

June 15th Council Meeting Summary

It is always a pleasure to hear about community involvement from our dedicated volunteers that help out with their time. Thank you to those who helped out on the highway clean-up to make our city's facade look beautiful and our lakes cleaner.

The budget was the main topic of the discussion and the primary agenda item that flowed through the night. Residents became aware of a shortfall of 2.5 million dollars from decreased property revenues. A bank transfer had to be made to balance our current budget to please the required state law. We are spending more than we are taking in.

Thinking that the entire city department heads gave their best estimates of what they wanted to spend for the coming year to the council to vote on, the next agenda item up was to place another street millage on November 3rd, 2009 ballot. Of course, it is a renewal of a millage that was passed along time ago, but our current budget holds no room for maintaining streets and as many of us residents have seen no money for sidewalk repair either. On top of that our water and sewage rates are on the rise. We do not have the money to pay for the operation of the 10 mile tank which would be filled at a decreased rate, but we will put it on the residents to buy new water meters and to water on odd-even days.

Next on the agenda was a one year extension contract to a long standing engineering firm. The extension succeeded. Knowing that we already established a balanced budget, it would be incomprehensible to even think that the bid process was not in full stride. Again we soon forget about the Waste Management contract that went back to bid which saved us over \$300,000. Even though the company is highly qualified, it is not the point that the engineering firm has to be the lowest bidder. It is the point of the bid process; it brings the cost down for the taxpayers. That is the whole point of being up on council and being a city official.

The next issue was the approval of 2 minutes of audience participation at the beginning of the meeting to let residents talk about agenda items before they are brought forth to the council. It was approved unanimously this time around, however, it did not end there. There was a motion to move the 5 minutes of audience participation before council comments so that council can reiterate and respond to resident participation. That motion was denied. Also the Mayor said that there will be a future council agenda to bring decrease audience participation at the end of the meeting to 3 minutes instead of 5 minutes. If we remember correctly back in March 2009 when the issue of the 2 minutes of audience participation was put to a vote, a question was asked to the Mayor if there would be a decrease of the 5 minutes if the 2 minutes was passed and the Mayor responded no. What seems to be the change of heart?

Stay tuned for a special meeting on June 22, 2009 at city hall.