



# News Release

## CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE

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### ***City Council Holds Record Vote to Lower the City Property Tax Rate to the Rollback Rate***

At the August 8 meeting, Council held a record vote to lower the ad valorem tax rate to the rollback rate of \$0.568022. The current rate is \$0.56963. The Council is required to hold the record vote to place the tax rate proposal on the agenda of a future meeting and hold two public hearings. Council will set the tax rate for the fiscal year 2017-2018 Budget, which can be lower than the rollback rate but not greater than the rate included in the vote, at a future meeting. Also effective for the 2017 tax year is the increased exemption amount from \$50,000 to \$75,000 for homeowners over 65 and disabled persons. Approximately 22% of the homeowners in Highland Village will benefit from this exemption and see an average annual savings of \$427.00. Assessed valuations came in at an overall 6% increase. The proposed base General Fund Budget expenditures total \$16,692,194, only a 2% increase over last year. A Supplemental Budget totaling nearly \$600,000 is also included, resulting in a total increase of 4%. The public hearings will be held on August 22 and September 12.

City Council continued budget discussions with staff presentations of the Utility Fund Budget. The Utility Fund is an Enterprise Fund that is financed through user charges. The Utility Fund has seen a decrease in revenues due to recent flooding, wet summers and resident conservation efforts over the last several years. A utility rate adjustment and increase was approved by Council in June. The new rate will take effect in October and will provide sufficient revenue to fund associated expenditures for water and wastewater costs. The new rate will provide an estimated 20% increase, however the percent of increase will vary with usage level. Detailed information on the new rate structure and example utility bills can be found on the city [website](#).

A special meeting will be held on Monday, August 14 at 5:30 p.m. to call a bond election to address reconstruction of several Highland Village streets, improvements to Unity Park and other parks projects. The special meeting is needed as the dates allowed by state law to call an election fall outside the window of regularly scheduled Council meetings.

Two ordinances brought about by actions taken by the 85<sup>th</sup> Legislature were addressed. The first was an ordinance establishing monthly and annual limits on the amount of time spent to produce public information for a requestor. The Texas Legislature, in the 85<sup>th</sup> session, passed H.B. 3107 amending the Public Information Act to allow government entities to establish reasonable monthly and yearly limits on the amount of time personnel is required to spend producing information for harassing, repetitive and/or redundant public information requests asking for a large amount of information. Council approved the ordinance establishing that any requestor of public information will be charged personnel costs in accordance with the Texas Government Code for all time in excess of 36 hours in any 12 month period beginning on October 1 of each year or 15 hours in a given monthly period beginning on the first date of each month.

Secondly, Council approved an ordinance establishing regulations for construction, placement and excavation of city rights-of-way and public easements and adopting fees for the administration of the right-of-way management ordinance. In the 85<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session, the Texas Legislature enacted Chapter 284 of the Texas Local Government Code which relates to the installation of equipment, specifically wireless network equipment, in public rights-of-way. Chapter 284 limits individual cities' abilities to regulate the location of such equipment. This is contrary to the historical right of Texas cities to regulate the improvements that are located within its streets and alleys and to levy a reasonable and fair charge for the use of public right-of-way by private business. The City's current right-of-way management ordinance needed to be revised to address the provisions of Chapter 284.

Council also met in closed session and authorized the City Manager to hire the law firm of Bickerstaff Heath Delgado Acosta, LLP to represent the City along with other Texas cities in litigation challenging the constitutionality of part or all of Chapter 284 of the Texas Local Government Code.

The [HVTV Update](#) provided information on the upcoming Highland Village Lions Club 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Balloon Festival, the upcoming utility rate increase, and the opening of the Highland Village Farmers Market which will be held every Sunday from 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. at the Highland Village Town Center.

During the Mayor and Council reports, police chief Doug Reim announced the annual [Steak & Stetson](#) fundraising event for the Texas Special Olympics. The event will be held on September 9 at the Circle R Ranch.

The City Council early work session and regular session is available on HVTV (Spectrum 16; Frontier 43) and via website streaming by searching HVTV. The meetings are also available for on-demand viewing on the city [website](#).