

September 2, 2021

The Graham City Council met in REGULAR SESSION in the Council Chambers at 9:00 a.m. on Thursday, September 2, 2021, with the following members present:

MEMBERS:	Mayor:	Neal Blanton
	Mayor Pro-Tem:	Shana Weatherbee-Wolfe
	Council Members:	Alex Heartfield
		Jack Little (arrived late)
		Randy Cantin
	City Manager:	Brandon Anderson
	City Secretary:	Sharon McFadden
	City Attorney:	Dan De La Cruz (absent)
	Municipal Judge:	Jim Reeves
	Police Chief:	Brent Bullock
	Fire Chief:	Jim Don Laurent

VISITORS: Randall Dawson, Thomas Wallner, Lisa Kinkead, Sonya Ramos, Jimmy McLeroy, Carla Ritchie, David Aleshire, Dorman Holub, Casyn Smith, Dennis Fellows, and Tammy Morrison.

ORDER: Mayor Blanton called the meeting to order and opened with prayer.

PUBLIC FORUM: Mayor Blanton asked if anyone would like to speak in the public forum. Sonja Ramos introduced herself. Ms. Ramos said she resides at 401 South Street. Ms. Ramos read a written statement expressing her concern for the topic of raises (for City employees) that were discussed in the previous Council meeting (August 19, 2021) during the discussion of the budget portion of the meeting. She stated her profession is a "want" and to necessarily a "need" and when living costs increase, her business is last as a skin and wax therapist. Her profession helps others feel better about themselves. When she relocated to Graham from Austin in February 2021, she adjusted and reduced her prices of the new location (referring to Graham). She is referred to the US Constitution regarding minimum wage. She said at the previous meeting (August 19, 2021), it was shared that some City (of Graham) employees received a two (2) to three (3) percent increase in wages last year. Ms. Ramos said she is asking two (2) things from this committee (referring to City Council). First, consider holding off on either raises (for City employees) or taxes for the next year (fiscal year 2021-2022). Ms. Ramos said for the second request, contact Congressman Jody Arrington to bring change to the current minimum wage. Ms. Ramos thanked Council and Mayor Blanton for their service and commitment to the town (referring to the City of Graham). Mayor Blanton thanked Ms. Ramos. Mayor Blanton asked if anyone else would like to speak in the public forum. There were no additional comments.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Regular Session Council meeting held on Thursday, August 19, 2021, were considered. Shana Weatherbee-Wolfe made the first motion approving the minutes and Alex Heartfield seconded. Jack Little was not present at the time of voting. The minutes were unanimously approved 3-0.

CONSIDER AND ACT ON RESOLUTION # 125 APPROVING THE 2021-2022 INVESTMENT POLICY AND INVESTMENT STRATEGY (2ND READING):

Brandon recommended the item be postponed and presented later in the meeting since Jack Little was not currently present. Mayor Blanton announced Resolution # 125 will be postponed until later in the meeting.

Jack Little joined the meeting at 9:05 a.m.

CONSIDER AND ACT ON A REQUEST FROM OPEN DOOR CHRISTIAN SCHOOL (ODCS) TO MAKE THE INTERSECTION AT FIRST STREET AND OAK STREET A FOUR (4) WAY STOP AND POST NO PARKING SIGNS ON THE DROP-OFF ZONES:

Brandon said in the previous Council meeting (August 19, 2021) there was a request from Open Door Christian School to change portions of Oak Street and portions of First Street to one-way during school hours. Brandon said he and City staff had a good meeting with Open Door Christian School administration and representative. As they transition, adding a junior high school to their campus, they agreed to making Oak Street and First Street a four-way stop. Right now, Oak Street and First Street is a two-way stop. Brandon said if City Council approves this item today, then there will be an ordinance presented at the next Council meeting (September 16, 2021). Brandon said the ordinance will officially designate that intersection as a four-way stop as opposed to the two-way stop. At that intersection (Oak Street and First Street) there will be crosswalks painted on all four streets to draw attention to travelers. The area is a safety concern for children. Brandon said the City has already met their (Open Door) concerns with the crosswalks originally painted along Oak Street. Open Door has also requested "no parking" signs be posted in the loading and unloading zones. Brandon said temporarily the Police Chief (Brent Bullock) has approved putting up temporary signs. The temporary signs are already in place with stop signs at Oak Street and First Street making it a four-way stop. The City (of Graham) is working on getting the "no parking" signs in place until officially done through ordinance if Council approves. Brandon said he liked the stage process he had with them (ODCS). Brandon said Oak Street is very wide and City (of Graham) staff have provided ODCS with traffic cones for their pick-up and drop-off zones. ODCS has visited with Morrison Funeral Home (neighboring business) and have a good repour with them and are working together. Brandon said the request letter (copy of letter in Council packet) reflects the request by ODCS. Brandon said if the request is approved, there will need to be an ordinance presented at the next Council meeting (September 16, 2021). Mayor Blanton asked if all of the twenty (20) mile per hour signs are the responsibility of the City (of Graham) or the schools (Graham ISD). Public Works Director, Randall Dawson, stated that the City (of Graham) maintains all the blinking ones (school zone street signs) by changing the batteries and set the program. Randall said a few years ago the school (Graham ISD) purchased cell phone and pedestrian signs then installed them around Graham High School and the Woodland Elementary areas. Randall said they (City of Graham staff) paint the crosswalks and maintain most of the signs. Alex Heartfield said he would like to make a motion to approve the Open Door request. Randy Cantin made the second motion and the request was unanimously approved 4-0.

CONSIDER AND ACT ON A REQUEST FROM THE CVB TO HOST ITS SECOND ANNUAL HIGH SCHOOL BARBEQUE COMPETITION IN GRAHAM ON FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2021, AND SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 13,

2021. THE REQUEST IS TO ALSO HAVE THE SOUTH SIDE OF THE SQUARE BE CLOSED TO TRAFFIC, BESIDE THE OLD POST OFFICE MUSEUM AND THE SIDE OF THE VISITOR AND BUSINESS CENTER FROM 5:00 P.M. FRIDAY TO 5:00 P.M. SATURDAY:

Mayor Blanton asked CVB Manager, Casyn Smith, if she had anything to add to the request. Casyn said she had nothing to add but did provide an explanation of what will be taking place at the event. Casyn said the teams will arrive after 5:00 p.m. on Friday (November 12, 2021) and set up their equipment around the square. Saturday morning (November 13, 2021) the participants will begin cooking for the judges. The food will be judged, and a winner announced. Randy Cantin said the event is good for the children. Mayor Blanton agreed with Randy Cantin's statement of being a good event for the children. Casyn said there are a lot more teams participating this year. Randy Cantin made the first motion to approve the request. Jack Little made the second motion, and the event was unanimously approved 4-0.

CONSIDER AND ACT ON A REQUEST FROM THE GRAHAAM REGIONAL THEATER AND DORMAN HOLUB TO USE THE OAK GROVE CEMETERY FOR A "TALKIN' TOMBSTONE" TOUR ON SATURDAY, OCTOBER 30, 2021:

Dorman Holub said this will be the fourth year for the event. Dorman said he writes the narratives for those buried in Oak Grove Cemetery. Actors and actresses from Graham Regional Theater act as the person by the person's tombstone. Dorman said the attendees meet on the east side of Oak Grove Cemetery where there is parking. Dorman said in the past, the event has taken place three (3) times at 10:00 a.m., 2:00 p.m., and 4:00 p.m. Dorman said depending on the weather, he may try to have three events scheduled. Dorman said the purpose is to highlight people buried in the cemetery that most people in Graham are unaware of. Dorman said he has written narratives for twelve (12) people this year with five (5) women and eight (8) men. Dorman said the people chosen for narrative made a difference or impact on Graham's early history. Dorman said there are plans to block off the entrance at Elm Street. Dorman said he will contact the funeral homes to make them aware of the plans for the event. Dorman said Oak Grove is a cemetery that is a "closed cemetery" which means if a lot is not already owned, there are no lots available to purchase. Dorman said Oak Grove Cemetery is the second oldest cemetery in Graham and offered to walk through with anyone interested in knowing who is buried there. Dorman said there are great stories in the cemetery. Jack Little asked if the event is a fundraiser. Dorman said it is a fundraiser with Graham Regional Theater (GRT). Dorman said GRT split the proceeds after all expenses are paid. Mayor Blanton said there has heard a lot of positive comments. Dorman said the first year there were approximately 80 attendees. Last year (2020) the event did not take place. The prior year (2019) there were 130 to 140 people that attended the three (3) presentations. Dorman said he has videoed three (3) of the presentations and they are on his Facebook page. Dorman said there is a great chance he will post some of those (video's) so people can see what the presentations are like. Dorman said one year Spencer Street and his wife were represented one (1) year, Bruce Street, Sr., and Anne Skipper dressed in period costumes and recreated those individuals. Dorman said the same thing for Colonel E.S. Graham and his wife Addie Graham. Jack Little made the first motion to approve the request. Alex Heartfield seconded and the event was unanimously approved 4-0.

CONSIDER AND ACT ON AN AGREEMENT FOR PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERING SERVICES BETWEEN THE CITY OF GRAHAM AND JACOB & MARTIN, LLC:

Brandon said Jacob & Martin have assisted the City (of Graham) in securing the grants through the parks board and Texas Parks & Wildlife. Brandon said we have been working with them on an hourly basis and they presented this proposal to City (of Graham) staff back in June 2021. Brandon said this agreement needs to be considered. They (Jacob & Martin) have been very good for us (City of Graham) and have been diligent in working with our committees. They (Jacob & Martin) have helped us (City of Graham) get the first grant. Brandon said it is important to keep continuity throughout this process. Brandon said they (Jacob & Martin) have been good partners for us (City of Graham) and gone above and beyond. Brandon said he should have already presented this (proposed agreement) to Council and the majority of this will be reimbursed from grant funds that will be received. Brandon said he recommends approval of the proposal. Jack Little asked for amount of the grant that was received. Brandon said the first grant is a 50/50 cost share grant that is about \$900,000. The City (of Graham) portion will come from the earmarked funds received from the BRA (Brazos River Authority) and the other half will be funded through a grant from Texas Parks & Wildlife. Jack Little asked what the money is going to be spent on. Brandon said there are three (3) phases. The first phase is to revamp the bathrooms at Fireman's Park. Add another nine (9) holes to the disc golf. All-inclusive playground equipment at Fireman's Park. There are also \$200,000 trails grant which ten (10) percent we (the City of Graham) must match, so \$20,000 will come from the BRA funds. There will be a lighted trail that goes under the Highway 67 bridge and around the soccer fields. Jack Little asked if the \$200,000 was in addition to the \$900,000. Brandon answered Jack Little's question with "yes, that is phase one (1)." Brandon said it is hoped to get phase two (2) of the parks project funded at a cost of \$1,000,000 along with other trails grant to add to the trails. Jack Little said there is going to be \$900,000 put into a nine (9) hole and everything else Brandon said. Brandon answered, "yes, sir." Randy Cantin said the park equipment is costly. Mayor Blanton stated the park equipment is costly and handicap accessible. Alex Heartfield said the playground equipment is fully handicap accessible. Brandon said the playground equipment will be all inclusive, all accessible from toddler to pre-teen. Jack Little asked if the playground equipment will go into Fireman's Park. Alex Heartfield said the equipment is fully handicap accessible and the bathroom revamp is also to get the facility to ADA compliant. Mayor Blanton said this is the first step in developing the whole park grant. Alex Heartfield said disc golf is not a large expense. Jack Little asked if the disc golf was used. Brandon said there is a passionate group of disc golfers and in phase two (2) there is another eighteen (18) hole course proposed. Brandon said that would be two (2) courses with eighteen (18) holes and the local disc golfer group could host tournaments in Graham. Brandon said that brings people to Graham resulting in funds for the CVB. The participants would play both courses to qualify and then have a championship round the next day. Brandon said the funds for these projects are ear-marked and can only be used in that area. The City (of Graham) received \$1,300,000 from the BRA with the buyout and deed process of approximately 150 acres. Those funds must be used for park renovations. Brandon said the handicap playground equipment is approximately \$500,000 and with the City (of Graham) having only \$1,300,000, the funds will not go far. Brandon said in 2018 the parks board put together new parks plan with the help of Jacob & Martin and Lee Boyd who was parks board committee chairman at that time. There are five (5) phases of the park plan and throughout the RV discussion, phase five (5) was discussed but is far into the future. Brandon is hoping for phases 1, 2, and 3 will be funded within the next three (3) years. There is hope that phases 1 and 2 will be funded through 50/50 grants or 90/10 grants through Texas Parks & Wildlife. Brandon believes the \$1,300,000 can be turned into \$3,000,000 parks investment by completion. Jack Little asked if the new equipment will replace the equipment that is there (at Fireman's Park) now. Brandon answered, "yes, sir." Alex Heartfield said it is not just the equipment, it also includes the surface. The wood chips must be removed so a wheelchair can access. Mayor Blanton said the equipment is first-class stuff. Randy Cantin asked Casyn (CVB Manager) if she receives calls about what Graham has to offer. Casyn told Council that

she does receive those calls and this type of equipment will be extremely beneficial. Casyn said especially for people with children that have disabilities. Mayor Blanton said some of the City (of Graham) playground equipment is more than 25 years old. Alex Heartfield said the equipment at Shawnee Park is falling apart. Randy Cantin made the first motion to approve the agreement. Shana Weatherbee-Wolfe seconded, and the agreement was unanimously approved 4-0.

CONSIDER AND ACT ON RESOLUTION # 125 APPROVING THE 2021-2022 INVESTMENT POLICY AND INVESTMENT STRATEGY (2ND READING):

Mayor Blanton said this item was approved on the first reading (August 19, 2021, Council meeting). This is the second reading since Randy Cantin was absent for the first reading. Since a unanimous vote is required, the second reading is required. Sharon McFadden stated the only difference in the resolution and the policy is highlighted (adding the second reading date). Alex Heartfield made the motion to approve, and Shana Weatherbee-Wolfe seconded. The resolution and investment policy were unanimously approved 4-0.

Mayor Blanton announced the entrance into a Public Hearing.

ENTERED INTO A PUBLIC HEARING AT 9:21 A.M.

Public Hearing on proposed tax rate (ad valorem tax) of 0.6050 (same as 2020-2021 fiscal year rate)
Public Hearing on proposed 2021-2022 City of Graham budget

DISCUSSION:

Brandon said the proposed budget has been on file at City Hall since August 5, 2021. There are some items that City Council has discussed and as mentioned earlier in the public comment. Brandon said some of those include a three (3) percent raise for City (of Graham) employees, capital items which will need to be added into the proposed budget and has not been done yet. At the next public hearing (September 9, 2021), Brandon said he will have a final proposed budget. Brandon said currently in the general fund revenue it is budgeted at \$7,057,439.00 and the expected expenditures are \$7,047,845.55 for a net figure of approximately \$9,600.00. The garbage fund was entered as a stand-alone and is considered a "wash" account for trash service. The garbage fund expected revenue is \$1,705,000.00 and expected expenses of \$1,640,000.00 for a net gain of \$65,000.00. Brandon said the water fund projected revenue is \$4,719,650.92 and expected expenditures of \$4,534,343.80 for a net figure of \$185,307.12. Brandon said in previous years there was more revenue but in this proposed budget, three (3) full-time positions have been added. Those positions will be working to replace the six (6) inch and smaller water lines in needed areas. Brandon said the revenue projected for the sewer fund is \$1,313,860.00 and the expenditures of \$1,187,312.92 for a net revenue gain of \$26,547.08. Brandon said topics of discussion were the three (3) percent raise for employees, the capital items for the general fund being funded by a loan with Interbank (City's bank depository), the capital items in water will come from generated revenue, a rate increase of \$5.00 per account is being proposed to start in creating a reserve fund to invest in the sewer plant. Currently a belt press is needed at the sewer plant and over the first three (3) years, the City (of Graham) plans to invest \$750,000 in the sewer plant and pay for it with the \$5.00 sewer rate increase.

Brandon said the proposed tax rate was discussed. Tax rate for 2019 was 0.6672, 2020 tax rate was 0.6050, and the currently proposed tax rate is 0.6050 which is no change in the tax rate. The no new tax rate with the increase in appraisal values, to raise and generate the same amount of ad valorem tax would be 0.5676. If we (City of Graham) were to adopt a rate that would meet the budget that is proposed, the rate would be 0.5820. If offering City (of Graham) employees a two (2) percent raise, the tax rate would need to be 0.6010. A three (3) percent raise (for City of Graham employees) would be 0.6100. Brandon is proposing an ad valorem tax rate of 0.6050 which is slightly under the three (3) percent. Brandon believes through conservative budgeting on revenue in the general fund, the City (of Graham) would still be able to meet the added expenditure with the 0.6050 tax rate which is no different from last years (2020) tax rate.

Mayor Blanton asked if there were any comments or questions.

Brandon said there will be another public hearing on Thursday, September 9, 2021, at 6:00 p.m. here (612 Elm Street).

Jack Little asked Brandon if he was proposing a 0.6050 rate. Brandon said, "yes, sir." Jack Little asked what kind of raise (for City of Graham employees) would receive. Brandon said that three (3) percent raise can be done with that proposal. Jack Little said he sees the 0.6100 (on the rate comparison sheet) showing a three (3) percent raise. Brandon said with conservative budgeting on the revenue side of the general fund will make up the difference. Brandon said when he first started (2015), the City (of Graham) was budgeting \$2,400,000 each year in sales tax revenue but only taking in \$1,800,000. That caused a \$600,000 shortfall. Brandon said the past couple of years, the amount was lessened to \$1,800,000 and has slowly been increased. At this time, our sales tax revenue has recovered. For 2021, the City (of Graham) has taken in more than budgeted by about \$350,000. That has helped in the recovery of the balance of the general fund. Brandon believes some of the reserve funds will help cover that deficit. Brandon said the deficit will be approximately \$20,000 between the difference of 0.6100 and 0.6050. Mayor Blanton asked if there was one (1) more month to go on sales tax results. Brandon stated, "yes." Mayor Blanton asked if the \$350,000 is what is being projected. Brandon said, "yes, projecting." Mayor Blanton stated that is a sizable amount. Randy Cantin said employees can be given a raise without increasing the taxes. Brandon stated that Randy's comment is correct. Mayor Blanton asked how much was added to the street fund. Brandon said \$100,000 has been added to the street fund.

Sonya Ramos asked if the \$100,000 was going to take care of the street situations we have now. Sonya said our streets are pretty bad, and she knows you all (referring to Council members) do not like to go on social media. Sonya said as she had spoken earlier, and everybody wants a raise. Sonya said the separation come from people about the City Council is that it is like you (Council members) are taking care of you alls self and not taking care of issues that are around town. Sonya said that rubs people the wrong way. Jack Little said he hears what she (Sonya Ramos) is saying and understands. Jack Little said he has had that same thought and he challenges those that are concerned, and not through Facebook, to go out and see what takes place. Jack Little said there was a huge leak last Friday

evening (September 3, 2021) and at 10:30 p.m., there were City (of Graham) workers doing the repairs and did a fantastic job. Jack Little said he saw that and appreciated the value and there were visitors from many schools. The hold up was trying to get someone from Fort Worth to find the lines. Jack Little said he sees what goes on and is aware there are problems. Jack Little said for those concerned with streets can go visit Breckenridge and Jacksboro to see town has money problems. Jack Little said we (City of Graham) have got to have employees. It is a struggle to get applications completed and it is not always about the pay and getting raises of an exemplary amount. Jack Little said it is about taking care of families and the much needed service within the City. Jack Little said he has visited the water plant and staff operating it and he has been to the sewer plant. We have got to take care of our own to keep things going. Jack Little said he thinks the three (3) percent is less than what he thinks raises should be. But Jack said if that is the best, we (City Council) can do, then he accepts it. Jack Little said if we (City of Graham) are moving forward, we (City of Graham) will get there. Jack Little said it takes people (City of Graham staff) and the City (of Graham) is struggling, just like local restaurants, to get people to work. Jack Little said the City (of Graham) has lost some really good people that have been with the City (of Graham) ten (10) years or more. Jack Little said we (City of Graham) can not control all of it (staff resignations) but need to control what we (City of Graham) can control. Mayor Blanton said the streets are a long term project and are trying to address the problem each year. There is a Texas Street project coming up and asked Brandon if that has started yet. Brandon said, "No." Randall Dawson said the City (of Graham) is still in the grant application process. Mayor Blanton said that we (City of Graham) are trying to move forward the best way possible and keep a budget, tax rate that is reasonable for everyone. Mayor Blanton said there are attempts being made to address the concerns in a direct way so that people like yourself (directed to Sonya Ramos) are not adversely affected by a higher tax rate. We (City of Graham) could raise the tax rate by \$0.07 and solve many of the problems right away. Mayor Blanton said raising the tax rate that much is not in the best interest of the community. Jack Little in reviewing the previous years tax rate, it is not the City (of Graham). Jack Little said the citizens living in this town (City of Graham) are our (City Council) responsibility and we (City Council) are trying not to put a big burden (high tax rate) on our citizens. Jack Little said now that he understands how the system works, it is not the City (of Graham) taxes putting the burden. Jack Little said before he was elected, he heard "coffee shop" talk and participating in blaming the City (of Graham). Mayor Blanton said the City (of Graham) is only about twenty (20) percent of the total taxes. Brandon said the tax mill is approximately \$2.90 per \$100 valuation. Brandon said what the City (of Graham) is about twenty (20) percent of that (total tax bill). Brandon said five (5) years ago, Graham did not have a hospital tax. The hospital district was formed six (6) or seven (7) years ago and that change created an additional \$0.30 to the tax mill that Young County had never seen. Brandon said Mayor Blanton is correct and for us (City of Graham) to make the impact that the community expects, everything has gone up, inflation goes up on everything, including the costs of materials for street repairs. Brandon said to repave a street cost \$15,000 to \$20,000 per block. To make substantial improvements, Brandon questioned where the funds would come from. Brandon said the general fund in continuing toward a solvent balance and to still have a negative balance in the general fund. The past couple of years when the sales tax revenue was low, the general fund was depleted. Brandon said this month it is tax rate, in six (6) months it will be streets again (referring to citizen complaints). The only way to make an impact on streets, Brandon said there are three (3) options. One option being to increase tax rate so there will be additional ad valorem taxes to spend on the streets. The other option, with community support, is to put together a bond package to repave streets at a cost of \$10 to \$15 million dollars. For the bond, there would have to be a bond tax added to cover the cost (bond payments). The other option could be a street maintenance fee added to the water and utility bills. Brandon said the City of Abilene add a street maintenance fee to generate extra funds. Brandon said the general fund is funded with sales tax dollars, ad valorem tax dollars, and franchise fee taxes. Brandon said not raising ad valorem taxes reduce the City (of Graham) ability to make changes in the general fund, which the street department is a part of. Brandon said he is passionate about supporting employees and he said you (referring to Sonya Ramos) mentioned minimum wage is \$7.25 per hour. Brandon said he has talked with a lot of local businesses and none of them are able to only pay \$7.25 per hour. To keep employees, local businesses are paying a range of \$12.00 to \$13.00 per hour. Brandon said City (of Graham) employees struggle with that (wage amount) because other businesses may be paying more than what the City (of Graham) can offer. Brandon mentioned the struggle to staff the swimming pool this summer at a pay rate of \$7.25 per hour. Brandon said we all (referring to local businesses) are competing for the same workforce. Brandon mentioned the point Mayor Blanton made that the tax rate (ad valorem) needs to remain palatable to the citizens. To make the impacts you (speaking to Sonya Ramos) are wanting in streets, that cannot be fixed with an adjustment in ad valorem tax. Brandon said through better management and unfortunately, patch and fix is the temporary solution. Brandon said repave and relay costs are substantial, and the City (of Graham) could hold a bond election or possibly add a street maintenance fee. Jack Little thanked Randall for repairing the "dip" on Fourth Street and it was nice fix. Jack Little said it will take time, working toward progress, and the City (of Graham) simply does not have \$10 million dollars to fix everything. Jack Little told Sonya Ramos that her concerns are important, and we (City of Graham) need people moving to our town. Jack Little said we (City of Graham) need businesses coming to our town and need streets in order. Randy Cantin said he understands what she (Sonya Ramos) is saying about repairing the streets. Randy Cantin said the money being considered for employee raises being moved over to fix the streets. Randy Cantin said imagine all the street repairs needed and no employees to work on repairing streets and other services. Randy Cantin said he understands restaurants and other businesses must "cut-back" on services to provide services, they offer. Randy Cantin said we (City of Graham) can not afford that, the people (City staff) are needed. Randy Cantin said being able to help our people (City staff) without increasing the tax base is the only way to continue the services for citizens. Randy Cantin said he would be in favor of doing that (employee raises) without increasing the taxes. Jack Little thanks Sonya Ramos for bringing up her concerns and said that was a good question and very good point. Jack Little said those questions need to be exposed and addressed. Sonya Ramos said you (referring to Council) keep on saying long-term goals but here is the situation, it is only going to keep getting worse. Ms. Ramos said she feels like we are just stuck in this place. Mayor Blanton told Ms. Ramos that he disagrees with her comment on things getting worse. Mayor Blanton said there has been progress since Brandon was hired five (5) years ago. Sonya Ramos said she is just talking about road conditions. Mayor Blanton said he understands but believes the road conditions will improve. Mayor Blanton suggested looking at other communities around us (City of Graham). The road situation is night and day, with our (City of Graham) road having dips here and there. Mayor Blanton said 95 to 99 percent of our (City of Graham) roads are paved. Randall Dawson said all roads within the limits of the City (of Graham) are paved. Mayor Blanton said that in other communities, that is not the case. Jack Little said he hears about big potholes, citizens need to address the concerns in the proper manner, the potholes will be taken care of. Sonya Ramos asked how it (referring to City of Graham road conditions) got this way, obviously the situation did not happen overnight. Ms. Ramos said she is walking pedestrian and she walks the streets of Graham. Sonya Ramos said she sees everything from where there is a leak and questions where the water is coming from. Ms. Ramos said most of the time she walks to find the source of where the water is coming from. Ms. Ramos said she goes to the high school and walks around the high school. Sonya Ramos said she saw the high water leak

and made the comment, "Holy moly" and asked how much water we (City of Graham) are losing. Ms. Ramos said she understands what you all (referring to Council) are saying, and she has not lived in Graham in twenty (20) years. Ms. Ramos said she questions on how we got here (referring to needed street repairs). Mayor Blanton stated he would not speak for previous Councils because that is not fair. Mayor Blanton said he knows all previous Councils have had issues with previous situations such as the water plant. The City (of Graham) had to immediately address it (water plant) because it was collapsing and now the sewer plant is a similar situation. Mayor Blanton said the items that are absolutely and immediately important such as water, sewer, and a tremendous need to replace water lines inside the City (of Graham). Mayor Blanton acknowledged hearing Ms. Ramos concerns and said he does not know how previous Councils addressed concerns. Mayor Blanton said they (referring to City Council) are going to move forward addressing concerns and do things every year and a little more the following years to improve the roads over a period. Sonya Ramos said that we (referring to the City of Graham) have a lot of work ahead of us. Mayor Blanton and Jack Little agreed with Ms. Ramos comment. Jack Little said he personally believes a lot of the problems are from climate and weather. Jack Little said a lot of it (poor street conditions) is from busted water lines and then repair, patch, and fix. Jack Little said he believes the heavy trash trucks on side streets is also contributing to street problems. Jack Little said he goes out into the community and sees what City (of Graham) staff are doing. Jack Little said he is pleasantly surprised at the work the City (of Graham) staff do and at the speed it is done. Jack Little said we (City of Graham) have good people (City staff), and they are needed to keep the City (of Graham) running. Shana Weatherbee-Wolfe commented that \$100,000 additional has been added to the proposed budget for street maintenance, taking the total from \$250,000 to \$350,000. Brandon said that is approximately correct. Shana Weatherbee-Wolfe asked Sonya Ramos if she would be opposed to a street maintenance fee. Ms. Ramos said if it was a fund specific to streets then she would be all for it because we want people to move to Graham. Ms. Ramos said if she were moving to Graham, she is currently living in her parents' home, she said if she wanted to purchase the beautiful house you (referring to Weatherbee Real Estate -Shana Weatherbee-Wolfe) are selling on Virginia Street, Ms. Ramos said if she were driving around on the streets, she would be a little concerned. Ms. Ramos said she would be asking if she could park on the side or front of the property without damaging her car. Sonya Ramos said she would be concerned as to whether her children could safely play on the streets without worrying about flipping a bike and busting a head open on the side of the road. Ms. Ramos said those are the things she would consider when choosing to purchase a property. Ms. Ramos said she would be okay (referring to a street maintenance fee) if she knew she would be putting funds toward that maintenance or repair. Ms. Ramos said she understands sometimes we have to give a little more to get what we need, and she wants to make sure her money is going directly for that. Ms. Ramos said she would be completely for that (street maintenance fee) because she knows that she will be contributing to something that is going to help herself and fellow people. Ms. Ramos said she has started riding bike (bicycle), there is several times that a car is coming, she would like to pull over, but she might freaking hit a hole and fall over. Ms. Ramos said she was sorry, but she is not going to break her arm so the car can wait or go around her. Alex Heartfield asked what impact a \$5.00 street maintenance fee have. Brandon said it would be about the same as the sewer rates which would generate about \$270,000. Jack Little asked if that were something that had to be voted on (referring to a road maintenance fee). Brandon said he said could possibly be by an election, but he will check. Brandon said it would have to be proposed in utility rates. Brandon said Abilene did take it (referring to a road maintenance fee) to an election, but it was required, can be adopted as the utility rate. Shana Weatherbee-Wolfe said even at \$15,000 to \$20,000 that is a lot to fix. Brandon said we (City of Graham) must be realistic. Brandon told Sonya Ramos that she had brought up sidewalks and to get sidewalks and streets to the standards she is describing is not realistic in the next ten (10) years. Brandon said brand new paved streets and sidewalks along the busy areas. Brandon told Sonya Ramos that with the money we (City of Graham) are dealing with, the first item discussed in her (Sonya Ramos) public comment was not to increase taxes. Brandon said we (City of Graham) cannot get there without a tax increase or figuring another way to generate revenue and have the standard of expectation she (Sonya Ramos) is talking about. Brandon said he has been here (at City of Graham) for six (6) years and the trash truck change took place right when he came to the City of Graham. Brandon said it has been frustrating with the negative impact on the streets and Brandon complimented City of Graham staff trying to make substantial repairs. Brandon said chip seal was being ineffectively done on streets which was ineffective, so the City (of Graham) is trying to use better materials. Brandon said Jack Edwards has been the street superintendent for two (2) years and staff have done the best for what was available to work with. Brandon said his first two (2) years he worked for the City of Graham; the sales tax revenue shortfall caused total dissemination of the street budget. Brandon said without staff, it can not be done and there is a struggle to retain staff. Brandon said with the water department and line repairs, there was an individual who was a huge asset that left and two (2) others that were considering leaving the City (of Graham). Brandon said the City (of Graham) struggles like all other employers do because if there is no staff for what is budgeted, it puts the City (of Graham) in a hard place. Brandon said the community is all in this together. Brandon said to do a long-term bond, a company would have to be hired to mill streets and repave them (the streets). Brandon said that is a substantial investment the public needs to discuss and have on a ballot. Jack Little asked where the money for streets comes from. Brandon said the funds for streets are in the general fund. Mayor Blanton said the general fund (referring to revenue) which is sales tax, ad valorem, and franchise tax. Jack Little said to take the burden off the citizens, we (City of Graham) need to concentrate on getting businesses to Graham and focus on the type of businesses that will generate sales tax and ad valorem tax. Brandon said it is gradual, and there is currently more interest in Graham since he has been here (in Graham). Jack Little said that (referring to new businesses) would be the quickest fix (to avoid tax increases) and not put the burden back on the citizens. Brandon said the struggle EDC (Economic Development) is staffing and nearly every business state staffing is their biggest issue. Brandon said there is a deficiency in workforce and if there are people to fill the jobs, then there is a concern of affordable housing. Brandon said there is needs for affordable housing including apartment complexes which there have been inquiries in that area. Brandon said it all must fold into place to grow us (Graham community). Mayor Blanton said there must be affordable housing and currently we (City of Graham) do not have an employee base that could support a new 25 to 50 employees. Mayor Blanton said there is a company closing a facility in Wichita Falls and trying to move everything here (Graham). Mayor Blanton said the company is having to bus individuals because there is no housing. Sonya Ramos said you all (referring to Council) keep talking about employees and said in theory, some kids are graduating out of high school. Ms. Ramos said some are not going to go college bound. Ms. Ramos asked if they (referring to Council) if have thought of a way to integrate into the school a way to employ seniors exiting high school students into entry level jobs in the city. Brandon said requests have been made to the junior college (NCTC) to offer more trades. Brandon requested Sonya Ramos visit with the new individual (at NCTC) named Dr. Bunyard. Brandon challenged Ms. Ramos to visit with Dr. Bunyard. Brandon said she (Dr. Bunyard) is excited about the opportunities that can be provided to kids. Brandon said he has visited with Dr. Bunyard about educating local kids about what they offer (NCTC). Sonya Ramos said she is talking about municipality jobs. Brandon said, regrettably, there are other jobs that are currently paying better than the City (of Graham) here in Graham, Texas. Brandon said anyone wanting a job in Graham, the jobs are available. Brandon

said he discussed with her (Dr. Bunyard) of having an introductory class for opportunities in Graham and bring those companies in. Brandon said our neighbors in Olney have some great companies that generate. Brandon said when looking at Young County, it is really needed to see what this county (Young County) has done in a shared relationship with Southern Bleacher and Tower Extrusion. Brandon said Air Tractor in Olney, Texoma Metals in Graham makes parts for Semco which is the largest producer of portable concrete plants. Brandon said all of this takes place in Young County, not to mention the company 1954 which is south of town (Graham). Brandon said some may think they are in a dead-end area in Graham but there are a lot of opportunities in Graham. Brandon said his opinion is kids have been too often told to attend college. Brandon said life is really dictated by work ethic and a willingness to make a difference where they can. Brandon said there are a lot of opportunities in Graham, Texas and then Brandon thanked Sonya Ramos for her comments. Shana Weatherbee-Wolfe said Graham High School also offers endorsements, work with high school students to identify their specialties, and may still offer a CNA (Certified Nursing Assistant) program and offer a work program. Jack Little said he moved to Graham in 1981 and has noticed that when kids graduate high school, including his own two (2) children, the first thing they want to do is leave Graham. Jack Little said later, when they get married have their own children, by the time their children are ready to attend school, they are ready to move back to Graham. Sonya Ramos said she knows that. Jack Little said it amazes him and he chuckles at it. Jack Little said he hopes it gets to a point in the City of Graham, there are jobs available for the grown children to return to Graham. Jack Little said that will help us (Graham community) all around. Mayor Blanton asked if there were any other comments for the public hearing. Jimmy McLeroy said to give the employees the percent because it is deserved. Jimmy McLeroy said he knows a lot of City (of Graham) employees and has kin working for the City (of Graham). Jimmy McLeroy said for people to walk into United (grocery store) and see how the prices have gone up. Jimmy McLeroy said that everyone will understand why City (of Graham) employees are looking (for other jobs). Mayor Blanton said he appreciated everyone's comments and interests in the City (of Graham). Mayor Blanton said it is all part of us trying to work together to have a better community and city. Randy Cantin said Mayor Blanton's comment was well-said. Mayor Blanton announced the conclusion of the public hearing.

EXIT FROM PUBLIC HEARING AT 10:02 A.M.

Resumed to regular meeting and Brandon requested reports be made to relieve staff from the meeting.

REPORTS:

- Public Works Director, Randall Dawson, said there was a lot of hot mix laid yesterday (September 1, 2021). The 1300 block of Morado Street was repaired. The job was tough, and the employees worked hard. Mayor Blanton said it was very hot outside. There has been an increase in water leaks recently. Grass is still growing since there were rains early in August (2021). We are still moving along. Randy Cantin asked if the temperature is causing most of the water leaks. Randall said the shifting of the ground and has noticed in his own yard, there are cracks in the ground since he does not water.
- Water Plant Supervisor, Dennis Fellows, said the plant is running well. He went around the City (of Graham) the other day and checked water quality at hydrants. Residuals are good and coming out crystal clear on every hydrant. Randy Cantin asked if there have been dirty water calls. Brandon asked Randall if there have been a lot of calls. Randall said there have not been any this week (August 30 to Sept 2, 2021).
- Municipal Court Judge, Jim Reeves, said he and Carla completed their mandatory training for the year. The training was online and closed one (1) day to complete it. Doing the training online saved a bunch of travel expense to Lubbock, Austin, Dallas, or wherever it would take place. There are 146 active cases currently. There are 769 outstanding warrants which they are trying to collect that total alone is \$385,430.60. That is a lot of money they are working on collecting. They have disposed of 2,608 cases and still have 4,771 cases. Carla is doing an outstanding job as clerk. Pre-trials are starting on Tuesday (September 7, 2021).
- Chamber Manager, Lisa Kinkead, said the quarterly luncheon is scheduled for September 14, 2021. Brandon asked for the topic. Graham Marketplace will be introduced by Pixel Pie Design. All the Chamber local retailers can sell their products online in the website. The website will be launched at the luncheon.
- City Manager, Brandon Anderson, said the lake is 94 percent full. The Young Central Appraisal District will have a public hearing on September 8, 2021, at 8:30 a.m. at the YCAD board room to discuss the ten (10) percent increase in their budget. Jack Little asked how big the board is. Brandon and Mayor Blanton both said very small. Brandon said COVID cases are continuing to rise, and the Delta variant is very aggressive. Some are under the assumption that the vaccine is the cure all. Medical professionals are saying if someone is to catch COVID or catch COVID again, being vaccinated may prevent a visit to the hospital. There are 152 active COVID cases in Young County. 7 people are in the hospital currently. Continue to be vigilant in taking care of yourself and if you are ill, stay home. Brandon is recommending the vaccine because it lessens the symptoms and may help keep people out of the hospital. It is a struggle to get good facts about COVID because it seems to be politicized at a higher level. Local doctors care and are still recommending vaccinations and remaining at home if you do not feel well. Graham Regional Theater and the Graham Leader is doing a fund raiser on October 31, 2021. They are doing a haunted house at 620 Oak Street.

Mayor Blanton announced Council to enter Executive Session.

ENTERED INTO AN EXECUTIVE SESSION AT 10:09 A.M.

- 551.072 (Deliberation regarding real property)
- Discuss Commercial Lake Lot Lease with RKJ Adventures, LLC
 - Discuss process of selling lake lots (land) to current lease holders at Lake Graham

EXIT FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION AT 10:36 A.M.

CONSIDER AND ACT ON INITIATING THE PROCESS OF SELLING LAKE LOTS (LAND) TO INTERESTED LEASE HOLDERS ON LAKE GRAHAM:

Alex Heartfield said he would like to make a motion to approve the City of Graham policy dated August 31, 2021. The policy allows, with certain conditions, that the lake lot lease holders can purchase the lake lot leases from the City of Graham. Alex said with the addition of that if the City of Graham rejects a bid, that would allow the City (of Graham) to obtain an appraisal at the expense of the City (of Graham). Shana Weatherbee-Wolfe provided the second motion. Brandon said he wanted to provide the background before approval. Brandon said this policy allows the lake


lot lease holder, and only the lake lot lease holder, the ability to obtain a certified appraisal. The appraisal will be submitted to the City Council for review. Brandon said that by statute that the City Council has the authority to accept or reject all bids. If during the process, they (lake lot lease holders) may have an appraisal of their own done, they (lake lot lease holders) would be able to do that (order appraisal) at the expense of the City (of Graham) for comparison reasons. Brandon said if everything checks out and the City Council accepts that bid, then it will allow the deed process to start. The City of Graham and the buyer would split the closing costs. The City of Graham will have a survey done at the expense of the City (of Graham). The result will be the lease lot holder having the deed to the property for which they are being taxed. Brandon said a letter, along with the policy and explanation, will be sent to all lake lot lease holders if the policy is approved. Alex Heartfield said it is the right thing to do. Jack Little said if a lake lot lease holder does not want to buy, then the lease agreement will continue. Brandon said this is only for those wanting to own the land and if not interested, then lease will not change. Alex made the first motion and Shana Weatherbee-Wolfe seconded. By a vote of 4-0, the motion passed.

CONSIDER AND ACT ON A COMMERCIAL LAKE LOT LEASE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF GRAHAM AND RKJ ADVENTURES, LLC:

Alex Heartfield made the motion to approve the lease for 15.337 acres, more or less, to RKJ Adventures. Alex Heartfield said that in addition, the lease terms and lien subordination agreement, allow the City Manager to sign. Alex Heartfield said the City Manager is authorized to make minor edits to the agreement and any major edits needed will be presented to City Council for approval. Shana Weatherbee-Wolfe made the second motion and the lease agreement was unanimously approved 4-0.

ADJOURNMENT:

Jack Little made the motion to adjourn the meeting and Alex Heartfield seconded.



Neal Blanton, Mayor

ATTEST: 
Sharon McFadden, City Secretary