

City of Hays  
City Commission  
Work Session Notes  
Thursday, July 17, 2025 – 4:00 p.m.

Present: Sandy Jacobs, Mason Ruder, Alaina Cunningham, Reese Barrick, Shaun Musil, Toby Dougherty, Collin Bielser, and Don F. Hoffman

**July 3, 2025 Work Session Notes**

There were no corrections or additions to the minutes of the work session held on July 3, 2025; the minutes stand approved as presented.

**Draft Ordinance to Allow Chickens in City Limits**

Collin Bielser, Deputy City Manager, stated that at the May 15<sup>th</sup> City Commission Work Session, City Staff presented a series of recommendations for a potential policy to allow urban chicken farming.

- Maximum of five hens. No roosters
- Allowed in any zoning district if property has a primary structure
- Chickens must be contained within a fenced in rear or side-yard and must be kept in a coop, run, or other confined structure at all times
- Coops, runs, etc. would be treated like any other accessory structure and would have to adhere to applicable planning and development regulations
- No registration system
- Complaint driven structure with enforcement handled by Hays Community Service Officers. Violations would be processed through Municipal Court

The draft ordinance as presented has been crafted with these recommendations in mind. The City's Public Relations Manager conducted an online community poll that ran for 10 days. There were nearly 1,900 respondents, and results indicated 58% supported the initiative, with 40% opposed and 2% no opinion. In addition to the poll, the City received 94 written correspondences, with 77% of that communication supportive of the policy.

Commissioners discussed having chickens in town and couldn't find a positive reason for the City of Hays to allow chickens. There was no consensus among the Commissioners; therefore, the agenda item will not move forward.

### **Review of Park Amenities**

Jeff Boyle, Director of Parks, presented an overview of the major parks, discussed current and past funding mechanisms, and discussed current and future financial needs.

Commissioners had a lot of discussion about the future of the parks in the City. The Commission greatly appreciated all the work it took gathering the information for this presentation and are happy that the Parks' staff is being proactive, so the Commission knows what to plan for.

### **2026 Budget Review**

Collin Bielser, Deputy City Manager, reminded the Commissioners that this 2026 Budget does keep the mill at 25 for the 17<sup>th</sup> year; however, it does exceed the revenue neutral rate. The notice that the City is going to exceed the revenue neutral rate needs to be at Ellis County tomorrow, July 18<sup>th</sup>.

Discussion was held about DSNWK's ask for additional money, which is currently not in the 2026 Budget. Consensus was that the Commission is upset with the State for cutting DSNWK funding, and they wish DSNWK would have come to them for budgeting help sooner before asking for money.

Commissioner Ruder exclaimed that this is a focused budget with a conservative approach, and he really appreciates it.

### **Other Items for Discussion**

Commissioner Barrick would like the topic of fireworks on a future Work Session; there have been multiple emails to Commissioners about this topic.

### **Executive Session**

Commissioner Ruder moved, Commissioner Cunningham seconded, that the Governing Body recess to an executive session at 5:37 p.m. for a period not to exceed 20 minutes to include the City Commission, City Manager, Deputy City Manager, Assistant City Manager, and City Attorney to discuss data related to the financial affairs or trade secrets of corporations, partnerships, trusts, and individual proprietorships.

Vote: Ayes: Sandy Jacobs

Mason Ruder

Alaina Cunningham

Reese Barrick

Shaun Musil

Commissioner Musil moved, Commissioner Ruder seconded, that the Governing Body recess to an executive session at 5:57 p.m. for a period not to exceed 20 minutes to include the City Commission, City Manager, Deputy City Manager, Assistant City Manager, and City Attorney to discuss data related to the financial affairs or trade secrets of corporations, partnerships, trusts, and individual proprietorships.

Vote: Ayes: Sandy Jacobs

Mason Ruder

Alaina Cunningham

Reese Barrick

Shaun Musil

No action was taken within the executive session, which ended at 6:14 p.m.

The work session was adjourned at 6:14 p.m.

Submitted by: \_\_\_\_\_

Jami Breit –City Clerk