

September 21, 2020

City Council approves annual budget

City Council approved a budget for the 2020-21 fiscal year beginning Oct. 1, that decreases the city portion of the tax rate, reduces water fees and invests in public safety, city's roadways, traffic management and more

On Monday, Sept. 14, 2020, the City Council approved a budget for the 2020-21 fiscal year beginning Oct. 1, which lowers the city portion of the tax rate to \$0.7111 per \$100 of assessed valuation, \$0.0089 lower than last year's property tax rate. Some property owners may see their city tax bills rise if the assessed values of their property increased. The city of Burleson does not set the appraised value of homes. The appraisal districts in the homeowner's residing county are responsible.

The approved budget also reduces the city of Burleson water customers, both residential and commercial, fees by 3%.

"The adopted budget was developed over the last several months with the input of the city council and community via an online survey," stated City Manager Bryan Langley. "The budget is designed to meet the challenges faced by the organization and accomplish the goals outlined in the City of Burleson's Strategic Plan."

"Due to the continuing effects associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, the budget is focused on ensuring the sustainability of core operations while recognizing the financial realities that have been forced on our community," said Langley.

The approximately \$112 million budget includes a substantial investment in Burleson's public safety. Multiple new positions are being added in the police department, including a sergeant, three police officers, a detective and a school resource officer. Four new full-time employees for public safety communications (dispatch) and a new firefighter was also approved in the budget.

Maintaining the city's roadways is a top priority in the budget. This is of particular importance as Burleson's population exceeds 50,000, after which the state of Texas will transition all financial and operational responsibility for maintaining traffic signals and lights to the city. Due to this approaching transition, the budget includes funding for a traffic engineer and a signal technician at a net cost of \$157,249, effective on Apr. 1, 2021. In accordance with the city's Intelligent Transportation Strategic Plan, the traffic engineer will be responsible for ensuring that the city's traffic lights and signals are effectively established and maintained to reduce traffic congestion throughout the city. The signal technician is necessary for traffic signal repairs for a growing system.

The adopted budget was developed with the “No New Tax Revenue Rate” (previously known as the effective tax rate) in mind. This tax rate seeks to raise the same amount of revenue as the previous year for existing properties regardless of whether property values have increased. In this way, property taxes are held constant and not increased for existing property owners.

Existing property taxes were reduced by about \$400,000 dollars and the city is receiving an additional \$1 million dollars from new development that was built in Burleson during the last year.

To develop a budget that uses the “No New Tax Revenue Rate,” a significant focus was placed on cost containment, organizational efficiency, and innovative service delivery approaches.

The budget encompassed the organizational changes implemented by the city manager’s office in May 2020. These changes include eliminating five positions, including the director of golf, deputy director of recreation and lifelong learning, planner, an athletic field maintenance worker and a fire investigator.

Additionally, the Recreation and Lifelong Learning Department was reorganized to create a new Department of Parks and Recreation to focus solely on core parks and recreation functions. The management of the Library has also been consolidated under a newly created Community Services Department. These changes are collectively designed to flatten the organizational structure and provide a more direct service model to the community.

“The reorganization also reassigned staff members in the organization to funding sources that more appropriately reflect their duties and responsibilities,” said Langley.

Examples of this include reassigning staff members from the General Fund budget to the Parks Performance and Solid Waste funds. The organizational changes eliminated five full-time employees and achieved an annual savings of \$590,000 in the General Fund, and approximately \$670,000 for the entire organization. This savings represents approximately two cents on the tax rate.

In the last two budget cycles, the city has eliminated eight full-time employees and \$1.2 million in costs.

Further, the city manager’s office has worked with the entire staff to improve processes, procedures and overall workflow. Over the coming year, staff will continue to critically look at the organization to maximize the value to the community.

To view the entire budget document,
<https://www.burlesontx.com/DocumentCenter/View/20739/Proposed-FY-2020-2021-Annual-Budget?bidId=>

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