

The Arlington Report

CITY COUNCIL APPROVES 5.9% TAX LEVY INCREASE, ADOPTS 2010 BUDGET

At the regular meeting of the Council on December 21, the City Council moved to increase the tax levy by 5.9% from \$699,659 in 2009 to \$740,726 for 2010. The 5.9% increase was lower than the preliminary levy set in September. The preliminary levy showed a 16% increase. Comprehensive efforts by the City Council contributed to the lower tax levy. The Council cut \$70,879 in additional spending to get to the 5.9% tax levy increase. Following the approval of the levy, the Council moved to pass the municipal budget for 2010.

<u>Fund</u>	<u>Revenues</u>	<u>Expenditures</u>
General Fund	\$1,376,299	\$1,376,299

SPECIAL FUNDS

Fire Department	\$95,885	\$95,885
Ambulance Dept.	\$241,078	\$241,078
Comm. Center	\$85,664	\$85,664
Rev. Loan Fund	\$15,319	\$0
Cemetery Fund	\$8,225	\$8,225
Cem. Perp. Fund	\$1,500	\$0
Park Ded. Fund	\$1,620	\$0
TIF District #2	\$55,000	\$4,791
EDA Special	\$5,500	\$1,138
Equipment Fund	\$3,600	\$0

ENTERPRISE FUNDS

Water Fund	\$410,436	\$404,278
Sewer Fund	\$425,986	\$412,167
Electric Fund	\$1,601,055	\$2,206,544

DEBT SERVICE FUNDS

2000 Imp. Bond	\$30,384	\$27,405
2001 Imp. Bond	\$26,296	\$32,775
2004 Imp. Bond	\$94,117	\$88,088
2009 G.O. Bond	\$31,181	\$37,662
GO Equip. Cert.	\$78,725	\$78,575
Ambulance Cert.	\$420	\$0
Fire Certificates	\$100	\$0
2004 Pub. Proj.	\$42,200	\$61,213

Total Funds:	\$4,630,590	\$5,161,587
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The loss in city revenue and an increase in debt obligations are the two biggest reasons for a property tax increase in 2010. Debt obligations are expected to increase 31% in 2010, while the 2010 Local Government Aid payment is expected to be \$108,701 less than the amount expected before the Governor's unallotment. Total city revenues are budgeted to decrease by 11.9% in 2010 with city expenditures decreasing by 10.8%. Contact City Hall or visit the City's website for a complete copy of the 2010 budget.

WATER AND SEWER RATES TO INCREASE IN 2010

At the December 7 council meeting, the City Council passed a resolution increasing the water and sewer rates for 2010. Starting with your water and sewer usage in January (billable in February), Arlington users will see an increase in their water and sewer rates. The water per gallon usage rate will increase from \$4.60 per 1,000 gallons to \$5.06. Water base rates will increase \$0.88 across all service sizes. Sewer base rates will increase \$4.50 across all service sizes. A residential property owner using about 4,000 gallons of water a month, will see an estimated monthly increase in their water and sewer bill of \$7.22. The water user rate increase was passed to offset operating losses in the water fund. The water base rate increase will go to help pay for a portion of the water infrastructure costs associated with the 2009 Street Improvement Project. The sewer base rate increase will go to help pay for improvements to the wastewater treatment plant along with a portion of the sewer infrastructure costs associated with the 2009 Street Improvement Project.

WHEN DO THEY MEET?

Are you interested in participating in public meetings, but do not know when and where they meet? If so, below is a list of meeting dates and times. All meetings are held in the Council Chambers at the Community Center unless noted. All meetings are subject to change. Please call City Hall to verify meeting times.

City Council:	1st & 3rd Mon. at 6:30 pm
Planning & Zoning:	1st Thur. at 7 pm
Hospital Board:	Last Mon. at 5 pm
Historical Society:	1st Mon. at 10 am
Cemetery Comm.:	Last Wed. (Quarterly) at 8:30 am
Park Board:	3rd Wed. (Quarterly) at 7 pm
Library Board:	3rd Wed. (Quarterly) at 6:30 pm (Library)
Police Committee:	4th Mon. at 1 pm (Tech Center)
EDA:	3rd Wed. at 6:00 p.m. (Tech Center)

SKATING RINK NOW OPEN

The ice rink is now open and ready for use at Four Seasons Park. Warming house hours are from 5:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., Monday through Friday and 1:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., Saturday and Sunday. Skating is allowed anytime of the day, but supervised skating will take place when the warming house is open. Richard and Kris Mueller will be the skating rink attendants again this year. The phone number for the warming house is 964-9280.

City Offices will be closed on Monday, January 18 for the Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday.

ELECTED OFFICIALS

Jim Kreft -- Mayor
 Jim Pederson -- Council Member
 Bob Pichelmann -- Council Member
 Curt Reetz -- Council Member
 Mike Vrklan -- Council Member
 Galen Wills -- Council Member

APPOINTED OFFICIALS

Matt Jaunich -- City Administrator
 Dennis Schultz -- EDA Director
 Lisa Tesch -- Deputy Clerk
 Vicki Pomplun -- Admin. Ass't
 Lana Woehler -- Community Center Coordinator
 Dan Thomes -- Streets/Parks Supt.
 Jeff Paine -- Maintenance Worker
 Bruce Rovinsky -- Chief of Police
 Scott Bennett -- Police Officer

CONTRACTED SERVICES

Ross Arneson -- City Attorney
 Cynthia Smith-Strack -- Planning & Zoning Consultant
 Darin Haslip -- Building Inspector
 People Service -- Water/Wastewater
 Joel Hawbaker (Bolton & Menk) -- City Engineer

PHONE NUMBERS

City Hall: 964-2378
 Fax Line: 964-5973
 After-Hours On-Call:
 507-327-6601
 Fire Garage: 964-2279
 Police Dept: 964-5200
 Library: 964-2490
 Hospital: 964-2271
 S.E. School: 964-2292
 Post Office: 964-5503

OTHER SERVICES

Water/Sewer/Electric Services
 City of Arlington (964-2378)
Gas Service
 CenterPoint Energy (800-245-2377)
Cable Service
 Mediacom (800-332-0245)
Internet/Phone Service
 Frontier (800-435-1504)
Garbage Services
 Waste Management (800-422-5785)

City of Arlington, Sibley County

Contact us at:
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Arlington, MN 55307

Phone: 507-964-2378
Fax: 507-964-5973
E-mail: cityhall@arlingtonmn.com



A Beautiful City Growing in Unity



MAYOR KREFT IDENTIFIES FIVE GOALS FOR 2010

In an effort to help guide the City in 2010 and beyond, Mayor Kreft recently released his Mayoral Goals for 2010. A list of those goals and a brief summary are listed below.

Goal 1 - Complete our Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) -- Our Comprehensive Plan outlines many long-range projects that will enhance our quality of life. Some of the projects are potentially very exciting, some necessary, and most expensive. During the last year, our elected and appointed officials, staff, and consultants have been identifying projects and evaluating their priority. Priority of street and utility reconstruction, park improvements, economic development projects, as well as vehicle rotation and upgrades will all be rated and included in a five year schedule. A Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) is a capital budgeting device that will help us transform ideas outlined in our comprehensive plan into tangible reality. It will empower our Council, staff, and committees to use multi-year budget cycles to save for projects and capital expenditures. A CIP will also enable us to co-ordinate our capital expenditures to ensure a consistent tax levy in years to come.

Goal 2 - Partner with Sibley East School District, St. Paul Lutheran School and Sibley County Public Health in a "Safe Routes to School" program application -- Historically, the City of Arlington has been fortunate and privileged to host both public and private schools, and their very presence and long-term viability are imperative to the welfare of our community. These schools and our city have many commonly held goals, the health of our children is but one. There has been a concerted effort in recent years by federal, state, city and school governments to improve the health of our young people. As childhood obesity rates continue to rise, it is incumbent for all of us to join in this effort; one way our community can contribute to this goal is to provide safe pedestrian routes for our students. "Safe Routes to School" is a state program, funded with federal money, designed to encourage students to walk and bike to school, and assure that they do so safely. The program provides funding to communities for infrastructure improvements such as traffic control measures and new sidewalks/trails as well as non infrastructure programs such as educational materials and incentive rewards for participation.

Goal 3 - Connect our city parks with pedestrian pathways and collaborate for construction of a pedestrian trail to Sportsmen's Park -- Six years ago, the City of Arlington

initiated a sidewalk improvement plan. The project has been hugely successful—steadily rebuilding sidewalks, starting with Main Street and radiating outward. In 2008, it was realized we needed to reevaluate the plan to examine connectivity and continuity of the sidewalks in town. In 2009 we assessed the pedestrian friendliness of our community and created a preliminary map of possible future pedestrian thoroughfares to connect our city parks. Concurrent to this assessment, the Prairie Line Trail Committee had been contemplating rural trail grant applications. Through cooperation with that group, and with the foresight of our County Board, two grant applications have been completed. If awarded, the grant dollars, would, in part pay for the construction of a pedestrian trail from Arlington to Sportsmen's Park, and money spent by the City of Arlington in city limits would qualify as a local match for that project. We have much work to do: identify the exact routes of pathways in town, examine possible funding sources, including TIF money, and further collaborate with Prairie Line Trail Committee and Sibley County to ensure grant application success.

Goal 4 - Assess the value of licensing only one solid waste carrier -- Many cities in Minnesota license only one solid waste carrier to serve their residents and merchants. Indeed Arlington for most of our history was served by a single carrier. Currently our City Ordinance allows the licensing of three residential and six commercial waste carriers. This allows our property owners limited autonomy in their choice, but the frequent truck traffic on our city streets adds to maintenance costs and raises some safety concerns. If the City chooses to issue only one license, proposals from any interested, qualified waste hauler would be reviewed with cost, experience, and customer service being a few of the many criteria to be evaluated. The belief is that such a selection process would ensure lower costs and fair, consistent pricing for our residents and businesses, while possibly adding a small revenue source for our municipal government. As we have recently learned, Waste Management has purchased the two other licensed carriers. It is unclear whether this corporate consolidation will assist or hinder the examination of a single license system. We had hoped to evaluate the possibilities over the next calendar year, but clearly the purchase will force us to accelerate our decision making.

Goal 5 - Open communication with adjacent ambulance services to examine areas for co-operation -- In 2008, the City of Arlington proudly upgraded our ambulance service. The City, Sibley Medical Center, Ambulance Director, and, most importantly, our ambulance service volunteers have worked closely to ensure success of our newly implemented system. Successes of our new system are as evident as the documented life saving measures our part-time Advanced Life Support license has enabled us to offer, and as latent as the increased staff professionalism, the improved day-time coverage, and the realized potential of cooperation and sharing to provide emergency health care. All parties involved in the service upgrade have grown to appreciate the innumerable possible enhancements to our patient care and cost savings that partnership with adjacent ambulance services could provide. Currently, Sibley Medical Center has satellite clinics in Gaylord, Henderson, and Winthrop, and we will engage elected officials, ambulance volunteers, and city administrations from these cities as well as Sibley County to research opportunities for collaboration. Spurred by budget constraints, collaboration, cooperation, and sharing of services between municipalities have quickly become salient necessities. A tenuous balance of open mindedness, trust, and acknowledged parochialism will be paramount in order to objectively and collectively explore avenues to maintain and augment our commonly offered services while diligently protecting our identities as distinct communities.

-- Mayor Jim Kreft (jkreft@arlingtonmn.com)