



City of West Orange

City Hall
2700 Western Avenue
West Orange, TX 77630

City Council Public Hearing on Proposed Budget Hearing Minutes

Tuesday, September 24, 2024

5:00 p.m.

Council Chambers

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mayor Randy Branch
Meritta Kennedy

Jay Odom
Lanie Brown

Michael Shugart, Sr.
Brent Dearing

APPOINTED OFFICIALS PRESENT:

Theresa Van Meter
Christopher Leavins

Jon Sherwin

Simmie Gibson

Call to Order

Mayor Branch called the hearing to order at 5:00 p.m., announcing that a quorum was present. Council Member Shugart gave the invocation. The mayor then led in the Pledges of Allegiance to both the United States and Texas flags.

Public Hearing on Proposed Budget for FY 2025

Mayor Branch presented his proposed budget for the 2024-25 fiscal year as summarized below:

2024-25 PROPOSED BUDGET SUMMARY

	<u>Operations</u>	<u>Capital Outlay</u>	<u>Total</u>
10 General Administration	\$ 544,436	-	\$ 544,436
11 Building Official	161,763	-	161,763
12 Fire Department	163,822	58,000	221,822
13 Sanitation	745,463	-	745,463
14 Humane	88,905	-	88,905
15 Police	2,287,357	240,000	2,527,357
16 Municipal Court	200,423	-	200,423
17 Street	512,512	133,000	645,512
18 Parks & Facilities	100,411	-	100,411
21 Maintenance Shop	96,323	-	96,323
	\$ 4,901,415	431,000	\$ 5,332,415

TOTAL REVENUE	\$ 3,786,284
+Court Technology Fund Transfer	30,000
+ Capital Imp. Fund Transfer	401,000
	\$ 4,217,284

TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES \$ 4,901,415

TOTAL CAPITAL OUTLAY 431,000
\$ 5,332,415

Potential shortfall \$(1,115,131)
(to be funded from prior years'
retained income)

Mayor Branch asked if there were any comments or questions pertaining to this budget.

Council Member Brown stated that she had two items to discuss. She would like to add an AED to the fire department budget. She reported that they cost approximately \$3,700 and the department needs three. She would like to see one added to this budget and the other two to the following year's budget. Asst. Chief Gibson explained that he has an AED included in his "medical supplies" line item in this proposed budget.

Council Member Brown stated that she would like to see at least half of the cost of the brush truck/multi-use vehicle for the fire department put into the budget so that it could at least be ordered. The remaining half could be paid from the following year's budget, with the understanding that they would continue to look for grant opportunities to hopefully cover all or most of the cost. Council Member Shugart asked Asst. Chief Gibson for an approximate cost for a brush truck. He responded "about \$350,000 range."

Mayor Pro-Tem Kennedy asked what was wrong with using the fire department's SUV for medical calls. Asst. Chief Gibson responded that it is being used for medical calls.

Mrs. Van Meter stated that if a truck is ordered "up front," it is doubtful that a grant would pay after the fact, because if the city has the money to order the truck, they would most likely feel that we have the money to pay for it. She added that if the city wishes to purchase this truck with a grant, the entity offering the grant will have procedures that will have to be strictly followed, including their bid procurement process. Council Member Shugart then stated, "Well, let's just buy it out of Capital Outlay for two years."

Mayor Branch explained that the department does have other options. There are other departments in the area who have brush trucks that can be called if/when needed. Asst. Chief Gibson stated that it was not a "good option."

Council Member Odom was concerned over the potential shortfall already shown on the budget, without adding more to it. He stated that if every department spent everything that was budgeted, the city would be in the hole. The mayor explained that funds to cover this would come out of the Capital Improvement Fund, which at the present time has approximately a \$1 million balance. Council Member Odom then said, "Oh, I didn't know that. Write a check." The mayor explained, however, that what everyone needed to consider was that this account would also be used should any major pieces of equipment unexpectedly need to be replaced.

Mayor Pro-Tem Kennedy stated that she would like to have a price. Council Member Shugart questioned the possibility of going through Buy-board and not having to go out for bids. Mr. Leavins responded that, "if it is done properly, it takes care of part of the process." Mr. Sherwin added that the city also has a Purchasing Policy that will have to be followed.

Mayor Branch then reminded those present that this was not something that had to be done that night... at that hearing. They have had some discussion about it, but a meeting can be held to amend the budget at any time. He then stated that he would like this issue to be tabled for more discussion, and possibly Asst. Chief Gibson could get a firm bid.

Council Member Brown then informed Council that she had just, at that time, received a text from the General Land Office for the possibility of any funding, specifically for capital outlay items. There may be funding in early 2025. HUD has approved their action plan, but they have not yet received funding. They are expecting to receive \$8 million for the entire state.

Discussion and Possible Action on Ordinance No. 488, adopting the City's budget (by record vote) for the 2024-2025 fiscal year, requiring a tax rate of \$0.3780 per \$100 assessed value – A motion was made by Council Member Odom for the passage of Ordinance No. 488, adopting the budget for the fiscal year beginning October 1, 2024 and ending September 30, 2025, requiring a tax rate of \$0.378 per \$100 assessed value. This motion received a second from Mayor Pro-Tem Kennedy.

The mayor then called for a record vote:

Mayor Pro-Tem Kennedy:	For	Mayor Branch:	For
Council Member Dearing:	For	Council Member Brown:	For
Council Member Odom:	For	Council Member Shugart:	For

With a unanimous vote, the budget for the 2024-2025 fiscal year was unanimously adopted.

Adjournment

With there being no further business before Council, Mayor Branch adjourned the meeting at 5:19 p.m.

ATTEST:


Theresa Van Meter, City Secretary




Randy Branch, Mayor