

New Smyrna Beach Special City Commission Meeting On 2019 Budget Sept. 25, 2018

1. The City Commission voted 4-1, with Commissioner Jake Sachs dissenting, to adopt a total millage rate of 4.1755 for the 2018-2019 fiscal year.

Funding for the total city budget of more than \$51 million budget, which includes \$26.9 million for the 2019 general fund, will come from an operating millage rate of 3.8416. That's a 4.4 percent increase above the current millage of 3.6811, and an 11.2 percent increase over the city's rolled-back rate of 3.4547, according to figures presented Sept. 12. Florida's "Truth In Millage" (TRIM) rule says the rolled-back rate is the millage rate that would generate the same amount of revenue as the previous year's rate, using new property tax assessments of the same land areas.

The city's 2019 fiscal year begins Oct. 1 and ends Sept. 30, 2019.

The proposed debt service millage rate, which pays down city debt, would be .3339. That is 11 percent lower than the current year's debt service rate, and it brings the combined 2019 operating and debt service millage rates to a total of 4.1755 for city residents. Officials said that's the second lowest total millage rate among the 17 cities in Volusia County.

Staff members estimate the new operating millage rate of 3.8416 for would cost property owners an additional \$14 in annual property taxes, based on an average residential taxable value of \$174,000.

As of the Sept. 12 meeting, officials calculated New Smyrna Beach would receive a net increase of 7.6 percent in taxable value revenue over the previous (2017-2018) year's receipts, due to new construction, annexations and increases in taxable property value.

Spending increases proposed for the 2018-2019 general fund budget include:

- \$369,182 for an employee cost-of-living wage increase (still in negotiations with two unions).
- \$235,000 to pay for three new Fire Department positions.
- \$309,439 for a market-driven increase to Police Officer wages to help New Smyrna retain and recruit officers.
- \$37,914 to reclassify two part-time positions to full-time employees (the Assistant City Attorney and Solid Waste Compliance Officer).
- Dollars for matching grants earmarked for several capital projects, including \$85,000 for Phase I Historical Restoration of the Old Fort Wall; \$75,000 for renovations to the Woman's Club of New Smyrna; \$45,000 to resurface tennis and basketball courts and repair fencing at Detwiler Park; and \$75,897 for improvements to the Sports Complex.
- \$500,000 budgeted for street resurfacing in the 2018-2019 Fiscal Year, which is more than previous years.
- \$34,656 for one year of the School Guardian Program at the three elementary schools within the city.

2. City Commissioners also unanimously approved a 2019 Fiscal Year budget for the Utilities Commission that includes \$22,861,100 in proposed capital improvements.

That figure is \$5.3 million higher than the 2018 Capital Improvements Budget. The increase is due to the cost of rehabbing the city's wastewater system and upgrades to parts of its sewer system and two lift stations.

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