

## Budget plan calls for raises, hiring of assistant city manager

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rate changes would add \$1 per month to the base rate and one-fourth of a cent per kilowatt-hour to the consumption charge. The proposed changes would increase a customer's bill by \$2.50 per thousand kilowatt-hours, plus \$1. An account holder with consumption of 1,000 kilowatt-hours, for example, would pay \$3.50 more per month, and a customer with consumption of 2,000 kilowatt-hours would pay \$6 more per month.

At its Aug. 7 budget meeting, the council asked City Manager Finley deGraffenried to put back into the upcoming year's budget a motor grader and a dump truck the street department requested. In earlier efforts to balance the budget, deGraffenried had recommended not funding those items.

Also on Aug. 7, the council called for including an assistant city manager position -- which Lampasas has had in the past but has foregone for several years -- in the proposed budget. The total cost of that management position, with salary and all benefits, is about \$122,000.

Additions of the equipment and one staff position raised the projected deficit from about \$152,000 to \$388,000.

To work toward a balanced budget after the Aug. 7 meeting, the city staff suggested a host of proposed expenditures to decrease. Also, a budget memorandum

from deGraffenried showed the motor grader and dump truck will be paid for with money left over from the issuance of certificates of obligation in 2011. The use of certificates of obligation money, out of what is called Fund 63, will save \$113,600 in the regular operating budget.

As a result of those suggested expenditure decreases -- along with adjustments to property and sales tax revenue projections that deGraffenried said were overly conservative -- the deficit was trimmed to about \$120,000. The proposed electric rate increases are expected to generate about \$300,000 in revenue, which would leave a surplus of a bit more than \$180,000.

At the council's direction, though, deGraffenried proposed a raise of \$864 per employee -- a total cost to the city of about \$96,000. Health insurance premiums will increase in the upcoming year, and the \$864 cost-of-living adjustment is enough to keep employees with the most expensive insurance coverage from seeing a reduction in net pay because of insurance premiums, city officials have said.

DeGraffenried's budget memo includes \$17,800 of additional expenses to adjust the pay of staff positions believed to be out of alignment with market conditions.

As a result of all the changes proposed since Aug. 7, deGraffenried on Monday presented the City Council a budget plan with

a surplus of about \$66,000.

The council agreed to give \$1,500 apiece to the Hill Country Children's Advocacy Center and the Hill Country 100 Club -- a support organization for emergency responders and their families. As a result, that left a surplus of about \$63,000.

The council ultimately decided to split the \$63,000 evenly among all city employees -- meaning each staff member will get a raise of about \$500-\$600, in addition to the \$864 cost-of-living adjustment. The wage adjustments will be given as salary increases, rather than as one-time payments.

At a previous meeting, Mayor Misti Talbert raised concerns about the perception that city officials planned to raise electric rates so they can give raises to city employees. At that meeting, Mrs. Talbert said officials instead should begin with a plan for no raises, determine what non-salary operating expenses are absolutely essential and budget from that perspective -- raising utility rates only if needed to balance the budget.

Mrs. Talbert said she was not contradicting her earlier position by supporting raises in the budget plan discussed Monday. The mayor said the approach the council took Monday was different than what city officials appeared to have taken earlier. Mrs. Talbert said instead of starting with the assumption that salaries would rise and then budgeting for higher revenue to offset

the increased expense, officials did the right thing in the most recent plan by supporting raises only after all other expenditures had been considered and there still was a surplus.

As the City Council settled on a budget plan Monday, the mayor said the budgeting process has been long and difficult. She thanked city staff members for their help throughout the process.

Former councilman Chris Harrison spoke during the budget workshop Monday, advocating city financial support for the Hill Country 100 Club.

On another topic, Harrison said the plan to buy a motor grader and dump truck does not address the street department's need for additional staffing -- particularly if the department does more road construction work than it has in past years. Harrison said several years ago the city decreased street department staffing as part of a plan to involve the street crew more in maintenance projects and less in construction.

Harrison's comments led to an extended discussion by the council and Public Works Director Shane Brown about costs and efficiency. One specific question was whether the city should hire contractors for road construction jobs -- as Councilman Mike White advocated -- or use the street department for some construction jobs.

Brown said because of the expense of hiring

### Included in the budget plan, as discussed Monday:

#### Revenue

- no increase in property tax rate
- increase monthly electric base rate by \$1
- increase electric consumption charge by one-fourth cent per kilowatt-hour

#### Expenditures

- \$864 cost-of-living increase per employee (to cover rise in health insurance premiums)
- additional raise of \$500-\$600 per employee
- add assistant city manager position: total cost of about \$122,000 (with salary and all benefits)

#### From hotel-motel tax funds

- \$50,000 for Hostess House rehabilitation
- \$50,000 for renovation of historic Colored School
- \$45,000 for Lampasas County Chamber of Commerce
- \$20,000 for Christmas on the Creek light display

contractors, the city can accomplish more work by using outside companies for some jobs but having the street department handle other construction projects. Brown also said while it would help the street department to add one or two employees, that is not needed in the upcoming fiscal year.

Although Harrison and Christmas on the Creek volunteers spoke during the budget workshop, no one spoke Monday during a formal public hearing about the proposed budget.

The city will hold public hearings about the proposed tax rate Aug. 28 at 7 p.m. and Sept. 5 at 5:30 p.m.

## Lampasas council approves sale of fire department vehicle to Lometa for \$8,000

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meeting packet, Sims wrote that since the variable frequency drive stopped working, the aerator has been operating at full power -- using about twice as much electricity as is necessary.

On another matter, the council voted unanimously to sell the city of Lometa the 25-year-old Unit 10 fire vehicle for \$8,000. The Lampasas Fire Department no longer needs the unit, which Chief Reece Oestreich said has been loaned to Lometa on an emergency basis since the Lometa Volunteer Fire Department's primary firefighting apparatus stopped working.

Council member TJ Monroe said she thinks the sale is a great idea, as it helps a small neighboring community.

Councilman Greg Smith said \$8,000 is a reasonable price, and he said the sale will help what he called Lampasas' "sister city."

In other business, the council approved Zachary Gautier's proposed Eagle Scout project in W.M. Brook Park. On the north side of Sulphur Creek, Gautier plans to extend a sidewalk from the suspension bridge about 105 feet westward to the creek. The sidewalk extension is intended to improve access for those who visit the park.

Gautier said he will raise funds for his Eagle Scout project, which he estimated will cost \$1,500-\$2,000. He said he is working with a local company and hopes to have construction begin by November/December -- or possibly earlier.

Mayor Misti Talbert said she always likes it when Eagle Scout candidates propose projects to benefit the public -- particularly the city and its parks. The mayor thanked Gautier and wished him success on his project.

In other items, the City Council:

- unanimously approved Lampasas Association for the Arts' request for \$1,745 of hotel-motel occupancy tax funds for the Oct. 14 Jammin' with Art in the Park event.
- OK'd the Lampasas County Chamber of Commerce's request for \$2,169 of hotel-motel tax funding for the Herb & Art Festival. The fest will be offered Oct. 14 in conjunction with Art in the Park.

Councilman Robert McCauley, who frequently

questions the return the city gets on events it helps fund with hotel-motel taxes, cast the lone dissenting vote. McCauley noted the chamber of commerce requested about 50 percent more than the \$1,440 the city gave last year toward the Herb & Art Festival. Chamber Executive Director Molly Lesley said the increase is because of additional emphasis on advertising for the upcoming event.

- passed the first reading of an ordinance that relates to traffic signs at

intersections. If the second reading succeeds Aug. 28, the intersection of Deb Lynn Avenue and South Willis Street will become a three-way stop. Currently, there is only one stop sign, and it is on Deb Lynn. The ordinance also will replace a yield sign at South Willis and Chris James streets with a stop sign.

Police Chief Sammy Bailey said when new stop signs are installed, the public will be notified. She also said as people adjust to the new stop signs, police officers will give warnings

for a while instead of immediately writing tickets for not stopping at the intersections.

- voted unanimously to appoint retired Lampasas Independent School District teacher Karen Love to the Library Board.
- voted to renew employee

health insurance coverage through Scott & White Health Plan for the 2017-2018 fiscal year. Rates for the upcoming budget year are about 13 percent higher than the current fiscal year's rates.

- passed the first reading of an ordinance to set

conditions for the use of columbaria in Oak Hill Cemetery. A columbarium, defined in the ordinance as a durable structure with niches to store cremated remains, has been installed in the cemetery. Fees are \$550 for a single niche and \$650 for a double.

### Notice of Public Hearing on Tax Increase

The City of Lampasas will hold two public hearings on a proposal to increase total tax revenues from properties on the tax roll in the preceding tax year by 6.19 percent (percentage by which proposed tax rate exceeds lower of rollback tax rate or effective tax calculated under Chapter 26, Tax Code). Your individual taxes may increase at a greater or lesser rate, or even decrease, depending on the change in the taxable value of your property in relation to the change in taxable value of all other property and the tax rate that is adopted.

The first public hearing will be held on August 28, 2017 at 7:00 pm at Council Chambers, 405 S. Main Street, Lampasas, Texas.

The second public hearing will be held on September 5, 2017 at 5:30 pm at Council Chambers, 405 S. Main Street, Lampasas, Texas.

The members of the governing body voted on the proposal to consider the tax increase as follows:

FOR:	Misti Talbert	Delana Toups
	Chuck Williamson	Robert McCauley
	TJ Monroe	Mike White
	Greg Smith	

AGAINST:

PRESENT and not voting:

ABSENT:

The average taxable value of a residence homestead in City of Lampasas last year was \$85,635. Based on last year's tax rate of \$0.395218 per \$100 of taxable value, the amount of taxes imposed last year on the average home was \$338.44.

The average taxable value of a residence homestead in City of Lampasas this year is \$87,481. If the governing body adopts the effective tax rate for this year of \$0.372178 per \$100 of taxable value, the amount of taxes imposed this year on the average home would be \$325.59.

If the governing body adopts the proposed tax rate of \$0.395218 per \$100 of taxable value, the amount of taxes imposed this year on the average home would be \$345.74.

Members of the public are encouraged to attend the hearings and express their views.

## Benefit for Rose

Please join us on  
**August 20, 2017 • 11 a.m.**  
**Lampasas VFW Post 8539**

481 N. Hwy. 183  
Live Acoustic Music provided by:  
**Billy Peak & Friends**  
**Raffle • \$8 BBQ Plates**  
*Dine-In or Take-Out Until Sold Out*



For additional information or to make a contribution and/or donation contact **Jess or Rebecca Ramos 254-458-2060**

**Falling is NOT an inevitable part of aging -- if risk factors are identified early, and the right treatment is delivered...**

**The RIGHT Therapy Program Can Help Reduce Accidental Falls.**

**Who is Appropriate for a Fall Prevention Program?**

- Those with a fear of falling.
- Those who have recently fallen.
- Those avoiding normal activities.
- Those who are unsteady while standing, walking or turning.
- Those who have suffered a stroke or hip fracture.
- Those with osteoporosis, Parkinson's, Alzheimer's or other Dementia-related disorders.
- Those who are experiencing side effects from medication causing dizziness, sedation, confusion or weakness.

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