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Ashland City Council holds budget hearing tonight

June 15, 2010

By Vickie Aldous

for the Mail Tribune

ASHLAND — The City Council will hold a public hearing before considering whether to adopt an \$89.3 million city budget for the coming fiscal year, which starts July 1.

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The hearing will take place during a regular council meeting that starts at 7 tonight in the Ashland Civic Center Council Chambers, 1175 E. Main St.

The coming fiscal year's budget is up \$6.3 million from the current budget of \$83 million.

Most of the increase comes from additional spending on city infrastructure projects, including parks projects funded by the city's restaurant and deli meals tax and infrastructure projects partially funded by \$2 million in grants.

The city property tax rate will go up by 1.6 cents per \$1,000 in assessed value to \$4.21.

That increase is to begin building a reserve fund to pay for fire hoses and protective pants and jackets for firefighters.

The owner of a home assessed at \$237,410 — the median in Ashland — will pay \$999.50 in city property taxes.

Almost half of city taxes go to the Ashland Parks and Recreation Department.

The tax rate also includes 17.5 cents per \$1,000 in assessed value to help make annual Ashland Fiber Network debt payments. The city-owned service sank \$15.5 million in debt after it was launched in the late 1990s. The city later privatized the money-losing cable television side of the enterprise and kept the Internet service.

The owner of a home assessed at the median value will pay \$41.55 in the coming fiscal year to help pay AFN debt.

City tax rates don't include property taxes for Jackson County government, the Ashland School District, a levy Ashland voters approved to supplement Ashland library hours or other taxes.

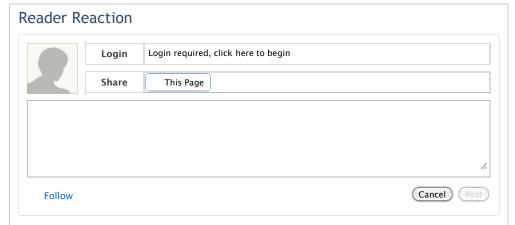
In other business tonight, the City Council is scheduled to consider whether to:

- Charge out-of-town people for services they receive from Ashland Fire & Rescue.
- Extend a contract with Bank of America, which provides banking services to the city government.
- Adjust the angle of parking spaces on the Plaza to increase safety and available parking.
- Make a recommendation to Jackson County about the Greater Bear Creek Valley Regional Problem Solving Plan, which is meant to guide development in the valley for decades.
- Approve a \$303,400 contract with Keller Associates to create a sewage master plan.
- Give initial approval for the Croman Mill site redevelopment plan.

For a complete list of agenda items and for details on each item, visit www.ashland.or.us/Page.asp?NavID=13052.

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