

KELLER CITIZEN OCTOBER 2, 2015

Westlake approves new budget

HIGHLIGHTS

Budget keeps tax rate same as last year

Includes pay increases for staff

Will fund first phase of a second fire station

BY MARK DAVID SMITH

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WESTLAKE — The Town Council in Westlake has adopted a \$32 million budget for Fiscal Year 2015-16 that keeps the tax rate the same as last year — 15.63 cents per \$100 of assessed value.

The town has the lowest rate of any municipality in the area, according to the the tax assessor websites for Tarrant, Denton, Dallas and Collin counties. Last year's budget totaled \$29 million.

Some of the capital projects in the adopted budget include \$2.8 million for the first phase of a new fire station, \$260,000 for a traffic light on Farm Road 1938 at Dove Road and \$366,000 for a drainage construction project at Dove Road and North Peytonville Avenue.

The new fire station will be the town's second. The town's other fire station burned to the ground on New Year's Eve 2014, but money to replace it was appropriated shortly after the fire happened.

Westlake Spokeswoman Susan McFarland said this budget would pay for the first phase of the new station that would include the engineering, design and acquisition of land.

McFarland said the the town is actively looking for a location for the new station.

Money for the construction phase of the new station will be in next year's fiscal budget, she said.

The budget included money to help manage the town's growing traffic issues.

McFarland said the traffic light at FM 1938 and Dove Road will be installed next spring. Another traffic signal budgeted last year, will be installed this winter at FM 1938 and Solana Drive.

"They did traffic studies, and it showed that both intersections warranted red lights," she said.

The construction project on Dove Road will include drainage with the new roundabout at Dove Road and North Peytonville Avenue.

The budget also included staff pay increases that varied by position, but averaged 12.4 percent for market adjustments. It also covered the addition of a full-time firefighter paramedic and two part-time clerk positions, one for the town secretary and one for facilities/parks and recreation.

Budget allocations for Westlake Academy are: Westlake Academy fund \$7.9 million; debt service, \$1.8 million; major maintenance and replacement \$270,000; and in-direct operating costs, \$579,000.



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