

City Page August 28, 2008

Council Approves IESI Rate Increase, Denies Fuel Surcharge

During the August 21st City Council Meeting, the Council acted on a proposed rate increase by IESI, the City's sanitation contractor. IESI was seeking council approval to increase the trash collection rate from \$10.00 per month to \$12.71 per month, and to increase the commercial collection rate by 18%. Along with the monthly increase, IESI also proposed a fuel surcharge that would adjust based on the cost of fuel during the billing cycle. The City Council approved the increase on the residential rates from \$10.00 to \$12.71 per month along with the increase in the commercial rate of 18%. The Council denied the proposed fuel surcharge. This is the first increase in solid waste collection rates in three years. The company has cited rising fuel cost as the main reason for the request.

Council Continues Review of Proposed Revisions to Sign Ordinance

During the August 21, 2008 City Council Meeting the Council continued their review and discussion of proposed revisions to the current City of Joshua Sign Ordinance. Action was tabled on the ordinance, and will be back on the agenda for the September 18, 2008 City Council Meeting. The proposed changes are meant to clarify the requirements, and make them easier to enforce. The proposed changes include allowing "Kiosk Signs", to prevent visual clutter around new developments, a regulation allowing the City to regulate signs in its extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ), to clarify portable sign regulations, and clarification of rules related to garage sale signs. Sign regulations are in place in an effort to reduce distractions for drivers, which may otherwise create public health and safety hazards.

Proposed General Fund and Capital Improvement Projects Budget

The City Council will hold the second public hearings on the proposed budget and the proposed tax rate during a September 4th special meeting that will begin at 6:30 pm. The following provides a summary of the Proposed General Fund and Capital Improvement Projects budget.

Proposed **General Fund revenues** total **\$2,767,270**, which comes from the following sources:

- Property Tax Collections of \$1,324,607 (49% of total revenue)
- Sales Tax Revenues of \$480,000 (17% of total revenue)
- Franchise Fee Revenues of \$255,000 (9% of total revenue)
- Revenue from Permits and Fees of \$225,000 (8% of total revenue)
- Revenue from fines of \$200,000 (7% of total revenue)
- Grant awards of \$134,000 (5% of total revenue)
- Payment from Fire District of \$93,023 (3% of total revenue), and
- Revenue from other sources of \$55,640 (2% of total revenue)

The Council has proposed a property tax rate of \$0.653476 per \$100 of valuation which is a slight decrease from the current property tax rate of \$0.656219 per \$100 of valuation. However, total revenues from property tax collections will increase over the previous year because of new construction and increases in existing property values.

Proposed **General Fund expenditures** for next fiscal year total **\$2,767,270**. This includes funds to maintain City services at the current level with expenditures distributed by City Department as follows:

- Police Department \$883,984 (32% of total expenditures)
- Administration \$414,810 (15% of total expenditures)
- Streets and Building Maintenance \$297,250 (11% of total expenditures)
- Fire and Emergency Medical Services \$269,893 (10% of total expenditures)
- Community Services \$204,825 (7% of total expenditures)
- Non-Departmental \$227,693 (8% of total expenditures)
- Building Inspections and Code Enforcement \$193,133 (7% of total expenditures)
- Municipal Court \$145,079 (5% of total expenditures)
- Animal Control \$126,031 (5% of total expenditures)
- Mayor & Council \$4,570 (less than 0% of total expenditures)

Proposed expenditures also include the following additional services or programs:

1. 1 Additional Police Officer to provide additional patrol coverage during peak call times
2. Provide incentive pay for Firefighters and EMS personnel on a per call basis to improve response time and increase the number of calls responded to by the Joshua Volunteer Fire Department
3. Potential to provide a full time Code Enforcement Officer at 6 months into the fiscal year to provide a proactive code enforcement program
4. Provide a Citizen Request Page to the City web site to allow more efficient and effective responses to citizen's concerns
5. Provide a City wide emergency notification system to notify citizens of severe weather and other emergencies
6. Provide an additional crew member for the Street Department which will allow for two street crews and increase productivity in street maintenance
7. Provide new budgeting and finance software to enhance financial reporting and tracking capabilities
8. Provide additional micro chips at the animal shelter to comply with state law which will be offset with revenue from adoption fees

The City Council is also proposing a Capital Improvement Projects budget that includes the following street projects, building improvements, and equipment:

- Country Club Road Bridge Reconstruction
- Forrest Lane Repairs
- Caddo Road Repairs
- Eddy Street Repairs
- Cofield Drive drainage improvements
- Addition of Bays and Office Space to the Fire Department
- Addition of Office Space to the Street Department Service Center
- Replacing the air conditioning system at the Animal Shelter
- An additional patrol car for the Police Department
- A command vehicle for the Fire Department
- Street Department equipment
- An emergency generator for the emergency operations center
- Bunker gear and extractor system for the Fire Department

These capital projects will be funded with reserves set aside for street and drainage projects, road use agreement fees collected with gas drilling permits, and issuance of a 7 year Tax Note in the amount of \$250,000 which will not result in an increase in the property tax rate.

Upcoming City Meetings and Events

Planning & Zoning Commission Regular Meeting
Proposed Budget & Tax Rate Public Hearings
4A Economic Development Board Regular Meeting
4B Economic Development Board Regular Meeting
Special City Council meeting
Regular City Council meeting

Tuesday September 2nd 7:00 PM
Thursday September 4th 6:30 PM
Tuesday September 9th 5:30 PM
Tuesday September 9th 7:00 PM
Tuesday September 15th 6:30 PM
Thursday September 18th 6:30 PM