

COMMUNITY UPDATE

CITY OF PILOT POINT, TEXAS

102 East Main Street – Pilot Point, Texas

www.cityofpilotpoint.org

FOR THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER 2009 (Volume 1, Issue 1)

WATER BILLING PROGRAM UPGRADE

The City of Pilot Point is pleased to announce a major upgrade in your water billing program, beginning with this current billing cycle. Some of the improvements include:

- Envelopes – provides privacy and allows for informational inserts by the city and others.
- New Account Number – numbers changed to incorporate route and address tracking - *Please make note of your new account number if you have your account set up for automatic draft from your bank account.
- Newsletters – a city newsletter will now be inserted in your envelope as a monthly communication and information update of city and community activity and events.
- Online Access/Payment – under our new billing program you may now access your account and securely pay your bill online 24 hours a day.
- 2 Turn It On – this is a new one-stop web link that allows you to set up or transfer services for all of you water, wastewater, electric, cable, and gas services.

HOME RULE CHARTER DEVELOPMENT

In March of this year, the city council appointed a City Charter Commission to begin drafting a Home Rule Charter for the City of Pilot Point. According to a publication by the Texas Municipal League:

“Home rule is the right of citizens at the grassroots level to manage their own affairs with minimum interference from the state. Home rule assumes that governmental problems should be solved at the lowest

possible level closest to the people. The legal position of home rule cities is the reverse of general law cities. Rather than looking to state law to determine what they may do, as general law cities must, home rule cities look to the state constitution and state statutes to determine what they may not do.”

The Charter Commission is responsible for drafting the home rule document for submittal to the voters of Pilot Point for approval consideration. As required under state law, the city must also send a copy of the proposed home rule charter to all homes in the city, no later than 30 days prior to the election. As soon as the Charter Commission completes its work, the City Council must call an election on the Charter at the next available regular election date.

Residents may secure and review a printed copy of the PROPOSED HOME RULE CHARTER from the Lobby of City Hall – 102 East Main Street, or at the Pilot Point Public Library – 324 South Washington Street or residents may review or print a copy off our city webpage at the following web link:

www.cityofpilotpoint.org

CHARTER HIGHLIGHTS

Here are a few highlights of the Proposed Home Rule Charter:

- Council-Manager form of government, increasing from mayor and five council members to seven members on the City Council (including the mayor).
- Elected mayor would get a regular vote, but no veto power.

- Council shall not receive pay for serving, but may be reimbursed out-of-pocket costs.
- Executive powers remain with the City Council — including the appointment of department heads, city manager, city secretary, city attorney, and all boards.
- City Manager shall serve as the Chief Administrative Officer of the City.
- City Manager must submit a five-year capital improvements plan each year as part of the annual budget submittal.
- Council members must be elected by a majority, not a plurality, and have no term limits.
- Council members can be removed for unexcused absences at three consecutive meetings, or by recall.
- Council member vacancies can be filled by appointment or by election.
- Recalls, initiatives and referendums can be called by a petition of the voters.
- Prohibitions: Nepotism is not allowed; elected officials cannot work for the city within a year after their term ends; individual City Council members cannot dictate personnel matters.
- No prohibition for elected officials or employees having an interest in a contract with the city, so long as that conflict of interest is disclosed in accordance with state law.

PUBLIC HEARING: The Home Rule Charter Commission will hold a Public Hearing on the Proposed Home Rule Charter on Tuesday, August 25th in the City Hall Council Chambers at 6:30 PM to receive comments on the proposed Charter. Interested parties are encouraged to attend and make comment.

DOWNTOWN MAIN STREET IMPROVEMENTS

Pilot Point was recently awarded a \$150,000 grant to provide renovation of a portion of our downtown sidewalks through the Texas Historical Commission and Texas Department of Agriculture. The City Council recently awarded a contract to Kimley-Horn Associates

of Irving, Texas to provide engineering and architectural services for this project, which intends to blend and recreate a historical period look to the sidewalks on the north and east side of the downtown square. The existing Thurber bricks located in some segments of the sidewalks, will be incorporated into the historic sidewalk design. The existing overhead street lights will be replaced with underground wiring and antique lighting. Local residents and businesses will be given an opportunity to contribute to the project through the purchase of memorial or sponsorship bricks.

Our engineering firm, Kimley-Horn Associates, will hold a public hearing(s) to receive input in the design of the sidewalks and adjacent landscaping elements as part of the overall architectural design process. Based on feedback at the public hearing(s), the engineers will develop a design proposal for submittal to the Main Street Advisory Board and the City Council. The current schedule assumes final approval before December 31, with the city accepting project bid proposals in January or February 2010; construction should be complete before year-end 2010.

DOWNTOWN PLAQUES, MARKERS, AND WALKING TOUR

In cooperation with the Pilot Point Main Street Advisory Board and in large part made possible by a donation from Texas-New Mexico Power, nearly two dozen historic plaques will soon be installed on historic sites in the Downtown Historic District. The plaques provide a brief history of that site or building as part of the Downtown Historic Walking Tour Brochure that was also recently developed by the Main Street Advisory Board.

The City recently ordered a new cast aluminum marker designating the Downtown Historic District as being designated and listed on the National Register of Historic Places. This important plaque will be placed on the square advertising the national importance and

significance of our square to the history of Pilot Point, Denton County, and the State of Texas.

SENIOR & DISABLED TAX FREEZE IN 2010

In accordance with provisions in Texas Tax Code - Section 11, in May 2009 the City Council granted a Disability & Over-65 Tax Freeze exemption for qualified property owners. Their tax values will be frozen at the 2009 rate and beginning in 2010 their values will not increase unless they make improvements to their property. This freeze amounts to a reduction in future tax revenue to the City, but the City Council felt strongly that those over the age of 65 and/or qualified disabled property owners should have the opportunity to take advantage of this optional tax value exemption.

NEW SOLID WASTE, BULK & RECYCLING PROGRAM STARTS OCTOBER 1ST

Solid Waste Program – Beginning in October, our solid waste and recycling services will be provided by IESI Corporation. The noticeable change will be that residential customers will be supplied with a 95 gallon rolling cart for solid waste and a 95 gallon rolling cart for recycling. Because the carts hold much more trash, service will be once a week on Monday or Tuesday instead of twice a week, recycling will still be once a week, but bulk pickup will go to twice a month on Saturday instead of weekly. An added benefit to the rolling cart service will be an approximate 11% reduction in monthly cost to our residential customers.



Residents are encouraged to visit City Hall and come see sample of the new carts that IESI will be utilizing in Pilot Point. More information will be available in the next Monthly Community Update newsletter, but as a summary:

- **EFFECTIVE OCTOBER 1ST**, the solid waste service will convert to furnished 95 gallon rolling carts which will be delivered to every residential household in mid September.
- **SOLID WASTE**; the northern half of the city will receive rolling cart service on Monday, the southern half will receive service on Tuesday (a detailed map will accompany the rolling carts when they are delivered in mid September). If a holiday falls on a scheduled service day, service will be automatically rolled to the next calendar day; Monday will roll to Tuesday service, Tuesday service would roll to Wednesday of the same week.
- **RECYCLING**; all residents will receive recycling rolling cart service on Thursday of each week.
- **BULK SERVICE**; beginning in October, normal bulk service will be on the 1st and 3rd Saturday of each month. Customers are still requested to contact the service provider for large service requests – numbers will be provided with the cart delivery in mid September.

CITY COUNCIL SETS PUBLIC HEARING ON 2009-2010 CITY BUDGET

PUBLIC HEARING: The City Council will hold a Public Hearing on the Proposed 2009-2010 City Budget on Monday, August 24th in the City Hall Council Chambers at 6:30 PM to receive comments on the proposed budget. Interested parties are encouraged to attend and make comment.

Residents may secure and review a printed copy of the Proposed 2009-2010 City Budget from the Lobby of City Hall – 102 East Main Street, or at the Pilot Point Public Library – 324 South

Washington Street or residents may review or print a copy off our city webpage at the following web link:

www.cityofpilotpoint.org

PROPOSED BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

Here are a few highlights of the Proposed 2009-2010 Annual City Budget:

- Ad valorem tax values of property in Pilot Point dropped approximately 3% compared to last year, due in large part to the overall national economy. The new certified tax role stands at \$196,464,976.
- The City Council proposes a \$.64 cent tax rate, which is the same as last year and nearly \$.021375 cents lower than the calculated Effective Tax Rate (ETR) which would have generated the same revenue as the city received last year. Due to setting a tax rate below the ETR, the city will receive approximately \$40,000 less in tax revenue as it received last year, but the City Council felt that the City should tighten its belt in tough economic times.
- The City will, for the second consecutive year, earmark dollars in both the General Fund and Water Utility Fund to increase our unallocated reserve accounts so that the city may begin to operate with a sufficient reserve to fund emergencies, assist in improving our future bond rating, and reduce our cost to issue debt in the future.
- Increased communication with residents holds a high priority in the new budget. The City will begin using this newly created Monthly Community Update to keep residents informed as to activities and events and we will begin to use emerging internet based blogs by October 1st.
- As part of the 2009-2010 fiscal budget development, the City Council and City Staff developed a list of twenty-four (24) Goals and Objectives for the twelve (12) month fiscal period beginning October 1, 2009. This document is posted on the City webpage and during our budget preparation next year, we will use this planning tool as a benchmark for a report card on how successful the City has been in accomplishing our stated goals. A copy of

the 2009-2010 Goals and Objectives is available on the city webpage.

- Funding levels for park improvements have been increased in the 2009-2010 budget to fund construction of a second T-Ball baseball field at Groff Park and to purchase equipment and make parking and grounds improvements in Old City Park and Kathleen Pullen Park.
- This budget allocates additional funds for annual street repairs and preventive maintenance; the allocation for 2009-2010 is double the amount in the 2008-2009 budget - setting aside \$70,000 for anticipated repair needs.
- As a result of a planned conversion from a curbside garbage bag trash collection system to a City furnished rolling cart system, residential solid waste rates will be reduced nearly 11% which will be reflected in your monthly billing beginning November 2009.
- In a move to 1) bring Pilot Point in line with neighboring city water rates, and 2) to encourage water conservation, beginning with the November billing cycle a higher per thousand rate will apply for water use above 4,000 gallons per month. On average, the adjustment will amount to approximately a 5% increase on high water use customers; wastewater rate will remain unchanged; there are no other fees changes proposed in the budget.

MONTHLY \$\$ CASH \$\$ DRAWING ON THE SQUARE

In addition to the Chamber of Commerce program asking residents to spend at least \$20 on the 20th of each month in Pilot Point to help support the local economy, the Chamber announces the return of the Merchant Gift Drawing on the Square on the 2nd Saturday of each month. You must visit and qualify at participating stores in town each month. For detailed rules on how to qualify, please call the Chamber 940-686-5385. The first drawing will be held Saturday, September 12th at 7:30 on the Square. Live music will be provided at 8:00 PM by Ryan Ready, Tyler Hollar & Ed Burleson.