



The Stafford Newsletter



Volume 31, Issue 4

Circulation 7,010

November 2010

City Better Off than Most Governmental Entities in Nation

AUSTERE BUDGET ADOPTED FOR FY 2010-11

Adopting a budget in the current economic climate is a significant challenge. After making numerous revisions, City Council adopted the Mayor's budget on September 29. Inherent in that budget is a principle to which this City has long adhered: living within our means. Three critical components of that principle revolve around providing quality services, a zero property tax rate and elimination of the City debt.

Revenues have declined approximately \$1½ million from 2008-09. Last year sales tax receipts were down 11% from that previous fiscal period. It is anticipated that there will be \$12,800,000 local sales tax revenues for this fiscal year. Hotel taxes, platting fees, interest income, franchise taxes, building permits and Stafford Centre receipts are expected

to roughly mirror those collected last fiscal year.

The major cost will be for the 126 full-time employees, 39 part-time employees and 44 volunteer firemen and will exceed \$10 million in salaries and benefits. One detracting feature is that, for the first time in 20 years, employees will not get a salary increase. Contrary to many entities, there will be no layoffs or furloughs.

There is \$25 million in cash available to the City: \$18 million in City accounts; \$7 million in SEDC funds.

Over the past decade, the City has reduced its debt to less than \$700,000 and will be debt free in 2014 – something few

entities can claim. (*Article continues on Page 2.*)



CITY'S WATER SUPPLY BECOMES TOP PRIORITY

With each passing year, water is becoming scarcer and more valuable. Having control over one's water supply will become more controversial and litigious.

Nothing better exemplifies this than the City of Sugar Land's legislative proposal to abolish Fort Bend County W.C.&I.D. No. 1 which has been in existence for 75 years and extends into the City of Stafford and its ETJ. Combine this with the filing of a lawsuit by Sugar Land which can impact the availability of water flowing through Oyster Creek to potentially serve Stafford, and the gravity and urgency become readily apparent.

As a result of these developments, Stafford has retained the services of a consulting law firm to advise us.

The City's involvement could bring potentially contentious situations with

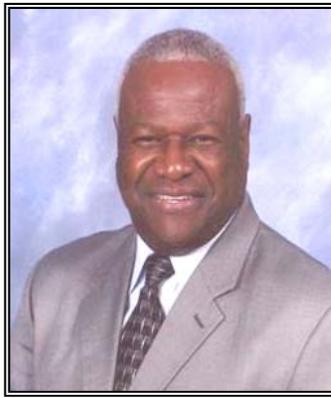
Sugar Land, W.C.&I.D. No. 2 and other entities. In spite of assurances from W.C.&I.D. No. 2 that Stafford will be protected and afforded this vital resource, when and as needed, City Council takes little comfort from these representations in view of the on-going obstinate and cross purpose actions of the District towards our City.

To the District, Stafford has become simply a component whose main value is to supply the District with over 75% of its funding while it pursues more territory, burgeoning debt, higher taxes and escalating rates.

With the advice of its consultant, City Council will carefully examine all the options to determine the best and most feasible approach to protect the City's water supply and, consequently, the growth and prosperity of Stafford.

FRED WOOLRIDGE GETS SEAT ON COUNCIL

Following the resignation of Councilman Jeff Smith in April, City Council, in accordance with the requirements of the Home Rule Charter, called an election which was scheduled for November 2 to fill Mr. Smith's unexpired term.



Fred is employed as an Instructional Administrator with the Houston Community College. With HCC since 1975, he has served as Department Chair, Assistant Dean of Workforce programs, Interim Dean of Instruction and Continuing Education Program Director.

The only candidate to step forward was Fred Woolridge who was declared the winner after the filing deadline had passed. Fred has a very impressive record which may have been a material factor in his not drawing opposition for this Council position.

Fred Woolridge has resided in Stafford since 1995. Since 2005, he has been a very active participant and outstanding member of the Stafford Planning and Zoning Commission.

Prior to employment with HCC, Fred worked as an Engineering Technician and Designer with TxDOT, Fluor Engineering & Construction, Bechtel Power Corp., Brown & Root Corp. and Turner, Collie & Braden Engineering and Construction.

Fred earned his B.S. degree in Technology and M.Ed. in Higher Education Administration and Supervision from the University of Houston-University Park.

AUSTERE BUDGET *(continued from Page 1)*

Critical components of 2010-2011 budget:

- No City property taxes
- Substantially declining debt
- Maintaining quality services
- Significant infrastructure improvements
- No employee layoffs
- Superb employee health care and retirement benefits
- Enhanced City appearance

Necessary increased fiscal restrictions:

- No additional employees
- No salary raises
- Reduced equipment purchases

Budgeting the 2010-2011 funds:

- \$5.4 million - Police Department
- \$1.3 million - Fire Department
- \$325,000 - Emergency Management, Fire Marshal, Humane Officer
- \$1 million - Stafford/Staffordshire Road (\$4 million previously expended)
- \$1.4 million - Dulles Avenue
- \$1 million - Brand Lane
- \$155,000 - Kirkwood Road
- \$3.5 million - Public Works (general street repair, parks, vehicle maintenance)
- \$530,000 - Building Department (building permits, nuisance abatement, health inspections, zoning)
- \$1.7 million - Stafford Centre (with \$464,000 in subsidies from hotel tax)
- \$206,000 - City swimming pool
- \$58,000 - Special activities (includes youth sports programs, 4th of July)
- \$440,000 - Civic Center (with \$221,000 in subsidies from hotel tax)
- \$300,000 - Finance Department
- \$454,000 - Municipal Court (plus \$150,000 supplement in state dictated fees on fines)
- \$221,000 - Stafford Municipal Educational Television (S-METV)
- \$268,000 - Computer Department
- \$12,500 - Planning and Zoning Commission
- \$600,000 - Stafford Municipal School District
- \$35,000 - Water supply study
- \$120,000 - Lobbyists for City and SMSD next legislative session
- \$2 million - General Administration (includes operations, activities and events)

HOLIDAY TREE LIGHTING SET FOR NOVEMBER 30



On Tuesday, November 30, at 7 p.m., the City of Stafford, in conjunction with the Stafford Historical Society, will host the annual Tree Lighting Ceremony at the Stafford Centre. The holiday celebration will commence with the Stafford High School ROTC posting of colors, Mayor Scarcella's welcome address and the ballyhooed arrival of Santa Claus. It will continue in the Centre's ballrooms with refreshments and performances by the Fort Bend Theatre and our very own SMSD Choir. Bring your family to the Centre to begin the celebration of the holiday season!

NEW YEAR'S CELEBRATION HEADLINES UPCOMING EVENTS AT STAFFORD CENTRE

The City of Stafford is hosting the **2011 New Year's Rockin' Eve Bash** at the Stafford Centre with a performance by Houston's phenom band **The Spiffingtons**.

Back by popular demand, Ray's Gourmet Country will provide a very tasty meal for the occasion.

Party favors, two drinks and a champagne toast at midnight are included in the ticket price. Tickets go on sale in November. The first 100 seats will be \$65, and the remaining seats will be \$85.

Several other headline events lead the coming attractions. Those include Christopher Cross, the Holiday Tree Lighting Ceremony and the Fort Bend Symphony's *Deck the Halls*. The dates of numerous forthcoming events are listed below.

Go to www.staffordcentre.com, and click the "keep me posted" tab to stay informed of the latest information regarding the **2011 New Year's Rockin' Eve Bash** and the other exciting events at the Stafford Centre.



- November 30 – City of Stafford's Holiday Tree Lighting
- December 5 – Fort Bend Symphony Orchestra's *Deck the Halls*
- December 6 – SMSD Band concert
- December 10-12 – Ballet Forte's *Nutcracker*
- December 17 – Grady Prestage's *Commissioner's Black Tie Gala*
- December 31 – City of Stafford's *Rockin' Eve Bash*
- January 12 – Ray Price concert
- January 15-16 – Sugar Land Home and Garden Show

For Your Information

City Offices will be closed:

Thanksgiving, Thursday-Friday,
November 25-26
Christmas, Thursday-Friday,
December 23-24
New Year's, Friday,
December 31

Tree Limb Pickup:

Monday, December 6

Alarm Permit:

2010 Alarm Permits expire December 31, 2010. Renew by January 31, 2011, for \$15. The fee is \$25 on or after February 1, 2011. Alarm Permits are available at the Stafford Police Department. For questions, call 281-261-3955. The Alarm Permit Application can be found at www.cityofstafford.com under the section "Forms, Instructions, Fees" on the front page.



City of Stafford
2610 South Main
Stafford, TX 77477

ZONING REGULATIONS PROGRESS

After three years of meetings, work sessions, a special committee and a bus tour, the City is on the brink of refining zoning regulations initially adopted in 2009.

This will be a culmination of an endeavor of City Council making the final determination, Planning and Zoning Commission presenting its recommendations, Stafford Economic Development Corporation funding the consultants for this endeavor, and special Ad Hoc Committee participating in numerous meetings to help bring the process to its current status.

The next major step in the process is a special public hearing of City Council and the Planning and Zoning Commission which is expected

to take place within the next two months. Following the public hearing, the Planning and Zoning Commission is expected to make its final recommendation to City Council which will then give consideration to adopting the final ordinance. Once adopted, this will provide new and stronger regulations in terms of requirements and standards in the Island area and primary corridors of US 90A and FM 1092.

In spite of the time-consuming effort - and often stirring debates - the City will be taking a major step toward enhancing these areas, improving their appearance, becoming more competitive and elevating the quality of life in Stafford.

Consultants Retained for City and SMSD

82nd LEGISLATIVE SESSION BEGINS IN JANUARY

City Council is preparing for the 82nd Texas Legislative Session which commences in January and will run for 140 days.

Representing the City and SMSD, which the City is totally funding, will be Marta Greytok and John Pitts. Both have ably represented Stafford in past sessions.

Numerous high-profile issues will be before the Legislature. Among

some of the most noteworthy are the redistricting, school finance, water rights, additional revenue sources and a looming State budget deficit of \$25 billion.

The City and SMSD have a vital interest not only in asserting legislation that they believe can strengthen both entities, but of critical importance, protecting against legislation that is damaging to either the City or school.