



Simeon Evans
chased a dream
all the way to
West Point; he'll
return with UNT
>> Sports, 4A

Vol. 122, No. 47 || DentonRC.com || Denton, Texas

DENTON CITY BUDGET



The city is increas-
ing fees for court
rentals at the
Denton Tennis and
Pickleball Center,
as well as other
parks and recreation
fees.

Penny
Kimble/
DRC file
photo

COURTS



Jury still out in Little Elm
park murder trial

Council approves \$2.5B budget with increases to tax rate, utilities, fees

By Christian McPhate
Staff Writer

Denton residents will see increases in their water and wastewater bills, property taxes and fees for a slew of city departments after the City Council unanimously approved an approximately \$2.55 billion budget Tuesday night.

Last fiscal year, Denton's budget was \$2.35 billion.

The budget cycle for fiscal year 2025-26 begins Oct. 1 and ends Sept. 30, 2026.

City staff have projected increases in utility rates through fiscal year 2029-30.

Council members unanimously approved increasing the property tax rate from 58.542 cents per \$100 property valuation to 59.542 cents, slightly higher than the fiscal year 2020-21 rate.

Of this tax rate, 33.478 cents is for operations and maintenance while 26.064 cents is for debt service.

For a home valued at \$386,698, the property owner would see their city tax bill increase by \$78, according to a staff presentation Tuesday.

"Regrettably, the debt side of things ... is just a straight-line calculation, and so we weren't able to pay enough [debt down]; but we were able to do yeoman's work on the other side of the ledger," Mayor Gerard Huds-peth said. "So, I'm appreciative of the holistic effort to minimize the impact on our citizens while delivering the best of service. And I think the future is bright ahead to address some of these concerns."

In a July 31 letter to the council, City Manager Sara Hensley pointed out that to address the budget deficit that the city was facing, Hensley and staff implemented zero-based budgeting and asked three key questions: "Are we duplicating efforts already handled by others? Are there activities we should no longer be doing? Where can we improve our existing services?"

"We recognize the current economic landscape presents its share of fiscal challenges," Hensley wrote. "However, this budget is not merely a

response to these challenges; it is a genuine effort to proactively manage our resources, identify efficiencies and innovate how to deliver services."

To do so, Hensley and staff cut, paused and reduced several programs. Those include:

- Discontinuation of Denton Parks and Recreation's after-school program (\$220,000)
- Strategic reduction in programming based on attendance (\$110,000)
- Paused the police K9 program (\$428,648)
- Reduction in contractual services (\$1.05 million)
- Reduction in travel and training (\$197,155)
- Reduction in equipment and supplies (\$618,317)

Major revenues for the general fund include property tax (33.24%); fees, permits, use of reserves (13.75%); sales tax (28.715%), ROI cost of service (19.6%) and franchise fees (4.71%).

Staff reported that approximately \$599.6 million in new value was added to the property appraisal rolls due to new growth and construction in Denton.

The beginning fund balance for fiscal 2025-26 is \$42.5 million. Total general fund revenue will be \$218.8 million for fiscal 2025-26, while the capital improvement program budget will be \$1.24 million.

Water rates will increase 3% while wastewater rates will increase 11% for residential and commercial accounts.

The total average utility bill will increase from \$3,070 in 2025 to \$3,143 in 2026, a \$73 annual increase, according to the presentation.

Electric and solid waste rates aren't increasing for fiscal 2025-26.

Projected future increases for residential and commercial customers include:

- Wastewater — 9% in fiscal 2026-27, 8% in 2027-28, 7% in 2028-29 and 5% in 2029-30
- Water — 5% in fiscal 2026-27, 7% in 2027-28 and 2028-29, and 5% in 2029-30
- Electric — 6.5% in fiscal 2026-27, 7% in 2027-28 and 2028-29, and 6.5%

in 2029-30

A summary of general fund rate changes, according to the Tuesday presentation:

Fire Department

- Increasing fees for special event personnel
- Increasing EMS medical supplies, emergency standby and medical assistance fees
- Increasing training facility fees, operational permit fees and hazardous materials fees
- Increasing fire prevention inspection fees
- Adding a lift assistance fee and gas leaks standby fee

Police Department

- Increasing fees for special event personnel
- Increasing training center and firing range fees
- Increasing records management fees

Library Department

- Increasing lost/damaged DVD, CD, Discovery Kits and RFID tag fees
- Increasing 3D printing material fee

Parks & Recreation Department

- Increasing special event rates
- Increasing Rec Pass, memberships, memorials and cemetery fees
- Increasing facility rental fees for the Senior Center, Civic Center, athletic fields, tennis and pickleball courts
- Reducing mountain bike trail rentals
- Increasing aquatic rentals, admissions and memberships

CHRISTIAN McPHATE can be reached at 940-220-4299 and cmcphate@dentonrc.com.

For more than 120 years, the Denton Record-Chronicle has been Denton County's source for locally produced, fact-based journalism. Your support through a tax-deductible donation or low-cost subscription is vital to our ability to deliver credible, relevant, unique coverage of our community.

HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL



Storylines to watch in
Week 4's Denton-area
high school football games

ROAD CONSTRUCTION



Interstate 35W off-ramp
at Bonnie Brae to close
overnight Thursday



BACK TO SCHOOL. BACK TO SAVINGS.
PAY NEXT FALL! 12 MONTHS. NO PAYMENTS. NO INTEREST.



940.565.1010

