



City of West Orange

City Hall
2700 Western Avenue
West Orange, TX 77630

City Council Budget Hearing

Thursday, September 10, 2026

5:00 p.m.

Council Chambers

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Randy Branch
Michael Shugart, Sr.

Meritta Kennedy
Lanie Brown

Jay Odom
Gail Langton

APPOINTED OFFICIALS PRESENT:

Jon Sherwin
Simmie Gibson

Mike Stelly

Theresa Van Meter

OTHERS PRESENT:

Jane Branch
Tiffany Elmore

Marvin Burke Weems

Richard Bland

Call to Order

Mayor Branch called the hearing to order at 5:00 p.m. Council Member Shugart gave the invocation followed by the Mayor leading the Pledges of Allegiance to both the United States and Texas flags.

Hearing

Mayor Branch explained that the purpose of this hearing was to provide time to receive and discuss council and citizen input regarding the proposed budget for the City of West Orange for FY 2027. He added that a few questions had been raised during the recent Budget Workshop, and afterward council members were provided with several financial statements and reports that hopefully further answered their questions.

Council Member Brown thanked the mayor for getting that information out to them so quickly. She also thanked him for taking into consideration the amendments to the fire department budget that were discussed during the workshop.

The mayor then turned the discussion to the financial reports provided to council that covered the months of October through December, 2025. He wanted council to see how difficult those months were (and are every year), as very little revenue comes in during that time. Things do get much better in January, though, as property tax revenue and industrial district agreement payments come in.

Mr. Weems questioned how the city can continue operating with a deficit budget. Sooner or later the savings covering those deficits would run out. Taxes would have to go up.

Ms. Elmore questioned the \$25,000 budgeted for Consulting Expenses. Mayor Branch explained that the city would be contracting (on a monthly basis) with Traylor & Associates Grant Administrators to go out and search for grants for the City. This \$25,000 could possibly have the city awarded with thousands of dollars in grant funds. However, if, after a few months, it does not show any progress, the contract can always be cancelled.

Mayor Branch then asked if there were any further questions. With there being none, he asked if there was a motion to adopt the budget:

CITY OF WEST ORANGE, TEXAS				
2026-2027 PROPOSED BUDGET SUMMARY				
		<u>Operations</u>	<u>Capital Outlay</u>	<u>Total</u>
10	General Administration	\$ 538,414	\$ -	\$ 538,414
11	Building Official	94,445	-	\$ 94,445
12	Fire Department	148,493	-	\$ 148,493
13	Sanitation	628,509	-	\$ 628,509
14	Humane	99,177	-	\$ 99,177
15	Police	2,218,644	-	\$ 2,218,644
16	Municipal Court	194,975	-	\$ 194,975
17	Street	473,537	-	\$ 473,537
18	Parks & Facilities	80,413	-	\$ 80,413
21	Maintenance Shop	94,075	-	\$ 94,075
		\$ 4,570,682	\$ -	\$ 4,570,682
		TOTAL REVENUE	\$ 4,276,695	
		TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	\$ 4,570,682	
		TOTAL CAPITAL OUTLAY	-	
			\$ 4,570,682	
		Potential shortfall	\$ (293,987)	
	(to be funded from prior years' retained income)			
	+Court Technology Fund Transfer	\$ 9,350		
	+ Capital Imp. Fund Transfer			
			\$ (284,637)	
	NET POTENTIAL SHORTFALL	\$ (284,637)		

Council Member Brown made a motion that Ordinance No. 499 be approved, adopting the City's budget for the 2027 fiscal year, requiring a tax rate of \$0.424515 per \$100 assessed value. This motion was seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Kennedy. The mayor then called for a record vote:

Council Member Shugart	aye
Council Member Brown	aye
Mayor Branch	aye
Council Member Odom	aye
Council Member Langton	aye
Mayor Pro-Tem Kennedy	aye

Ordinance No. 499 was thereby unanimously adopted, approving the FY 2027 budget as presented.

Adjournment

With there being no further business before Council, Mayor Branch adjourned the hearing at 5:18 p.m.

Randy Branch
Randy Branch, Mayor

Randy Branch, Mayor

ATTEST:

Theresa Van Meter
Theresa Van Meter, City Secretary

