



College Place in Review

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DECEMBER 2015

MAYOR'S MESSAGE

U-B reporter Andy Porter, who we warmly thank for his regular attendance and reporting on College Place's city council meetings, penned a story that received a below-the-fold, but large font headline "College Place OKs Tax Levy" (Tuesday, November 24, 2015). When I was getting my master's in journalism at University of Oregon, I worked as a stringer covering civic stories in the Eugene area, so I particularly appreciate Andy's steady help in talking about the city to our citizens, but I want to say a bit more about his topic, our 2016 city property taxes.

First, I want to promise all of you that I am very sensitive to tax increases – I have felt the increasing tax burden over the last few years too. Thus, I want to say that the 1% increase in property taxes for 2016 should not feel very different to our property owners, unless the valuation of your property increased (which is decided by the county). The reason that you are likely to not notice the change is because our property tax rate is a combination of the 1% increase and the amount already voter-approved for the CARS project that is in the works on Rose Street and College Avenue. For

2015 the combined rate was \$3.26/\$1000 of property value. Because of the way the debt for the bond is being paid off, even with the 1% increase, the combined levy for 2016 is \$3.27/\$1000 of property value – a \$.01 increase. The city council evaluated these figures carefully before voting the 1 percent.

Second, I should describe how the city uses that 1 percent. We, of course, run the services that citizens need for safety, and to support the roads, sidewalks, lights, parks, and water/sewer systems. All of these things require personnel and equipment, which tends to get more expensive every year. This year the personnel side is receiving a 2% cost of living increase, and other things are included in the budget to purchase needed equipment or upgrade systems as required (the specific budget details for 2016 will soon be available on the City of College Place website). I should mention that each year's budget is an extensive process of thoughtful give and take within the city organization and the 1% (or about \$12,500) is a very small part of a \$14.5 million operating budget (the big construction CARS project is not included in this figure).

Quick Fact:

City Water Usage

October 2015

40,574,000

October 2014

48,548,000

YTD 2015

415,233,000

Total 2014

429,267,000

Your City Representatives Mayor

Julie L. Scott

Council Members

Jerry Bobbitt
Adam Keatts
Marge Nyhagen
Loren Peterson
Greg Tompkins
Heather Schermann
Larry Dickerson

City Administrator

Patrick H. Reay

City Hall
625 S. College Ave
College Place, WA 99324

Municipal Building Hours:

Monday through Thursday
8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Friday
8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.



NEW Phone Numbers:

Utilities/Finance—394-8509
HR/Administration—394-8508
Accounts Payable—394-8510
Building—394-8522
Fire Department—394-8600
Fire Chief—394-8605
Public Works—394-8526
Planning—394-8524
City Engineer—394-8525
City Shop—394-8653
Police —394-8550
Dispatch—527-1960

Finally, our property tax base (the amount all of our CP housing is worth) changes on the basis of valuation, but also with seniors that apply for tax relief benefits, and with holdings by our local non-profits (property owned by Walla Walla University, for example, isn't taxable). Also, in our latest budget report from Sarah Killgore, she mentioned that our city's single family residence new housing permits have been steadily increasing with 22 in 2012, 28 in 2013, 34 in 2014 and 50 in 2015 – new houses help the city generate additional property tax revenues and help balance those properties that go off the tax rolls.

Stay tuned for the next newsletter where we cover more of the 2016 budget details. And please have a safe and wonderful holiday season.

HOLIDAY TREE RECYCLING

Walla Walla area Boy Scouts of America, Troop 305 will be picking up your unwanted holiday tree on January 9 and 10. All neighborhoods will be covered; however, if your tree is NOT picked up by the evening of January 10, you may send an email to: treepickup@troop305.net. Donations to the Boy Scouts are appreciated and will be used for scouting activities.

