

City budget to cut property taxes next year

By Tom Betz
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City property owners will keep a little more green in their pockets next year with a decrease of more than 7.4 percent in the property tax in the proposed budget to be approved at a commission meeting Monday evening.

The budget hearing will be at 5 p.m. at the opening of the commission meeting, and approval should come later in the agenda.

The budget for next year will reduce the property tax level by 4.19 mills and that means for a homeowner with a home appraised at \$75,000, city property taxes will drop \$36.18, and for a commercial

business appraised at \$75,000 the tax will drop \$78.66.

The total city budget will increase from \$13,960,733 to \$14,442,754 (3.5 percent), but the city property tax collected will drop from \$1,381,771 to \$1,331,046, a 3.7 percent decrease.

During city budget work sessions July 7-8, commissioners said they wanted to be sure the property tax would go down. They cut transfers to the general fund and decided not to raise utility rates to keep the budget below last year.

The commissioners held a work session at 7 a.m. Tuesday morning to review the budget figures, and talk about the amount set aside for

merit raises for city employees. During the sessions last month, they had agreed to cut the total salary amount by one-third from \$305,000 to \$203,000 to help bring the property tax down from a proposed drop of 2.2 mills to the 4.19 mills.

At Tuesday's session, Mayor Rick Billinger said he was concerned the total amount of the proposed salary increases was higher than needed and wanted to review the numbers to see if it could be cut any more.

City Manager Wayne Hill said having the merit raises in the budget does not mean all of the money would be spent, but it would give him the flexibility to raise some of the lower-paid and critical jobs to be

more competitive.

Billinger said he was more comfortable with a set percentage like the 5 percent that was in the budget last year.

City Commissioner Josh Dechant went through the figures and said it appeared to him that the total for salaries was \$4,000 higher than what was in the budget for this year. The budget for this year had a total salary figure of \$199,000 and the proposed budget for next year has a

figure of \$203,000.

City Commissioner Dave Daniels, who attended the meeting via speaker phone, said he had first thought the figures were high, but when everything had been explained, he felt the budget should be adopted as proposed.

City Commissioner John Garcia, however, said he agreed with Billinger that the figures appeared to be too high, and suggested cutting them by another \$50,000.

City Commissioner Annette Fairbanks said she felt the figures were fair, and did not see any reason to change the budget.

Billinger said it appeared there was a consensus to leave the budget figures alone. No official vote was taken because it was a work session.

Daniels said he would not be at the meeting on Monday, but could be reached by phone again if needed to vote.

At-large voting forum to be Monday

FORUM, from Page 1

Issue stalled in a conference committee in Topeka this spring. It died when the bill number was used to pass a different measure.

Linton said the forum would open with an explanation of what the proposed bill would do and the history of the past two years. He said the current commissioners should be present, and people will get a chance to talk and to ask questions.

Linton said the committee plans

to hold two more forums, one in September and one in October, to gather information to present to the commissioners.

Commissioner Chuck Thomas said in May he felt one of the reasons the bill failed was that the county had not held public forums legislators had asked for before it was passed by the Senate and was sent to a conference committee. Thomas had said in March he was not in favor of the change. His vote against pursuing the bill in the state

Senate created confusion in Topeka that all the county commissioners did not support the change.

At a candidate forum July 21, county commission candidates were asked about the at-large voting issue. County Commissioner Mitch Tiede said he had changed his mind and was not in favor of abandoning the district system, but said it should be up to the people.

County Commissioner Kevin Rasure said he felt it was up to the people to decide the issue at an election and was disappointed the bill had failed to pass.

Dee Miller, who is running against Tiede in the Democratic primary, and Max Linin, who is running against Rasure in the Republican primary, both said they felt the at-large voting issue was something the citizens should decide.

Sheriff asks Republican voters to elect him to second term

SHERIFF, from Page 1

Butts said he was disturbed by a comment from his opponent that he is not out riding a shift.

"There are times when I have put in a 60-70 hour weeks," he said. "I do a lot of things rather than sit behind a desk. I really take offense at that."

"I won't be out on the road from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. every day. The sheriff's department is a business and I have a business to run."

He said another of the comments from his opponent deal with not having a deputy on the road between 2 a.m. and 7 a.m. Since January, he said, the department has had just eight calls on that shift, none of them serious.

Butts said his wife Cindy sells for Homestead Real Estate, daughter Shawnee is a student at Fort Hays

State University and son Brock a fifth grader at North Elementary School.

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Terms of Sale: Down Payment: \$2,000 cash down at close of auction. Balance due at closing. **Taxes:** All 2007 taxes and all prior years, if any, shall be paid by seller. All 2008 taxes shall be prorated to date of deed. **Title Policy:** Title policy shall be at the expense of the buyer. **Purchase Agreement:** All successful bidders will be required to enter into a purchase agreement at the auction site immediately following the close of the auction. **Closing:** Closing shall be on or before September 7, 2008. **Possession:** Possession shall be at closing. **Financing:** Bidding is not conditional upon financing. You must have arranged prior financing. **Agency Disclosure:** Warren Realty & Auction Service and its representations and Carl Clark are exclusive agents for the seller(s) only. **Confirmation:** Seller has 24 hours to accept or reject any or all bids.

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SPORTS TELEVISION SCHEDULE

Saturday

10:30 a.m. 23/29 ESPN2 NASCAR Nationwide Series Qualifying Montreal

11 a.m. 7/11 CBS PGA Tournament WGC - Bridgestone Invitational: Third Round from Firestone Country Club in Akron, Ohio

12 p.m. 22/28 ESPN Amateur Baseball Big League Baseball Championship from Easley, S.C.

3/9 NBC Horse Racing Hambletonian Harness Racing from The Meadowlands in East Rutherford, N.J.

1 p.m. 8/8 NBC Champions Tour U.S. Senior Open Championship: Third Round from The Broadmoor in Colorado Springs, Colo.

1:30 p.m. 23/29 ESPN2 NASCAR Nationwide Series NAPA Auto Parts 200 presented by Dodge from Circuit Gilles Villeneuve in Montreal, Canada

3 p.m. 22/28 ESPN Horse Racing 2008 West Virginia Derby/ Darley Test from Chester, W.V.

4 p.m. 22/28 ESPN Sports Awards Pro Football Hall of Fame Induction from Canton, Ohio

5 p.m. 30/27 FXSP MLB Baseball Colorado Rockies at Florida Marlins from Dolphins Stadium

7 p.m. 23/29 ESPN2 U.S. Open Series Tennis Western & Southern Financial Group Masters: Men's Semifinal #1 from ATP Tennis Center in Cincinnati, Ohio

1 a.m. 23/29 ESPN2 USA Basketball Pre-Olympic Game USA vs. Russia from Shanghai Stadium in Shanghai, China

Sunday

11 a.m. 7/11 CBS PGA Tournament WGC - Bridgestone Invitational: Final Round from Firestone Country Club in Akron, Ohio

60/79 UNIV F'tbol Liga Mexicana AmÈrica jguilas vs Toluca Diablos desde Nemesio Dìez Estadio

12 p.m. 22/28 ESPN NASCAR Sprint Cup Pennsylvania 500 from Pocono Speedway in Long Pond, Pa.

12:10 p.m. 99/39 WGN MLB Baseball Pittsburgh Pirates at Chicago Cubs from Wrigley Field

1 p.m. 23/29 ESPN2 U.S. Open Series Tennis Western and Southern Financial Group Masters: Men's Final from Cincinnati, Ohio

3/9 NBC Champions Tour U.S. Senior Open Championship: Final Round from The Broadmoor in Colorado Springs, Colo.

8/8 NBC Champions Tour U.S. Senior Open Championship: Third Round from The Broadmoor in Colorado Springs, Colo.

Monday

3 p.m. 23/29 ESPN2 U.S. Open Series Tennis Rogers Cup: Final from Toronto, Canada

6 p.m. 22/28 ESPN MLB Baseball Philadelphia Phillies at St. Louis Cardinals from New Busch Stadium

8/8 NBC NFL Football NFL Hall of Fame Game Washington Redskins vs. Indianapolis Colts from Canton, Ohio

Tuesday

7 p.m. 30/27 FXSP MLB Baseball Colorado Rockies at Pittsburgh Pirates from PNC Park

Wednesday

5 p.m. 22/28 ESPN MLB Baseball Teams TBA

23/29 ESPN2 MLS Soccer Teams TBA from TBA

7 p.m. 23/29 ESPN2 Wednesday Night Fights Card TBA from TBA

30/27 FXSP MLB Baseball Washington Nationals at Colorado Rockies from Coors Field

Thursday

11 a.m. 28/40 TNT PGA Tournament PGA Championship: First Round from Oakland Hills CC in Bloomfield Township, Mich.

6 p.m. 7/11 CBS NFL Preseason Football Kansas City Chiefs at Chicago Bears from Soldier Field

22/28 ESPN Monday Night Football Preseason from University of Phoenix Stadium

7 p.m. 23/29 ESPN2 2008 Little League World Series Southwest Regional Final from Waco, Texas

Friday

11 a.m. 28/40 TNT PGA Tournament PGA Championship: Second Round from Oakland Hills CC in Bloomfield Township, Mich.

6 p.m. 22/28 ESPN 2008 Little League World Series Southeast Regional Final from St. Petersburg, Fla.

7 p.m. 23/29 ESPN2 Friday Night Fights Card TBA from TBA

30/27 FXSP MLB Baseball San Diego Padres at Colorado Rockies from Coors Field

9 p.m. 23/29 ESPN2 U.S. Open Series Tennis Countrywide Classic: Quarterfinal from Los Angeles, Calif.

Crossword Puzzle

Type B Personalities

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
14				15						16			
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ACROSS

1. Smoking, to some
5. Kegler's pickup
10. Speak ill of
14. Not working
15. Sweater synthetic
16. Woody's boy
17. Legendary Crimson Tide coach
19. "Keep it ___!"
20. Mr. Potato Head piece
21. Laundry item
22. Buyer's incentive
24. Need a bib
26. Vena ___ (main vein)
27. Under the weather
28. Crank out
32. Out-of-date
35. "Java" trumpeter
36. Explorer Tasman
37. ___ of Sandwich
38. Blacktops, say
39. Pooch's plaything
40. Corn holder
41. Some Monopoly properties: Abbr.
42. Alternative to dish
43. Unwrap in a hurry
45. ___ Lanka
46. Yemeni port
47. Hindered, as growth
51. Elopers' need
54. Grin from ear to ear
55. Without further ___
56. Stone for many Libras
57. Longtime Giant slugger
60. Philosopher Descartes
61. Bit of wisdom

DOWN

1. Hampton's instrument
2. Having no drawbacks
3. Mild smoke
4. Suffix with chariot
5. Horse color
6. Richard of "Bustin' Loose"
7. Actor Bates
8. Author/vet Kovic
9. Ones in a race

10. "Mission: Impossible" actress

11. Plane measure

12. Bed frame piece

13. Links target

18. Book to swear on

23. Time of anticipation

25. Hoopster-turned-senator

26. A dwarf planet

28. Like a first name

29. Simple rhyme scheme

30. Spill the beans

31. Reese's "Legally Blonde" role

32. Sunnis, e.g.

33. Scale button

34. Opera highlight

35. Place of refuge

38. Lunch holder, maybe

42. Cake bit

44. Poem of Sappho

45. Hung around

47. Twilled material

48. Jessica of "Driving Miss Daisy"

49. Dog on "Frasier"

50. Prescribed amounts

51. Tribal tales

52. Did a takeoff on

53. "Drat!"

54. Rotten little kid

58. Abbr. on a toothpaste box

59. Not 'neath

The crossword puzzle brought to you by:

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