

Monday September 21, 2026, 6:30 PM Special Meeting

The City Council of the City of Robert Lee, Texas, met in Regular Session at the City Hall at 6:30 p.m. on September 21, 2026.

Present: Mayor Steven Arens, Council Members: Mike Stephens, Skyler Rainwater, Josh Tennison, Jonathan Torres, and Megan Sheppard
Staff: City Administrator Amanda Portales, City Superintendent Clayton Brickey, Code Enforcement Officer Martha Grimes, Deputy City Administrator Kiara Burns

Call to Order, Quorum Determined, Meeting Declared Open

- A. Public Hearing (Final)- CDBG 2023 Program Community Development Grant
Hearing opened for public comment on 3rd Street Grant.
With no comments, hearing is closed.
- B. FY 2026-2027 Budget Hearing
Hearing opened for public comment on proposed budget for FY 26-27.
With no comments, hearing is closed.

Proclamations and Presentations

Consent Agenda

Regular Agenda

- A. Resolution 21-26 2026 Tax Rate
Discussion: Proposed tax rate of \$0.419663 is a one cent increase per \$100 valuation from last year, and will generate an additional \$4,592.00 for the General Revenue Fund.
Motion by Council Member Josh Tennison to approve resolution 21-26 to set the tax rate for 2026. Seconded by Council Member Jonathan Torres. Vote 5-0, motion carried.
- B. Ordinance 18-26 Final Budget Amendment FY 25-26 (2nd reading)
No change from the previous reading.
Motion by Mayor Pro Tem Mike Stephens to approve Ordinance 18-26, Final Budget Amendment for FY 25-26. Seconded by Council Member Skyler Rainwater. Vote 5-0, motion carried.
- C. Ordinance 19-26 FY 2026-2027 Original Budget
Discussion: Budget for FY 26-27 presented to council.
The budget is summarized below;

Income	Revenue	\$2,359,926.00
Expense	Payroll	\$509,620.00
	M&O	\$1,850,360.00
	Debt	\$0.00

Motion by Council Member Megan Sheppard to approve ordinance 19-26, Budget for FY 26-27. Seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Mike Stephens. Vote 5-0, motion carried.
- D. Ordinance 20-26 Fee Schedule

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Discussion: Fee schedule presented with annual rate increases. Water rates were increased by 3.33% to reflect the increase from the City of Bronte. The tiered system was also restructured to encourage customers to use less water. Additional tiered rates were presented to the council for consideration to be implemented during the different stages of the drought contingency. Sewer rates will also increase by 5% to help with the cost of maintenance of the plant.

Motion by Mayor Pro Tem Mike Stephens to approve ordinance 20-26, updating the fee schedule. Seconded by Council Member Jonathan Torres. Vote 5-0, motion carried.

E. Tx Health- Health Insurance Renewal for 2026

Discussion: Renewal has increased \$72.00 per employee.

Motion by Council Member Josh Tennison to renew insurance with TxHealth. Seconded by Council Member Skyler Rainwater. Vote 5-0, motion carried.

F. Housing Authority Commissioners & Chairman- Update & Approve Appointment

Motion by Mayor Pro Tem Mike Stephens to approve the appointment of Sherri Arens to the Housing Authority Board. Seconded by Council Member Skyler Rainwater. Vote 5-0, motion carried.

G. SB 3 Update- Emergency Flood Sirens

Discussion Only: The Concho Valley Council of Governments awarded Waterworks Engineering the job for the flood sirens grant. The initial setup cost would be free to the city, but the city would be responsible for maintaining the sirens after installation. Robert Lee has asked for three sirens: one in Fern Haven, one at Mountain Creek Dam, and the third would replace the siren on top of the water tower. The flood/emergency sirens are required for the city to qualify for other emergency grants.

H. City Attorney Agreement Renewal

Discussion: Renewal for city attorney presented. His retainer increased from \$2,400 for 12 hours to \$4,000 for 20 hours. The city was billed for 50.7 hours last year. Hourly rates stayed the same.

Motion by Mayor Pro Tem Mike Stephens to accept the renewal for Jeff Betty as the City Attorney. Seconded by Council Member Skyler Rainwater. Vote 5-0, motion carried.

I. FD Agreement- Proposed Changes for FY 26-27

The Robert Lee Volunteer Fire Department (VFD) presented proposed changes to its annual agreement with the City of Robert Lee. The agreement provides \$15,000 in funding in exchange for fire protection services within city limits and use of the City-owned building.

The following changes were requested under VFD Obligations:

Remove “Non-member volunteers will not be used for fire protection by the VFD” from Item D. The City expressed concern that removing this provision could allow individuals who are not VFD members or trained firefighters to participate in fire protection activities and could create additional liability concerns.

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D. VFD agrees to cause its members and personnel providing fire protection services in performance of this contract, when performing said services, to conduct themselves in a professional manner and to comply with applicable laws. ~~Non-member volunteers will not be used for fire protection by the VFD.~~ All fire fighters of the VFD must be members of the VFD and properly trained and equipped to perform fire protection duties. Radio communications will be conducted in accord with any rules, procedures or directives of the Sheriff of Coke County. The VFD further agrees that it will cooperate with the CITY Fire Marshal to the extent provided for in Texas law.

Item G. Remove it entirely.

G. The books and records maintained for operating VFD shall be open to inspection by the CITY of its designated representatives during normal business hours.

Item H. Change Financial Report requirement to tax return and change the timeline it's submitted to the CITY.

H. VFD shall submit a copy of the tax return ~~financial report~~ to the CITY no later than two ~~three~~ months after receiving the report ~~the close of the VFD's fiscal year.~~

Item I. Remove Entirely.

I. The VFD shall file a TXFIRS report with the State Fire Marshall's office for each incident. The City of Robert Lee is authorized to review all fire incident reports filed by the Volunteer Fire Department with the State Fire Marshal's Office.

Item J. SOG's will only be submitted to the city when the contract is renewed instead of 30 days following the change.

J. VFD has submitted a document entitled Standard Operating Guidelines (SOGs) and by this agreement pledges to comply with all of the guidelines and requirements contained therein. Any amendments or additions to the SOGs will be submitted to the City at the time of renewal ~~within thirty (30) days of approval by the VFD.~~ Such amendments or additions will be included as an attachment to this agreement at the beginning of the next contract period.

During FY 2025–26, the VFD's board and officer positions changed on multiple occasions, and City Hall was not consistently provided updated contact information. The Council discussed establishing a designated point of contact for VFD-related correspondence. City staff explained that correspondence directed to only a few individuals had previously gone unanswered or without follow-up, and City Hall subsequently began including all board members on correspondence. The Council expressed a preference for having a designated point of contact for VFD-related correspondence. City staff stated that if correspondence directed to the designated contact

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does not receive a response or follow-up, City staff will consult with the Council regarding further communication.

Item K. Remove entirely.

K. The VFD recognizes that the CITY has no responsibility to furnish statutory workers' compensation coverage for VFD employees, officers, members, or volunteers, and VFD waives any right to pursue the CITY for liability regarding payments for this coverage or for liability regarding payments for claims filed against any coverage it may acquire.

The VFD requested to make the following change under Dispute Resolution:

Item D. Add Fire Board President or Representative.

D. Second Resolution Meeting. If the parties' designated representatives cannot reach an agreed resolution, the following representatives shall meet to discuss the matter: VFD: Chief and/or Assistant or Deputy Chief and Fire Board President or Representative; City: Mayor and/or City Administrator.

The VFD requested that the following requirements be removed entirely from the General Provisions section:

NIMS – National Incident Management Systems: The VFD shall supply the CITY, at the time of execution of this contract, a list of personnel for the Fire Department as well as the Certification of NIMS compliant testing for each person on the list. Testing shall be in accordance with FEMA guidelines as to what level, who and when training is done to remain compliance. All departments must be NIMS compliant.

Department Chief Officers shall complete NIMS 300 and are encouraged to complete NIMS 400 training.

The City stated the VFD has not complied with the NIMS documentation requirement in the current agreement. The City was informed the VFD currently uses a different training course. The proposed agreement did not identify that training course as a replacement for the NIMS requirements.

A letter was prepared by the City Attorney advising the Council not to approve the agreement with the VFD as presented, as it does not meet state and federal guidelines for the use of tax dollars by fire departments. If the VFD would like to separate the lease of the building from the funding, the city can do that, but they would still be required to pay Fair Market Value rental for the building.

Item tabled for the September 28, 2026, regular meeting.

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Reports

Mayor

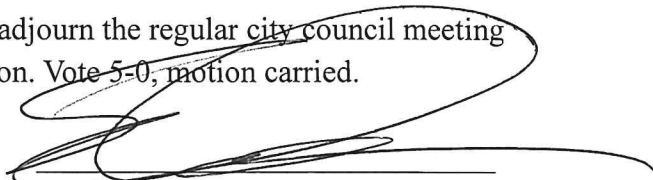
Administrator

Superintendent

Requests for Future Agenda Items

Adjournment

Motion by Council Member Jonathan Torres to adjourn the regular city council meeting at 7:20 PM. Seconded by Council Member Josh Tennison. Vote 5-0, motion carried.


Steven Arens, Mayor

ATTEST:


Amanda Portales, City Administrator