

City budget approved with funds for costly sewer upgrades

Written by Elizabeth Barrett
Friday, 23 September 2011 15:18 -

Authority to grow budget if needed also granted.

Sewer improvements, estimated at \$2 million, and elimination of state funding, means a 24% increase in the 2011-12 city budget.

Gothenburg City Council members passed an \$18.3 million expenditure plan as well as a \$521,742 tax request.

No one from the public spoke during budget and tax hearings at the council's Sept. 13 meeting before members took action.

A proposed levy of .331650 means taxes on a \$100,000 home will increase \$23, from \$309 last year to \$332.

Members also approved an additional 1% in restricted funds authority which means they can increase the budget \$102,052 if needed.

City administrator Bruce Clymer explained that restricted funds are a cushion many communities try to build up when there's more growth over the years in a city's budget than the 3.5% growth allowed by law.

"So when there's a year that a community has to budget something, there's room," Clymer said.

In other action, the council granted a request by Hilltop Estates and Care Center to obtain a license to maintain improvements behind the facility.

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Hilltop officials want to pave a parking lot behind the care center but will need to install a storm sewer pipe that will cross two city utility easements and a phone company line as well as a drainage ditch owned by Nebraska Public Power District.

The storm sewer will connect with a drainage ditch on 27th Street.

On another matter, members listened to property owner Ken Christensen who wants the city to vacate right of way on property he owns west of First Avenue on Sixth Street and west of First Avenue on Fourth Street.

Christensen said he's trying to straighten the corner on both of the properties.

City officials suggested that Christensen attend a meeting of the Redevelopment Authority since the authority owns property to the north which was once owned by Mann Hay Company.

In other business, the council:

approved the appointment of Shawn Bickford to the Gothenburg Volunteer Fire Department.

learned of a tree walk, sponsored by the Gothenburg Tree Board, at 5:30 p.m. in Ehmen Park. At 6:30 p.m., members will plant a donated tree in honor of Retree Week.

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