



OUR TOWN

Where the desert meets the mountains.

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City Finances

Hailey Proposes Budget Cuts To Weather Economic Downturn

With less development applications being filed at Hailey city hall, there is less demand on city staff for review of development proposals, infrastructure approvals and inspections, building inspections, and other development driven work. There is, however, a higher demand due to current economic conditions and other stresses for police, library, and public transportation services.

Hailey has responded to these influences with significant changes to its proposed 2008-2009 budget:

Areas of Budget Decreases and Increases

Cut 10.5 development driven staff positions...	\$ (530,000)
Wage increase for employees.....	148,750
1-Year deferral of equipment replacement.....	(206,000)
Elimination of vehicle due to less employees...	(24,000)
Accomodate higher gas and diesel costs.....	58,000
Increased contribution to public transportation..	70,000
Increased activity for economic development....	74,740
Net Operations Decrease	(408,510)

The budget public hearing will be August 11, 2008.

City Finances and County Dispatch

Blaine County Dispatch Service

After reducing operations budget by 10%, city services would be significantly harmed if Hailey makes further cuts to accommodate Blaine County's request that Hailey contribute in excess of 1/4 million dollars to pay salaries of County Dispatch employees.

The Mayor and Hailey City Council have asked Hailey's City Attorney to send a letter to the Blaine County Commissioners regarding this matter:

Dear County Commissioners:

The Hailey City Council first heard Blaine County's request for \$258,227 on May 12, 2008, at which time the council expressed serious reservations about Hailey's ability to fund the request and about its legal obligations. Following that meeting, Hailey received a letter dated July 7, 2008, from Mike McNeese, County Administrator, explaining that dispatch services to Hailey would be severely cut if Hailey did not participate in the funding request.

Hailey maintains that the funding mechanism proposed by the county is not equitable to the taxpayers of Hailey. Under the county's proposal, citizens of Hailey would pay both county and city taxes for the same level of service provided to a tax payer in an unincorporated area of Blaine County. Moreover, the staffing levels of the dispatch center are proposed to be increased. In difficult economic times, we do not believe expansion is prudent. To make matters worse, under the McNeese letter, city residents would only receive minimal 911 service, unacceptably threatening lives and property.

It must be emphasized that Hailey residents are also county taxpayers who deserve the same rights and protections as citizens who live outside of the city boundaries.

Hailey representatives have been meeting with county representatives and have proposed several options.

First, we suggested that the county review and readjust the emergency communications fee by increasing the \$1 fee/line/month to pay for operations of a communications system. It is my understanding the county attorney will be recommending that the county not increase the fee in excess of \$1/line/month. We believe that there is a legal interpretation allowing for such a readjustment and that the readjusted fee is equitable to all the users of dispatch.

Second, we suggested that the county continue funding dispatch service at the same staffing level the county previously funded dispatch, but allow other governmental entities, such as Ketchum, to fund extra positions to raise the level of service it deems advisable. Under this proposal, the level of service is maintained at a safe level, though less than full double-staffing at all times, and funded in an equitable fashion. Any entity desiring greater service could then pay for that service.



Third, there has been discussion about a county-wide levy override election. Like the first option, this option would more equitably share the cost of dispatch among all the citizens by assessing the same county levy rate. It would also allow the citizens a greater voice in the matter.

Hailey respectfully requests that the Blaine County Board of County Commissioners publicly discuss the three options contained in this letter and, as is your practice, provide advance notice to the public. For the third option, Hailey will fund a fair interim payment but only if Blaine County places a county-wide levy override election on the ballot.

We are willing to continue the discussions, but we feel it is time for the leaders of the county to address this issue in a public setting. We look forward to your response.

City Finances

Development Impact Fees *The First in a Series*

In 2005, the City of Hailey became concerned that continued development would not pay for itself but would burden the community as a whole. The Mayor and Council researched and concluded that the best funding source for growth-related infrastructure is in Development Impact Fees.

Impact fees are intended to fund improvements to city systems that benefit the entire service area. For example, as development occurs within a growing area of town, intersection improvements such as merge lanes, center turn lanes, traffic circles or traffic lights can be paid for with development impact fees. The need for the expanded intersection is created and paid for by those developing new houses and businesses in the area. Without the development impact fees, existing families and businesses who had previously not needed an expanded intersection would have to pay for the expansion through their property taxes, or endure using a failing intersection.

Before Impact Fees existed developers negotiated with governments for improvements. With Impact Fees, developers know what their costs will be. Parameters of the fees are regulated by state legislation (Idaho Impact Fee Act), arguably the most protective legislation of its kind toward developers rights as property owners. This Act specifically requires that larger projects pay proportionately more than smaller projects and that no project pay more than their fair share of the costs.

Fire Marshal's Corner

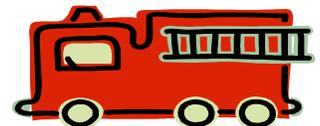
Wildland Fire Safety Measures

Every year many families unnecessarily lose their homes and possessions to wildland fire. These losses can be minimized if homeowners become aware of – and implement – home protection safety measures

The roof and exterior should be constructed of non-combustible or fire resistant materials such as tile, slate, sheet iron, aluminum, brick or stone. Wood siding, cedar shakes, exterior wood paneling, and other highly combustible materials should be treated with fire retardant chemicals.

A Survivable Space – Things To Do Today

- Clean roof surfaces and gutters of pine needles, leaves, branches, etc., regularly to avoid accumulation of flammable materials.
- Remove portions of any tree extending within 10 feet of the flue opening of any stove or chimney.
- Maintain a screen constructed of non-flammable material over the flue opening of every chimney or stovepipe. Mesh openings of the screen should not exceed ½ inch.
- Landscape vegetation should be spaced so that fire cannot be carried to the structure.
- Remove branches from trees to a height of 15 feet.
- Maintain a fuel break around all structures.
- Soak stove or fireplace ashes and charcoal briquettes in a metal pail of water before disposal.
- Store gasoline in an approved safety can away from occupied buildings.
- Place propane tanks far enough away from buildings for valves to be shut off in case of fire. Keep area clear of flammable vegetation.
- All combustibles such as firewood, picnic tables, boats, etc., should be kept away from structures.
- Garden hose should be connected to hose bib.
- Addresses should be clearly visible on structures.
- Roads and driveways should be at least 16 ft wide.
- Have fire tools handy, such as: ladder long enough to reach the roof, shovel, rake and bucket for water.
- Each home should have at least two different entrance and exit routes.



For more information visit firewise.org.

