

## *October 2013 City of Sweeny Monthly Newsletter*

As we start a new Fiscal Year, we wanted to let our citizens know of on-going activities that contribute to the improvement of our City. Many may or may not know why the term Fiscal Year (FY) is used, and why it is different from a Calendar Year. Many organizations, to include most governmental entities, operate their budget on a FY basis. In our case the City's FY is October 1<sup>st</sup> through September 30<sup>th</sup> of the following calendar year.

Financial documents for the preceding year have been closed out, and our auditors will begin the process of reviewing those documents in the near future. Their report to Council will be completed sometime in March or April 2014. We're pleased to report that all financials, ending September 30, 2012, were considered to be in order, as presented to Council this past May.

During July, August and September Council completed the budget process for the FY which we just entered. As most of you know, the property tax rate for the upcoming FY was raised to generate more money within the General Fund (GF). This was necessary to continue services at their current level. Even with the tax increase there is not sufficient projected revenue for the General Fund to be fully self supporting.

As in preceding years it will be necessary to transfer monies from the Enterprise Fund (Utility Account) to supplement the GF. We can't continue this practice as it takes money from the Utility Account, which should be set aside for repairs and improvements to our gas, water and sewer systems.

As a City we need to start reviewing how we can fix the problems facing us today and into the future. On this month's Council agenda is an item to establish a workshop to set into motion 3-year, 5-year, and longer plans. These plans will look at infrastructure improvements, I.e., water, sewer, drainage, and resources (money and manpower) needed to make our City a better place for everyone.

One area where citizens can help is making sure their property is maintained. For example, just this morning the City was asked to mow and clean an abandoned property. Obviously it costs the City to do this, and as everyone knows the City is short on money. Citizens should not have to tolerate potentially dangerous (health and other) situations. Nor should they have to pay for others' neglect. The City, this past August, raised its mowing fees, and will be looking at other options on how best to deal with these situations, now and into the future.

Also, on the agenda will be three proclamations: Breast Cancer Awareness Month (October), Municipal Court Clerk's week, and National Alzheimer's Month (November). Each of the Proclamations address issues and causes that in some way affect each and every one of us. Future Proclamations will, when possible, be listed on the preceding month's agenda to insure full notice.

Recently Council approved changes which will allow access to on-line bill payment (checking). We are working with First State Bank of Louise to implement a process that will accomplish this action. Once we are confident the process is working, we will make it available to all citizens. Hopefully, by the first part of 2014? Once implemented, we will look to expand to include credit card transactions.

We hope the above is helpful to everyone, and welcome your feedback, and/or suggestions on future topics.

Rodney Weems, Mayor  
City of Sweeny, Texas

Cindy King, City Manager  
City of Sweeny, Texas