

City Business by Michael Leamons

As reported in last week's paper, the new poly carts should soon arrive. The City first inquired about the possibility of transitioning to poly cart service at the beginning of the year. Stephenville, Hamilton, Walnut Springs and many other area communities have already made the transition. Initially, IESI indicated it wouldn't happen this year and that some of the other area communities would first have to agree to make the change to justify the expense of acquiring a truck for automatically dumping the carts. Later, the City was informed IESI was considering the possibility of transitioning Hico to poly carts now, while delaying the purchase of a truck until one or two other communities make the transition.

A poly cart proposal was presented to the City Council at its Regular March Meeting. To provide the carts, IESI indicated it would need to obtain a contract extension as the current contract was scheduled to terminate in August, 2012. IESI didn't want to make a substantial investment in carts and risk losing the contract in only a year. Also, IESI indicated they had planned to approach the City about a cost of service escalation, per the terms of their contract, due to increases in the Consumer Price Index and in landfill dumping charges. So, the poly cart proposal presented to the Council included a five year contract extension and a 10% cost increase.

City staff spoke with staff in Walnut Springs, Morgan and Hamilton concerning their experience with poly carts and received very favorable feedback. Comments were made about the reduction of litter in the cities, the durability of the carts and how easy they were to use. One city reported how a 90+ year old citizen of theirs had no trouble wheeling the cart back and forth from the curb each week (a tub out service is available for anyone physically unable to negotiate the poly carts).

The matter was tabled at the March meeting pending clarification on questions about granting a contract extension without going through a bidding process. Later, it was discovered the extension could be granted without going out for bids due to solid waste collection being a matter of "public health".

Since IESI wasn't being exposed to the bid process, the City asked for and received some contract concessions: 1. The City was given 2 free thirty yard roll-off hauls per year (in addition to the 2 already provided) for special events such as an annual clean-up. 2. The City was absolved from liability for "illegal" trash which might make its way into the system. 3. Permission was secured whereby owners of single family residences may dispose of demolition and construction debris without having to contract with IESI (in the original contract IESI had the exclusive right to haul all waste generated within the city limits). 4. IESI agreed to "repaint, or replace any Containers that are broken or in need of fresh paint."

In general, citizens will be seeing a \$1.00 increase for residential trash collection (\$11.60 to \$12.60---an increase offset by residents being relieved from having to buy their own trash cans) and a 10% increase in dumpster service costs as the City passes the 10% IESI increase along to customers. Those who previously received poly cart service will experience a cost decrease, due to the economies of scale, as the cost of that service goes from \$16.00 to \$12.60 for residential users and from \$27.85 to \$19.10 for commercial users.

The contract still allows citizens to place one bulky (appliances, furniture, etc.) or bundled item (not more than 4' long or over 50 lbs.) out for collection each week. If a citizen occasionally has more trash than will fit in the poly cart, an additional bag or two may be placed beside the poly cart for collection. If a citizen regularly generates more trash than one poly cart will hold, a second cart will need to be obtained for an extra \$6.50/month. The trash placed in the carts needs to be bagged so that it doesn't blow out and litter the city when the cart is emptied.

May God bless the City of Hico.