

City council tries to hold down taxes

Written by Elizabeth Barrett
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Proposed budget drops 5%.

Under the city's proposed budget, taxpayers will not have to fork over more money next year unless their property valuation has risen.

For the third year in a row, the Gothenburg City Council is proposing a levy which is .30922.

For a home valued at \$100,000 that means the city's tax portion will be \$309 if the 2010-11 proposed budget is approved by the council Sept. 14.

While the levy remains the same, the tax asking increases 5.4% over last year to \$468,301.

That's because of a 5.4% rise in valuation which jumped to \$151,443,835.

Valuations for agricultural land in the county increased 12% or more.

The budget drops 5%—to \$14,846,125—because the council wanted to hold the line on taxes, said city administrator Bruce Clymer.

"The council, mayor and community also wanted to try and make the budget fit within parameters," Clymer said.

Council members worked out details of the 2010-11 budget during a two-hour work session Aug. 24.

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While the levy remains the same, residents are likely see a 7.6% increase on electric bills next year because of increasing costs for Nebraska Public Power District which supplies the city's wholesale power.

The council will vote on the proposed increase at a January 2011 meeting.

NPPD officials say the hike is necessary because of increased costs in their power plants and transmission systems.

Revenue has also dropped from excess power energy sales to out-of-state utilities due to mild weather and lower than expected market prices.

Gothenburg residents and businesses will also probably see an additional monthly 25-cent charge on solid waste bills to cover the cost of providing roll-off dumpsters during Clean City Week each spring.

The increase will generate about \$4,500 yearly. Clymer said the city experienced a \$5,706 deficit at the end of last year's campaign.

As in any large organization, salaries and benefits take the most cash and the city is no exception with an estimated \$1,845,303 earmarked to pay city employees.

The Gothenburg Airport Authority's levy, although separate from the city budget is added to the city's to determine if the 45 cents per \$100 valuation lid is met. Authority board members have requested \$66,788 for the coming year.