



# News Release

## CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE

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### ***Council Approves Utility Rate Increase Effective this Fall***

At the May 23 meeting City Council approved the final read of an ordinance adjusting the City's utility rate structure which includes a residential and commercial rate increase. The water and wastewater rates charged to customers solely fund the purchase and delivery of utility services and the maintenance of the system. The City has maintained the same utility rate for water and sewer services for the last ten years. Several years of wet summers, along with increased conservation efforts has resulted in reduced water sales. This coupled with increased maintenance costs has prompted the need for an adjustment to the rate structure.

There are two cost components associated with the City utility system, the purchase of wholesale water and wholesale wastewater from the Upper Trinity Regional Water District (UTRWD) and maintenance of the water and wastewater distribution system along with 100 miles each of water lines and wastewater lines, five water wells and ten lift stations used to pump wastewater through the City system to the UTRWD for treatment. The cost of purchased water and wastewater from the UTRWD is passed directly to the resident, with no markup. The revenue derived from water usage funds the maintenance of the system, including capital improvement projects, mandatory testing, personnel and repairs to the system.

The current rate structure was based on a graduated rate structure that provided a higher percentage of revenues with higher usage tiers. This structure provided sufficient revenues, particularly during the dry summers of 2011 and 2012, when a reserve was established and used to fund the system during the recent wet summers. Since 2012 however usage patterns have decreased considerably, due to increased rainfall and conservation efforts. This new pattern has resulted in annual deficits depleting working capital to less than desired levels. An update to the rate schedule is needed to ensure sufficient revenues for continued utility operations.

The new water and sewer rate structure increases the base level charges as operational costs are fixed in nature and customers equally share in providing the availability of service. For water charges, the graduated usage rate structure is modified to a base rate for the minimum usage of 4,000 gallons per month and a flat fee for over 4,000 gallons to 50,000 gallons per month and a substantially higher rate for customers who use more than 50,000 per month. Sewer charges are based on water usage with a 15,000 gallon cap and a winter average program is used to determine the specific maximum usage for each residence.

The average household during a non-irrigation (winter) month has 8,000 gallon water usage and 5,500 gallon sewer usage, and will see an approximate 20% increase. The average household during an irrigation (summer) month with about 20,000 gallon water usage and 5,500 gallon sewer usage will see an approximate 18% increase.

The utility rate increase will go into effect with the October billing to allow time to inform residents of the change and avoid raising rates in concert with the higher usage summer

months. Detailed information regarding the rate structure and rate change can be found on the city [website](#).

Council approved an ordinance adopting the amendments to the Home Rule Charter that were approved by voters on May 6, 2017. Ten propositions were included in the special election and all ten were approved by voters. The propositions include updates to conform the language to current state laws, including the Texas Election Code, as well as language that better states and clarify the intent of current charter language.

Two site plans for property located in The Marketplace at Highland Village were considered at this meeting. The first located at 2200 Village Parkway is for the construction of an 8,702 sq. ft. medical office building for Kids First Pediatrics. The second is located at 2100 Village Parkway and is for the construction of a 10,500 sq. ft. building for retail use. Both site plans were approved by Council.

Council received a presentation and approved a resolution accepting the Sunset Point Park Concept Master Plan. Environs Groups was contracted to develop the master plan for the 1.00 acre park located in Clearwater Estates at 400 Edgewater Drive. Although small, the park site is a perfect location for a Lewisville Lake overlook with additional site furnishings, landscape and improvements to stabilize erosion to provide a welcoming atmosphere and encourage public access and use.

Parks Superintendant Tommy White was recognized at this meeting as he retires after 20 years of service to the City of Highland Village. Tommy, a Highland Village native, began his career with the City as an Herbicide/Pesticide Technician. "We appreciate Tommy's service to the City and wish him well in his retirement," stated Mayor Charlotte Wilcox.

During the Mayor and Council reports, Mayor Wilcox recognized Sloane Miller as Mayor for the Day. Ms. Miller, a student at Heritage Elementary, assisted Mayor Wilcox throughout the Council meeting. Mayor Wilcox also read proclamations for Emergency Medical Services Week and Children's Mental Health Awareness Day.

Mayor Wilcox conducted a swearing in ceremony for a new Highland Village firefighter/paramedic Clinton Duke and a new firefighter/paramedic recruit Clayton Grubbs.

Police Chief Doug Reim conducted a swearing in ceremony for a new Highland Village police officer, Benjamin McKelvey. Officer McKelvey received his degree in Sociology and Criminology from Texas Tech University and worked for the Dallas County Sheriff's Office prior to coming to Highland Village.

The [HVTV Update](#) informed residents of the upcoming Celebrate Highland Village on Saturday, June 3 at Unity Park, showed a virtual ribbon cutting for Club Pilates in Highland Village and informed residents of the Parks and Recreation summer Kids Kamp program.

The City Council early work session and regular session is available on HVTV (Spectrum 16; Frontier 43) and via website streaming by searching HVTV. The meetings are also available for on-demand viewing on the city website.