

City of Sweeny July 2014 Newsletter

July is upon us, and we all know what that means - heat and humidity returns to our area for an extended visit. During these hot summer months, remember to stay well hydrated for yourself, your children and your pets. July also has an important date that we're all eager to celebrate - July 4th, and this year's marks the 238th year since the signing of the "Declaration of Independence." The Chamber of Commerce will host an "Old Fashion" 4th of July, Friday the 4th, starting at 6:00 P.M., at Backyard Park. This event is open to all and includes "Free" waterslide, splash pad, entertainment, hotdogs, funnel cakes, popcorn, snow cones, watermelon, drinks, bubble machine and more. Also, the Community Choir will be presenting songs of the Nation. As mentioned there are many free activities thanks to Chamber Members, and the generous support of the Community during fund raiser activities on behalf of the Chamber.

Do you have out of date prescriptions or over the counter medicines? "Don't flush or put in your regular take out garbage." Our Police Department is now able to help you safely get rid of them. In coordination with the National Association of Drug Diversion Investigators (NADDI), these items can be placed in a stand up metal container (think corner mail box), and periodically collected and incinerated. Needles and liquids can't be accepted.

The next regular Council meeting date is July 16th, and will convene at 6:00 P.M. at City Hall.

Council will also hold its first Budget Workshop on July 29th. The workshop(s) is/are open to the public, but without public comment. Once finalized, there will be a "Public Hearing" (September 17 or later, but not later than September 30, 2014) where input will be accepted prior to final approval of the Budget for Fiscal Year beginning October 1, 2014 and ending September 30, 2015.

Last year's budget was painful for everyone – taxes increased, rates for water and sewer increased, an infrastructure fee was added to utility bills, and employees received less of a pay increase than hoped for. This coming year's budget cycle will be no less painful. Systems are starting to fail, and we have to figure out how best to solve our issues, all of which entail money, which is in short supply.

*The General Fund, which provides, municipal court, police protection, administrative services through City Hall, road, drainage, parks, garbage collection, library, etc., **will not** receive sufficient monies through property taxes, sales taxes and other fees to be able to stand on its own at the current level of services being provided. In the past, any short fall was made up by transferring money from the Enterprise Fund (easier to understand as Utility Account) to the General Fund.*

That process, compounded over many years, has left the utility account with insufficient monies to make the much needed repairs to our overall systems, that is, water and sewer lines, and waste water treatment plant. We have some monies, but not near enough!

We will need to consider not only current levels of taxation, general fund services (that is, maintain current levels or reduce), rates for water, gas, and sewer, but the option of a bond as well. All are critical to our community, but we have to recognize something will have to give. As Mayor and City Manager, we will present the issues and options to Council, but the budget for next fiscal year will be finalized by the voting members of Council as established by the City Charter. You are encouraged to share your thoughts with your Council.

Recycle dates for July are the 10th and 24th.

As always, we encourage you to provide feedback and/or suggested topics for this forum.

*Rodney Weems, Mayor
City of Sweeny, Texas*

*Cindy King, City Manager
City of Sweeny, Texas*