

A SPECIAL CALLED MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE CITY OF SODDY-DAISY, TENNESSEE WAS HELD ON THURSDAY, MAY 30, 2024 AT 7:00 P.M.

INVOCATION BY: REV. JACKIE PENNEY

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER BY:
MAYOR EVERETT

MEMBERS PRESENT:
MAYOR EVERETT
VICE-MAYOR COLEMAN
COMMISSIONER KEITH
COMMISSIONER PENNEY
COMMISSIONER SHIPLEY
CITY MANAGER JOHNSON
CLERK RICHEY

MEMBER ABSENT:
CITY ATTORNEY ELLIOTT
ASSISTANT RECORDER DOLBERRY

STAFF AND OTHERS PRESENT:
SEE ATTACHED COPY OF SIGN IN SHEET

Mayor Everett stated that because this is a special called meeting we can only hear and discuss what is on the agenda. He said we will not have a normal citizens participation. Mayor Everett said the first reading is normally the public hearing. Mayor Everett said we will take comments and concerns from those in attendance.

James Berry, 8921 Springfield Road, expressed concerns about 1.5 million for creek stabilization. Mr. Berry said the State of Tennessee owns the property in question. He questioned the legality of using City funds to make the repairs. City Manager Johnson said creek repair was removed from the capital improvements list and replaced with a new fire engine. City Manager Johnson said none of the projects listed are in this coming year's budget. He said the only item from the capital improvements list in this coming year's budget is the personnel. City Manager Johnson said the list is a plan for the future. Mayor Everett asked Commissioner

ShIPLEY if he could clear up some confusion regarding the creek issue. Commissioner ShIPLEY stated that the area in question is now a State Park. The State purchased property near Montlake to build an information center. Commissioner ShIPLEY stated that would be a good thing for residents that live along the creek.

Shane Harmon, 8329 Springfield Road, stated decisions that Commissioners make are not easy. Mr. Harmon said money that would be used to stabilize the bank would be to save lives not just to spend money. Commissioner ShIPLEY said there are items on the list for bridges and the federal government has a lot of money through grants with no match that the City needs to get to apply for.

Hardie Stulce, 10414 Dayton Pike, gave a history of the City of Soddy-Daisy Fire Department. Mr. Stulce encouraged those in attendance that are concerned about the budget to attend budget workshops. Mr. Stulce said he has discussed staffing levels and concerns with the Commission. He said people are not lining up to volunteer and come to training. He asked the board to vote for the tax increase.

Mayor Everett said that since last meeting there have been many concerns presented to the board. Mayor Everett said in 1995 we had 25 sworn officers, in 2018 we had 31. Mayor Everett said we now have 28 sworn officers and two State funded School Resource Officers (SROs) bringing our sworn number of officers to 30. He said the City has always been very fiscally responsible. He said we have 28 total Firefighters of which 17 are volunteer and 11 are paid which includes the Fire Chief and Deputy Chief which are on call 24/7. He also stated that Public Works has 15 employees which is at or just above the same number of employees we had in 2009. He said once grass cutting starts 8 of those employees are assigned to that job duty.

Mayor Everett also stated that House Bill 0565 State of Tennessee passed and was assigned to the Property and Claims Sub-committee on February 1, 2024. He stated another bill is also at the House and if the Governor signs the bill into law we would only be able to raise our

tax rate Inflation plus 2%. Due to this restriction, to hire additional fire personnel the City would have to raise taxes in consecutive years to cover the cost. He said the State missed the sales tax forecast. He asked City Manager Johnson what our property tax growth has been recently. City Manager Johnson stated since 2018 our property tax growth has amounted to \$28,000.00 per year. Mayor Everett stated our reoccurring monthly expenses are \$800,000.00 per month. He said he asked City Manager Johnson to take a look at the tax increase and see what might be an alternative number.

He asked Commissioner Keith if he had anything to add. Commissioner Keith said everyone wants growth and the only way to get it, is for someone to pay for it. He said we are not guaranteed any money from the State or Federal Government. He said the Board is trying to move the City forward and the only way to do that is to keep up with the cost of living.

Diane Walker, 9986 Lovell Road, asked if she could get some clarification on the property tax revenue of the City. City Manager Johnson stated we receive \$3.8 to 3.9 million from business and residential property tax. City Manager Johnson was asked about the budget expenses. He said this coming year it is \$16 million. City Manager Johnson clarified we do not have \$16 million in revenue, it is \$16 million in expenses. He also said that most of the improvements and purchases the City have made are primarily funded through government funds and sales tax revenue.

Commissioner Coleman questioned which property tax rate is being voted on. City Manager Johnson said the budget would not change based on the vote if the amount of the tax increase is lowered. He said that whoever makes a motion needs to clarify which rate they are making the motion to vote on.

Commissioner Shipley said he is going to support a tax increase, but it would not

be the original proposed \$1.45. He said we should see some increase in revenue from new homes and businesses. He said next year is also the reassessment. He said the amount he is willing to vote for would cover the personnel and other needs of the City.

Commissioner Penney said he is in support of the tax increase because he loves Soddy-Daisy and wants to see the City thrive. He said we are well behind other cities in Hamilton County in regard to the tax rate. He said employees need the right tools to do their jobs effectively. He said even with the proposed tax increase we would still have the lowest property tax rate.

Commissioner Shipley said that it would appear that the growth would be enough to keep the City ahead. He said that the system eats the growth here just as it does everywhere.

City Manager Johnson said he listened to citizens and the Board and looked at different options. He said at \$1.32 we could hire all personnel and save about \$375,000.00 to carry forward to next year. He said we would be foregoing about \$450,000.00 if the Board does not vote in the proposed \$1.45. He said we do not do as much resurfacing of roads as we need to. He said this year we have only done about \$100,000.00 due to various reasons. He said we need to do about \$600,000.00 in resurfacing each year and we would still be behind. He said the City needs the \$1.45 whether it is this year or split up over this year and next. He said if we want to stay ahead, we need to be at \$1.45 whether this year or next. He said we can no longer go 10 years or more without a property tax increase. He said the only taxing authority the Board has is property taxes. Mayor Everett asked City Manager Johnson which rates he looked at. City Manager Johnson said that at \$1.32 it would be an increase of \$0.20 cents as opposed to \$0.33 cents.

Mayor Everett said he has listened and wants to work with everyone and made a motion to accept the budget as is with a tax rate of \$1.32. Commissioner Penney clarified that is less than the \$1.35 tax rate in 2021 before it was adjusted to \$1.1159.

OLD BUSINESS:

2023-2024 ORDINANCE NO. 18

**AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF SODDY-DAISY, TENNESSEE,
ADOPTING THE ANNUAL BUDGET AND TAX RATE FOR THE FISCAL
YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2024 AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2025.
SECOND AND FINAL ADING.**

- 1st - Mayor Everett to approve as proposed with a tax rate of \$1.32
- 2nd - Commissioner Shipley

City Manager Johnson made a clarification that taxes are looked at each year and need to be looked at on a year to year basis.

Ayes - Unanimous

NEW BUSINESS:

2023-2024 RESOLUTION NO. 6

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF SODDY-DAISY, TENNESSEE,
ADOPTING A CLASSIFICATION AND PAY PLAN FOR CITY
EMPLOYEES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2024-2025.**

- 1st - Commissioner Shipley
- 2nd - Commissioner Keith
- Ayes - Unanimous

Adjourned 7:52 P.M.

Burt Johnson