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# Press Release

## Commission schedules budget hearing, votes to publish budget

*2016 budget capped at \$26,188,933 in expenditures, \$3,598,313 in taxes*

ARKANSAS CITY, Kan. (July 29, 2015) — The City Commission of Arkansas City met Tuesday night at City Hall for a special budget meeting and scheduled a public hearing on the budget next month.

It also voted to publish a proposed budget that would cap ad valorem property taxes at \$3,598,313, or about an estimated 70.026 mills. This would be a slight increase from 68.605 mills in 2015. A mill is expected to generate approximately \$51,386 in property taxes in 2016, but that number is not fixed and will be based on final valuation in November.

The total 2016 budget authority for expenditures was capped at \$26,188,933, of which \$9,460,748 is designated for the General Fund. Commissioners still can reduce all of these numbers at the public hearing, which will be at 5:30 p.m. Aug. 12 in the commission room at City Hall, 118 W. Central Ave.

The proposed budget includes a 2-percent cost-of-living adjustment for all city employees, estimated at total budgetary impact of \$113,680 across all funds. About \$84,000 will come from the General Fund.

The Arkansas City Police Department is slated receive \$14,000 to raise the minimum pay of certified police officers, \$10,000 for new handheld and car radios, \$12,000 for a new server and computers, \$45,000 for continuing third-party software costs, and \$10,000 for evidence room upgrades.

Facilities improvements includes in the budget are \$95,000 toward the recoating or replacement of the Agri-Business Building roof, \$92,000 for a new elevator control box at City Hall and \$25,000 for roof repairs at the Northwest Community Center.

The Arkansas City Fire-EMS Department is set to purchase a new 3,000-gallon tanker through a three-year lease-purchase agreement, which will replace a 1986 tanker. About one-third of the lease-purchase, which is estimated to cost about \$240,000 overall, would be paid in 2016.

**For immediate release**

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The fire-EMS department also will buy 1,000 feet each of new 3- and 5-inch hose, totaling \$10,000; purchase \$38,500 worth of new portable radios; and spend \$26,000 to replace its south overhead bay doors, and \$18,000 to renovate the apparatus bay with sealed concrete floors and epoxy-coated walls.

The commission elected to set aside \$25,000 for building demolition in 2016, as well as \$13,000 for a new outdoor warning siren and \$2,000 for emergency communications equipment.

Commissioners also elected to continue funding a variety of outside agencies. In order of amount:

- Arkansas City Public Library — \$358,000 (about 6 mills);
- Cherokee Strip Land Rush Museum — \$168,000;
- Convention and Visitors Bureau — \$70,000;
- Cowley County Economic Development Partnership — \$45,000;
- Arkansas City Area Chamber of Commerce — \$30,000;
- Cowley County Humane Society — \$30,000;
- City-Cowley County Health Department — \$17,270;
- Arkansas City Municipal Band — \$4,500;
- South Central Kansas Economic Development District — \$2,060;
- After Prom/DARE, Fraternal Order of Police fireworks show and Outstanding Student Award — \$1,000 each.

**In other business, the commission:**

- unanimously approved an agreement with Cherokee Strip Land Rush Museum, Inc. to transfer ownership of the museum and collection to the museum's board of directors. The agreement returns legal and financial responsibility for the building and all artifacts within to the museum, as it was until Dec. 31, 1997, when the museum originally came under City control. For the price of \$1, the City will execute a Statutory Quit Claim Deed on the property and donate a safe used to store valuable items from the museum's collection. No items exceeding \$10,000 in value may be sold, donated or traded by the museum without the City's consent. Future City funding will be paid in two biannual increments and be reduced to no more than \$100,000 in 2018, with funding after that point up to the discretion of the City Commission. The museum will abide by the

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Kansas Open Meetings and Open Records acts as long as it receives public funding, and a member of the City Commission also will remain an ex officio member of the board of directors.

- voted unanimously to set an alternate date of Oct. 26 for Trick or Treat Night in Arkansas City, at the request of the Arkansas City Recreation Center. Trick or Treat cannot be held on Halloween because it conflicts with the last day of the annual Arkalalah Festival.