

By Jan Schultz

The Imperial Republican

Taxpayers in the city limits will see a slight increase in their property tax support of the 2009-10 General Fund budget.

At a special meeting Sept. 9, the city council approved the city's \$4,298,023 General Fund operating budget for the coming year. The city's fiscal year starts Oct. 1.

To support the General Fund, city property taxpayers will be providing \$722,095 for the coming year, compared to \$691,824 for 2008-09.

The additional \$30,272 in the property tax request reflects an increase of 4.3 percent.

Taxpayers will be assessed a levy of .714949 (per \$100 valuation) to support the General Fund next year, compared to .704342 for 2008-09.

The city realized an additional \$2,776,737 in valuation in 2008, which helped spread the levy assessment across a larger pool of property.

Figures from the county assessor's office showed the city valuation grew from \$98,222,740 to \$100,999,497.

Of that total, \$872,193 was attributed to new residential and commercial growth in the city limits, with the rest from additional personal property.

City Clerk/Administrator Jo Leyland said it was the council's desire this year to reduce the amount of funds the city utility department "contributes" to the General Fund.

The growth in valuation helped that happen, as \$34,000 less was funneled into the city General Fund from the utility department.

For 2008-09, the city budget was supplemented with \$244,000 from the utility department, which will drop to \$210,000 in 2009-10.

The biggest capital improvement projects in the coming year are the street improvements on East 5th, 9th and 12th Sts. The street department budget shows \$2.1 million planned for those street projects and some equipment purchases.

Those projects will have to be bonded, although those bond costs will not show up until the 2010-11 budget year, Leyland said.

In addition to the General Fund operations, city taxpayers will also be assessed for bonds and operating expenses for the Imperial airport in the amount of \$30,840 and another \$7,500 for the Community Redevelopment Authority (CRA).

With those additional dollars included, the city's total levy will be .7451818 per \$100 valuation.

Wage increases reviewed

At last Wednesday's special budget hearing meeting, the council held first reading on a wage ordinance that includes increases for full-time employees and department heads from 4 to 15 percent.

The council held second reading on the wage ordinance at their regular meeting Monday this week.

City ordinances must go through three readings before passage. Council members can waive second and third readings, but must vote in a separate motion to do so.