



MINUTES

SPECIAL COMMISSION MEETING

TUESDAY, JULY 7, 2020 AT 5:30 P.M.

CITY OF ST. AUGUSTINE BEACH, 2200 A1A South, St. Augustine Beach, FL 32080

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor England called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor England led the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. ROLL CALL

Mayor England asked City Clerk Raddatz for roll call.

Present: Mayor England, Vice Mayor Kostka, Commissioner George (virtually), Commissioner Rumrell (virtually), and Commissioner Samora.

Also present were: City Manager Royle, City Attorney Douglas, Assistant City Attorney Lex Taylor, Police Chief Hardwick, City Clerk Raddatz, Finance Director Douylliez, Building Official Law, and Public Works Director Tredik.

IV. PUBLIC HEARING CONCERNING THE SETTING OF FEES FOR THE NON-AD VALOREM ASSESSMENT FOR THE COLLECTION AND DISPOSAL OF HOUSEHOLD WASTE, YARD TRASH/SPECIAL WASTE AND RECYCLABLES

Mayor England introduced Item IV and asked Public Works Director Tredik for his report.

1. Introduction and Explanation by Bill Tredik, Public Works Director

Public Works Director Tredik showed a PowerPoint (Exhibit 1) of the history of this item. The current non-ad valorem tax was established in 2012 at \$74 per year, which only pays for a portion of the costs. The rest of the costs are paid out the General Fund. In September 2019, the costs were \$460 per year. On April 29, 2020, he did a reanalysis of the City costs and found the total rate was \$330. He explained that the St. Johns County Tax Collector did not tell the City that the non-ad valorem tax could go into effect in 2021, if the City decides that. He said if the Commission wants to decrease the tax by 2.5% to start the non-ad valorem in 2021, that could be an option. He then stated the corrected costs.

Commissioner George asked if the revenues would be collected this year would that be for FY 20-21 budget. She asked if this would be a one-year acceleration.

Finance Director Douylliez advised yes, that the non-ad valorem taxes would be billed in November 2020.

Commissioner Rumrell had no comments.

Commissioner Samora had no comments.

Vice Mayor Kostka had no comments.

Mayor England explained that the reason for the non-ad valorem tax is to right size our customers by reworking the fees, moving the large scale customers to dumpsters, moving short-term rentals and transient rentals to commercial rates, and reducing the costs from \$480 to \$330. She advised that the Commission has received and read the emails.

City Clerk Raddatz advised there were only a few and they were mostly about the size of the recyclable containers.

2. Public Comment

Mayor England opened the Public Comments section. The following addressed the Commission:

Nicholas Binder, 232 Big Magnolia Court, St. Augustine Beach, FL, advised that the \$74 tax assessment was what the County was asking for in 2012; explained that smaller homes will be paying less ad valorem tax than non-ad valorem tax; renters already have contracted rates will go up in 2021 for an average of \$100 for the year; containers fees will eventually increase to \$375; and he previously requested a table on ad valorem versus non-ad valorem if costs were going to be increased.

Mayor England closed the Public Comments section and moved on to Item 3.

3. Discussion by the Commission and Setting Rates for Fiscal Year 2021

Mayor England introduced Item 3 and asked the Commission to discuss the rate setting for Fiscal Year 2021.

Commissioner Samora thanked and appreciated the staff for working so hard on this item. He said that this is the correct structure, even if this is not a perfect system. This gets the City closer to paying fees on services that are being provided. The notice covers half the costs this year and will increase each year. A \$200,000 home would be assessed approximately \$35 a year more in non-ad valorem tax and only is half the costs for the services being provided. He advised that he supports starting the tax in 2021 and not decreasing the non-ad valorem total rate of \$178. He commented that one of the reasons why the City is in this situation was because the tax was never changed in eight years, which the City codes says that the fees were to keep up with the services provided.

Mayor England asked Commission if the Commission wants \$178 or \$165.

Commissioner Rumrell agreed with Commissioner Samora's comments. He explained that if the City residents were charged for the last eight years the City would not be in the same situation. He advised that he could not quantify how much trash each house puts out and the methodology that staff presented makes more sense than counting the trash. He believes that the City staff can do a more efficient service and at a cheaper rate than Advanced Disposal regarding recycling and will be looking to have the City's staff do the recycling as well in the future.

Commissioner George opposed to adding a non-ad valorem fee on principle but supports the methodology. Staff has done a lot of good work on this methodology. She commented that the Commission did get some public comments against this going into effect this year because of COVID-19 and the economic hardships.

Vice Mayor Kostka shared Commissioner George and Mr. Binder's comments. She did not agree that one size fits all with fees and would like this tax to be an ad valorem tax instead of non-ad valorem tax. She was concerned about the economic effect of COVID-19 and would like to cut back the amount for 2021 to \$165. She thanked staff for all their hard work.

Mayor England commented that the Commission has worked hard on the methodology and having the commercial fees not being less than residential fees. She explained that the millage rate has not increased in a few years and supports the non-ad valorem tax starting this year and the fee to be \$178. She asked staff to investigate creating a procedure for hardship cases.

Finance Director Douylliez advised that there is nothing in the code to allow for hardship cases and that due to HIPPA the Health Department would have to research the claims as they do for the County. She advised that a committee would have to be developed to vote on whether to grant them or not.

Mayor England requested staff to investigate how the County does their hardship cases and report back to the Commission.

Motion: to correct an error of the ranges to affect the Commission's intent more accurately. The ranges on the non-ad valorem collections would be a minimum of \$75 and maximum of \$175, the range of the non-ad valorem disposal would be a minimum of \$50 and maximum of \$150, and the range of the non-ad valorem recycling would be a minimum of \$0 to a maximum of \$50. **Moved by** Commissioner Samora, **Seconded by** Mayor England.

Roll Call was as followed:

Mayor England	Yes
Vice Mayor Kostka	Yes
Commissioner George	No
Commissioner Rumrell	Yes

Commissioner Samora Yes
Motion passed 4 to 1.

Motion: to assess the non-ad valorem taxes as noticed this year in the amount of collection non-ad valorem at \$87, disposal non-ad valorem at \$67 and recycling non-ad valorem at \$24 for a total of \$178. **Moved by** Commissioner Samora, **Seconded by** Mayor England.

Roll Call was as followed:

Mayor England	Yes
Vice Mayor Kostka	No
Commissioner George	No
Commissioner Rumrell	Yes
Commissioner Samora	Yes

Motion passed 3 to 2.

V. ADJOURNMENT

Motion: to adjourn. **Moved by** Mayor England, **Seconded by** Commissioner Samora.

Roll Call was as followed:


Commissioner Samora	Yes
Commissioner George	Yes
Mayor England	Yes
Vice Mayor Kostka	Yes
Commissioner Rumrell	Yes

Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:40 p.m.


Margaret England, Mayor

ATTEST:


Beverly Raddatz, City Clerk