

Council approves 2012 budget

Written by Chris Lee

Tuesday, 22 November 2011 14:18 -

Holyoke City Council members approved a \$6.25 million budget for 2012 at the Tuesday, Nov. 15 meeting.

Also approved was the first reading of the annual appropriations ordinance. The final reading and passage will be held during the council's Dec. 6 meeting.

Total appropriations in the budget is \$6,250,421 with the majority in the general fund, \$2,946,783 and utility fund, \$3,116,031.

Other appropriations were as follows:

Sale of Heginbotham Land Fund \$366
Equipment Replacement Fund \$90,328
Library Land Fund \$970
Cemetery Perpetual Care Fund \$5,451
Fire Pension Fund \$19,675
Massman Memorial Fund \$509
Contingency Fund \$0
Cem White/Leeper Memorial Fund \$10,280
Conservation Trust Fund \$47,820
LeBlanc Estate Fund \$7,208
Capital Reserve Fund \$0
Spindler Library Fund \$5,000

Prior to approving the final draft of the 2012 budget, council members approved an ordinance appropriating additional sums of money to defray expenses in excess of amounts budgeted for the city. The ordinance can be found elsewhere in this edition of the Enterprise.

Originally the 2012 final draft of the budget was in the consent agenda, but council member Scott Murray asked to have it removed and put under new business. Murray questioned the mention of tasers in the police budget.

Money is budgeted for the purchase of tasers, but that doesn't mean they will be purchased. Council member David Churchwell said the police committee has talked about tasers but

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nothing will be purchased unless the council approves it in the future.

“Nothing in here is a done deal until the council votes on it,” Churchwell said.

Council approves utility policy changes

Utility changes that were approved at last week’s meeting include the way city utility bills will be handled. All bills will now go out through the mail, and there will not be a mail-out fee charged to customers.

Council members also approved a utility deposit increase for new customers. The residential charge will be \$250 up from \$200 and the commercial will be \$350 up from \$300.

Reports of city officials

Council members heard reports from City Superintendent Mark Brown and Police Chief Doug Bergstrom.

Brown said the final day for leaf pickup was scheduled for Wednesday, Nov. 23 and the city will no longer pick them up so residents are asked to stop piling them in the gutters.

Bergstrom said he gave conditional offers of hire to the top two police officer candidates

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Monday, Nov. 14. The offers entail polygraph and psychological tests. Bergstrom said if all goes well the new officers should begin around Dec. 1.

Other business

In other business Nov. 15, council members:

—appointed Judy Beavers to serve another three-year term on the cemetery board.

—voted to provide the prize money for the annual lighting contest. First place will receive \$100, second \$50 and third \$25.

—approved a \$250 donation to Rural Philanthropy Days to be held in Fort Morgan.

—accepted policy changes for Holyoke Police Department. Chief Bergstrom said the main changes deal with wording outlining senior officer and sergeant.

—approved holiday bonuses for full-time employees.

—allowed notice for electric rate increase to be published with a two percent increase scheduled in 2012 for usage.

—announced a variance board public hearing will be held in the council chambers Thursday, Dec. 1.

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