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City Council approves annual budget

City Council approved a budget for the 2017-18 fiscal year beginning Oct. 1, that invests in public safety, the Burleson Public Library, the city's Parks and Recreation system, infrastructure and more.

On Monday, the City Council approved a budget for the 2017-18 fiscal year beginning Oct. 1, that invests in public safety, the Burleson Public Library, the city's Parks and Recreation system, streets and more. The City Council also voted to maintain the property tax rate at \$0.7350 per \$100. Some property owners may see their city tax bills rise if the assessed values of their property increased.

The approximately \$92 million dollar budget includes \$835,000 to adjust the city's public safety step plan which increases the city's competitiveness in the metroplex public safety employee market. The budget also includes funds to make merit-based pay adjustments to civilian positions equivalent to about 3% of civilian payroll. Other personnel from the recently approved budget include a position in the criminal investigation division, a firefighter, a GIS position in support services and a plans examiner position.

Parks and recreation highlights include funding for additional sections of Village Creek Trail, a 10-foot-wide concrete trail for pedestrians and cyclists. The public works department will be getting an aerial bucket truck to assist in the traffic maintenance division. This truck will allow the department to maintain signal lights, mount street signs and perform emergency repairs. Currently, the city has to rent a bucket truck or hire a contractor for emergency repairs now public works will be able to respond to our residents more effectively and efficiently.

Other portions of the budget continue funding for important upgrades to the city's infrastructure. These include the continued five-year neighborhood street rehabilitation program along with the annual sidewalk program that provides the city's youth safe routes to school.

The budget plans to continue enhancing our library by replacing computer desks, adding electronic screens to alert patrons on all the great programs the library offers and new software that will make checking out eBooks a breeze.

Even though the city's property tax was maintained residents will see an increase in the city's water and sewer rates. These services are funded through user fees and those fees are adjusted accordingly to cover the cost of the services. The average homeowner will see an increase from \$14.34 to \$15.13 as minimum water base rate and an increase from \$16.17 to \$17.06 in the monthly minimum sewer rate. This increase is due to two factors, one is the City of Fort Worth is increasing their rates by 7.8% (Burleson purchases its water from Fort Worth). The other factor is the city is in the process of multiple water and sewer projects to rehab older lines, replace a public works water main, increase the lines from Hidden Vistas to Dobson Road and from Wilshire to FM 731 along with several others projects to enhance the city's water and sewer services.

Solid waste rates will remain the same.

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