Secretary about this and the exact wording from her that he was given was that we can't give away taxpayer money. He stated that this is a contract now and it is a service, a Fire Department and it doesn't matter if it is volunteer or not.

Chief Williams stated, to answer Deussen's question, that if the Town asks for anything over and above what they are doing then he can give a price on what it would cost to get there. They are working on the ambulance.

Mayor Pro-Tem said that last year they brought a contract and were told that the budget had already been finalized and so they brought this one ahead of time on June 30. He said he didn't know about anyone else, but he wasn't told about it until the July council meeting, and he is very offended by that because he is asked to approve a \$2.4 million budget, but notice was given in June. He noted all of the people here in support of the contract. He stated that this should not be on as an agenda item at all.

Council Member McWilliams stated that he visited the fire station and wants Chief Williams to tell how the PVFD stacks up against other Towns and that he appreciates the time that he took out of his day to meet with him and that he was very impressed. Chief Williams stated that his department is all volunteer. There is only one other volunteer department, and it is Double Oak. They pay their fire department \$100,000 and contract with Flower Mound for EMS. McWilliams asked how often Double Oak misses calls and Chief Williams replied consistently. He added that the last time the PVFD missed a call was three years ago. He also stated that they have a four-minute response time and had over 600,000 calls for service last year, not all in the Town. There was an average of 5 members out on each of those calls. Justin is a partial paid department and run three times as many calls. Justin representatives stated that he has no problem seeing PVFD show up. He stated that highly trained members are showing up.

John Williams, who used to volunteer with the Mayor lives outside the Town now and volunteers for 20 years now. He has a paid income job but it is a slap in the face when a citizen says he is just a volunteer. He stated that this department is his life, and he does not feel that he is not a fireman. He has done EMT training on his dollar through the PVFD. Just because he doesn't get paid for it doesn't mean he isn't a fireman. He has left his family at 3am and comes home just to go to his job. He is terribly offended and is glad that there are so many people here to support him. This has not been taken lightly.

Council Member McWilliams asked the Chief to speak on insurance ratings. Chief Williams stated that a few years ago they began getting an ISO rating based on water availability and fire department capabilities. It is a rating system 1-10. They spent over a year getting documents together to get a lower rating. The company verified everything and got flow testing on the water hydrants and were able to get a 4 rating. He stated that a 4 is a good rating and is in a position now to get as low as a 3. They can haul 7000 gallons of water to areas with no hydrants within 1000 ft. Back to the surrounding departments, even Denton doesn't think they are so bad. They PVFD has Mutual Aid agreements with everyone in the County. They have all the resources that Denton County has to offer because of the agreements. Council Member McWilliams thanked Chief Williams for being good stewards

of the monies that they receive, including the grants that Chief Economedes receives. They just received on for air tanks that are necessary for hazardous fumes. An annual salary of a Firefighter is between \$53,000 and \$70,000.

Council Member McWilliams said he appreciates the PVFD and thinks that they do a great job, and he doesn't take lightly this decision. He added that he knows that it is important, and prioritizing has to be made in the Town budget.

Mayor Poole stated that he received a lot of emails and texts today, with people under the impression that the Town is trying to cut funding or dissolve the PVFD. He understands that emotions get high, and people don't always hear or read everything. Since he became the Mayor, the Town has never cut funding for the PVFD. He would go so far as to say that the PVFD has never had a bigger supporter than himself and his wife, giving many years to the fire department. He takes exception to the insinuations that we think of them only as a volunteer fire fighter. During the Ferti discussions, there were several people on the Council who brought up and defended the ability of our fire department. It has never been about what they deserve or now. One of the issues with having one issue is that you can focus on that one issue. In June when Charlie contacted him and said that the mayor was probably going to be mad, but we have to have a discussion and they did. He was told then and then he told Andrew that it is not that he thinks they don't deserve or didn't want to give it to them, but we don't have the luxury of raising our tax rate to whatever we want. All that it would take is for someone to oppose our tax rate and then we would not only not be able to afford this contract, but the Town would have to cut many services because our tax rate would drop to \$59/\$100 which is the voter approved rate. He has had discussions with Andrew about the proposed \$50,000, and that there would probably be tax revenue coming in at the end of the year, and we could revisit the other \$50,000 then. He said that he gets that they don't want to do that but for himself and the staff it is fiscal. If the Town wants to raise taxes up to \$1.00/\$100 they can. But the insinuation that there is some sort of vendetta against the fire department is simply not true. He stated that he has worked with the PVFD this entire time, getting the ESD, fought with the City of Denton trying to take some of their district away, working on getting surface water so that they have good capacity to fight fires and to lower the ISO rating. He said that the Council is charged with bringing a balanced budget while maintaining a low tax rate as possible, so we brought before you this proposed budget. He said that the staff's job is not to bring a Cadillac budget. He also asked that when these situations arise, that we all step back and take a logical view. This is not an us versus them and that he and Charlie have been friends for many years. He has stated to many citizens today, that if they want to raise the tax rate to pay them whatever they want, then they can, but he can't in good conscience. Some have tried to articulate that he has a grudge toward the PVFD and it is simply not true. He appreciates everyone for their input.

Ayes: Council Member Deussen, Council Member Couch, Council Member McWilliams, Mayor Pro-Tem McGregor. Nays: Council Member Lynch Abstentions: None. Motion passed with 4 ayes, 1 nay and 0 abstentions.

**ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA**

None

**ADJOURN**

Council Member Lynch moved to adjourn at 8:06 pm. Motion seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem McGregor. Ayes: Council Member Lynch, Council Member Couch, Council Member McWilliam, Council Member Deussen and Mayor Pro-Tem McGregor. Nays: None. Abstentions: None. Motion passed with 5 ayes, 0 nays and 0 abstentions.

**APPROVE:**

**ATTEST:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Matthew Poole, Mayor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sheri Clearman, Town Secretary