

City Business
February Council Meeting
by Michael Leamons

Several items were addressed at the February 15th City Council Meeting:

1. David Todd of EHT was authorized to move forward with a TWDB loan application on behalf of the City for funds to develop an irrigation system to handle the Wastewater Treatment Plant discharge. It is possible partial, or total, loan forgiveness will be offered. The City will have no obligation to take the loan unless the terms are deemed favorable. The fact that the project addresses a TCEQ violation, is environmentally friendly and would serve a low income community should all work together in the City's favor.
2. A new Customer Service Agreement Ordinance was adopted. Among other things, the Ordinance provides that customer's whose service is disconnected for non-payment will have to put up a \$200 deposit. To allow customers an opportunity to adjust to the new requirement, the Ordinance does not go into effect until May 1st.
3. A revised Junked Vehicle Ordinance was adopted. The old Ordinance provided a fairly substantial loophole regarding "antique vehicles". The revised Ordinance, which closely follows provisions of the Texas Transportation Code related to junked vehicles, allows antique vehicles without current registration or inspection stickers to be kept within the city limits, but they must not be in public view. Citizens need to begin making plans for either disposing of their junked vehicles or concealing them from public view. Because of current scrap iron prices, now is an excellent time to dispose of unwanted junked vehicles. As mentioned in a previous column, the City can arrange to have junked vehicles hauled off at no cost to the owner. Actually, with a few phone calls, owners of junked vehicles can probably find someone who will pay to secure the salvage rights to a vehicle and haul it off to a recycling center.
4. No action was taken regarding the existing ordinance requiring trash at the curb for collection be in containers. Though no vote was taken, during discussion it seemed as though there wasn't much support for the existing container requirement, but that citizens are expected to remove emptied containers from the street (at least by the end of the day). The matter will be taken up at a future meeting.
5. The Utility Street Ball Field Maintenance and Operations Interlocal Agreement with Hico ISD was approved. This agreement is the product of a cooperative effort between Hico ISD, the City of Hico and the Hico Baseball Association, representing give and take on the part of all the parties involved. The decision to abandon and dismantle the Elm Street Ball Fields generated the most impassioned discussion of the Council Meeting. Although considerable emotional attachment to the fields was expressed, the many benefits of consolidating ball field activities at the Utility Street Complex were acknowledged. The Council determined the memory of Milton Rainwater, which is closely connected to the Elm Street Fields, will continue to be honored. The plaque honoring him will be re-located to the vicinity of the Utility Street Ball Fields.
6. A contract to purchase a 50' wide right-of-way between Iredell Road and Highway 6 was approved.
7. An elevator service agreement with Otis Elevator was approved.
8. The budget was amended to reflect an unexpected, \$23,270 one-time sales tax disbursement (1/3rd of the amount initially reported in this column was due the EDC).

The bulk of the funds were directed toward Park expenses: a new zero turn radius mower, pre-emergent grass bur treatments and a hedge to eventually screen the Wastewater Treatment Plant from the Park. Some of the funds were used to cover the elevator maintenance contract (required by law) and the purchase of the previously mentioned right-of-way.

9. An election was called for May 14, 2011 for electing three aldermen and to vote on a proposition for the legal sale of all alcoholic beverages for off-premises consumption only.

10. A resolution was passed allowing the City to join the Texas Cooperative Purchasing Network.

11. Authorization was granted to sign up for a rewards type credit card.

12. An EDC resolution amending its bylaws regarding bonding requirements was approved.

13. A Park Access, Use and Reservation Policy was adopted.

14. Reservations for Peppermint Park were approved for a March 26th Jars of Clay BBQ, an April 1st Billy the Kid Museum Chuck Wagon Meal and a May 14th Wine and Cheese Tasting Event.

15. The Council voted to change the time of the Regular Monthly Meeting to 5:30 p.m.. The Meeting will continue to be held on the 2nd Monday of the month.

May God bless the City of Hico.