

Funding Committee Unapproved Minutes 8/7/2025

Members Present: Lisa Meyer, Jon Martin, Jack Moseley, Butch Higginbotham, Denecia Ramsey, Scott Staples, Phillip Partain, Jim Erwin

Staff Present: Mayor Treat, Ted Taylor, Jordan Reynolds, Rebecca Kidder, Chief Carl Minden, Chief Brandon Futch

Guests Present: N/A

Call to Order: 6:01 PM by Chairperson Meyer

Approval of Minutes-June 24, 2025 Meeting - Motion by Partain, second by Martin

Public Comments

- None

New Business

- **Police & Fire Pensions**

- Mayor Treat provided an update:
 - As Bryant's population grows, sales tax revenue also grows, but the City needs more officers and firefighters.
 - A chart was presented showing:
 - General Fund pension costs by year
 - Examples of other cities with a designated police/fire millage
 - State law allows voter approval of up to 2 mills (1 mill each for police and fire pensions), which could generate approximately \$800,000 annually.
 - If approved, funds could be used to:
 - Add 3–4 police officers
 - Help pay for the ladder truck
 - Increase Bryant Youth Association and Bryant Senior Center funding to \$100,000 each
 - Would require City Council passage by December to appear on the March primary ballot.
 - Estimated homeowner impact: \$7.11/month.
 - Would create a dedicated Police and Fire Pension Fund, which does not currently exist.
- Committee and Staff Discussion

- Phillip Partain asked how other cities fund pensions—Chief Futch noted Little Rock uses a similar approach.
- Scott Staples asked about contributions—Chief Minden stated officers contribute ~7% and the City ~24%, with retirement paid out by LATFI.
- Jim Erwin asked Chief Minden how many officers are needed—minimum of 4.
- Scott Staples asked how the ladder truck would be funded without the millage—Mayor Treat said through the General Fund.
- Lisa Meyer asked how much City Council can raise mills—Mayor Treat said up to 5 mills, but voters can approve more; he prefers a public vote.
- Committee discussed timing, with Jon Martin noting that three Council readings would be required, so October introduction would be ideal.
- Lisa Meyer noted this would make Bryant's millage the highest in the county and asked about impacts—Partain said Benton has more resources to offset lower millage; Treat noted ISO ratings can save residents money.
- Jack Moseley said he supports public safety funding but is cautious about voter approval following recent A&P and BAM votes.
- Phillip Partain believed the fire station was key to the 2017 bond passing.
- Scott Staples suggested creating a one-page explainer on City operations, employee counts, budgets, and spending.
- Lisa Meyer noted Council may be hesitant given the upcoming water/sewer rate increases.
- Denecia Ramsey asked about communication channels beyond social media and the newsletter.
- Butch Higginbotham expressed concern about low turnout for March elections and meetings; stressed sales tax as an option.
- Lisa Meyer noted 65% of May voters were age 55+.
- Mayor Treat reminded the committee's purpose is to explore alternative funding ideas alongside staff proposals.
- Discussion included the possibility of a one-cent sales tax dedicated to public safety; police currently receive a smaller share of sales tax than fire.
- Committee weighed pros/cons of a millage vs. sales tax, with several preferring a sales tax.

- Scott Staples requested 3–4 funding options with estimated amounts.
- Phillip Partain emphasized public safety as the driver for the conversation.
- Jon Martin noted sales tax revenue would be collected faster than millage revenue.
- Staff to return next month with additional strategies for consideration

Adjournment: 7:17 motion by Erwin, 2nd by Higginbotham

Next meeting: September 4, 2025 at 6:00 PM in City Hall Conference Room