



7019 Pleasant Ridge Road CR 4217 * Coffee City, TX 75763 Phone: (903) 876-3414 * Fax: (903) 873-2433

CITY OF COFFEE CITY
Town Hall Meeting Minutes
October 23, 2023 @ 6 pm
7019 Pleasant Ridge Rd
Coffee City, TX 75763

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN OF A COUNCIL MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF COFFEE CITY. TO BE HELD ON **MONDAY, October 23, 2023, at 6:00 PM AT THE COFFEE CITY COMMUNITY CENTER, 7019 PLEASANT RIDGE RD, COFFEE CITY, TEXAS.** FOR THE PURPOSE OF CONSIDERATION OF THE FOLLOWING AGENDA ITEMS. THE CITY COUNCIL RESERVES THE RIGHT TO MEET IN A CLOSED SESSION ON ANY AGENDA ITEM SHOULD THE NEED ARISE AND APPLICABLE PURSANT TO AUTHORIZATION BY TITLE 5, CHAPTER 551, OF THE TEXAS GOVERNMENT CODE.

Council Members

Jeff Blackstone – Mayor (P)

Carrie Ousley - Place 3 (P)

Ruthie Seward - Place 1 (P) arrived at 6:15

Keith Skender - Place 4 (P)

Marquis Castleberry – Mayor Pro-Tem (P)

Ollie Harmon - Place 5 (P)

1. Call Meeting to Order:

Jeff Blackstone called the meeting to order at 6:07 PM.

2. Roll Call and Announce if quorum is present:

Mary McDonald announced roll call and a quorum was present.

3. Opening remarks:

Mr. Blackstone stated this meeting was intended to bring the community together to speak on the police department, where the city stands at the moment with the department and if we get a new department how the department will look and be affordable. He updated the community that the chief was terminated and they deactivated the police department for the time being and now trying to re-established the department and looking at the budget. He stated that he wanted to put it out to the citizens and see how important it is to them to have a department and if it is come up with ways to fund the department. He stated grants could be an option but would need to be one that does not require a matching amount at the end of the grant. He stated the other possibility its property tax, something the city does not have. Mr. Blackstone asked if the council wanted to speak on the matter. Ollie Harmon spoke and stated that she was in favor of having a department for the safety of the citizens. Carrie Ousley spoke and stated she agreed with Ms. Harmon and a department was needed even if it was just two officers. Mr. Blackstone opened the meeting to the citizens to speak.

4. Discussion: Coffee City Police Department

a. Open to the public to speak on the rebuilding of the police department.

Mr. Wagley spoke and stated Tyler was heading this way and many developers were looking to expand south on 155 but what was killing the developers was the police force we had on the highway. He stated that he would recommend not to go back down that road but he does support a police department

for safety reason. He asked what the city receives from sales tax. Mr. Blackstone stated 1% goes to the city but also funds that go to the EDC and Roads account. He asked how much would be brought in if a property tax was implemented. Mr. Blackstone stated that he did not know at the moment and it would be something we look into with the tax appraisal office. Mr. Wagley stated he was supportive of a police department if it could be funded in a reasonable way without putting a black eye on Coffee City.

Next, Mr. Harbert spoke and stated that he was opposed to having a department just because of what the city has been through the last 20 years. He stated he would be supportive of 1 or 2 officers if the city could afford it without a property tax. He asked if there was a way that they could hire an officer from another department to drive around for security reasons and asked if it had to be someone that was going to have to issue citations. Mr. Blackstone stated that he wasn't sure if that was possible and he asked Sheriff Hillhouse if that was something that even legal to do. Mr. Hillhouse spoke and stated that his department doesn't issue many citations but make several stops. He stated that if the city had an officer patrolling the area, it would be at their discretion to issue a citation or not. Mr. Harbert asked Mr. Hillhouse how many officers he had in our area. Mr. Hillhouse stated that the shifts consist of 6 people and they use HWY 19 to divide the county and it's usually 3 on each side of the county.

Mr. Vrba spoke and asked Mr. Hillhouse what would be the response time if someone had called for an emergency. Mr. Hillhouse stated the response time is estimated at 17 minutes. Mr. Hillhouse stated they will respond in accordance to priority. Keith Skender asked how many calls they have received for Coffee City since the deactivation. Mr. Hillhouse stated that they have had 38 calls and that DPS has been covering any wrecks and that there had been a few of those. He stated that DPS has also been out patrolling the area as well. Mr. Vrba asked about code enforcement and who would be handling that now. Mr. Hillhouse stated that Henderson County could not enforce a city ordinance violation.

Mr. McBride spoke and asked how the property tax and if that information would come from Henderson County appraisal. Mr. Blackstone stated that it would and it would be based on whatever the yearly appraisal is of property that people receive in the mail. Mr. Blackstone stated that the city council would have to approve and adopt a city ordinance for property tax and it would have to be submitted to Henderson County no later than September 29th of each year so it would take almost another year before that would even be implemented. Mr. McBride asked Sheriff Hillhouse if he had guys just responding to calls or actually patrolling our area since the department's deactivation. Mr. Hillhouse stated that they get out this way as often as possible and that he hasn't asked them to come this way and just stay here because he doesn't have the manpower to do that. Mr. McBride stated that he was concerned about HWY 155 and the speed that people come through town at. He asked Mr. Hillhouse if the city was to provide equipment needed and was in agreement with the county if it would be possible to have someone with his department in our area controlling the traffic. Mr. Hillhouse stated that he has guys that have the equipment but can only come out if they are not working on something else of high priority. Mr. McBride asked about the response time and if that was since the deactivation or prior and if it was for Coffee City or the entire county. Mr. Hillhouse stated that it was as of January 1, 2023 and was for the entire county. He stated he doesn't have the response time for just Coffee City as he is having to cover several different cities right now as there is a shortage of officers and even with his department.

Mr. Blackstone asked Sheriff Hillhouse if he knew what could be done about reducing the speed between the two bridges on 155 as the city council had already voted and approved for the reduction of it. Sheriff Hillhouse stated that was something that he would need to ask Senator Nichols or Representative Harrison.

A gentleman in the audience asked about the citations that have been issued and if people were still required to pay them and asked about the drug arrest that have been made are those still going to be taken to court. Mr. Blackstone stated that we still have court set up and people still paying their citations but as far as the arrest cases he wasn't sure as that would be with the county. Sheriff Hillhouse spoke and said that it would be up to District Attorney, Jenny Palmer to decide and that if it

was a case that a person has been indicated on, it was not likely for her to just dismiss the case due to the office no longer being employed with Coffee City and she could just subpoena that officer and they are required by law to show up.

Mr. Blackstone stated that if no one else had anything to speak on that they could adjourn the meeting. He stated that a survey was passed out and they could turn them in at the end of the meeting or drop them off at City Hall on a later date but just would like to have them to get the opinions about having a department.

5. Adjournment:

Carrie Ousley made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ollie Harmon seconds the motion. Motion carries and meeting adjourned at 6:43 PM.


The City Council of the City of Coffee City reserves the right to adjourn into Executive Session at any time during the course of this meeting to discuss any matters listed on the agenda, as authorized by the Texas Government Code, including, but not limited to, Section 551.071 (Deliberation about Gifts and Donations), 551.074 (Personnel Matters), 551.076 (Deliberations about Security Devices), 551.087 (Economic Development), 418.175-183 (Deliberations about Homeland Security Issues) and as authorized by the Texas Tax Cod, including, but not limited to, Section 321.3022 (Sales Tax Information).

CERTIFICATION

I CERTIFY THAT A COPY OF THE MONDAY, OCTOBER 9, 2023, CITY TOWN HALL MEETING AGENDA BY THE COFFEE CITY, CITY COUNCIL WAS POSTED AT THE CITY HALL PUBLIC NOTICE BOARD AND THE CITY WEBSITE ON FRIDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2023 BY 5:00 PM.



JEFF BLACKSTONE
MAYOR



MARY MCDONALD
CITY SECRETARY