

City Business
Council Meeting & Progress in the Field
by Michael Leamons

A Happy New Year to all. As you may have noticed, this column has been absent the past two issues. It's true the holidays have been a distraction, but an even greater distraction has been the task of rewriting the City's Safety and Personnel Policies.

Each of the current policies is over 100 pages long. Due to their length, technical language and devotion to minutiae, the two policies aren't very familiar to staff. To make the policies more effective, they've been pared down to a more manageable size, with the revised Personnel Policy at 12 pages and the revised Safety Policy at 6 pages.

The Regular Monthly City Council Meeting will be called to order at 7:00 p.m. next Monday, January 10th. Between now and when it is posted on Friday the agenda may change, but currently the following items are scheduled to be discussed and possibly acted upon:

1. Mission Statement, Vision Statement and Goals for the City; 2. Authorization to sell or otherwise dispose of the two water storage tanks on CR 242, the two Jeep Cherokees and some miscellaneous paving equipment*; 3. The revised Personnel and Safety Policies; 4. Demolition of the collapsing shed roof at the former Pecan Street Waterworks Building; 5. Repair of the landing at the former Gulf Building**; and 6. Additional funds for paving***.

*About \$600 a year is being spent to inspect these water storage tanks which haven't been used since the Elevated Storage Tower was completed; the Jeeps were recently taken out of service; and, another City has expressed interest in buying some of the paving equipment Hico isn't using for what Hico has tied up in it.

**The Gulf Building hasn't been used in years, but it is structurally sound and has a good roof. If the landing were rebuilt, this building would be better for storage than the Pecan Street Waterworks Building.

***Recently the City received an unbudgeted \$10,655 check for losses associated with last year's water well collapse. The final City Hall Renovation costs ended up being less than anticipated, so about \$24,000 of the Jenkins Bequest is still available. When discussing priorities with individual Council members, paving was mentioned many times; consequently, the Council is being asked to consider allocating some, or all, of the above toward this year's paving budget.

There are a number of factors to be considered when calculating the costs, but applying a 2 coat chip seal is expected to run about \$1.70 per square foot, or \$51/linear foot for a 30' wide street. There's no way the City can afford to make even a good dent in the street work that is needed, but it would be helpful at least to make a little progress every year. In the past, maps were prepared indicating which streets are most travelled and which are most in need of repairs. Expectations regarding future water and wastewater line replacements will be factored in with the data on those maps to select an area to be resurfaced. Definitely, we don't want to resurface a street which is expected to be torn up to replace utility lines.

You are encouraged to participate in the decision making process. If you have any thoughts or concerns regarding next week's Council Agenda, come to the Meeting and/or give your elected representatives a call ahead of time.

On another note, when not distracted by broken water lines the field staff is able to make progress in other areas. If you've driven around town much, you've probably noticed most of the potholes have been filled, and the City's gravel roads have been worked over with a grader.

During the holidays, the Pecan Street Waterworks Building was cleaned out. For years, spoils from excavation work have piled up along Utility Street. Much of that has now been removed. Brush is being cleared out of some of the alleyways. And, finally, some unnecessary fencing has been removed between the Transfer Station and the Utility Yard. Thanks guys!

May God bless the City of Hico.